

NCAA 2022 Women's Basketball Championship

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Mark Emmert

Lynn Holzman

NCAA Women's Selection Show Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the NCAA Women's Final Four press conference. We're going to start off with some comments from President Emmert followed by comments from Lynn Holzman, and then we'll open it up to questions.

MARK EMMERT: Good afternoon, everyone. Delighted that you're here. We're certainly excited to be in Minneapolis and back inside Minnesota. We were just chatting a minute ago and realized the last time we had a normal Final Four, we were here in Minneapolis for the men's Final Four, and now post-COVID and post all the cancellations, we're back for another wonderful Final Four. It's great to be with all of you.

The tournament so far from my vantage point has been absolutely extraordinary. We've had some remarkable games. We were able to add four more teams and have a full field of 68 and got great games in those early matchups too for those young ladies to be able to compete in the tournament as well.

We've seen a lot of hard work on everyone's part. Vice President Holzman and her team have been working incredibly hard. The women's committees have been working very, very hard to make sure the student-athletes have the kind of experience that they deserve.

None of us, of course, were happy at all with the outcomes of last year, and we went through a great deal of hard work, first of all, understanding what transpired last year and what the history has been and where we need to make appropriate investments in time and energy and money and people to make sure that the women who play basketball are provided with the same kind of experiences as the men are. And we're seeing some really great steps in that direction that Lynn can talk about in just a minute.

We certainly still know that we've got a ways to go. This is

not a finished task or anything remotely close to it. But in the time that was available and the resources that we're able to put in, I think you'll all be able to see and recognize there's a fair amount of changes that have occurred.

It's also important to note that many of the efforts are not particularly visible, and indeed they are not aimed necessarily even at this particular year, but in making sure we have a sustainable and embedded model that provides the kind of continuity of these championships moving forward.

So while it's not a very sexy topic, doing a really deep dive into zero-based budgeting and creating a realtime budgeting model so you can track all the investments and compare and contrast everything line by line has been an integral part of this so that we know that where there are differences between the men's and women's events, for example, those are the result of conscious decisions rather than historical accident.

So as a place to be right now, I'm personally very pleased with the success that we're seeing, and I'm looking forward to what I think is going to be a remarkable three games and crowning of a new champion. We've got four amazing teams left right now, and they've been able to play some remarkable basketball over the past couple of weeks.

Before I turn it over to Lynn here, I think it's also important to note that the NCAA as a whole, college sports as a whole, is in the midst of really dramatic change and that that's a good thing. The membership came together this past year and redrafted a constitution and passed a new constitution. And one of the prominent feature of that constitution is an emphasis on gender equity across all of our championships and the requirement that schools take very seriously their commitment to gender equity.

We saw in today's USA Today, a really well-done piece -- in my opinion, anyway -- a really well-done piece that points out there's a lot of work to be done when it comes to gender equity investments on campuses. And the fact that we've been able to make headway around our championship and that we're going to continue to focus on our championships is great. I'm all in favor of it, and I'm



excited about it. But we've got to do a lot more than that at the campus and conference levels as well. So this is systemic across all of college sports.

And the work of the constitution committee and now the Division I transformation committee that's engaged in its work is going to be really critical in all that.

With that, let me pause and turn to Lynn, and she can tell you a bit about how the tournament's been going.

LYNN HOLZMAN: Thank you. Also, just first, I want to acknowledge the Minnesota local organizing committee and the University of Minnesota as they serve, host, and have provided tremendous support and leadership in working for the last two years to really prepare for us to be here in Minneapolis for the Women's Final Four this year.

As President Emmert just noted, what we've seen over the course of the last several weeks of this championship are many firsts. It's been historic for many reasons. In some cases, there are things that many of us have been -- the committee and others have been advocating and really pushing for women's basketball and women's sports.

It is a year of firsts, as I said. It is the first year we had 68 teams, the first year that we had First Four games. We also, as you look at some of the historic nature of the championship as has been already reported, the attendance for the rounds leading up to the Women's Final Four, we have set records with those.

The ratings by our ESPN broadcast partner also have set records, but all of that is a testament to women's basketball, the leadership that occurs on campus with our coaches, the administration, and most importantly, our student-athletes.

