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## Advocacy for Fairness In Sports - News July 2019

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Dear Friend,

Thank you for being a friend of Advocacy for Fairness in Sports. The last few weeks have been a whirlwind for us, but hopefully a wind of productivity. This is our first general interest newsletter; some of you have subscribed through our website and others have interacted with us on Twitter. Newsletters will be published about once per month, but if you don't wish to receive them, there's an unsubscribe link at the bottom of this email so we ask that you forgive the intrusion.

For those interested in recent activities, in addition to our normal reporting, we've launched two new projects that we hope you'll find interesting and useful.

The first is our [Document Cloud Project](#). Document Cloud is an open-source software as a service platform, operated through Thompson Reuters, that allows journalists to upload, analyze, annotate, collaborate on and publish primary source documents. Advocacy for Fairness in Sports has joined other journalists in sharing the documents we acquire in the course of our reporting in the interest of transparency and greater public access. The [Document Cloud Project link](#) on our main menu takes you to a listing of projects that we've uploaded to the cloud. Most but not all are documents from court cases we've been tracking. The NFL Concussion Litigation and Settlement is a huge case with over 10,700 documents filed, so we've taken the most important and

organized them by year or topic (such as opt-out related) as you'll see from our site.



If there's a case you'd like to track and don't see it, [just let us know](#), and if we're tracking and currently have the documents we'll try to get them uploaded as soon as possible, or pull and add them in the near future. We are tracking several cases, that haven't been uploaded yet due to time restraints so check back frequently for new additions. To get the most from Document Cloud, we've also written a [tutorial](#) to show some of the many ways you can search and use the documents.

The second project we've launched this month is our [Event Calendar](#). It's an interactive calendar in which we hope to compile a vast list of events of interest to the sports law community and athlete advocates. Currently, we have several interesting symposiums on the calendar and hope to add court dates, when available for cases we track, for those interested in attending. We also invite you to add events of interest to the calendar such as sports league alumni events, other panels, and symposiums, and really any event you think might be of interest to readers of Advocacy for Fairness in Sports.

The mobile interface doesn't have quite as many features as the computer layout, but events can be added from either. From your laptop or pc, you can also search for events by date, city, state, or keyword, and you have your choice of three different views. We hope that you'll enjoy this feature and hopefully, it will help to connect many of us through events of mutual interest.

Those are our side projects! As you know, our primary focus is investigative sports journalism and bringing you the stories you seldom see elsewhere.

Here are a few recent articles that may interest you:



## NFL's Latest Dirty Deed Exposed in Holiday News Dump

If there's one thing consistent about the NFL, it's their passion in denying benefits to former players. Roxanne Gordon described how the NFL fought and fought until her husband Amon's thrice approved claim was denied when the NFL was given a fourth bite at the apple, and then backed up with a final denial by Judge Anita B. Brody on July 2. Judge Brody's order was cryptic at best, alluding to references that were nowhere to be found until Roxanne Gordon filled us in on the missing details. [Read more...](#)



## More NFL Dirty Deeds Alluded to in Chris Seeger's Letter to Retired NFL Players

On July 2, Chris Seeger sent an emailed letter to the class of retired players. In emphasized text, Seeger tells class members, "All the information you provide in your claim package must be absolutely complete and accurate." While my long-time readers know I've disagreed with Mr. Seeger on numerous issues, I am in complete agreement with him here. Some examples he gives include employment history, driving, and daily activities, as well as complete medical records. Take this as a Miranda warning, "Anything you say can and will be used against you." [Read more...](#)



## The NHL is Taking a Victory Lap for Now, While Concussion Settlement Holdouts Struggle

As the National Hockey League has completed another season and a new batch of draft picks are signing contracts with the clubs that selected them, the NHL seems to be feeling it. That confidence is apparent in its latest activity in the ongoing concussion litigation. [Read more...](#)



## Notre Dame, NCAA Attempt to Run the Clock on Brain Injury Lawsuit

John Askin once wore number 72 for the Fighting Irish. Now he's fighting the school and the NCAA for his brain. We first reported on the lawsuit in February shortly after the former linebacker filed in Jefferson Circuit Court, in Kentucky, his state of residence after months of attempted negotiations with the school seeking compensation for his latent brain injuries. Now Notre Dame and the NCAA are trying to convince the court his clock has expired. [Read More...](#)

We've also recently reported on

[The litigation between the NFL and its insurers,](#)

[Some NFL disability lawsuits,](#)

[The state of settlement funding issues in the NFL Settlement,](#)

[What the Packers financials reveal about the NFL Concussion Settlement,](#)

and more. You can check it all out on our [homepage](#).

Closing thoughts...

Some of you received our fundraising letter sent a couple of weeks ago. Sincere thanks to those who contributed. Investigative journalism becomes rarer with each passing year. It's expensive and time-consuming, and often the first thing cut from a newsroom budget, not to mention purposefully avoided by many major outlets with links to the sports leagues when it comes to sports. That's one reason I'm determined and passionate about the work we do. Stories need to be told and leagues held accountable for the damage they've done. With your help, we are going to continue moving toward that goal!

Margaret Mead famously said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." I agree,

wholeheartedly, but it never hurts to add a few more thoughtful, committed people to the mix.

It's no secret that keeping up with the NFL's misdeeds has become close to a full-time job for me, but there are problems that sorely need more attention in the NHL, NCAA, and Olympic sports. If you're passionate in one of these areas and you're willing to dive in and do some writing, we'd love to talk to you. Unlike many nonprofits, ours is a 100% volunteer operation. We have no paid staff and all funds go toward meeting the operating costs that come with investigative journalism. Because we are an all-volunteer group, there's a lot of flexibility whether you wish to contribute one story or regularly. Perhaps you'd enjoy tracking a single case from start to finish and writing about the developments along the way. Perhaps you'd like to focus on the inequities in a single sport? If so, [drop us a line](#) and let us know your interest. Our writers' document costs are always covered as well as access to our subscription-only resources.

We could also use some help in researching and/or writing proposals for appropriate grants both to support our reporting and to launch a new initiative for medical support for retired players. If this is something you'd consider helping with, please accept my gratitude and [contact us](#) to discuss.

If time's in a pinch but money not so much, consider making a [donation](#). Together we can make a difference -- both for the future, and in supporting the athletes of the past and present.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Sheilla Dingus'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sheilla Dingus, Editor, and President  
Advocacy for Fairness in Sports



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