

3-3-2008 Fan Misbehavior

1 (File: 20080303mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: Dr. Brand, recently, we've discussed
3 some ugly incidents on The DoubleAZone involving fans at
4 Oregon and Illinois. Obviously, these types of sportsmen
5 issues happen and they happen across the country. They're not
6 appropriate. What can we do to stop it?

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, first, let me comment that
8 I think, unfortunately, we're seeing a growing number of these
9 incidents for whatever reason, whether they're encouraged by
10 being shown time and again on various media shows or talked
11 about on the talk radio issues in a favorable way, but we're
12 seeing more and more of these happen.

13 I think they are a threat to the integrity of sports.
14 I mean, sportsmanship is nothing more than respect for those
15 who play the game and for the game itself. And when you have
16 these ugly incidents surrounding the event, you're
17 disrespecting the players; you're disrespecting the game. It
18 hurts the integrity of what we're doing. It actually spoils
19 the fan interest and the fan involvement.

20 It might be fun in the short-term to go overboard. In
21 the long term, you risk actually what you love the most, which
22 is the game.

23 JOSH CENTOR: Why do fans believe they have the right
24 to demean their opponent?

25 DR. MYLES BRAND: They have a right to boo the

1 opponents. They have a right to cheer their team, a right to
2 applaud and shout and whistle when they like a play and do the
3 opposite when they don't. That's all part of being a good
4 fan. And the players, and everyone expects it, and it adds to
5 the environment.

6 But there are commonsensical limits to this when you
7 go overboard, when it becomes frankly an attack, not
8 necessarily a physical attack -- although sometimes that
9 happens too -- but when it becomes an attack on the players or
10 the opposing team, on the opposing coach, on the referees and
11 officials, and also on the game itself. So there are limits
12 of common sense.

13 And I believe those who control the venues, whether
14 it's the college or university in which a game is being played
15 or a championship, have to take steps in order to not allow
16 that to happen. And the officials, in particular, have a
17 central role to play.

18 JOSH CENTOR: Do you think that fans believe that this
19 type of behavior can actually influence the outcome of games,
20 and that's why they go into these stadiums and arenas and act
21 this way?

22 DR. MYLES BRAND: If they do actually influence the
23 outcomes of the games, it's very much like cheating because
24 you're not winning the game on the field of play. You're
25 winning the game doing something extraneous. It's like

1 someone kicking an opponent in the knee when the official
2 isn't looking. It's taking steps outside the normal rule to
3 the game. And I don't care what kind of fan you are, if you
4 have to resort to cheating, it's not worth it.

5 JOSH CENTOR: Is it realistic to think that we might
6 be able to nip this behavior in the bud?

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: No, we can't nip it in the bud. But
8 we can ask our officials to take a strong line and penalize
9 the team, the home team, if that's who causing the problem.
10 So the officials have to take a strong stand.

11 I think coaches sometimes grabbing the microphone can
12 also help the fans understand that they are disrespecting
13 their own players, as well as the opposing players in this
14 kind of activity. And we can try and have the venues
15 themselves, whether it's the schools or the championship
16 venue, set the tone better.

17 No. I don't think, on their own, all these fans would
18 do it themselves.

19 JOSH CENTOR: I think you raise an excellent point. I
20 have actually long thought that when one of these incidents
21 happen -- you know, when the coaches get on microphones,
22 that's quite powerful. But I've always thought that wouldn't
23 it be interesting if an arena were emptied because of poor
24 sportsmanship behavior, and the game was played in silence
25 with nobody there. I doubt that those fans the next time

1 would come back and cheer and demean their opponents the same
2 way.

3 DR. MYLES BRAND: I think that's right. There had
4 been a few, not very many, but a few occasions in which that's
5 happened, in which, for example, there have been fights in the
6 stands and things of that kind. As a result, they have played
7 the next games without any fans.

8 JOSH CENTOR: Thanks so much for this interesting
9 conversation.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25