

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Intelligence Squared U.S. New York Audience Decides to “Ban College Football”

Buzz Bissinger and Malcolm Gladwell Win Debate over Tim Green and Jason Whitlock

Debate will air on NPR stations nationwide and be telecast on WNET/Thirteen on June 16th at 3 PM

NEW YORK – May 9, 2012 – Last night, Intelligence Squared U.S. continued its spring 2012 season with a victory for the motion “Ban College Football.” In the final tally, Malcolm Gladwell and Buzz Bissinger won the Oxford-style debate by convincing 37% of the audience to change their minds and oppose the motion. After the debate, 53% of audience members agreed that college football has no place in an academic environment, up from 16% pre-debate (see full numbers below).

Watch the full debate streaming at Fora.tv here:

http://fora.tv/live/intelligencesquared_us/college_football

Opposing the motion, Tim Green and Jason Whitlock sought to prove that college football provided academic opportunities through scholarships, and instilled positive values in players and college students. But at the end of the evening it was Bissinger’s and Gladwell’s argument that college football was ultimately damaging to players, and detrimental to the ideals of academia that convinced the audience to support the motion.

This latest intellectual matchup was IQ2US’s 61st debate and was streamed live on Fora.tv with additional coverage from IQ2US’s media partner, Slate.

ABC News correspondent John Donovan is the moderator, and the executive producer is Dana Wolfe.

Key Excerpts For the Motion:

MALCOLM GLADWELL:

“The human brain is a mass of soft tissue that is suspended within a hard skull, right? Every time you get hit, that soft tissue rattles around inside your skull. And the effect of that rattling around is to stretch and sometimes tear the connections between your nerve cells. In the course of everyday life, that almost never happens. In the course of playing football, that happens all the time. It is not unusual in the course of a game for a player to sustain hits to the head of between 40 and 100 Gs. To put that in perspective, if you were

to get in your car and not put on your seatbelt and drive at 25 miles an hour into a brick wall so that your forehead struck the dashboard of the car, that would be a hit of 100 Gs, right? If you reversed your car and went and did it over and over again so that you hit the brick wall 30 to 40 times at speeds between 20 and 25 miles an hour, that would be the equivalent of a football game. If you reversed your car and over the course of the next three months drove it at 25 miles an hour into a brick wall 1,000 times, that would be the equivalent of a college football season.”

BUZZ BISSINGER:

“The amount of money that coaches make is insulting. It is insulting when a coach is making five to 10 to 15 times more than a college president. What does it say? What does it say about the priorities of a university? It says that the head coach runs the school. And make no mistake. That was the tragedy of Joe Paterno. He did run Penn State. He did run Penn State. And I know he ran Penn State because when Graham Spanier went to his house in 2004 and said, "Joe, it's time to retire," he threw him out. They never spoke for 10 years. Joe ran that school.”

Key Excerpts Against the Motion:

TIM GREEN:

“It's how much can you take, how much can you take and keep going? And I think that's one of the great lessons of the sport of football, and I think that's why it's great for our youth. It's great in little league. It's great in high school. It's certainly great in college because it teaches kids that life is tough. Things are tough. And then you pick yourself up, and you go on. I think it's the greatest lesson in the game, and I think it's the greatest game that we play.”

JASON WHITLOCK:

“And everything in America is connected to freedom and to capitalism and to democracy. And so you can't remove our institutions of higher education from capitalism and from freedom. You can't. We don't do that in America. We let capitalism exploit everything whether we like it or not. And so football has to be tolerated no different than Ronald McDonald. Ronald McDonald has done far more damage to America than any football coach, any of these overpaid coaches that he's talking about.”

Before the debate, the IQ2US audience voted as follows:

- 16 % of audience agreed with the resolution
- 53% of audience against the resolution
- 31% undecided

After careful consideration of the points by the audience, Bissinger and Gladwell won the debate: the team that moves the most votes at the end of the evening is determined the winner.

- 53 % of audience agreeing with the resolution (+37%)
- 39% of audience against the resolution (-14%)
- 8% undecided (-23%)

To learn more about the debate and review a detailed breakdown of how the audience voted pre- and post-debate, please visit our Facebook page at:
<http://www.facebook.com/Think2Twice>

The showdown at NYU's Skirball Center in New York City (566 LaGuardia Place) puts the leading public intellectuals in the limelight in front of a live audience for nearly two hours of heated debate.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared U.S., please visit:

NEED LINK

- NPR will air the debate on stations nationwide and the podcast will be available to download. Please check with your local NPR stations for additional details or visit:
<http://www.npr.org/series/6263392/intelligence-squared-u-s>
- WNET/Thirteen will air this debate June 16th at 3 PM

ABOUT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATES (IQ2US)

Named One of “Five Podcasts that Will Change the Way You Think” by Forbes:

<http://onforb.es/zWuDal>

Rethink your point of view with Intelligence Squared U.S. (IQ2US), Oxford-style debates live from New York City.

Based on the highly successful debate program based in London, the Intelligence Squared Foundation has presented over 50 debates on a wide range of provocative and timely topics. From global warming and the financial crisis, to Afghanistan/Pakistan and the death of mainstream media, Intelligence Squared brings together the world's leading authorities on the day's most important issues.

Since its inception in 2006, the goals have been to provide a new forum for intelligent discussion, grounded in facts and informed by reasoned analysis; to transcend the toxically emotional and the reflexively ideological; and to encourage recognition that the opposing side has intellectually respectable views.

The Rosenkranz Foundation initiated the Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate Series and continues to provide major support.

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