



## **After the Buzzer**

Transcript: Bob Wallace's interview with Kenneth Shropshire, Adidas Distinguished Professor of Global Sport at Arizona State University

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Bob Wallace: Welcome to After the Buzzer. I'm Bob Wallace, chair of the Sports Law Practice at Thompson Coburn here in St. Louis. Thanks for joining us for another episode of our podcast. When I decided to start doing these podcasts, I did so because I wanted to share some of the great conversations I've had over the years with some great sports people. During those conversations, we talked about topics that impact sports and that sports impacts.

Although we talked about who won and lost, we also examined the hows, the whys, the whens and the because. My guest today Ken Shropshire, is one of the thought leaders in today's sports base and has been since the early 1980s when he worked for the Los Angeles Olympics. After practicing law for several years, Ken moved to Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania to serve as a professor, and he founded and led the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton Sports Business Initiative, which became one of the world's most respected sports business think tanks.

Universally respect by his peers, Ken served as president of the Sports Lawyers Association and chair of the ABA Forum Committee on sports law. With the 30 years at Penn, where he is still recognized as a Wharton endowed professor emeritus, Arizona State University recruited Professor Shropshire to become the Adidas Distinguished Professor of Global Sport and CEO of Global Sports Initiative. Ken's guidance and wisdom is widely sought after. He has worked and consulted with the NCAA, major league baseball, the NFL, the NFLPA and the USOC.

He has also advised PGA golfer Rory McIlroy. Dolphins owner Stephen Ross asked Ken to help him set up with the Ross Initiative for Sports and Equality and Ken used to serve on its board of directors. Ken hosts a weekly sports business show on Sirius Radio and has written several books, including *Negotiate Like A Pro: A Top Sports Negotiator's Lessons for Making Deals*, *Building Relations and Getting What you want*, *Being Sugar Ray, the Life of America's Greatest Boxer and First Celebrity Athlete*. And in black and white, *Race and Sports in America*.

His two most recent books, *Sports Matters, Leadership, Power and the Quest for Respect in Sports*, and *The Miseducation of Student Athlete, a Manifesto to Fix College Sports*, are must reads for those interested in sports space, or more importantly, for those who work in it. As I said, my conversation with Ken, whether over cigar and a cocktail, at dinner or a side conversation at the Sports Lawyer's Board of meetings are always interesting and insightful and exactly that type of thoughtful conversations we want to bring you at After the Buzzer. Ken, welcome to After the Buzzer.

Now that sounds like a very, very impressive title, the Global Sports Institute. Tell us, what is the Global Sports Institute and what do you guys do?

Kenneth Shropshire: Well, you know, as you said, the Global Sport Institution was – for me it was the next step. I'd been at the Wharton School and grew this thing called the Wharton Sports Business Institute. Arizona State University came to me and said, "Well, what about using the whole university to address issues related to sports? What about thinking about the science related departments, the sociological related departments, the athletic department? Using all those areas to further analyze sport. And more importantly, use the Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication to disseminate that information."

So they said, "Would you like to come and be the CEO of this thing?" First of all, I hadn't been CEO of anything. So I said, "Okay, well, that sounds like a good idea." But also the idea of being deeply involved in getting the messages

out through the Journalism School, we'd been doing our share of podcasts. We're working on some documentaries. And daily we publish a piece called *Global Sport Matters*, it's [Globalsportmatters.com](http://Globalsportmatters.com), that disseminates this information that we think is useful and impactful. Much the way you described your show.

Bob Wallace: Is there a focus of the institution? Are you focusing on a specific topics? Or is it sort of a broad range look at sports?

Kenneth Shropshire: In the daily publication it's broad. So one day we'll look at should your kid play with a concussion? And the next day we'll look at, should we be hosting Olympic games in third world countries? Yesterday we had a piece on the first female to go into a locker room as a reporter in major league baseball. So we look at different issues every day. But we do have an annual theme. The first year's theme, which just finished up, was focused on sports and technology, sports and innovation. This year we're actually focused on sports and race. I thought it was very important to do that this year and again, it was the same focus of what should people know about this? How can people use the information that we know about race and sports?

