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Former Boxer Raises Concussion Awareness


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Four decades after his career ended, former Geneva middleweight boxer Ray Ciancaglini says he's fighting the toughest fight of his life.

The Second Impact

"For many years I've been battling dementia pugilistica and Parkinson's syndrome."

Ciancaglini believes the progressive disorders could have been avoided or significantly reduced had he correctly addressed a concussion he suffered in the third round of a bout at the Buffalo Memorial Aud when he was 16.

"I caught a right hook to the back of my head. It was no knockdown but I was temporarily dazed, my vision became blurred and my hearing was impaired. The crowd noise fluctuated from loud to muffled back to loud again," Ciancaglini said.

Ciancaglini said he ignored his symptoms and got back in the ring one week later.

"I thought these symptoms were only temporary and I thought they'd all go away. I thought I could work through it and I didn't want to miss my next opportunity. To me, I thought boxing was my whole life."

Ciancaglini now travels around the state teaching people about second impact syndrome and its debilitating affects.

"You know there's a lot of experts on concussions that can come in and talk about concussions but Ray lives it every day of his life. He lives the ramifications of not addressing the concussions," said Bob Lowden, FLCC Director of Athletics.

Lowden brought Ciancaglini in to speak after several athletes suffered concussions and didn't take them as seriously as he thinks they should've.

"It's pretty much like if I don't go out and chase my dream now, then somebody else is going to be a step ahead of me," said Lareik Taylor, a freshman at FLCC.

Taylor said he took a hit to the head during a basketball game and fell to the ground about a month ago. When he got up, he says he was dizzy and his vision was blurry.

Over the past few weeks, Taylor's roommate has been pointing out a number of things he keeps forgetting.

"I just thought okay, I took a shot, and that was it. I didn't think the situation could be something big," said Taylor.

Ciancaglini's three R concept – Report, Rest and Rehabilitate – resonated with Taylor.

"You want to take the chance and throw it all away like I did? I threw a whole career away for the sake of not missing one fight. What a foolish mistake," Ciancaglini said.

"The game you sit out today could be the career you save tomorrow." Ray Ciancaglini repeats that quote often during his Second Impact presentation.

It's also a lesson he wishes someone else had taught him.

"Now I wanna go and get checked out," Taylor told Ciancaglini.

"Yes, the best thing you can do is get it addressed. That's the key to the whole thing is honesty and being patient. You have a whole career ahead of you; don't throw it away for a couple of games," Ciancaglini said.