

THE KNIGHT COMMISSION ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS PRESENTS  
A SUMMIT ON THE COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC EXPERIENCE

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**5) Discussion among Knight Commission and panelists about drug-testing and performance-enhancing substances with Frank Uryasz and Kareem McKenzie**

DR. WHARTON: Thank you, Kareem. We'll take about fifteen minutes for questions and answers from the panelists, from the Commission members and I would ask them to introduce themselves for the sake of the website at the time they ask the question. So who would like to go on? Judy Woodruff.

JUDY WOODRUFF: I have a question for Frank Uryasz. You paint a picture of enormous improvement in the use of banned substances and so my question to you is, is this a problem we should even be focusing on? I mean, you said you've gone in football from what, 8.4 percent twenty years ago to 1.2 percent. Are we over worrying about something that isn't really that big a problem anymore?

MR. URYASZ: Well, it's an issue you never really stop worrying about. In fact people have mentioned that perhaps now that the numbers look so good we could stop testing. But again that avoids the obvious and that is that we test because it's a deterrent. I think the NCAA has done an excellent job of drug testing and drug education. I think the numbers are coming down. I think we have other areas of sport, perhaps not of concern to this Commission as much the intercollegiates but, you know, we don't have a widespread testing program in our two year colleges, and that's a problem.

We don't see much in the smaller colleges, the NAIA schools. And we're seeing increased steroid use in the high schools. So if a group were to ask me where it should focus its energies, it would be I would say in the junior high and high school level right now.

ELSON FLOYD: Frank, if one were to compare drug use between athletes and non-athletes, how would those numbers look?

MR. URYASZ: Well they look very good for what we call drugs of abuse or street drugs or whatever terminology you want to use. Generally the use of marijuana, cocaine, other drugs of abuse are much lower among the college athlete population than the general student body.

Where it's higher is the use of performance-enhancing drugs. There's very little need for the average student to use Ephedra or to use an anabolic steroid. And so that's why organizations like the NCAA will focus their initiatives on performance-enhancing drugs. Now alcohol use is an interesting issue.

When we look at the drug of choice among college students it's alcohol. And the latest NCAA drug use study when it comes to alcohol shows something that we're seeing in the rest of the college community, and that is we're losing the middle. And what I mean by that is that the moderate drinker is disappearing and we're seeing

more abstainers and we're seeing more individuals who drink to excess. And so the athlete population is mirroring what's happening on campus when it comes to alcohol consumption. I think that's very interesting.

HODDING CARTER: Mr. McKenzie, I'm interested, going back to the high school situation, and who do those kids model themselves after? I mean, is there a clear understanding there? You were making good points but I'm a little less rosy-viewed about what's happening in the high schools than I am about what's happening in the colleges to be perfectly frank. Is there a clear message getting out to the kids about drug use?

MR. MCKENZIE: I don't think really that it's really focused when the individual NFL teams go out to schools to talk to kids about different situations in life. I've been asked to talk from any number of subjects from steroids to drug use to being a good community minded citizen to just being a good sportsman. I think it's something that the principals and different coaches of various high schools basically ask for drug education and the steroid use when you go to a school because mainly we focus upon the given message that the principal or administrators want us to convey to the students themselves.

And if we don't see it as a prevalent problem ourselves, because you have to remember now, we're coming to a school based on a given need and if the high school doesn't provide that we need to talk about steroids or a given situation, we really won't touch upon it because they want us to focus on a certain subject that they might be having a problem with. And that's what we mainly focus on.

DR. YOUNG: Mr. McKenzie, I'd like to follow up on your comment about the things that high school students look at when they're looking at a university, what university they should attend and it seems to me from what you've said and from my own experience that we're sending the wrong message to people. We're talking about the wrong things. We're talking about how big the weight room is or how many practice fields we have, rather than what kind of an education you can get and what kind of an opportunity you have to play and excel in the sport of your choice.

What can we do to change that?

MR. MCKENZIE: Basically what you can do is make sure that you ask your prospective students the necessary questions. What are their goals in life? You know, you want to know what that student is all about as far as education wise is concerned because you have a lot of students who, even when I was in college, all of a sudden they had to change their major because they were at school, messing around and they missed their opportunity to be in the right major. So all of a sudden you have turf grass management, archeological studies, history, things of that nature where they're not really focusing in on what they went to school for in the first place. Because they're not focusing on being, going to school or college to be a business major or anything of that nature, they're going in it to play sports, you know, to be the limelight of the college campus.