But this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1968 Olympics and the iconic Olympic protest on the Victory Stand by John Carlos and Tommie Smith. So we wanted to make sure we honored that, looked at that and for those that aren't as old as you and me, kind of make sure people understood that history and the connection between that protest and the Kaepernick and other NFL related protests dealing with police brutality and social justice.

Bob Wallace: Right, I saw on your website that you did a forum with John Carlos and...

Kenneth Shropshire: Wyomia Tyus, yeah, the...

Bob Wallace: Wyomia Tyus, right. And that's very topical, you know, their protest and what's going on with Colin Kaepernick now and I want to get into that in a

little bit. But tell me a little bit about the first year in the technology aspect and what you guys were kind of focusing on there. Were you talking about – was it wearable technology? Or was it e-sports? Something I completely don't understand.

Kenneth Shropshire: That's the fun thing about being an academic. Now if you ask me what I know about the technology and innovation side, you know, especially with the pure science kind of things. I mean, you and I think a lot about how to change systems, how laws should be better. But to think about do wearables really work, does wearing a FitBit really make a difference? Is Gatorade better than water? Should you pay the extra money for hydration?

A faculty member is studying the transition of an athlete from male to female. How does the testosterone levels look like? How does that impact performance? So all these kinds of issues that we know are out there. Yeah, why are people fascinated by e-sports? Well, the injuries that happen to e-sport participants tend to be less fit than other types of athletes. Should we consider them athletes? But all those issues have fallen into play as we've looked at that technology space. So part of this job, the great thing, I learned a tremendous amount, and we still have research that's coming in from that. In terms of funding, we funded I think about 20 different projects across Arizona State University and elsewhere. Averaging about \$20,000 apiece to either begin research or complete some research on different topics. So it's a wide range of things that you and I don't think about day in and day out, but will be important in the sports space.

Bob Wallace: Well, I think about how you get a 62-year-old guy who used to think he was an athlete to continue to perform at a high level or get to a high level and continuing maybe getting carried away. So are you involving the athletic program at Arizona State? Are they involved in this and supportive of what's going on and some of the research that you guys are doing?

Kenneth Shropshire: Very much so. I mean, you know about Ray Anderson the athletic director here at Arizona State University was a college teammate of mine. And so he was really instrumental in my coming here. As I mentioned, you know, we try to utilize the whole university. One of the things that's unique about what we're able to do here is the athletic department, unlike athletic departments at other places, they have said, you can use us like a teaching hospital, like a research hospital. It says, any data that we have or that you want to begin to accumulate, that of course are within the – don't violate the privacy rights or others interests of the athletes, student athletes, we want you to do that.

We want to know, is there a way to increase the graduation rates of our athletes, and if we can figure out ways to do that, let's share that information with others. We want to know if somebody comes in with a certain GPA and test scores, are there ways to elevate them? What are their chances of success? So for the number realms, we have begun to work with them. And that's just gotten underway. But it's the access or the connectedness, is unique. You're an old Ivy athlete. At Penn, the athletics were wonderful. But it's just a whole different kind of level here and a different type of student athlete that comes to a place like Arizona State.

Bob Wallace: And that's a good kind of segue Ken into some of your writing, and one of your writings that I found very interesting was your book on the miseducation of the student athlete.

And you and I probably have sat around and talked about the NCAA and I'll call it – because now you're part of it a lot more than I am, some of the hypocrisy that exists in big time college athletes. When people talk about the student athlete, which is sort of a term, I always tell you it's the athlete student. Because in my opinion, so many of these big time college programs, the student part is often forgotten. And kids are spending so much time on their sport that they don't really get a chance to be a student. And you talk about that in your book. Kind of give me your thoughts on, do we really have student athletes?

Kenneth Shropshire: You make a great point, and when you said athlete student, I did pause for a moment. I think the student athlete label is – today the best we can say is it’s aspirational. That we need to have a goal, we need to have something to point to. As you know, the original creation of the phrasing by the – I guess the initial executive director of the NCAA Walter Byers, it was created for legal reasons, to make sure that the student athlete, the athlete, would not be able to receive the benefits that employees would receive if injured on the job and that sort of thing. So that you could avoid that kind of circumstance.

