

6-2-2008 Student-Athlete Development Conference

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2 JOSH CENTOR: Welcome to "Mondays With Myles".

3 Dr. Brand, last week I spent all of it in Orlando at  
4 the NCAA Student-Athlete Development Conference. There were  
5 some major differences for what used to be the National  
6 Leadership Conference.

7 Before we talk about those differences, I want to get  
8 your take on why it is important for the Association to  
9 sponsor leadership conferences.

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, it's a great opportunity to  
11 look across the board in all sports and all divisions about  
12 our student-athlete leaders. These are individuals who are  
13 not only good at sports they are playing, not only good in  
14 academics, but also have that natural leadership talent. And  
15 we want to help bring it out so that they can bring it home to  
16 their campuses, help others, for example, in the SAAC, take  
17 advantage of it. But also to develop themselves as persons  
18 once they graduate and begin to play a leadership role in  
19 their communities and in their businesses.

20 JOSH CENTOR: We have spoken about the merits of SAAC  
21 a number of times. And one of the things that I liked about  
22 the development conferences is that there were Student-Athlete  
23 Advisory Committee sessions, so that the participants came and  
24 spoke with the national SAAC. The national SAAC led the  
25 session, talked about things at the national level, that they

1 can go back and educate the student-athletes on all of their  
2 respective campuses. And that that type of dissemination, I  
3 think, is probably important for these campus leaders.

4 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's important for the campus  
5 leaders. It gives them a chance to practice leadership. It  
6 also shows the importance of SAAC on campuses, providing some  
7 opportunity for students to take a leadership position within  
8 athletics. But also for the SAAC itself to bring that point  
9 of view to the entire athletic department and beyond to the  
10 campus as well.

11 So it has large-scale ramifications, in addition to  
12 the students who attend the conference.

13 JOSH CENTOR: I've been to a number of these regional  
14 and national leadership conferences. And one thing that  
15 always strikes me is when we have these conferences, the  
16 student-athletes recognize that their voice actually matters  
17 in the NCAA-governing structure.

18 DR. MYLES BRAND: You know, I think that's  
19 interesting, Josh. I mean, we tell them that, and, in fact,  
20 it's true. But it's as if it's not credible until they see it  
21 up front and close. And they do see it up front and close in  
22 these kinds of leadership conference meetings, certainly when  
23 you go to the divisional meetings or the committee meetings in  
24 which student participate.

25 In fact, one might say that their voice is listened to

1 a great deal by presidents, ADs, coaches. They're surprised  
2 by it. I'm not.

3 JOSH CENTOR: I think that's exciting. And I think  
4 that the participants are excited by that.

5 One of the major changes that happened at this year's  
6 conference was that we had twice as many student-athletes  
7 there as in years past. We used to have about 350 to 400  
8 athletes. Now it is more than 700.

9 What's the rationale for doubling the number of  
10 participants?

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: We have been so successful over a  
12 decade, really, having about 350, 400 student-athletes that we  
13 wanted to share it on a larger scale. So this is first year  
14 we've ramped it up to see if we can do as good a job for 700  
15 as we have done for 400. That's a big difference, and it may  
16 change -- the scale may change the success of it.

17 Now, you mentioned you were just there. What's your  
18 view, having looked at this one from a point of view of 400  
19 versus 700? Was it as successful?

20 JOSH CENTOR: Yeah. You know, what I really think is  
21 that twice as many kids got to experience some of the  
22 wonderful things that the NCAA has to offer. They had a  
23 chance to be educated. And then they'll be able to go back to  
24 their campus. They are all underclassmen for the most part.  
25 They'll go back to their campuses and be able to educate their

1 student-athletes colleagues, which I think is really integral.

2 You know, the thing that I really liked is being a  
3 former Division III student-athlete, there was more of an  
4 opportunity for Division III student-athletes to be at the  
5 conference because previously you had to have a chance life  
6 skills program on campus, and that's legislated in Division I,  
7 but not all Division II and III programs had that.

8 So I feel that the student-athlete population, on a  
9 whole, across the country, will benefit from the changes.

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I'm glad to hear that. And  
11 you're quite right, of course. We do invite underclassmen in  
12 order for them to go back and bring the messages and the  
13 learning that took place at the conference -- bring that home.  
14 Did it scale up well?

15 JOSH CENTOR: I thought it did. I thought that it was  
16 really, really successful first try at splitting the  
17 conference. You know, there was a quick turnaround when you  
18 go from a 5-day conference to a 2 and a half and a 2 and a  
19 half. But I thought that the student-athletes really had a  
20 wonderful time. And I don't see any reason that we wouldn't  
21 continue to make improvements in these development conferences  
22 because they are just such incredible benefits.

23 DR. MYLES BRAND: They are. You know, Josh, I have  
24 spoken to many student-athletes over the years who have been  
25 to that conference, in particular, and similar ones. And it

1 is remarkable. You get a uniform answer of how much they  
2 didn't merely like it, but how much they learned. And usually  
3 at the end of these conferences, I'll get a bunch of emails  
4 that say, This has actually been my best experience while I've  
5 been in college. And that's -- that really speaks well for  
6 those who conduct the conferences and the reasons why we do  
7 it.

8 JOSH CENTOR: Well, it is one of the favorite things  
9 that I think the NCAA does, and I look forward to going to  
10 many more.

11 DR. MYLES BRAND: Good.

12 JOSH CENTOR: Thanks, Dr. Brand.

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