And we have to change that focus because I know at Penn State that when we went to school it baffled me that some of the scholarships, postgraduate scholarships that I won went towards my current scholarship. Some awards that I had won, I said, well, wait a minute, wasn't my scholarship already paid for by the university? So how is that scholarship that I win during my undergrad, they go ahead and take it and say, well, this goes to help towards your grant and aid.

It baffles me that some of these universities have these high budgets where they count in the dollars that a respective school makes from a bowl game. That just

doesn't seem fair to me because you look at it, these students are basically working two jobs when they play a collegiate sport. They're not only studying to do what they want to do in life after their sport is over, but they're also playing sports which is a high requirement on a student to ask them to come in there, have a full scale schedule of sixteen credit hours, and to participate in collegiate sports.

It's a hard and long day, something that I didn't understand when I first went to school for my first semester there. It was very tough on myself having to go through a full day's schedule of classes, then go to practice and study hall at night. All these things are required of these students to perform on and off the field. It's a double standard and a lot of people don't understand that when you are a collegiate athlete, that some professors love you and others hate you because they see that you're given the opportunity to be a better person, a better athlete. And they also think at the same time that you're giving an easy grade because you do play sports. Well, some professors will do that, I will admit it, they do do it, they do take a liking to you because you play sports, you play a great sport for the school. But other professors don't like you at all, they make it harder for you, they want to see you fail.

And I think that needs to be addressed also because a lot of these professors think that because I'm a college athlete, I'm a dumb football player, I don't know anything, I came to school just to play football. I went to school to get my education, which I did in three and a half years and I have my degrees in business management and I did very well at it. But a lot of people don't understand that. A lot of these athletes go to school to get their education because to be honest, not everyone is going to be a football player a baseball player or a basketball player, it's not going to happen.

There are how many Division 1-A schools that have collegiate sports? There are only thirty-two teams in the NFL, eighteen hundred players total. All these kids go to school thinking that they're the next Andy Katzenmoyer, Jerome Bettis, whomever it may be.

There are only eighteen hundred positions in the NFL. You can't go ahead and kick everyone out and all of a sudden have a new batch. Some will make it, some won't. So I think these schools need to go ahead and focus on being, or having higher graduation rates and being better professionals first and foremost. If you want to come to school to be a business manager, talk to our business school. These are people that we have in these positions in the business world, talk to these people because not everyone makes it. That's the plain and simple truth.

DR. WHARTON: I don't think anybody will think that you were a dumb football player. Anita DeFrantz --

ANITA DEFRANTZ: Thank you, and to your point there are about the same number of professional athletes, men and women, as there are neurosurgeons in this country. Guess who has the longer earning period?

MR. MCKENZIE: I can tell you that in a heartbeat, anybody besides the football player, the professional athlete.

MS. DEFRANTZ: Right. Well, my question actually went back to what you know and who you tell? You evidently were not approached by anyone about the potential of supplements. Did you hear about other athletes? And once you got to the pros did any of those athletes talk to you about how it happens? Because that is the key. How does it happen and how do you stop it, where it happens?

MR. MCKENZIE: Really you look at, when I came into the NFL in 2001, the New York Jets, and there wasn't really that prevalent of a substance or performance-enhancing drug use. It was more so supplements. And supplements were something that were a dime a dozen. Really the NFL had not yet enacted their strict rules and guidelines on the actual purity of supplements at that point in time so at that time there was EAS, it was a very big drug company at that point in time and different other supplements that were trying to cater to the NFL saying, well, this athlete used this, this linebacker uses this one, this wide receiver endorses this one. Well, the NFL finally said, you know what, let's stop all of that and go ahead and make sure that we enforce strict guidelines for these supplement companies to use to make sure that their products are pure. Because whether or not a drug is pure, whatever it has in it, if you take it, it's your responsibility. It doesn't matter if it's aspirin from the drugstore or a doctor prescribes it for you, it doesn't matter as far as the NFL is concerned. If it's in your body you're responsible for it and you will be penalized.

DR. WHARTON: Thank you, we'll take—I'm sorry, go ahead, Anita.

