



After the Buzzer

Transcript: Bob Wallace's interview with Charles Harris and Herman Frazier

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Bob Wallace:

Welcome to After the Buzzer. I'm Bob Wallace, her at the law practice of Thompson Coburn at our Firm's headquarters office in St. Louis. And thanks for joining us for another episode of our podcast. In the midst of this horrible pandemic, when most of us are dealing with working remotely and/or keeping our families safe and healthy, athletics have taken a backseat. Today's guests are right in the middle of this discussion about bringing college life and college athletics back. My two guests – Herman Frazier and Charles Harris – are colleagues and amateur sports legends, not to mention, two of my best friends.

Herman is currently Senior Deputy Athletics Director, Chief of Staff, at Syracuse University, where he has been since 2011 when he left the position of Senior Athletic Director at Temple in his home town of Philadelphia. Frazier has served a combined total of eight years as the Athletic Director Hawaii and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Additionally, Herman spent 23 years at his alma mater Arizona State University working his way up to Senior Associate Athletics Director for Business Operations. At ASU Herman worked with our other guest, Charles Harris. However, before I introduce Mr. Harris, let me continue with my introduction of Herman, whose storied athletic career as an administrator and student athlete. Herman was an eight-time All American in track at ASU. He was the leadoff runner from the 1976 Olympic gold medal winning 4x4 relay team and the bronze medal winner in the 400. Herman was ranked number one in the world going into the 1980 Olympics, which the U.S. ended up boycotting. From 1980 to 2004 Herman served on a variety of U.S. Olympic committees including two stints as USOC Vice President. In 2004 Herman was named Chef de Mission of the U.S. delegation at the Athens Olympics, the most successful team in U.S. team history, with a total of 103 medals. At Syracuse, Herman was involved in all aspects of Syracuse athletics and remains well-known and respected nationally as a member of the division 1 track and field committee.

My other guest is the well-respected Charles S. Harris. He is Executive Vice President at Averett University in Danville, Virginia, a small school who spent decades on the big stage. After graduating from Hampton University and working at the University of Michigan, at age 29, Harris became the youngest athletic director at an ivy league school when he was appointed Athletic Director at the University of Pennsylvania. Charles spent six years at Penn where his basketball team went to the

final four, I believe the last time an ivy league school made it that far. In 1985 he was named Athletic Director at Arizona State University, again being named the first African-American director at that school. He was credited with improving facilities and was a key figure in getting the Cardinals to relocate to the valley. Harris' football team went to the 1987 Rose Bowl. After ASU Charles became commissioner of the Mideastern Athletic Conference from 1996 to 2002. He then went to Averett University as the school's Athletics Director in 2004 and after a short stint getting that athletic program up to speed, he was upped to Vice President of Student Service and then to his current position as Executive Vice President, where he manages the 2020 strategic plan. A strong supporter of women in athletics, he's a tough negotiator and a forward thinker, Harris is a proven leader and has shouldered many leadership role for the NCA, including he held the F One Management Committee, a member of the Division 3 Championship Committee and a member of the Division 1 Men's Basketball Committee. Charles is a mentor to many and the list of people that worked for him in addition to Herman that went on to become AD's is numerous. While looking forward to our discussion about their careers' challenges and how we're going to get back to playing on the field. Welcome Herman and Charles.

Charles Harris: Thanks. Appreciate being here.

Herman Frazier: Thanks, Bob. We have some levity in this as well because I thought your computer voice sounded just like Charles.

Charles Harris: I've been coaching him, Herm.

Bob Wallace: So before we get into the present and what's going on in the world, let's go back a little bit. Herman, I've always wanted to ask you this question so I'm going to start off with this now that I got you on the record. Tell me about winning the gold medal and reflect back on some of the disappointment of not getting to compete in the 1980 Olympics due to the boycott.

Herman Frazier: Well the first thing, Bob, is I consider myself very fortunate to have represented the United States and to have captured a gold medal. I personally did not start running track until I was a senior in high school. A lot of people just couldn't fathom that. And then four years later I was at the podium, or atop the podium, having a gold medal placed around my neck, along with my three other teammates at Newhouse Knights and Parson Betty Brown. And all those guys were post-collegians and I was actually the only one of that relay team that was still in college at Arizona State. And so, to only have competed for four years and then be at the top of the podium was a dream come true. But more importantly for me, capturing the bronze medal was even better because on that particular day I got to be ranked number three in the world, and to come from high school to being number three in the world in four short years was just unbelievable.

Bob Wallace: So is it urban legend or a creation of what I've said, but you were ranked number one going into 1980; is that correct?

Herman Frazier: Well there's no question after the boycott, or after the '76 games let me say, I was the guy who then led Arizona State track team to a national championship in '77, and then I also made the world championship team after that. I made the PanAm team. After that I competed in Puerto Rico. And so, if you were to interview anybody in America they would say, who do you think could be the top athlete going into Moscow. And because of the experience that I now had since I was now competing four more years since '76, I was the guy to beat going into 1980. But obviously when President Jimmy Carter pulled the plug in April of that year, we knew that we weren't going to the games. And we still had Olympic trials. I did not win the trials, but I still made the team and had we been prepared to go we would have been ready and I would have probably been able to protect that ranking.

Charles Harris: Herm, didn't you win the Liberty Bell Class though, that summer?

Herman Frazier: Yes. We came back to...

