

Evening The Tribune

Monday, January 13, 2014

www.eveningtribune.com

Former boxer miffed at NFL concussion handling

This from former boxer Ray Ciancaglini who's been for decades alerting young athletes to the dangers of concussions, the injury that shortened his promising career: "I have been following the handling of Wes Welker's concussion and am not only surprised but alarmed. The Denver Bronco wide receiver suffered his first concussion Nov. 20 and after the first hit was treated for a neck injury and allowed to return to play in that game. After his next pass reception, he felt other symptoms, which prompted concussion protocol testing.

"Welker was diagnosed with a concussion and put on injury rehab. He returned to play Dec. 8 and promptly received his second concussion in less than three weeks. He was put back on concussion protocol rehab and allowed to return to practice on Christmas Day. Again, this is less than three weeks after his second concussion, and five weeks after his first concussion. He is cleared to play on January 12 and he says he feels fine.

"That's simply wrong.



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After all we know about concussions today, this is not only an unconscionable and dangerous act for him but also for the Broncos and the NFL. For every high school or college athlete whom I have counseled about properly sitting out these injuries, a 'star athlete' circumvents the message. This is not the role-model behavior I would endorse. Money and winning too frequently come before all else, before long-term health and the well-being of a family member.

"I'm not a doctor and not treating this athlete. I'm equally sure you can get anybody to say anything you want to hear or justify his return to practice or play. But is the potential long-term danger worth the risk? What these stars don't realize is that there are young, impressionable athletes

watching everything they do and will emulate everything they do.

"I wish Mr. Welker all the best. But knowing what I know and having been through what I've been through, I can simply declare 'nothing is worth the risk of a life of misery.' Concussion Awareness takes a step forward and then when you see this brazen circumvention, we then take two steps backward.

"Thank you for reading about my frustration."

A-E note: If you know a student competitor, please assure that young athlete follows the New York State-mandated protocol that involves neurological testing and careful attention to every head injury. Only physicians should make decisions about if and when victims of sports concussions can participate again.