And it stuck, and it’s kind of an interesting phrasing. Well, this is great, somebody who can do both. What I will say today, it is very difficult for any athlete student to do both, to be successful at both, at the highest level with both. And that’s the kind of reform that I think we need to think about, and that’s what “The Miseducation of the Student Athlete” looks at, is what could we do differently? We’re kind of stuck in this mode of doing things the way we have. Can we do them differently? Can we do them better? And some of the kinds of things that we talk about are the idea of, just be honest from the beginning and say, okay, the typical student at this university takes five years to graduate. We’re going to give you, in best case a lifetime, but we’re going to give you seven, eight years. We’re going to give you funding for this period of time.

And we’re actually going to work with you constantly in a counseling mode of how to accomplish this. So one of the major lawsuits involving Northwestern University, involving Kain Colter was, hey, I wanted to be a physician. I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to go to med school. And I found out I couldn’t do it because the timing of practice and the like. Well, maybe as you come in you think about it differently. Don’t get up your aspirations, but set it up on a calendar and set it up so that the school is funding you in a way that you can get it done. And all this for guys like that and for women wanting to go to the WNBA. So it depends on whether or not you make it to the pros.

But be flexible enough to work with kids in that kind of way. So that's just kind of a small part of the kind of thing that we think about.

Bob Wallace: But Northwestern's situation, and I read some of the opinions on that case, on the Workers' Comp and whether they were – the NLRB board. I actually agreed that those athletes were employees. Their time was controlled. They were not getting paid in the traditional sense, but they were getting some compensation in terms of their athletic scholarships. They were controlled like employees were, their coming and goings. And I was a little surprised – no, nothing surprises me anymore, that that was kind of dismissed out, that they weren't employees. But the description of their relationship with the athletic department and their coaches was that of an employee in a business.

Kenneth Shropshire: Well, that one's really difficult for me. When I saw that language in that initial opinion, my son was then a – he was a freshman that year at Northwestern playing Division One tennis. He was number one on the team. And I did talk with him on a regular basis about the kinds of time struggles that he had. And wistfully, I thought back to my time in college where you were able to do both. And I kept trying to figure out, well, you know, is this kid telling me what's really going on? Is it really that hard for him to do both? He ended up getting out with a degree and all that sort of thing. But it was not easy, and he did help me to recognize that it's very different – anybody kind of 40 and over that's listening to this and you're thinking these guys are selling a bill of goods about how tough it is. It is a whole new day from the way it used to be.

Bob Wallace: My son, as you know, and both of them went to Northwestern and my son played at Yale. They spent a whole bunch of time on their sports, and it was a full year commitment. And I was sitting in the stands watching a game one day with one of my teammates and he said, "If Carm Cozza ever told us that we had to get up at 6:30 in the morning and lift weights in February, we would have all quit." {Laughs} And he was 100% right. Jim Delaney, the commissioner of the Big Ten has argued that we're asking the student athlete

to spend too much time on their sport. That they don't have a chance to be a student or study abroad or work/study project. Can we change it? Or has – and I guess the overriding question Ken I ask you, has money ruined college athletics?

Kenneth Shropshire: For sure, as they say, the horse is out of the barn. I mean, it is very difficult if not impossible to think about reeling it back. So this is why when I try to think about how to reform it, there's certainly things you can do. Certainly you can better police the 20 hours a week. You can make sure the athletes get the food that they need so they can study properly. Of all these things that were out there, you kind of shrug and say, it's crazy. Why would that even be a problem?

But I think the whole idea of extending the calendar, extending the opportunity to get the education that these young men and women want to get, at least when they come in and they are kind of, of the most open frame of mind about the importance of education. But also I think you cannot give enough credit to the value of great counseling. The value of somebody who really cares working with them about what their life is going to be like in the future and all the reality checks of, you know, even if you make it to the pros, that might be a one, two, three year kind of thing. It might be a month long thing.

Bob Wallace: Both of us have mentioned our sons who were college athletes. We kind of look at the helicopter parents and we talk about LaVar Ball, the AAU kind of things going on and the Rice Commission that just kind of looked at college basketball. What do you think of the study that – I guess your colleague out at Stanford came out with, Dr. Rice. What do you think of what they've discovered over the past – when they looked at college athletics?

Kenneth Shropshire: It's funny you saying that. When we were talking about doing the show I was reflecting on the day of the announcement coming out of the Rice Report. Pointy head guy that I am, I read it right away and I forget how many pages it



was, but I kept looking for more pages. I kept waiting to say, okay, now where's the great revelation? And there really wasn't anything.