Charles Harris: In Philadelphia?

Herman Frazier: Yeah. And you might have been at Penn at that time, Charles.

Charles Harris: Yeah, I was. Yeah.

Herman Frazier: What happened, the State Department went to a few cities and said hey, we need to do something for these athletes, and they hosted the meeting, a track meet in Franklin on that day. And then I think after that we all went to Washington, D.C. and we were hosted by the government. But we all received a medal, believe it or not. They gave us all gold medals, and later on we realized those were the national medals that are given out to people throughout the country. And so it was a National Freedom Medal that we all received, the members of the 1982.

Bob Wallace: So you're not a big Jimmy Carter fan, I gather, from that experience.

Herman Frazier: I would say that Mr. Carter would not receive a Christmas card or birthday card from me, Bob. But the thing about it is, that's what enabled me to be able to get involved with the USOC. Because it was my goal along with a few other athletes, Fred Newhouse who also pushed me real hard and has been a great friend over the years, we had decided that we were going to get involved through USA, it wasn't USA Track at that time, it was the Athletic Congress, and also through the Olympic Committee, and that's when I became what they called the athletes' representative. And from there I went on to serve on the Board of the United States Olympic Committee for 20 years.

Bob Wallace: Wow. That's wonderful. We can talk about that a little bit. Let me talk about when we all first met. And I guess that goes back to 1987 or 1988,

whenever the Cardinals decided to move from St. Louis to Arizona. And I just remember, and I've told this story a number of times because I think it's very funny. I remember being out in Arizona State, coming out there to negotiate a lease agreement with Arizona State University to use you guys' stadium, Sun Devils Stadium. And throughout our negotiation when I was there with my two partners, Tom Gilform and Gearhart Patsall, and we were going back and forth on how a professional football team could use a college football stadium. And I believe at that time that was the only one that existed, or potential relationship that we had. And so we're negotiating with the University's general counsel, a guy named Bruce Myerson, who's a very well-known arbitrator and mediator these days, but Bruce kept saying throughout the negotiations, Well my athletic director won't let me do this, well my athletic director says we can't do that. So this went on for about a day and a half. The athletic director, who he never really said, My athletic director Charles S. Harris; he just said, my athletic director. So finally I say to him, Well who the heck is this athletic director of yours. Why don't bring him into the meeting and maybe we can persuade him of this. And I remember he says, okay. So we had a meeting and Charles came into the meeting and sat down and within five minutes we had basically solved all the issues that the lawyer kept saying, my athletic director won't let me. And I tell that story because it just goes to show that if you have too many lawyers in a room nothing ever gets done I guess.

I don't know what I said. But, the funny thing about that is that we then adjourned – I was staying at a hotel about two blocks from the Arizona State offices – and we adjourned to, back to the local restaurant there. And Charles said, I want you to meet my, some of my guys. And so Herman was there, another friend of ours, Tom Stadler, was there. And we just sat down and it was really the beginning of, what is this now, it's 2020, and so a 33-year friendship that we've all had. And we've had some great times together, and it just goes to show that you can you know be in an intense negotiation and still remain friends and move along. So Charles, what do you kind of remember about that whole Cardinal relocation to Arizona and Arizona State's role in that?

Charles Harris:

Well, you know, Bob, it's interesting that you maybe finish with what I think is the thing that I enjoy most about relationships with people who work hard, who are committed to doing something that matters. And I just prescribe to the notion people, reasonable people, equally informed, in the end are not going to disagree. We may not share the same view about how we get there. And that's exactly what happened when the Cardinals came to town as those negotiations began. Because quite frankly we had some people involved in the process on the front end who didn't really understand some of the nuances that an NCAA institution had to deal with. I had the frankly good experience of having dealt with the USFL when they were trying to play in Franklin Field by the New Jersey Generals of all teams.

We had to thread a very narrow needle because the constrictions related to amateurism and professionalism as defined by the NCAA, at the time

very, very strident. And at Arizona State we had an uneven history of compliance. So the last thing I wanted us to do is kind of stumble into doing something that seemed really good for the institution and really good for the community because Arizona and Phoenix deserved a team, but I didn't want to put the university or our athletics program at risk. So I did have one piece of sage advice from a buddy of mine who was then the athletics director at Seattle. Herman knew him well, he was at the University of Washington. His name was Milo Lewd. And Milo was talking to Seattle at the same time, roughly I guess they'd been there maybe two years. And I said, Mike what can you tell me. And he said, here's one thing you need to know. They got one product. They can push it 365 days a year. You got to run a program. That wasn't the motivation for me to establish a friendship with someone that I truly respect and admire and some others that we've lost along the way – Kurt Rosier and other folks that were part of that process. But again I think at its core is, we're trying to do the same kind of thing. We have different employers. We have different expectations. Let's figure out a way to make this work and be civil. Let's see if we can do that.

Bob Wallace: I was going to say, and civil and you know, you ended up working with myself and Kurt who you mentioned and you know, Bill Bidwell.

Charles Harris: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: Who people in St. Louis which is a large part of our audience will remember the late Mr. Bidwell. And he was a strange guy. What kind of relationship did you have with him?

