

# Educating Athletes on Concussions: Former Boxer Ray Ciancaglini Making Strides to Raise Awareness on Head Injuries

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by:admin  
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By: Peter Subsara – The College at Brockport – Sport Management Intern



[www.thesecondimpact.com](http://www.thesecondimpact.com)

“Leave no doubt, wait it out.” This is what Ray Ciancaglini is trying to tell athletes of all ages throughout the country. Ciancaglini is trying to educate kids and adults alike on the possible repercussions you can receive from coming back too soon from a concussion. His message stands as a living example of why concussions should be taken seriously, no matter the severity.

Ciancaglini assists the NYCBL's Geneva Red Wings throughout the year. [www.genevaredwingsbaseball.com](http://www.genevaredwingsbaseball.com)

Ciancaglini was a promising middleweight boxer in the late 1960's. His many achievements in his short career were a glimpse into the potential he had as a boxer. However, today Ciancaglini suffers from Dementia Pugilistica, a neurological disorder that affects people who have experienced numerous blows to the head, specifically boxers. Early in his career, Ray received a second concussion before properly healing from the first. Never having been knocked out, he wasn't aware of how serious his injury was. No one was nearly as educated about concussions in the early 1970's as they are now. Without the proper knowledge of knowing how to deal with these types of injuries, Ciancaglini received multiple unnecessary hits to the head, which has led to his condition today.

During the interview with Ciancaglini, he told me there's no comparison between boxing and baseball in regards to head injuries. “Once you receive a blow in baseball, that's it. You receive medical treatment right away. In boxing, you can be hit multiple times in the head, and not think once about it.” Concussions are still a serious issue in baseball. Baseball is an extremely competitive sport and you have players fighting for positions everyday. Ciancaglini explained to me that preventing second-impact concussions all comes down to the athletes. “No one can prevent the first concussion, but the second concussion is 100% susceptible. Athletes can't lie about an injury, regardless of their position on the team”, said Ciancaglini. The force of a baseball hitting a player in the head is tremendous. However, the multiple blows a boxer receives to the head within a period of time increase the damage to the brain. Usually a concussion in boxing takes more time to recover from because of the potential for a future concussion. Regardless of which sport you endure a concussion in, the importance of “fully-recovering”

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before resuming participation in the sport can prevent a future of struggle and uneasiness.

Ciancaglini is currently working with Senator Michael Nozzolio to help prevent second-impact injuries. Legislation is trying to propose a 24 hour waiting period for all student-athletes after they receive a concussion to not partake in any activities, whether their trainer approves them for physical contact or not. However, it's not that simple. "Following up on legislation remains difficult, especially at smaller schools where trainers sometimes aren't always on site. This isn't fair to coaches who can't make judgments on injured players and coach at the same time", said Ciancaglini. Even though cutting down on future concussions remains a work in progress, getting legislation involved is a big step in the right direction.

While speaking with Ray, it was refreshing to hear someone with personal experiences try to raise awareness on an ever-increasing issue in sports today. Concussions are occurring at a rate no one has seen in athletics before. Ciancaglini explained that in the long run, he is trying to make a difference in the future of young athletes and educate them on handling concussions the correct way. He has his own website, at [www.thesecondimpact.com](http://www.thesecondimpact.com), which he uses to help make people more aware of the seriousness of this issue. He also gives occasional talks to college and high school students. "Doing this helps give me closure. I'm trying to make something good out of something so bad", said Ciancaglini. It was a privilege to speak with Ray about this topic. He is dedicated, genuine and speaks from experience. It's an opportunity that I'm grateful for being able to have had. Concussions are becoming more serious everyday. Ciancaglini is doing something valuable that has a purpose, and that is educating athletes to be responsible and think before returning from a concussion too quickly.

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