

Former boxer Ray Ciancaglini speaks out on head trauma

Posted: Jun 06, 2013 7:12 AM EDT

By Megan Rupp -

ALBANY, N.Y. – Former boxer, Ray Ciancaglini, was on his way to becoming a middleweight champion before repeated blows to the head caused brain damage that cut his career short. As a part of the 31st Annual Brain Injury Association Conference, Ciancaglini will be speaking about his current efforts to raise awareness about concussions for student-athletes.



Ciancaglini may no longer take the ring, but he is still a fighter in his battle with Dementia Pugilistic and Parkinson's syndrome. Having experienced the affect sports-related brain injury can have on one's life and career, he has committed the remainder of his life to doing what he can to prevent other athletes from facing similar obstacles.

At Thursday's conference, he will not only attempt to raise awareness about concussions in athletes, but he will also address the state's concussion law.

"The New York State law we passed is a good start, but doesn't go far enough," Ciancaglini said.

Under the law that went into effect in July of 2012, parents of student-athletes must sign a permission slip before their children can participate in practice or games. Once they have permission, if they suffer a concussion, the student cannot return to play until they are symptom-free for a 24 hour period and have a doctor's note of clearance for the first known concussion. If they experience second or any additional concussions they must be symptom-free for seven to ten days and have a doctor's note.

Each year, roughly two million teenage football players suffer a mild traumatic brain injury, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The two sports most prone to resulting in a concussion are football and women's soccer, but the likelihood of suffering a concussion for football players is still three times higher than it is for soccer.

The two-day conference is held from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. on Thursday, with a special address by Ciancaglini at 2 p.m., in the Albany Marriott Hotel. On Friday, Brain Injury Association of New York State will host an "Advocacy Discussion" period where experts, neurologists, psychotherapists, authors and psychologists from across the nation will exchange in-depth ideas about prevention, diagnosis, treatment, latest research and changing perceptions of disability.