Charles Harris: All I can tell you is we had lunch about once a week and talked about all things great and wonderful. And interestingly, it's through those conversations I don't recall very many conversations about sport. You know, he had some very specialized kinds of interest. He had an interest in issues of frankly of civility, of race and race relationships. He didn't wear it on his sleeve but I think Mr. Bidwell was a friend to a lot of people in a lot of ways and to a lot of communities that made him underappreciated because he wasn't necessarily a high profile individual who enjoyed the spotlight.

Bob Wallace: Yeah, I would say that's true. He was a very, very shy man. And you know, I knew him until his death and actually spent some time with him a week, no maybe a month or so before his death. You know, he was not very communicative at that time, but I could tell in his eyes that he appreciated me coming to visit. And then of course Michael and Nicole, whoa are two of his children, told me that he was really looking forward to your visit. So you're right. I think he had a sense, you know, he hired me way back in 1981, put me in a role of you know, handling his money in terms of dishing it out to players and stuff, which at that time I was probably the first African-American in the NFL that had a role like that. And he hired Adele Harris who was an African-American woman. And then he had Betty Green and Rod Days and that may be the first and only time until currently with Chris Greer and Brian Flores in Miami where you

had an African-American head coach and an African-American general manager. So after ASU, Herman, you know, and you were there a long time, you kind of moved on to UAB, right?

Herman Frazier: Yes.

Bob Wallace: UAB and Hawaii and the journey that you had. As you look back on those experiences, what do you think you learned about being an athletic director. And I'm always, looked when I see some of these, and we're getting to the age where we're on the down side of our career as opposed to the up side of our career, why you haven't gotten another opportunity to lead your own programs. What's your thoughts about some of that?

Herman Frazier: Well you know it's interesting, Bob, because I was speaking at an NCAA convention in Phoenix of all places, two years ago. And it was a large minority group back there and the person who brought me in to speak to the group was Vicky Stokes. And for those people who don't know Vicky, Vicky was the point guard on the basketball team with Ralph Stanton at Virginia when they lost to Chamenade over in Hawaii. And Vicky is currently the associate commissioner at the MAC conference in Ohio. And he wanted me to speak to this audience of about 75 to 100 people of color, and while I was there they wanted to talk to me about all the do's and don't's and a lot of things I learned along the way within my career. And I pretty much was very, very candid with them, and I talked to them about a lot of things. I talked to them about being at Arizona State for 21 to 23 years. I started there as a graduate of Princeton. I talked about the relationship that I had with the one Charles Harris who is on the phone with me. And how, when Charles Harris was the athletics director at Arizona State University and I was fortunate enough to be working at my alma mater and serve as his deputy/associate, and how we were doing that in the '80s. And so Charles and I were probably considered before our time in having the opportunity to be at a PAC-10 school which we now call them Power Five, but I would beg to say that you couldn't find anybody with the relationship we had and have, two African-Americans running a Power Five situation at that time. So then Charles left. Then I stayed there for a while.

And then come 2000, I figured it was time for me to go. And I had many opportunities. A lot of people thought I was going to go to the United States Olympic Committee and work there. I had had numerous opportunities. Dick Schultz was there. Colin Miller had been there. Harvey Schiller had been there. And everybody thought that I would always go to the USOC. But my goal was to always be an athletics director. And so, fortunately, the job opened at the University of Alabama Birmingham and I interviewed there and I really walked in and basically was offered the job. And it was my first time running my own shop and we enjoyed it. And we had some fun. We had to make some tough calls on turning around some staff members and making some other calls. But more importantly, everybody always thought I was never going to leave Arizona State. And sure as hell, soon as I left Arizona State then all of a sudden all these other schools started calling. Because everybody

wanted to see what I was going to do at UAB. And then all of a sudden the Hawaii job opened and again, I wasn't looking for a job because I had only been at UAB for two years and we built a house in Birmingham. So we had every intention of staying. And when the Hawaii job opened they just made an offer that I just could not refuse. And so we went out west to Hawaii and to this day I really enjoyed the person who I worked for, Evan Dobel, who was the president at the university at that time.

And Evan Dobel was definitely not a cookie cutter president of an institution. And he's the kind of guy who, if he was the president of a school tomorrow, I'd go work for him again. But unfortunately he wasn't there the entire time I spent my career at Hawaii. We went into Hawaii with less money than most schools and a less desirable place for some student athletes to go to, and we really had that program flourishing. It was on the up and up. And as you know, Bob, we had an opportunity in 2008, we went undefeated and went to the Sugar Bowl. And so things were really going well but, you know, unfortunately the football coach had a great offer to leave and go somewhere else. And so all the sudden the inability for us to keep him really became my problem and no one else's problem. And so at the end of the day the football coach left and went to another institution and so this is now my fault. And I called you and one of the things we talked about was, you know what, let's get out of here. And what's amazing about that is as soon as I departed Hawaii, I had offers on the table from Kevin Light, at the time he was at Notre Dame, and then he left and then he went to Duke and he said, hey, how about coming to Duke.

And at the same time a job opened up at Temple and then that's how I ended up going to Temple. And the timing was right then as well because my parents were up there in age and starting to lose people because I had not lived in Philadelphia going back to high school when I left there in 1973. So it was a good time for me to be back in Philly, and so again, lo and behold nobody thought I was going to come back east, and so I come back east and I'm at Temple for three years and Dr. Darryl Gross calls me and says hey, I need some help up at Syracuse and I need you to come do for me at Syracuse what you did for Charles Harris at Arizona State. And so Darryl brought me here in 2011 and I thought I was going to be here about three or four years and then perhaps take another position. But as we can see, it's 2020 and I'm still at Syracuse. But it's interesting. You learn a lot of things. You make some tough decisions. And the good thing about it is I've enjoyed my career professionally and it's something I'll always remember.

