

SPORTS

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SECTION B

Getting the message out



Michael Tartaglia / Tartaglia Productions

Geneva graduate Ray Ciancaglini speaks at Geneva High School Wednesday for The Second Impact, which seeks to raise awareness of concussions and head injuries.

Ciancaglini speaks to audience at Geneva HS

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GENEVA — Former middleweight boxer Ray Ciancaglini trained hard for every one of his 44 bouts as he worked to be the best he could be in the ring.

Ciancaglini received victorious applause 31 times during those seven years of competition from 1966 to '72.

The Geneva High School graduate has been training hard for a different type of fight recently, delivering a strong message that has induced the same eruptive ovation.

Ciancaglini brought the Geneva High School crowd to its feet after conveying his concussion awareness

message Wednesday evening.

The 61-year-old suffers from pugilistic dementia that leaves him confused, forgetful and trembling with Parkinson's Syndrome-like shudders.

His condition is a result of multiple head injuries that accumulated before his initial concussion healed.

The Geneva Sports Hall of Fame member now travels the area delivering a powerful message to high school and college athletes on the importance of treating an initial head injury and reaching full recovery before resuming athletic competition.

"The main thing is to get them to think twice before

■ See MESSAGE on Page 3B

MESSAGE

Ciancaglini: Report, rest, rehabilitate key to recovery

■ Continued from Page 1B

they make that mistake,” Ciancaglini said. “Concussions are so easily healed if you pay attention to your doctor’s instructions and go through your school’s concussion protocol.

“If you challenge that, you’re going to bump into all the trouble that I’ve been through and it’s so unnecessary. I couldn’t be happier that it’s getting out there and that’s my whole purpose. Go get it addressed and you’ll come back another day.”

Ciancaglini’s discussion divulged his personal story of receiving a concussion, ignoring the symptoms and then suffering another head injury.

The Rochester Boxing Hall of Fame member explains this sequence as “The Second Impact.” Ciancaglini is the founder of “The Second Impact” (www.thesecondimpact.com).

“One of the things I firmly believe in with dealing with young kids is how the message is delivered and Ray has a powerful message,” Geneva athletic director Randy Grenier remarked. “The students can see it, they’re visual learners. When they see Ray up there talking and pouring his heart out with his life story, it hits home.

“I couldn’t think of a better venue to do this. Our kids were great, we had the place packed tonight and I think it was great.”

Ciancaglini will be speaking at Keuka College Oct. 11. Upcoming engagements include Ithaca College, Nazareth College, Strong Memorial Hospital’s Concussion

Conference and the University of Rochester.

Ciancaglini’s message also provided the listeners with some important steps known as the “Three Big Rs” to aid the process towards a successful recovery from a possible head injury.

Ciancaglini explained those keys as: report, rest and rehabilitate. Report that you’re experiencing symptoms and rest and rehabilitate under the supervision of your doctor and school concussion program.

Arguably the most important ingredient within Ciancaglini’s message is a simple yet impactful asset: honesty. Ciancaglini described it as being honest about experiencing symptoms related to concussions, which “can help the (doctors and coaches) do the best they can for you.”

Ciancaglini had dreams of becoming the middleweight champion and later of teaching physical education.

Although the impact of head injuries derailed both of those goals, Ciancaglini is now capitalizing on an opportunity to educate and assist student-athletes on the impact of concussions, becoming a champion of awareness.

“When I realized that I wasn’t going to be the champ and I wasn’t going to be a physical education teacher, that broke my heart but it’s funny how that came around now,” Ciancaglini said. “I’m making the best out of a bad situation.

“Speaking here was very special for me. This is special because I graduated from here and it just added that little extra special touch.”