We saw with this championship this year also an increased parity of women's basketball that resulted in some pretty phenomenal games. Regardless of whether you're a women's basketball fan or not, just a sport fan, the atmosphere of these preliminary round games, the crowds that were there, and the performance of our student-athletes playing a game they love, it's a testament to the dedication and the hard work that they have put in, especially over the course of the last couple years as we work through a pandemic and even this past year as many programs faced different fits and starts because of cancelled or postponed games and also other challenges that they faced.

So we're really proud about the fact of where we are today. But as I want to emphasize, our work is not done around this championship, and also as we work with other

stakeholders in women's basketball.

The priority this year around this championship and over the course of the last six months was the student-athlete experience. And with the committee's leadership, the Division I basketball committee's leadership and others at the office and otherwise, we are proud of the fact of where we've been able to elevate this championship with that student-athlete experience. And as we have been hearing from teams as they advanced throughout the championship and those as they arrived here in Minneapolis, they have felt the effects of that.

We also saw visibly the enhancements of the championship with the use of March Madness, with the increased branding, and even as you just look at the city of Minneapolis and this venue, you see the results of those efforts.

That being said, it is really important, as President Emmert just noted, that we continue with our championship to really honor and respect the championship and nurture it in a way that it needs to be to continue to grow and build.

The infrastructure around the championship and as we look forward and being innovative and also being respectful of what women's basketball brings with its values and its attributes, the engagement of our fans, and also our student-athletes, what fans like about our game, those will be part of the strategic analysis that takes place as the committee and others start to continue with their ongoing evaluation about the evolution of this championship all rounds.

So we appreciate everyone being here today, and we're really looking forward to our four teams actually getting to play these games, and on the worldwide stage, our student-athletes getting an opportunity to vie for that National Championship trophy.

Q. This is for Mark. When the weight room and safety equity issues first surfaced last year, the NCAA released a summary of the men's and women's tournament budgets. It said the women's event had lost \$2.8 million, which was, quote, the largest loss of any NCAA Championship. We now know the NCAA broadcast contracts and policies make it very difficult for the women's tournament to generate anything close to what expert analysts hired by the NCAA say it could.

Do you feel it's important for the women's tournament to be able to maximize its own revenue? If so, will you make all necessary contract and policy changes to make it happen?



MARK EMMERT: Well, the short answers are yes and yes. It's obviously in everyone in college sports' best interests to maximize a revenue that you can produce from media contracts, while recognizing you want to balance that with making sure you get the right coverage too. So it's not just about money, of course.

But the current contract that women's basketball and virtually all of the non-men's basketball sports operates under is 13 years old now. It was negotiated before I even arrived with the NCAA. It's scheduled to end in '24, August '24, so we're heading into just the right period to be looking at and determine the best approach going forward for a new contract. Whether that's splitting up sports, whether that's keeping some of it together, we'll have to determine that, and we'll have to work with outside experts, as we always do, who provide the necessary data and expertise in all of that.

I want to quickly add that ESPN's been a great partner for this championship. I think they've done a superb job this year. In particular, we've had a number of games and events on ABC, and that really helps obviously a lot. We enjoy working with them a lot. They're terrific partners in advancing women's sports.

But it's certainly essential that we find all the ways that we can to maximize the resources that can go to reinforce this championship. But bear in mind it's not just the championships, there are many, many schools and conferences that are utterly dependent upon the revenue that flows from the NCAA Championships to them to keep their programs alive.

So that's part of our mission is to make sure we're providing as much as we can to all of those schools.

Q. As you reflect on the last year and all of the backlash that there was at this time a year ago, and obviously it continued on for a while and I think we probably all agree it hasn't completely gone away yet in some ways, did any of the reaction, whether in nature or scale or whatever, surprise you?

MARK EMMERT: Well, the only part that was surprising, I guess -- first of all, the answer is no, not really. So once you stopped and looked at it and looked at the data, we all understood it, none of us liked it. We were all, I think, equally disturbed about it. But the best part was that everybody inside the national office, everybody in the women's basketball community quickly pivoted and said, okay, let's make this an opportunity.

The resources that are committed to any of our championships come from -- and this is a point that's often

missed -- the economic decisions are all made by the schools themselves, right? So the budgets that are set aside to support championships are made by the representative bodies that come together, schools that come together and make decisions about: How much money do we want to spend on championships? How much do we want to spend on other elements of the NCAA operations?