Bob Wallace: So, and I'm going to ask you both these questions. Charles, start with you on this. You know you went from the ivy league to the Pac-12, or 10 back then. You used to be the commissioner of an historically black college conference to a small Division 3 school. Talk about the differences in those sort of environments for college athletics.

Charles Harris: You know, Bob, it's interesting. I was actually listening to Herman and thinking about his story. I've got to tell you one thing. What Herman

didn't say and people who are like Herman will never say. These are hard jobs. And Herman did them extraordinarily well. And Darryl knew what he was doing when he hired him at Syracuse, just like John knew it when he kept him there. Just like Billy Bradshaw knew it when he hired him at Temple and Kevin Coingham at Duke. These are hard jobs. Don't let anybody kid you about that. You know, there's fun and there's adulation. To the contrast between when I started at Michigan and really in sports information and then on to the ivy league and yeah, we did have some success there. And then Arizona State and the chairman of the board here when I took the job here initially as a consultant, should help me know why you would even be interested in this job. First of all, I left this area a long time ago in the mid-'60s. So this is an area that I'm generally familiar with. And Danville, Virginia, for those who don't know, this is the answer to a trivia question. This was the last home of the Confederacy before the surrender in Appomattox. So it's got some unique features about it that require that you have some sort of sensitivity to the area or to what the politics are if nothing else. At any rate, the chairman of the board who was the chairman of a Fortune 500 company at the time, had helped me know with your background why you've come here. And I said, well I'm from the area, number one. Number two, here's one thing I've come to know: Whether it's in the ivy league or the Pac 10 or the Big Ten or the MEAC. Everybody keeps score. You know, the rules of the game are not different. What's different is the money that goes into it, and it's dramatic. What's different is the expectations of students, and it's dramatic.

And part of it for me, part of my attraction is I remember back in the old days when I was at Michigan when Coach Schimbexler came. To give you a sense of how long ago it was, I remember submitting the first budget to what was called the boarding control of intercollegiate athletics at the University of Michigan. It was one million one hundred and fifty dollars. There was a pause in the room and they said, we will not accept this budget. It has to be less than a million dollars. I took it back to my boss. He took off a hundred and one dollars. A hundred and fifty-one dollars. It was nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand dollars. That was in 1974. Michigan's budget this year is I think a hundred forty firm. Does that sound about right? And they're fixing to go lose forty of that because if football. So you go from there to an Arizona State and you get here. What I saw along the way thought is, and this is kind of my own bias, the way how things were treated. There really was such a thing as two-sport athlete three years ago, 30 years ago or 40 years ago. You know, you played football in the fall, you ran track in the spring, you played football in the fall, you played basketball in mid-year. Or maybe you actually studied internationally.

These are year-round activities at any level and what I didn't like was the way athletes were treated. And so that got me to the MIAC because I felt like some of the skills that I gained in high profile conferences could be of help for HBCU graduates. So without that experience I wouldn't have gotten anywhere. And then additionally, at a Division 3 school you can actually touch people. You don't have to talk to them through their agent.

You don't have to talk to them through their coach. You can take four kids to lunch and talk to them about life and career and being responsible citizens because they know they're not going to be playing on Sunday. They don't need a school teacher or a guidance counselor or affecting meaningful change in the community. So it's different, Bob, but people keep score. I mean, the guys in the weight room, they are different sizes but they working just as hard.

Bob Wallace: Yeah, I think that's true. I mean, I know that I played ivy league football a long time ago and then my son played ivy league football, and they were working as hard as the Michigan team. I mean they were working up at six in the morning and do weight lifting and running. But it was a different, you know, athletes spend time perfecting their athletic skills no matter what level they're at. And it does take a lot of time. And we've had a lot of heated discussions about the treatment of college athletes. And you know, and you just gave an unbelievable example, Charles, where you're talking about a million and a half budget, a little bit over a million budget, going to a hundred and forty million dollar budget, and in that process of that, the only non-rise in competition is there's a little bit of rise. College costs more money now than it did back then. Is the student athlete who is not getting any money. So talk about, you know, I mean there's a late movement or recent movement about compensating athletes. I don't think they've come up with a system for that. But they have begun passing some statewide laws on name, image and likeness. How has this changed in the way you're viewing athletes are going to affect college athletics in the next 10 years?

Herman Frazier: Let me take the first stab at that, Bob.

Bob Wallace: Okay.

Herman Frazier: And the reason I want, because obviously it's the soup d 'jour within the Power Five schools, and it's kind of taken a little step backwards because of COVID-19. However, what's happening is a lot of the states are passing their own laws and what that does though, is it puts a little bit more pressure on the institutions and it also puts a little bit more pressure on the NCAA. Because for instance, let's take California. The California schools pass the law, or the state passed the law and the schools had to abide by it, then it makes those athletes if they start receiving money, before the NCAA everybody else catches up to it, it makes them ineligible. Or other schools aren't going to compete against them. So the thing is, you've got to start moving everybody in the same direction. And to that point, I personally have actually traveled to Albany to meet with our state representatives here in the State of New York to have conversations about this. Because we don't want the State of New York to start passing laws that will deem some of our student athletes ineligible. And so this whole thing has to be coordinated in a lot of ways. I think it's going to happen. I think it's going to happen sooner than some people wanted it to, but it all still has to be coordinated so that we don't create any other issues for the schools down the line.

