

2-4-2008 Mock Selections

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2 JOSH CENTOR: Well, Dr. Brand, it might as well be  
3 March, because we have some exciting mock selections going on  
4 this week. Can you tell our listeners a little bit about the  
5 mock selections?

6 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, we started this process last  
7 year. We called in the media, and we put them in the same  
8 room that our committee sits in. And we say, Well, suppose  
9 this is all the information you have. And we expose them to  
10 the technology and to the incredible amount of data we have  
11 and say, Okay, pick the 65 teams.

12 JOSH CENTOR: It's not so easy.

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's not so easy at all. I think  
14 they were take it aback, because when they're sitting home and  
15 writing on their computers about, Oh, it should be this team  
16 rather than the other team, when they put themselves in the  
17 role with the committee, boy, things change. And it was  
18 enlightening, I think, for all those who participated.

19 So this year, we're going to do it again -- actually  
20 double the effort -- include the women, as we didn't last year  
21 as a pilot program last year -- and let those people for the  
22 media see if they could figure it out.

23 JOSH CENTOR: Well, it's a pretty big success, first  
24 of all, because now you understand a little bit more when the  
25 committee makes its decisions in March.

1 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think that's exactly right. And I  
2 think what the people who participated in this began to  
3 understand a lot better than they did previously is that this  
4 is not a formula-driven decision. It's not just, What is the  
5 RPI? And that gives you the place and you figure out what  
6 part of the country they're from, and you can do this in a  
7 half hour and sit and drink coffee and eat cookies afterwards.  
8 Not at all.

9 This is a case of judgment calls, very careful  
10 judgment calls, about people who know their basketball and who  
11 watch a lot of games.

12 JOSH CENTOR: How difficult is it to pick a bracket?  
13 To take 65 teams and put them in the right regions against the  
14 right opponents and follow all of the rules?

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, on a scale of 1 to 10, I  
16 would probably say it's about an 11. The problem is that you  
17 really have to understand, not just their win/loss records and  
18 not just who they played against, but what kind of basketball  
19 they're playing. And then you've got to be able to predict  
20 how, in a particular bracket, it will lead eventually to a  
21 good Final Four. And I've got to say our committees in the  
22 past have done an absolutely remarkable job.

23 Of course, because it's being qualitative, there's  
24 always room for discussion, and that's fine. But they've done  
25 a remarkable job. And I think through this mock process, the

1 media is now able to understand better and help the fans  
2 understand better what's really going on here.

3 JOSH CENTOR: For those of you at home, this is  
4 exciting for a number of reasons. But to fully understand it,  
5 today is Monday. Wednesday would be the Sunday, the last day  
6 of conference championships. The folks who are here for the  
7 mock selections will be waiting for the results of the games  
8 played on Wednesday before they go and make the final bracket.  
9 So it serves as an absolute replica of what we would see in  
10 March.

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: It does. Except we're making up the  
12 scores and the teams in the mock exercise. But the fact is  
13 they're under the same time pressures with the same amount of  
14 information, using the same technology and equivalent data; so  
15 it's really interesting.

16 JOSH CENTOR: What we're going to do for The  
17 DoubleAZone during the mock selections is be in the room as  
18 the committee -- quote, unquote, committee -- your writers and  
19 journalists obviously -- are making this mock bracket on  
20 Wednesday. And we're going to talk about the seedings and  
21 some of the discussions that happen, because then in March,  
22 we'll have a better understanding of what the actual bracket  
23 looks like and why it looks that way.

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think that's an excellent thing to  
25 do. It would be great for your readers to actually have that

1 direct insight.

2           What we're trying to do is to make the process  
3 transparent so everyone understands what the process is. No  
4 wild guesses about what kind of secret data is being used.  
5 The process will be totally transparent. Of course, each  
6 year, it will be different which teams you're plugging in --  
7 who's won and what the data -- who wins and what the data is;  
8 so that's different. But how it proceeds, I think, should be  
9 very well known as we go through this mock process.

10           JOSH CENTOR: And of course, for those of you at home  
11 maybe guessing and looking for your teams, this bracket --  
12 this mock bracket, in no way, shape, or form reflects what  
13 we'll see in a month. But it does provide a little bit of a  
14 bird's eye view with the appropriate data and records of where  
15 we are. So an exciting initiative, Dr. Brand.

16           DR. MYLES BRAND: I think it's an exciting initiative.  
17 And I think that you get people ready for the upcoming Final  
18 Four.

19           JOSH CENTOR: Sounds good. I'm excited.

20           Thanks, Dr. Brand.

21           DR. MYLES BRAND: Pleasure.

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