

6-30-2008 Changes in Going Pro

1 (File: 20080630mwm)

2 JOSH CENTOR: All right. Well, the NBA draft has come  
3 and gone. And, Dr. Brand, I'm not going to quiz you on who  
4 got selected where and how your favorite teams were impacted.

5 But I do want to talk about a trend that we saw before  
6 the draft. Obviously, a lot of underclassmen declared for the  
7 draft, and then had the chance to go through tryouts in front  
8 of NBA teams and scouts, et cetera. And if they didn't like  
9 what they were hearing, had the chance to retain their  
10 eligibility and return to college to continue their education  
11 and their student-athlete experience.

12 Can you elaborate on this process?

13 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah. It's a rule that was passed  
14 several years ago. It's not new, but it isn't that old  
15 either. And it gives an opportunity for student-athletes to  
16 make a good assessment of where they stand in the draft before  
17 they make a decision to go forward or not.

18 They only have one shot at this. You can't do this  
19 every year. So if you are freshman, you can get it once, or  
20 if you're junior, you can do it once. You can't do it more  
21 than once.

22 But it does give the student-athletes an opportunity  
23 to really understand, in detail, many of them go through the  
24 tryouts, for example, the camps, from the pros. And it gives  
25 them a really good chance, besides the conversations they have

1 with prospective agents -- excuse me -- prospective NBA folks  
2 about where they will stand, because they'll actually get a  
3 good feel for where they are.

4 I want to make sure I correct that. It's not agents.  
5 They are not permitted during this process to be able to talk  
6 with or work with agents. I misspoke a moment ago.

7 JOSH CENTOR: Well, it seems like this is a fair  
8 process that our membership has put into place for  
9 student-athletes.

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: That's correct. We are trying to be  
11 fair to the student-athletes. But in trying to be fair to the  
12 student-athletes, the question arises are we being fair to the  
13 game of basketball, college basketball? Because the coaches  
14 bring up, the male coaches, bring up this issue, and it's a  
15 fair issue for them to raise.

16 There is a long period of time from the end of the  
17 Final Four until the NBA draft, which takes place after the  
18 NBA finals. And during that period of time, they may be on a  
19 very productive team. If there are several members of that  
20 team that declare they want to go to the NBA and the majority  
21 of them will go back without going to the NBA, if they have  
22 tested the waters --

23 JOSH CENTOR: Right.

24 DR. MYLES BRAND: -- their expectations may have been  
25 higher than reality, and so they go back. But what happens to

1 the team and the coach?

2 He may find that, you know, he has two, three players  
3 who are in limbo. Does he recruit for them? Does he hold  
4 open a place for them? The team is and the coach is in limbo  
5 for a long period of time. And that's a legitimate concern.  
6 I think our membership is going to have to address that in an  
7 honest and forthright way.

8 JOSH CENTOR: Well, my question, I guess, is how do  
9 you counteract that? Because if the NBA doesn't move up the  
10 draft and doesn't move up all the tryout camps, then if the  
11 membership decides that, they could compromise that  
12 opportunity that they decided give the student-athletes,  
13 because of the coaches. So it's almost 6 here, half dozen of  
14 the other.

15 DR. MYLES BRAND: Well, I think unilaterally the NCAA  
16 membership -- and that's not the national office -- the NCAA  
17 membership -- could say we only want to give them two weeks or  
18 even three or four weeks past the Final Four, and after that  
19 you'd have to make a decision. So we can force the decisions  
20 by a process of rules whether the young men want to continue  
21 in this limbo category of trying it out or not.

22 You know, and some youngsters who tryout feel that,  
23 you know, they are not really NBA material, and they may not  
24 go back to school anyway. They may want to go back to Europe  
25 to play, which is another opportunity for them. But in making

1 that decision, the question again that the coaches are raising  
2 is have you overdone the flexibility? We want some  
3 flexibility for the students, and disadvantage the team.

4 JOSH CENTOR: Well, it seems to me that to at least  
5 get a sense of where you are will reduce and seems to have  
6 reduced the opportunity that some kids will go into the draft,  
7 not get selected, lose their eligibility, and actually would  
8 be better off back in school. We seem to have seen a  
9 reduction in that.

10 DR. MYLES BRAND: Yeah, we have. And I think this  
11 rule, leaving aside the length of time for making that  
12 decision -- I think this rule is fairer to the  
13 student-athletes. So they get to really figure out where they  
14 are going to stand.

15 There are only 450 slots in the NBA. That's not very  
16 many. And they don't all open up, obviously, every year. And  
17 as you know, there are more and more international players, so  
18 the opportunities aren't as great as one would think.

19 Lots of people have the expectation and believe they  
20 are going to make it in the NBA, and they want to try out and  
21 see if that's the case or go back to the university. As long  
22 as they keep their academics in shape, they can go back to the  
23 university.

24 JOSH CENTOR: And just finally to talk about another  
25 sport, just as a comparative example -- the NFL, there are

1 underclassmen who declare for the Professional Football Draft.  
2 It is obviously a different draft, and there are more slots in  
3 the draft, and you may not see the same process as the NBA.  
4 But there is an extended tryout period for football  
5 student-athletes where they can then decide. It's a totally  
6 different situation.

7 DR. MYLES BRAND: It's totally different. They have  
8 to make a decision in a shorter period of time. And you're  
9 right, there are more opportunities in football in terms of  
10 sheer numbers than there are in basketball. But that sport is  
11 treated differently. There may be changes that are necessary  
12 in the NBA. I just think we have to have an honest,  
13 forthright conversation about it with the membership.

14 JOSH CENTOR: And, again, just to reiterate that's  
15 membership decisions in both of those sports.

16 Dr. Brand, thanks for the clarifications.

17 DR. MYLES BRAND: Pleasure.

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