Charles Harris: There were memberships that you had to have in order to be able to get tickets. And those tickets were tax deductible. And then somewhere along the way in the last 35 or 40 years, somebody said no you can't deduct that see because you get value for that. That actually worked its way all the way up to Congress because people who own those tickets wanted that deduction and it got muted a little bit because of the athletic enterprise. I look at what we now talk about name likeness and image and realistically if you think of that from a purely practical standpoint, how can you not tell somebody they can't sell a picture themselves? Bob, you and I have seen Herman in great pictures and shouldn't he have benefited from that at some point? But to the larger issue, Herman's right and that – this is going to be done. It can't be done one off where California does one thing, New Jersey does something else. Uh, I think Florida is working their way through the system. COVID did put a pause on it but all that really gave was an opportunity for others who have interests, whatever they may be, to get involved in a conversation with Congress to talk about a tax exempt status for the NCAA. And you know, that may happen, that may happen. I do think something's going to happen but I would predict this: If we get to an NCAA that is tax exempt, we'll then be talking about institutions that are doing business as Arizona State, doing business as Michigan, because they really are separate companies and that's when the athletes are really going to get energized.

Herman Frazier: I'm not sure everybody understands who may benefit from this and who may not benefit from this.

Charles Harris: Great point, Herm, great point.

Herman Frazier: I.e., I mean, if you're a football team, even if you're in the SPC, and your football team is 0-12, somebody's not getting paid.

Charles Harris: Yeah.

Herman Frazier: If your basketball team, you may have one or two athletes on there and we also have to be careful that it doesn't act in reverse to our great women athletes, and so at the end of the day I'm not sure how big the pie's going to be when you start trying to decide who is going to benefit.

Charles Harris: This goes back to our history and Herm and I over the last 30 years or so. They, there was a conversation, a very active conversation about providing student athletes with a cost of living stipend based on where they lived. So, the example I think we used to throw around all the time is it's a lot cheaper to live in Tempe than it is to live in southern California. True, except what a coach is going to sell is, well at Arizona State they're only going to give you a hundred extra dollars a month. Here, we're going to give you \$350. And it's the same kind of thing with an NLI. If you're an 0 and 12 team, you're not going to get the money that the guys at Alabama and Clemson are getting. I don't have a good way to say that to you, but they're going to be higher profile.

Bob Wallace: Right, and I think over many years of our discussions I've always said I'm, I am not smart enough to come up with a system that is fair and I think you guys raised some points is, that it's hard to compensate someone from Clemson versus someone from a lesser school, or do you compensate, how does a woman field hockey player get compensated as opposed to a men's basketball player? Those are issues that I think, you know, need to be discussed. I get nervous and I think you guys and Herman raised a point about sort of a unified approach. I always get nervous when where, you know, the federal government hasn't been very successful agreeing upon anything. Whether they can come up with a national approach to this problem may take more time than what the state legislature and some politicians are willing to give them. Uh, but so let me just sort of go into it a little bit because you talk about whether – Charles you just mentioned the athlete will become awakened a little bit. And athletes are becoming awakened. How do you guys deal with the student athlete who is now taking a position on certain things?

Charles Harris: Well, here's what we do here, and we've actually done this summer, you know, we've only, we've got like 500 athletes here. So I've asked the Director of Athletics and our Dean of Students regularly to do Zoom calls in part because of the very abrupt way the semester ended. You know, we have teams, we have some teams that had, really hadn't even started competition yet for the spring. The season's over. I felt it was really important for people who were paying as you do with division 3, for the opportunity to participate, that we stay in touch with them. Make sure that they knew we cared about them. I mean folks left it just like at Syracuse and everywhere else, they left without in some cases being able to clean out their room.

So we had a lot of Zoom calls and they were all good and the kids were involved. We probably had about 25 to 30% of our kids on calls with coaches, with administrators, and then the events in Minneapolis happened and, and the calls took on a very different kind of tone, in part I think because people don't understand and, you know, there this, there's kind of a social media frenzy that drives all this stuff notwithstanding the facts of whatever position you may have. We spent a lot of time in small groups, in breakout groups, having people really express both their fears, anxieties, frustrations and concerns and I make no prediction about what the fall will be uh because it's going to be a fall like no other, other than I would say this for a fact. I'm confident this isn't over and when students come back they will have opinions and they will have looked to institutions to either support them or to allow them to fully express themselves, or both.