And it was a great chance to say, okay, look, we've got to redouble our efforts here. We've got to add personnel. We've got to add millions of dollars in support funding. We've got to do a whole variety of things differently. So that part was -- I was surprised and pleased by how quickly everybody made that shift.

And the fact that there was continued debate and discussion -- and there is today, even today, and there doubtlessly will be going forward -- isn't inherently a bad thing at all. I think it's perfectly fine for people to say, wait a minute, are you still being equitable here and fair here? What are the other areas in which you can and should be doing better? That's pressure on all of us, but that's not a bad thing.

Q. Some of the criticism even on the changes that was made, some feel it was more cosmetic and not really making a big difference based on the outrage from last year. So can you talk to us about any more changes that's going to be made, especially to a financial setup, where the men seem to get more from these units than the women's teams?

MARK EMMERT: Yeah, I'll make the first comment, and then I'll turn to Lynn. Some of the things you see are visible, tangible changes, and that's fairly straightforward, some of the things you can do. The focus on the experience of the student-athletes themselves and of the fans has been really important. So there are a lot of things that you don't necessarily see that aren't cosmetic, but they're important to those players. I'll let Lynn talk a bit about some of those in a second.

In terms of the what I'd call more substantive changes, first of all, as Lynn mentioned, we expanded the bracket to a full 68 teams. That's been very meaningful to those teams that got in. There's plans for how to make that an even better component of the tournament. Lynn can talk about that as well.

There have been the beginnings of discussions around whether or not there should be economic distributions around the tournament opportunities that student-athletes have and whether or not it should look like the same thing on the men's side. Those again are decisions that have to

be made by the committees of the member schools that work on those issues. So there's a group working on it right now.

That's part of what I meant about this being a great moment to have this transformation committee working and the new constitution because all of those decisions are in the hands of each of the three decisions, and in this case, Division I. So the schools in Division I now have a great opportunity to sit down and say, all right, starting next year or the year after, what do we want to do there?

Then finally, the best and biggest change will be when we get to renegotiate our media contracts around this tournament and all of our championships around all of our sports, including all the other women's sports. So those will present really meaningful chances to make even more investments than we have now.

Lynn, you can add more to that.

LYNN HOLZMAN: Sure. In relation to your question around aspects and presentation of the championship itself, I'll just note a few things. The visible things this year include a significant investment, and you see enhanced branding and signage. I already referenced the women's championship, the first this year with the use of March Madness. And you saw throughout the early rounds of the championship just the presentation of that.

Those early rounds also with enhancements around the branding efforts that reached all the way into the locker rooms of where our student-athletes are at, those are meaningful for our student-athletes, and those were things that were also cited as important enhancements for the championship that we were certainly able to address this year.

As we come out of this championship, it is incumbent upon us and the committee that we sit and evaluate where we were and where those areas can continue to -- that bar continues to be raised and elevated and in the sense of what is expected from participants and fans at elite level sporting events. That's what this championship is.

Behind the scenes, kind of enhancing the infrastructure of the championship positions us for that long-term sustainable change that is needed. So aspects of that that I would point to is that, as our championship has grown, it also was necessary to make sure that aspects of the championship related to direct operations within a venue such as this, at regional rounds and others, that we have experts in the field that were brought on board to help make sure that, again, as you conduct a large-scale event, that you have the right people at the table making sure that

things are being executed.

And the final thing I'll point out, as an example, is that one of the additions this year to the championship was for all rounds of the championship, as we normally have press conferences for our teams and our student-athletes, an addition this year is that those press conferences, that they were virtually available, that they were transcribed, and that those videos were then available for women's sports.

And you talk about media coverage of women's sports over the year, that to allow worldwide media to have access to those things in order to report on the games -- because it is not as commonplace this day and age that media only show up in person. You have to have other avenues for that access to occur and therefore build on the coverage that is taking place.

Now, that's something that's not as sexy, if you will, but that was very important for us to bring to the championship this year. And that also has contributed to what I believe we have seen already, which is the increased media coverage of our championship in women's basketball this year.

Q. A moment ago you mentioned the committee level discussions that are being had, but I'm wondering what's your sense of the interest amongst the membership in actually overhauling the current fund structure? And your judgment, if there is to be a change to it, should it happen sooner rather than later as the Kaplan report hinted, or should you wait until the TV contract is renegotiated?

