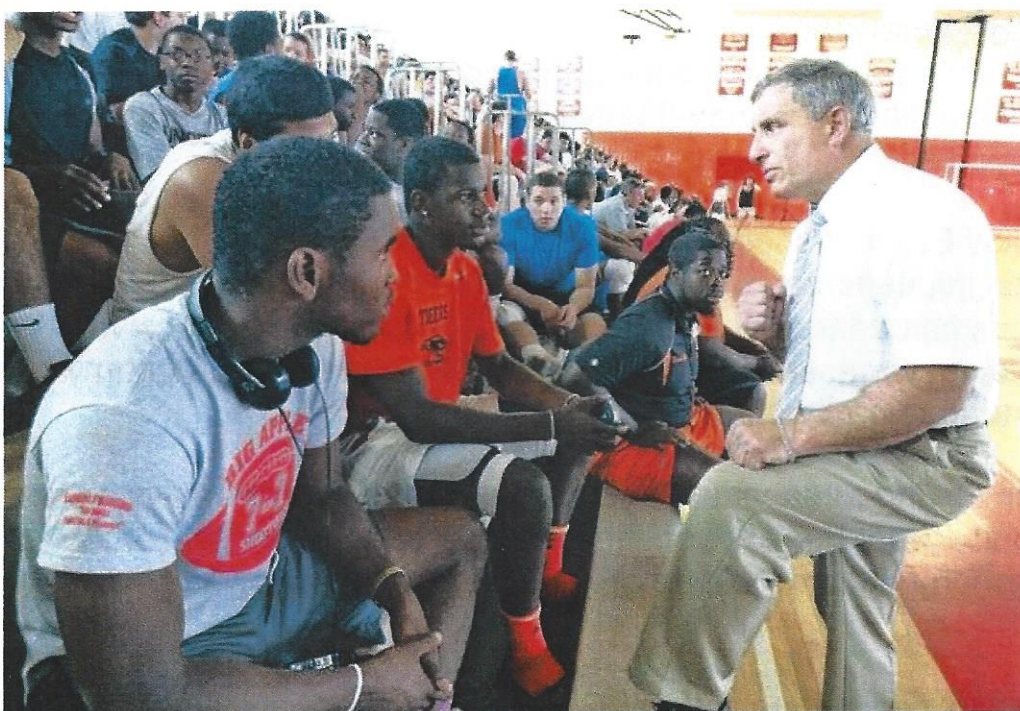


**SPEAK TO A COUNSELOR  
(866) 320-0194**

## Former Boxer Shows Young Athletes The Results of Untreated TBI

PAUL STONE | JUNE 26, 2013



Ciancaglini speaks to young football players. Photo courtesy of John Meore/The Journal News

We've made great strides in improving our understandings of traumatic brain injury and educating many about the effects of an untreated concussion. Almost every athlete in America has to sit through classes and [seminars](#) about brain injury, and most are tested before the season begins to help diagnose any brain injuries that occur as soon as they happen.

Maybe these advancements are the reason it is so disheartening to see studies like the one [published in early May](#) reporting that almost half of all high school football players – some of the athletes at the highest risk for brain injury – said they would try to hide their injury so that they can stay on the field.

What can we do to try to make youth athletes fully comprehend the risks they are willfully putting themselves in for short term glory? That has been one of the biggest questions on the minds of parents and health care professionals for years, but former boxer Ray Ciancaglini has a fairly simple answer: show athletes the effects of repeated brain injuries first hand.

Several New York state football teams took part in the North Rockland Football Camp which included an event called “The Second Impact” [which Dan DeFrancesco reports](#) consisted mainly of a concussion-awareness speech by the former middleweight boxer who now suffers from Parkinson’s disease and dementia pugilistica as a result of untreated concussions. These athletes had likely already many speeches about brain injuries, but according to their coaches, this one was different.

“A lot of the kids, when you talk, it goes in one ear and out the other,” North Rockland football coach Tom Lynch said. “To meet this gentleman that’s gone through this his whole life and is battling every day, they see what can happen, and you want to do the right thing for yourself.”

Ciancaglini, now 62, was once a boxer with a promising future before repeated untreated brain injuries forced him to retire at the young age of 20. He says all of his health problems can be traced back to a “mild” concussion he received during a fight in Buffalo that was never assessed by a doctor. “One week later, I got my bell rung again and things started to go downhill,” he told the athletes.

Ciancaglini isn’t trying to advocate against physical sports. He says he would box again if he could. What he is advocating is honest personal assessment when injuries occur so that young athletes will be able to live happy healthy lives once they leave the field.

“That’s the key to it all: letting it heal,” Ciancaglini said. “I always tell them I endorse playing any sport. I think any sport you want to play you play the hardest you can play. But if you get your bell rung, you have to get it addressed properly.”