Bob Wallace: Herman, you guys are on the biggest stage. Do you have a similar thought process or do you think, you know, you're a student athlete who, who are thinking they're going to play on Sunday or be, play 40 days and 40 nights on TNT, how they approach social activities

Herman Frazier: Well, we uh, we've been heavily involved with it recently with all the things going on. We even had a little demonstration last year here called Not

Again SU where the student occupied the administration building and so forth and so on and there's been a lot of things going on and these athletes are now more aware because of the social media aspect of everything. I mean, they're always on their phones and through Facebook and through everything else that's going on. They're all in tune to what's happening. Now, as you talk about playing on Sundays or playing anything else, what's interesting here at Syracuse is most recently in our sports of men and women's soccer and our sports of men and women's lacrosse, obviously basketball, and some football, there's been a significant amount of them have gone pro and we keep in touch with a lot of them. A lot of them have that aspiration to continue uh in those particular directions. Like I was watching the major soccer league tournament down in Orlando the other day and low and behold we had like six or seven kids from Syracuse who have come out of here the last couple of years. And then I'm looking at who's in football training camps and we've had a lot of those kids. And so as you look at the future, every kid who comes here thinks they're going to do something but more importantly, being the private school that we are, they really, really work hard, Bob, on obtaining their degree. They really understand what the education means to them. And part of it, and I'm laughing, it's because of the price and the, I mean it costs a lot of money to go to a private school like Syracuse and they take it real, real seriously. And then Charles, even though you talk about your numbers, 500, we don't have that many more than you.

Charles Harris: Yeah.

Herman Frazier: We have probably about 650 but we spend a lot of time with academic coordinators, with tutors, and everybody else helping them in trying to get them ahead. So it's been unique on the type of student athlete that comes through this institution.

Bob Wallace: So both of you guys have mentioned when we come back things will be changed. When are we coming back? What is – are we going to play college football this year? Are we going to have, you know, women's field hockey this year? And Charles, you said you weren't going to make a prediction but I'm not letting you off that easy.

Herman Frazier: Yeah, we're gonna play college football.

Charles Harris: I'm going to say ask me next week. You know, I think --

Bob Wallace: *[Laughs]*

Charles Harris: It literally changes by the hours and, and I'm anxious. I have to be honest with you. You know, the – I actually put our folks on – we got to a point where we were swapping emails by the hour. So every two hours, did you hear, did you see – and I said guys, we need to make informed decisions based on data, number one, and the facts on the ground here in Danville. Now what has happened around us is the two conferences that we play 90% of our nonconference games have both basically said

we're going to do online only in the fall. And half of the schools in our league are in North Carolina which is in Phase 2 of whatever the recovery is and if it's Phase 2, they can't leave the state. So, you know, by the same token, we'll have a meeting this afternoon with our football team and talk to them about re-acclimatization and getting back on campus in the next ten days. Having said that --

Herman Frazier: We actually brought our football student athletes back in June. We brought our mens and women's basketball athletes back July 7. On July 13 we brought women's soccer back. On July 17 we brought men's soccer back and on July 20th we brought back volleyball and field hockey. So I actually have around 160 athletes on campus right now. We tested all of them and if you came from quote one of the hot states that the governor has identified, you have to quarantine for 14 days and you know, these are the workouts when they come back and they just get in shape and they can work out with the strength and conditioning coaches and they don't get to be with the- their actual position coaches for football, they started last Monday. The ref in sports, the coaches can't be out there with them, meaning the coach of their specific sport can't be out there with them until August comes into play. So we're monitoring everything that goes on. Uh, we brought them back. We put them in pods.

So the football has been back here long enough that the pods are now combined and as I read about all the things that are going on throughout our country and my colleagues would be high numbers, we've been able, and I'm knocking on wood, and we've been able to manage to keep our numbers down much lower than some of my colleagues but we're on top of it and we continue to talk to the county, state health and medical officials. Uh, yours truly even took the Johns Hopkins contact tracing court so we are all in. Now, having said all this, if the rest of the country and everybody don't wear face masks, and people don't abide by the social distancing rules, there may not be any competition in any of these sport. But as of right now, nothing's been called. I had a – prior to this podcast, I was on an hour and 15 minute call with the ACC and we discussed football scheduling. We discussed everything and you know, we're just going to try to see where we are in about I'd say two weeks.

Bob Wallace: Is it a different dynamic? Because football uh, and maybe not at Syracuse but you know, Syracuse is a big ACC school, it makes up so much of a budget for so much of the athletic department. Now at Syracuse you guys use the, it's not the, the dome, it's not the Carrier dome anymore, the dome for basketball, so you make, you get a lot of revenue from that. Basketball has always been huge at Syracuse, but is there a different decision making that goes in for an average as opposed to a Syracuse where, you know, you guys at Syracuse are willing to push it a little bit more because it's so important to the overall budget uh – of the school and the athletic department?

Charles Harris: Well, you know, from our perspective, you know, first of all it's a health and safety issue and it is really about doing the right thing for people now

and, and being able, and all of us have been in that circumstance where something happens on the weekend and we're all trying to explain on Monday why we decided what we decided or what we didn't decide. And in this case, I look at it as fundamentally using data to make an informed data. Just as Herm talked about, we've all taken the Hopkins test ensuring that we're doing things that are reasonable but as I've said to my colleagues here and frankly as I've said to our board, here's the reality. Somebody's going to come down with COVID. So, it's not so much of a question of what we do to avoid that, it is the same kind of pod approach that Herm has taken and then, you know, the good news is that I've got friends like Herman Frazier who can share with me what their athletics training staff protocols are and what their institutional protocols are. So we can make the best and informed decision.