MARK EMMERT: The answer is it's entirely up to the schools what they want to do in that regard. It's a complicated relationship because the championship on the men's side, the relative weight of moving forward in the tournament has actually been diminished over time because there are those in the membership schools, in the membership, that think that there shouldn't be that much emphasis on winning in a tournament.

So the first unit, if you will, goes out to everybody quite independent of what they do in the tournament. Then secondly, there's been an emphasis on the need to meet academic standards, for example, and a variety of other things.

So whether or not the schools decide that they want to have some sort of distribution of revenue around women's basketball, they're going to have to determine what that might be. And is that also distributing some of the revenue from the men's basketball tournament, for example, which is enormously larger, right, almost eight to ten times larger, or is it going to be some portions just out of revenue

produced by the women's tournament? What's that ratio? What's that model look like?

There's really only just preliminary discussions about it. I would hope those are decisions that can be made within the next calendar year, for example. If by this time next year there's some notion of a direction to go in, that would be great. It doesn't mean it can be implemented immediately, but there's no reason why they couldn't start that debate and that discussion. But it is a very challenging debate among the schools. Once you start talking about how you're going to divide resources, then those are difficult.

Q. I want to say, Lynn and Mark, the transcripts are a big deal from every round. They're hugely helpful. As somebody who's covered many, many tournaments, I want to thank you for that because I think it's helped all of us.

Lynn, I think maybe this is a question -- and, Mark, if you want to jump in -- the decision to go to two regionals was made before a lot of the emphasis of the past year. I'm wondering what you guys think will be the measure of success of two regionals. What are the points you're going to be looking at to see if that works? Because that will be a big difference in the women's tournament next year.

LYNN HOLZMAN: Thanks. One of the data points that will be analyzed is attendance at the regional sites. That was one of the rationale points for when the committee made that decision to go from four to two. It was also to create a -- to elevate the championship atmosphere. And, if you will, with two regional sites, eight teams being at each site, was to put us in a position that we could immerse ourselves in a community for multiple days and in a way that we could bring elements of the women's Final Four to the regional sites.

For example, at those regional sites, if there were some different type of engagement points that we could do with fans also at the regional sites, through the notion of economies, it would be -- it's a strategic approach for us to focus on two regional sites, games being played every day. With projected increased attendance, our goal of course is selling out at those two regional sites over those days, but to bring some fan fest elements into those atmospheres.

So those are going to be some of the measures under which -- when the concept was initially adopted by the committee, that the committee and we will be evaluating that on. And then as they continue to look at their strategic priorities for the championship, determine if there's some other data assessment points that they want to use in their evaluation.

MARK EMMERT: I don't have anything to add to that.

Q. One of the interesting things about the Kaplan report is the specific recommendation that you have the Final Fours in one place. I'm wondering if that's just a recommendation, or is that something that actually might be on the table for the NCAA?

MARK EMMERT: Let me just say this. The Kaplan report was extremely exhaustively researched, and they put together some really terrific material, not all of which we were happy to read because it was hard. Some of it was just hard stuff to read, and their critique was severe in a lot of ways, but that doesn't mean it was wrong.

They brought out a number of -- a litany of recommendations, and they're literally recommendations. So the whole report was broken into components to determine who should handle which pieces. Which pieces would automatically go to the basketball committee -- committees, since that was both men's and women's recommendations. Which parts would go into the governance process; like the question around the allocation of financial units, that goes over to the governance system where the schools sit down and vote on it. What parts could go inside my office and we could handle administratively, like putting in zero-based budgeting and realtime auditing so we knew exactly what was going on.

That decision fell -- the one about the championship fell squarely in the camp of where the committees, the men's and women's committees, wanted to be, and I'll let Lynn answer that question then specifically.

LYNN HOLZMAN: Sure. As was noted, that topic went to both Division I men's and women's basketball committees. The committees both jointly at various meetings, which started back in the fall, and independently had discussions around the concept of the combined championship. Ultimately here, I believe it was February, it was announced the committees decided that they were not going to pursue that at this time, but they were going to continue to study other models and explore other concepts because through that examination, some other suggested models were raised.

One, for example, that they're going to evaluate is whether the men's and women's Final Fours should be on different weekends. With that decision around the combined championship not being pursued at this time, really the committees continue to want to make sure that they're doing what meets the strategic priorities of both championships for college basketball overall.