The power of it though was that the NCAA said they were going to act pretty quickly to do some of the recommendations that are in there. But it wasn't earth shattering. It wasn't anything that we didn't know already. So – and I think we're still evolving in terms of the response that's coming to the report. The one that I've been focused on for a while, this idea of when you can go to the pros and the idea of the NBA moving itself back and allowing kids to go straight from high school.

I always thought, you know, any kid should have the opportunity to go wherever they can go, whenever they can go, right. That if you're the computer expert or you're the opera singer, whatever, if you're ready at an early age and the enterprise is a safe place to be in, then we should let you go. So – and I think the NBA, for example, has done and will do a fine job of telling kids, no, you're not ready yet. And part of it too, the changes that need to be made, is make sure that messaging can be given and the kid can make the right decision. So the Rice Report thing, it was a great moment in time. A great moment for that information to be disseminated. But there wasn't a whole lot new in there.

Bob Wallace: Right, so now in – but your book, *“The Miseducation of the Student Athlete,* the subtitle is, *How to Fix College Sports.”* How are you fixing it professor?

Kenneth Shropshire: That's to sell books, come on. {Laughter} If I had that answer, I'd hire you to represent me so we could sell it somewhere. You know what, so it really – we have a probably aggressively titled manifesto in there that talks about the kind of things that should be done. And largely it's, as I said, a lot of it, if we cut through it, it's really about better education. It really is about giving these kids the information that they need, but also shifting the dollars. And you alluded to this too. I mean, there's a lot of money in college sports and as you said, it's not going in the direction of the student athlete. So I

wrote this in the midst of this conversation about paying student athletes and...

Bob Wallace: Right, so should we pay them? That's my – should we pay them?

Kenneth Shropshire: Well, you know, I've practiced this answer very carefully. There's nothing wrong with it. I mean, if you did, there'd be nothing wrong with it. But in my mind, the expenditures that we should be focused on are on making sure these kids get their degrees, they get their education. And when I say degree, I often qualify that with meaningful degrees. That it's not just you're kind of running people through the mill.

So I don't have a problem. If we could get that set up and we use all the dollars and we say, hey, we still got some left over, then I think paying these guys and women is a good thing. Somebody, one of the big advocates of paying athletes said, well, it doesn't have to be either/or. So I'm not adverse to doing both at the same time either. I just want to make sure the priority of education doesn't get lost.

Bob Wallace: Right, and one of the things that you always hear on why we can't pay the athletes is that, well, we can pay the football and basketball players because they're the ones generating all the revenue. But we can't pay the women's swim team because nobody comes to see them other than their parents and they're getting in for free. So is there a way to sort of reconcile those two things?

Kenneth Shropshire: Yeah, I almost always, whenever I write something about this or otherwise, I start off with there's nothing wrong with it. Then I say, but we have to focus on the important issues related to Title IX, as you're pointing out. And then the third I say is, you know, which takes you away from using a pure open market principle, which is the answer which people point to, just open up and schools will pay what they can pay and it will all balance out.

Well, that may or may not take care of Title IX. It may not be balanced in that kind of way. You do that and then you shift additional funding to women's athletics to make sure the balance is there. So that is a possibility. But – so the fourth piece is, is the fact that we can't figure it out or we haven't taken the time to figure out, is that a reason not to do it? So I have never taken the time to try to figure it out. The people that say they figured it out, they often are saying open market, but they seem to forget about the Title IX issues that make the open market problematic.

Bob Wallace: Your other book, recent book, because you've written a bunch of them, the *Sports Matters* book, which is – you talk about leadership, power and the quest for respect in sports. And then you talk about the Ray Rice incident and you talk about the Miami Dolphin incident and the bullying with Richie Incognito. And your second year of the global sports industry you're talking about race and social issues. Talk a little bit about what you're hoping to find as you look at all those things going forward.

Kenneth Shropshire: You know, that book, the *Sports Matters* book, really looked a lot at what leadership did when those things occurred. And I think that's so important. And that book was written a couple of years ago now, and we were able to look at the leadership issues, how did Adam Silver perform when you had the Donald Sterling racism with the LA Clippers? What did he do? And we gave him high marks for acting quickly, for essentially forcing the sale of a franchise in a way that – there had not been a commissioner that moved that quickly on an issue before.