The money is always going to be an issue to me. If we ever say it's not about money, it's about money and if you – over the last few days I mentioned Michigan earlier, you know, Wisconsin said they project to lose \$60 million dollars. But I think about the Mid-America conference and you know, Herm talked about Ricky Stokes out in the MAC, those guys are going to lose \$10 or \$15 million dollars because they can't play guaranty games. Worse than that, in a town like Miami of Ohio for the big game against whomever, it's a two night minimum at the Days Inn for \$275. They're only going to make that money if football's played. And if it's not played, the trickle-down effect is going to be dramatic. Maybe not at the big end but by the same token, I can tell you, you know, there are – I want to say over the last seven years, \$4 billion dollars, \$4 billion dollars in debt service has been incurred by major athletics programs for building, all premised on one thing – ticket sales and television. If people are not in the stands because there's no game and there's no game and it's not televised, somebody going to have to pay the piper.

Herman Frazier: Bob --

Bob Wallace: Yes?

Herman Frazier: Charles is correct. I mean the economic impact of our football and our basketball in a city the size of Syracuse is unimaginable. Um, I get local restaurants, I get hotels, I get all these folks calling us all the time about what's going on, are you guys going to play, what's happening. And if – and COVID has placed much more emphasis on it too because so many people have been shut down for three months –

Charles Harris: Hm mm.

Herman Frazier: -- that if we come back and play sports in a town like this, it opens up so many more doors and it's almost like a medicine to some of the people who live in this community and so that's where it gets to be more than just sports and the people competing.

Bob Wallace: Yeah, you've talked about, you know, the guaranties and Herman you mentioned that you guys are doing a good job at Syracuse of keeping

your athletes healthy, uh, and non-positive. But if one of the schools that you're going to play doesn't, then the game can't go on because you don't have an opponent so that, so you're kind of dependent upon other things. But these, these smaller schools like I'm sure you guys play some games against un – non-powered conferences and the important thing to that non-powered conference whether it's University of Buffalo or something, is the guarantee that you give them. So there's a big discussion now on what happens that, you know, the Big Ten, I think the pack 12 have all said we're only going to play conference games which means those other games get chopped by the wayside. Are those guarantees going to be honored, do you think?

Herman Frazier: Well you're the lawyer, but I've kind of been lucky in this regard to this point because we played four non-conference football games and to date two of mine have already been cancelled on – by those guys. So Rutgers cancelled on me out of the Big Ten and Colgate cancelled on me out of the Patriot League. So I have two other non-conference games still on the schedule which are Liberty and Western Michigan. And so we just have to wait and see what our conference is going to do and what their conferences are going to do. So I'm not as exposed as some of my colleagues at this point. But our presidents are meeting within the next couple of weeks and then hopefully we'll know exactly what's going on at that point.

Charles Harris: I only got two words for you – force majeure.

Bob Wallace: Well, you're right. The force majeure clause is, is you know, kind of the get out of jail free card. However, force majeure is an impossibility of performance, it's you know, a national emergency that says that you can't perform, although the argument, the schools that are, and Herman is lucky that those schools have cancelled on him so they can't play, but what the Big Ten has said is we won't – we're going to play games, just not with you. So is that not a breach of contract because, I mean I'm ready to play you now. Herman, you'll have a problem with Liberty because I think they're back in school. Old Mr. Farwell has let everybody back on campus.

Charles Harris: Yeah, I think they come back this weekend.

Bob Wallace: I've had some discussions about, with you know, various institutions about whether they can invoke the force majeure and I keep saying well force majeure means you can't do it, it doesn't mean you don't want to do it, which is sort of the argument against, you know, when you're going to play games, just not with me

Charles Harris: Bob, since we're dealing with the respect Thompson Coburn law firm, let me just say this. I'll have my lawyer call your lawyer, okay?

Bob Wallace: *[Laughs]*. Okay, let me – I know you guys had to go back and run your programs so I want to thank you. I just want to just throw out a couple of quick questions for you. Give me a quick answer on, you know, coaching

towers seem to be way out there. Again, we talked about going from a \$1.5 million budget to a \$140 million budget but when we were coming out of school, coaches were making \$40,000. Now they're making \$9 million dollars. Have we lost control of balance?

Charles Harris: Well, Herm, let me just take a quick shot at this. I'll say this. The numbers are simply not sustainable. And you're right. I mean there was a time when coaches coached and they taught classes so they stayed connected to the institution. I made the reference earlier about a DBA and if we're not careful here, we'll create a circumstance that is not defensible, particularly in difficult times economically.

Herman Frazier: And I would add that there's going to be a lot of belt tightening because of COVID on being able to try to keep and sustain the programs themselves but I think that's going to have a direct correlation on salaries going forward.

Bob Wallace: Diversity in college athletics. Uh, we don't have many black head coaches in football. We don't have many black athletic directors. What can be done about that?

Charles Harris: You know, I'll do a quick shot at it. I think this. Part of it is directly related to your earlier question. And Herm and I saw this actually I think in a pretty profound way at Arizona State. There were some very, very, very talented men of color on the football staff. What they concluded, however, with one exception is, they're better off being paid as a coordinator at \$250 or \$400 or \$500,000 than it was worth taking the crap in a bad job and being called a head coach. So as the money equation has changed, a lot – the people that are getting paid are getting paid very well. So it becomes in some ways almost a disincentive. And the other part of it is quite frankly, the generation of which we are all a part. Are a people who are working a little bit, you get paid a little more you work a little bit more, you get paid a little more, your opportunities comes. Now folks want it yesterday. And yesterday can put you in a position to be at the throttle but not necessarily in control.

Bob Wallace: Herman?

