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# Concussion awareness advocate to speak in Canandaigua on athlete safety

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Former professional boxer and nationally recognized concussion awareness advocate Ray Ciancaglini will deliver a powerful presentation on concussion protection next month. Sponsored by UR Medicine and Thompson Health, the event, titled "From Punches to Prevention: Protecting Athletes from the Hidden Dangers of Concussions," is set for Thursday, March 13, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Finger Lakes Community College Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public.



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Ciancaglini, who founded The Second Impact organization, has dedicated his life to educating young athletes about the dangers of concussions and the importance of properly addressing them. Having suffered lifelong consequences due to untreated head injuries during his boxing career, he now advocates for better education, awareness, and rule changes to protect young athletes.

Also presenting will be Dr. Peter Obourn and professionals from the UR Medicine Thompson Health Rehabilitation Department. The discussion will cover concussion symptoms, rehabilitation, and the importance of reporting injuries honestly.

Ciancaglini is a strong supporter of sports but emphasizes necessary changes for safety, including eliminating heading in soccer for young players and promoting flag football for children under 14. "I want to keep kids in sports, but make adjustments," he said. "Remember, if you hurt the brain, it affects future potential."

Beyond athletes, Ciancaglini's message also extends to first responders, who risk concussions in their daily duties without the luxury of a referee calling timeouts. He will highlight the risks of PTSD, depression, and the need for proper recovery protocols.

Through The Second Impact, he continues to push for national concussion education and regulations. "Some athletes have to be protected from themselves," Ciancaglini said. "That is why we now have education and restrictions."