With the Ray Rice incident, we talked about the Roger Goodell issues and how (inaudible) the NFL bungled the path that they took. That they didn't move swiftly enough. They didn't make enough statements about their true position on the issue until, as you recall – and in this atmosphere of trying to approve a Supreme Court Justice, more and more information began to come out with videos and the like. And rather than taking the right position, it took awhile to do that.

Also in there we talk about the leadership issues, you know, another negative one is Snyder's ownership of the Washington football club and the refusal to address the changing of the name. That to me is just a huge leadership issue, and a guy and an enterprise with blinders in terms of what would be the best move to take in terms of being a leader. So the great quote that I use in the book to look at these different circumstances is from JFK in *Profiles in Courage*, "Sooner or later we'll all have the opportunity to be courageous." It really is how will you act when that moment comes, which I've connected it today with Kaepernick and Malcolm Jenkins, sort of all these guys that have said, look, I got this platform for this moment. Let me lead in the way that I can lead on this issue that's important to me.

Bob Wallace: Well, and going to that leadership point of view, and you mentioned that there had been some dropped balls on the NFL landscape in terms of the Washington football club, Ray Rice, maybe even the Miami Dolphin situation. I guess the question is, in light of what's going on with the Me Too movement, in light of the Supreme Court and then – did Adam Silver just drop the ball with Mark Cuban and not doing something stronger when they found all the issues of sexual harassment in his workplace?

Kenneth Shropshire: Yeah, that's a great question, right, because the maximum fine, and I think it was \$2.5 million, Mark Cuban steps up and says, "I paid \$10 million –" I think to women's organizations or however they decided to do it. It does get you (inaudible) huh, can you buy your way out of actual prosecution? And then as we're talking (inaudible) moment where, again, not trying to equate things, this one time icon Bill Cosby, sadly 81 years old is being incarcerated for crimes against women. Just the imagery of what's going on in this day and age and has Silver finally fallen short? Should he have done some more?

If it's the whole organization and you're the person running the organization, and I just – again, this is money I can't grasp, is \$10 million, is that adequate punishment relative to racist comments by an owner? Which frankly enhanced

his pocketbook by a couple of billion dollars, but having been forced to sell. He can't be the owner anymore. I guess that's the real punishment that came about there. So yeah, it's difficult. What are the right punishments in these circumstances and what are the right statements? But yeah, I haven't really focused on that one that much as one of those issues, but I think you're absolutely right.

Bob Wallace: So the social movement, we have Kaepernick who's really the leader in this generation of doing that. But it goes way back when to the athletes John Carlos and Tommie Smith and Mohammad Ali, and there's this one side of people and maybe it's the Jerry Joneses of the world and to some extent the Roger Goodells which are saying, shut up and dribble or, shut up and kick. And then you have the athletes that are willing to take a stand. What's your position on that? My position and I'll say it is that I think what these athletes are doing is courageous. It's peaceful, and it's bringing the attention that only their platform can bring.

Kenneth Shropshire: I am – and you just said (inaudible) wonder if I would do this. When Carlos and Smith were on the Victory Stand raising their black gloved fists, I was 13 years old. And it was inspiring, and it was a statement. I said, you know, yeah, I can do that. And to think about the Kennedy quote that I mentioned, when you have the opportunity, would you really do it? Would you really step up and – so these men and women, I mean, WNBA teams, you could even say that they were at the forefront in terms of let's do this as a team, wear the t-shirts, come out together and that sort of thing.

I am impressed. I think the leadership moment problems there have been, again, the NFL was leading the way and fumbling on, huh, how do we respond to this? And allowing the president of the United States to hijack the issue and recast it as an anthem issue, I'm glad that the players have moved more aggressively to making expenditures and doing activities that show their concern for the social issues, for the criminal justice issues. And moved away

from the protests that were able to be maneuvered to be the focal point of controversy.

So I think it's going to be interesting to see what happens over the next couple of years, how these athletes continue to move, will the NFL continue to fund, to give them credit at a high level the activities of these athletes? But yeah, it's so impressive to me that you can – again, it's kind of like being the great student and the athlete, to be the great activist and the great athlete at the same time. That too is not an easy thing to do.