Herman Frazier: I would agree with what Charles is saying. I mean, you could have an opportunity to take a job but if you take the job, Bob, and you don't have the resources to be successful, you will be destined to fail. And so I think when you look at the African-American athletic directors who we now see in powerfied schools, that's progress. But to say that you're going to be an athletic director and you go to a small conference school that just isn't going to support you, that's a recipe for disaster.

Bob Wallace: Women in athletics. Can you make the same point or is it a different dynamic for women athletic directors?

Herman Frazier: Well even some women coaches – Bob, I went through, I guess it was a year ago, ATC women's soccer is some of the best soccer In the country,

okay? Now having said that, we have 15 schools. Of those 15 schools, in women's soccer, there's only four women head coaches believe it or not. And so what happens is people get these jobs and they keep them because they're good jobs and they pay well. So I was determined to find a woman to lead my soccer program and I will tell you it was the hardest search I ever conducted. And I'm talking about harder than when we hired Bruce Snyder –

Charles Harris: Yep.

Herman Frazier: -- Harder than when Arizona State hired John Cooper. Harder than any basketball coach search I ran. It was the hardest search and I had to go back into the drawing board for at least – I talked to at least 20 guy head coaches to be able to take that job. It was unbelievable, Bob, and I kept all the information because I was thinking about writing a paper about it.

Charles Harris: [Laughs] Exactly.

Herman Frazier: And I – I mean I talked to – and some of them people were afraid and I put more money into it. I did everything I had to do. I was giving a five year contract for the job and the person who was in it before was a male and we did everything we could but it was the hardest search I've ever had to run.

Bob Wallace: I remember the Bruce Snyder search. That wasn't that hard. [Laughs]

Charles Harris: Yeah, so you think.

Herman Frazier: Football is football, you understand what I'm saying, but here, I mean I was six figures in a five year contract.

Charles Harris: Unbelievable.

Bob Wallace: Okay, in closing let me just ask both of you, the highlight of your career as you look back on it. I mean, I know it's not over but what's been the high point for you Charles?

Charles Harris: Wow, you know, I think when you get old and in my case I can see the leaves turning like right in front of me, so I think when I look back I think about some of the experiences and some of the exchanges with really tremendous young men and women that have gone on to have had great careers and I'm reminded more than once of a passing conversation that somebody 15 or 20 year later will say you know, I can't help but remember that day you talked to me about staying focused and not necessarily basing it all on winning and losing. It's, you know, the enterprise of sport is a wonderful experience for any and all of us and we've all been touched by it. Without it, certainly my career would not have had the arc that it's had and so all I try to do is think about those wonderful experiences because there's been legions of them and as I talked to young men and women now I just say look, you have a single obligation. If you got a break, take full advantage of it. But the other thing

I want you to do is find the next person just like you and give them that opportunity.

Bob Wallace: Yeah, you know, in preparation for this podcast I was reading some articles and I read a really nice one about you, Charles, where one of the student athletes said he's a human GPS. And he said that he, when, you know, that there's a line outside your office just for a young student athlete to come in and get a pearl of wisdom.

Charles Harris: Yeah.

Bob Wallace: And I know having known you for 30 years myself, I do that occasionally. I mean, you can always call Charles Harris and learn something so I tell you if that's what you look back upon as, you know, a crowning achievement, I think it's a well-deserved one. Herman, how about yourself?

Herman Frazier: You know, Bob, for me, and I take heat for this, but I don't think I've ever worked a day in my life. I go to work and I just love what I'm doing to be involved with sports, um, and if can make the difference in the life of any young person that I touch while I'm here at the institution or any other institution I've been in, that's the saving grace for me. And I've just always chugged along thinking that way about what I do.

Bob Wallace: Final question, guys, when we come back – when we get back to semi normal and I don't think just like after 9/11 the world's going to change. We're going to approach things much differently after the pandemic than we did before. It will be a whole bunch of new protocols that will come in effect. But once we get back to what becomes the normal, what we will be talking about 10 years from now in college athletics, Herman?

Herman Frazier: Well, we'll be talking about, for right now, the four month pause of which there was no sport and I just hope we're not talking about anything any longer. As you know, Bob, I'm a big Yankee fan and I'm sitting here watching the game last night and even though it didn't have any fans, it was just nice to try to get back to some semblance of normal. And I just hope we're only talking about four months and we're not talking about any longer.

Charles Harris: Yeah, you know there's a part of me that kind of, I think we'll all be looking back at the good old days but I, I think unfortunately looming in my mind is this notion that the three of us will be reflecting on telling stories to people who are a decade or two younger than us about how people used to do stuff and they will say no, really? It's like yeah, really, and it's not going to happen again. Uh, this will be a, this is a seminal moment for so many reasons and um, you know, so I'm going to enjoy this moment and enjoy the friendships that have come with it and enjoy the arc of this career and recognize we may not see this particular view again.

Bob Wallace:

Okay, great. Thank you guys for doing this. I enjoyed it. I hope our listeners enjoyed listening to both Herman and Charles and that you enjoyed our podcast. And if you have, let us know. You can provide your feedback by going to Apple Podcast and going to the ratings and reviews section for our podcast. If you're listening on Stitcher, go to the Sticher.com and search for active above us to leave a review or comment. Of course if there's any topics you'd like us to discuss in the future, let us know that. We thank you for listening. Thank you guys.