But in the case of the women's committee specifically, the women's basketball committee, it was important at this time for the committee to see the results of the enhancements and the other investments that were being done in the championship and to really pay homage to or continue to respect what has been built around the women's Final Four already with the fan base and otherwise.

The Women's Final Four sells out. We've sold out seven out of the eight Final Fours prior to the pandemic. I expect to be sitting here and to be talking about how we sold out here in Minneapolis.

There are some great things that happen around this championship, and in that regard, the committee wanted to make sure that it was continuing to do what they felt was vital for the strategic priorities of the championship itself, as did the men's committee.

Q. One of the recommendations in the Kaplan report was that the NCAA encouraged CBS and Turner to create a third tier of corporate sponsors, corporate partners that could specifically help the women's tournament. I'm curious how that encouraging is going, how those conversations are going. What, if any, challenges there are with something like that?

MARK EMMERT: I'm not at liberty to talk about any of the contractual arrangements, of course, but we have been talking with all of our media partners around that and a variety of other issues. One great point to look at is that here in Minneapolis, all of our corporate champions, corporate partners, are engaged in some kind of activation, which is about twice what is normally the case at a women's Final Four.

So they're engaged, I think, as much as anything because they recognize the value proposition of being engaged around women's basketball, and that's a great thing. We similarly saw a lot of engagement in TV advertisements and a number of cases where the prominence of women athletes in general and women's sports, in particular in basketball, have been very, very constructive.

And as we move into the next phase of our negotiations with our new contract, again, that doesn't run out until August 24, we're going to be sure and make sure that's a critical component of it.

So there's things we can do incrementally in the meantime, and we've seen a nice step forward this championship. It's like all of these things, it's a great place to be right now, but we've got a good ways to go.

LYNN HOLZMAN: The one thing I'd like to add to that comment is that the current NCAA corporate partner and champion program, our CCPs, they invest in all 90 championships. That's part of what they do in being part of that program. And then depending on where their priorities and strategies are and then with the championship, that's where you seek to find alignment in that.

We're very pleased that the CCPs have all done that additional activation here at the championship, and there are those that have been activating in previous years that have enhanced and increased their activations in different ways. You can see that through many of the fan events that are taking place here as you see the "presented by" aspect. Again, this is a place that we've made tremendous strides this year, but we're not done.

Q. I have a two-part question. The first one is to both Mark and Lynn. I know the schools decide about the units, but are you both in favor of giving women's basketball potential units because that may increase interest in campuses, and schools that can make money off of it are probably more likely to put more resources into it?

The second part of the question is the \$2.8 million that were lost in the past in this tournament, is that number expected to grow this year because there were more teams involved with the 68 and more money being put into the women's tournament this year with the branding, the signage, all the great stuff you mentioned before, Lynn?

MARK EMMERT: First of all, your first question is a really good one that I'm not going to bite on. The reason is, look, every sport of the 24 sports believes they're the most important. Every sport believes that their championship ought to be supported with some sort of performance unit. Every sport in all three divisions thinks there ought to be more revenue flowing their way. Those are decisions that the schools have to make themselves because they're the ones at the end of the day that have to deliver on campus in supporting these athletes.

And what most people don't always grasp is, of course, that the NCAA is an entity. The whole association uses the vast majority of its revenue that comes in from all of its sources as passthroughs onto those schools. So how that gets distributed and how that gets passed down to the schools really has to be a decision that the schools themselves make.

So I'm not completely dodging your question. I do believe that it's really important that they look at it, that they look at how can we get the resources we need in this championship and other women's championships overall

by the way.

And part of what is the answer to your second question is I think it's appropriate to look at it as a cost benefit analysis in cold cash. The reality is that we are investing more money in women's basketball now than ever before, and that's a good thing. I'm happy to have had the support of the board to put millions of dollars into this enterprise, we need more staff, need more attention to it. I think it's already showing up in a lot of important ways, and it's going to well into the future.

Then if we invest in it and we build it and then we can go on and do a new media contract around this new and improved tournament, then I think that's great. Whether or not you're looking at it just in a dollars and cents fashion or not, it's a decision that every school makes and every conference makes and has to be made at the national level too. Lynn probably really thinks that more money needs to go to women's basketball.