Bob Wallace: For years or the last couple of years when they talk about whether Kaepernick has been blackballed, I said, I've sat in a number of NFL meetings and I never thought that as a group they could agree on anything, so that if they thought somebody could help them win, somebody would sign him. But it seems very, very curious that some of the quarterbacks who are getting signed, their resume can't stand up to Colin Kaepernick and he can't get a job. If you're – who lost the starting quarterback this week? Oh, the '49ers and he's not on their list. To me it's just...

Kenneth Shropshire: It's that ironic, right, where he came from, right?

Bob Wallace: Right, where he came from to me is just amazing. And so I'm sort of – my thought process is sort of moving to the fact, maybe they are blackballing this guy, because it's too much of a coincidence that he can't get signed and either can Eric Reid. I'm looking at – some team lost two safeties, and Eric Reid, who is a good player, can't get signed.

Kenneth Shropshire: Yeah, I keep waiting to see if there is some sort of smoking gun that exists. If there is an email or a memo or the old – NFL case, if there was a seminar at Harvard where the idea of doing something like this was discussed. It is so striking. But yeah, my experiences are – I wasn't as intimately within clubs as you were, my experience across sports leadership amongst owners is, these kinds of agreements are very difficult to bring about. So – and the idea,

would there be uniform league think, that we all would have the same opinion, that this guy would be too problematic in our locker room, so we don't want to make this move. I just – I find it hard to believe.

Bob Wallace: I was at the Harvard seminar. I don't remember any discussions about that whatsoever {laughs}.

Bob Wallace: One of the things that I found very interesting in the last week is – or really over the last month is, here in St. Louis we had the PGA tournament. And it was a rousing success here in St. Louis. People were ten deep following Tiger. And I noticed that the people rooting for Tiger were black, white, men, women, old, young. And, you know, as I say, Tiger never had the reputation of being all that friendly. He then ended up getting in some controversy, marital controversy, women controversy, drinking controversy. And he's now the most popular – it seems to me he may be the most popular athlete on the horizon these days or on our landscape. Why do you think that is?

Kenneth Shropshire: I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I'm surprised watching the gallery behind him on the 18<sup>th</sup> in this last tournament.

Bob Wallace: Right, unbelievable.

Kenneth Shropshire: It was so impressive. Part of it, you know, again, for old guys, it is to see somebody come back like that a few years above prime. That just gives you that I too can do this kind of feeling. But just to see somebody go through that much adversity too and to make a comeback, no matter what you thought, you do have a bit of thinking of, huh, maybe this guy has finally come back. And it is interesting that the major violation that people point to was his private moment.

So he really could be cast in a whole different direction right now. But it seems that whatever steps you can take when it is a – phrase it as a personal domestic kind of issue, apparently he's taken the steps that somebody should

take to do so. I mean, he received some counseling and it's kind of, best we know, again, these reporters are out there, has, quote, kept his nose clean. Maybe that's all part of it too. I don't know. But the one thing we do know, the reason why OJ never came back was he was not playing anymore. I mean, there's something about being able to get back out there on the field to get yourself together and to get the public back behind you.

Bob Wallace: Right, you mentioned that there's reporters out there, and it seems now everyone's a reporter. How will social media change the sports landscape?

Kenneth Shropshire: You really do need to be of a different frame of mind. And frankly not just for athletes, for all of us. Just the idea that anybody can pull out a phone and record whatever's going on at any moment. So that's one side of it. The other side of it is, when you put yourself out there, tweeting and other social media paths, you have to be very careful what you say, what you put out there. We had that moment earlier this year with, was it two or three different MLB players that had these youthful tweets that were problematic in different ways. It does cause you to scratch your head a little bit and say, okay, now how far back are we going to go on these things?

Good thing about being an old guy at this point, they didn't have that stuff when I was a kid. So we're not in that realm of possibility of having youthful foolishness drug up. So it's something that's here to stay and it's only going to become – lives are going to be even more transparent than they've been in the past. So athletes and everybody in sport and otherwise, just be aware and it's a new consciousness.

Bob Wallace: Right, so now as you look at what you guys are studying this year at the Global Sports Institute and race, do you go in with any preconceived notions on what you're going to find out? What are you looking to find out? And what do you hope to be able to report in a year?