MS. DEFRANTZ: Also now for Frank. We speak of drug testing and I've heard, I mean everyone talks about it but each drug test can be different and what you're looking for may be different. You mentioned alcohol and marijuana, cocaine and steroids and Ephedra. Is there a way when you say drug test, that you know exactly what it's for and then again, to whom is it reported? Especially at the high school level.

MR. URYASZ: Well it is a very broad term, there's no question about it. We have excellent labs that do this work and they call it a drug test and we have labs that aren't so good and they call it a drug test also. So that's a problematic area.

I'm not a firm believer that every drug test has to be the same. I think we have problems in certain sports. We ought to tailor our drug testing to those sports. So the test that's done on professional athletes be the same test that's done on Olympic athletes and collegiate athletes? Probably not because our issues are different.

But, yes, you're right a test is not a test but generally we tend to group it all together.

Clearly the tests that will be used in the Olympic Games in a few weeks are probably the most sophisticated tests that exist right now and speaking for the NCAA, they try to replicate that test. But is it necessary for a high school athlete to get an Olympic test? I don't think so.

MR. CARTER: Just to follow up one question. Sophisticated tests suggests that there are sophisticated ways to mask the drugs themselves. Who's winning the race?

MR. URYASZ: Well we always call it the proverbial cat and mouse race but I think that the masking is a much larger issue at the very top levels of sport than it is at the levels that we're dealing with. Unfortunately we paint with this broad brush and say that, you know, it's affecting every level. It's very difficult to beat a drug test and despite what you read in the papers we're actually pretty good at what we do.

But there are people who are working against us and there's no doubt about that. There are chemists who are developing drugs that we cannot detect and so that's why it's so important that the work that we do be at university based laboratories. Doctor Young and I were talking were talking, he was instrumental in getting the laboratory established at UCLA back in 1986 and that lab continues to do tremendous work in this area. But it's very important that this work be done at research labs.

DR. WHARTON: We'll take one more. Bill Asbury.

WILLIAM ASBURY: Yeah, just a sense, and perhaps I'll also ask this with Jemalle later, the subject of this panel has to do with values and choices and it also deals with violent behavior and an observation about the behavior, particularly in basketball, professional basketball and professional football and college football about, what fuels, Kareem, the appearance that the behavior of some of our athletes in college and in pros, violence, particularly directed toward other athletes and off the field directed toward women particularly, is fueled by substance abuse or alcohol and how does this behavior addressed on the teams?

MR. MCKENZIE: Really when I think you look at the violence factor of sports, whether it be football or basketball and when you think about football for myself it's a very violent sport. It's the closest thing to, I guess you would say a gladiator competition back in the Roman times because it's not just team against team, it's man against man. And there are many battles within the game itself and the more violent you are, sort of the more ferocious you can be, the more coveted you are as a player.

You look at the different commentators that comment on sports of just how tough a player is, this level of toughness, how many games he's played in a row or that vicious tackle or, did you hear that hit, the top ten hits. You see all these different comparisons to violence and, you know, sometimes players can't separate that from the field. You know, regular life from being on the football field. Because I know myself, whenever I'm acted upon with a certain amount of force I have an automatic reaction to where it's game time speed because you bring a certain level of—suppose you're trying your will on that other player and when you condition yourself to be that way, when it's coached to you day in, day out from high school to college to professional sports, I mean my high school coach used to always tell me, you're not mean enough.

I'd say, well, what do you mean, mean enough? Why should I be mean and lose control? That's not a smart player to me.

My mother always told me, be a smart player, not a stupid one. Anybody can be dumb and run around and just chase anybody. Anybody can do that but it takes a smart individual to go out there and be consistent.

So I think that you have to get to look at from Pop Warner to all the way up through the professional ranks of, what are we teaching our kids as far as our sports are concerned? Because when we look at football, oh, he's a tough tackle, you look, it's violence. And when you're conditioned to be a violent person on the field, to a certain extent you can't separate it because your body is conditioned. Football is all about reaction, how you react to it, you can't think in football. You think, you get hurt or you don't succeed, so it becomes reactionary. And being a professional athlete, those reactions are conditioned and when you see a certain situation you don't think, well, you know, I'm at home now. You don't think, well, no, I'm out on the football field. You just react because that's what you've taught your body to do over how many number of years. So I think it's how we approach our individual sports and we teach the game itself. That's the most important thing that we can do.

DR. WHARTON: Thank you and let me move on to the other three panelists now. We will begin with Joanne Belknap, who is a Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the University of Colorado.