Q. Talking about gender equity, do you have a long-term plan for transgender participation in women's sports? Is there a time frame? I know you said you were leaving it up to the sports, and then the USA Swimming came up with guidelines, and those kind of got set aside. What's the long-term plan time frame?

MARK EMMERT: Let me, if I can, as quickly as I can, sort of improve the record on that one. So what the Board of Governors, which is a group of 24 university presidents and 5 independent directors, so that's the -- board of directors is the most senior governance body of the association. What they approved in February is we simply -- we have followed and operated under policies similar to the Olympics since 2010.

All they did in February was say and we need that to include whatever the current standards are for individual federations of sport because the Olympics had moved in that direction in 2019 and '20. Some of those individual groups were just beginning to publish new standards.

In most of the sports, then, that had a clear threshold based on testosterone levels -- and we can talk about nanomoles per liter if we want -- but it had clear thresholds for all sports that didn't have their own independent standards. So the board said, look, here's where we want to be, here's the right place, they took the advice of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Sports, which is a group of medical professionals and health care professionals, and they said this is the right place to be for health and safety and fairness and equity and inclusion.

So right after that, USA Swimming and Diving said we've changed it to a new standard. And the medical professionals said, look, we don't think it's appropriate or even safe to try then to enforce that new standard when you've got a matter of weeks to try and meet that standard. If you meet the extant standard, the one that had been approved just weeks earlier, then we think you should be allowed to compete.

What the board also said, though, is that the new standard will be phased in starting the new competition cycle. The board's position has been we will utilize the standards the Olympics are using, but they also reserve the right to talk to the medical -- the Committee on Medical Aspects of Sport to make sure that that model, whatever the Olympics is using, is also consistent with collegiate athlete health and well-being and inclusion. And so the standards that have now been put in place by USA Swimming may or may not be adopted by the international federation, FINA.

The board is committed to using the same standards as the Olympics and simply phasing them in so that athletes know what they are far enough in advance that they can make decisions appropriately.

Q. Question for either Mark or Lynn. In regards to the weight room situation last year, I know there was a lot of public backlash about it, but how much did you speak with these student-athletes about the situation? What was their input? And did you take any input from them on what to implement for the future? What do they have to say about the situation this year?

MARK EMMERT: I'll let Lynn answer it. She was obviously deeply involved in it at the student level.

LYNN HOLZMAN: I think it's important too, as we reference back to last year, the men's and women's basketball championships being conducted in one location was unique, and is a result of the pandemic and trying to make sure that we had the infrastructure in place so that those championships could be conducted.

For all NCAA Championships in a typical, normal year, the NCAA does not provide or put together weight rooms. That was because in those championships, there were multiple weeks that our teams are going to be in one location essentially.

So with the weight room situation being identified with our women's basketball student-athletes as being a place of concern and then us immediately mobilizing to put in place weight rooms that had been planned for to be in place anyway after -- due to original spacing issues after some teams had not advanced, the engagement with the

student-athletes has been really directed at those things that are part of our championships in any given normal year.

So some of the items that were explicitly identified in the Kaplan report -- for example, when you talk about gifts, mementos, and awards of our women's basketball student-athletes and ensuring that the same items are being provided to both the men's and women's basketball student-athletes, that has been addressed this year, and that is, in fact, happening.

In previous years, there was very similar value associated with it, but as we know as human beings, sometimes the intrinsic value that we assign to a product may not be related to the actual retail value. But that being one, in particular with student-athletes and their experience, has been addressed this year. And we've seen that throughout the championship with what has been provided to the student-athletes, whether it's in locker room drops, room drops, everything, and how that is being delivered to student-athletes in both championships in the same manner, presented in the same way. All of that has been really important.

We do have, besides engagement, just through normal conversations with student-athletes and everything, we also do have a women's basketball student-athlete engagement group that we worked with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association to put together, and that's really to have at least one student-athlete from each of the 32 multisport conferences. And even in the midst last year of the championship, we immediately got together -- myself and Nina King, the chair of the women's basketball committee, got on a video call with those student-athletes from that group because we felt it was really important that we had conversations with them directly about what was going on.

That group, we've continued to meet with them very frequently, and they did actually have input on those gifts, mementos, for example. Again, those items that are part of a normal championship. It's important that we find those outlet points to engage our student-athletes along with coaches and other stakeholders of the game, and we're committed to doing that as all our sports are.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us this afternoon.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