Kenneth Shropshire: Well, a lot of it is just making sure people have the information from the past. The most current kinds of things that we're looking at, issues like the Rooney Rule and whether or not such as a rule has worked. Whether or not these kinds of rules that help to propel an enterprise to be more diverse at the top in leadership positions, are we doing all the things that we need to do? So I'm hopeful that we will look at those kinds of issues and we'll come up with some answers that maybe we didn't have before, some critiques of systems that are in place that we haven't critiqued before and find better ways to do the things that we have out here. So that's a lot of what we're trying to do for this year.

Bob Wallace: You were not at the last sports lawyers meeting that we had, but we had a – they had a conversation about the Rooney Rule as opposed to the major league baseball. And what major league baseball was arguing was that they scrapped their version, I don't even know what they called it, of the Rooney Rule because they believed that they needed to provide training for minority and women candidates. And my argument back to them was, I don't need training. I need an opportunity. And just because we're minorities doesn't mean that we need remedial help. All we need is a chance to sit in the room and tell you why we can do the job as well as someone else. So it always makes me – the hair stand on the back of my neck when people are saying that we need remediation. What we need is opportunity. I mean, there's nobody more qualified in the sports world than you, and I believe that about myself. That we could lead any organization. We could be the commission. We don't need a remedial to do that.

Kenneth Shropshire: No, two things I'll say though. That's a great point. One about baseball. Compare baseball with football. You look at the very top and we know Rob Manfred and the leadership there. It's all white men. I mean, it is the clearest statement you can make about, I guess we don't have enough consciousness about this because we've got in our top six employees – you think of the top six in NFL versus the top six in major league baseball. To NFL's credit, it's black men in and out of there. Not in major league baseball.

And the second, the term we all need to re-explore that I've got people thinking about and I'm trying to think about a little bit more is this unconscious bias phrasing. Look, at this point it's just bias. I mean, it's not – there's enough information out there for people not to go up to two black men in Starbucks and throw them out. That's bias. It wasn't unconscious. You knew (inaudible) because they were black. I mean, it wasn't some subliminal kind of moment.

So you've raised a great issue. Just fairness, equality, that's all we need. Where I'll disagree with you a little bit, we do need to find ways to move those people that won't move. And I don't know what the right systems are. I don't know if, for example, Rooney Rules are the right way. But we do need to continue to address the issues.

Bob Wallace: No, I think we do need to continue to address the issues. Okay Ken, my final question to you is, and I know you probably think you should have this position, but you're the tsar of sports. How are you fixing it? In five years, Ken Shropshire is in charge of sports and has an unlimited budget, an unlimited authority, what do you want to see the sports world look like?

Kenneth Shropshire: You know what, I had the opportunity to do some work with this tribe in South Africa, the Royal Bafokeng Nation. Three hundred thousand person tribe. Think of it as like Native American tribes of the US. And after opening elections in 1994 with Mandela taking charge, they finally had access to all this wealth that was (inaudible) wealth, billions of dollars of wealth. So I met with the king there and no, I didn't get any of the money, but I met with the king of this tribe. And one of the things he told me is, you know, we've never been able to have sport in our tribe, in our community because the Afrikaners, the oppressors though it would help us get too organized. So they didn't want sport in here.

Now we have a chance to introduce sport for the first time in our schools. How would you do it? And this is 1990 – I don't know what year it was. And to me it was a striking question. If we could redo everything, what would we do? And my short answer was, you got to find ways at the base of the pyramid to keep as many people engaged in sport for their entire life as possible. And the tip of the pyramid, the pro level, we got to make that a lot less important. We got to kind of move this whole thing from being a pyramid kind of structure, to being more of a rectangle, that we can all continue to play forever in some kind of way. So that's a long way to say, greater engagement, sport for all in a positive kind of way, to me is more important than all the glorious stuff that we watch on Sundays and other days.

Bob Wallace: Great. Thank you Ken. As I said in my introduction, Ken is one of the thought leaders in this industry and always insightful, always thoughtful. And Ken, I really appreciate you taking the time. Interested to see what the Global Sports Institute comes up with in the next year or so and some of the findings that you have and recommendations and education that you provide to those of us in the sports space.

Kenneth Shropshire: Well, thanks Bob. Appreciate it.

THE END