



November 4, 2019

Dear Friend of Advocacy for Fairness in Sports,

This month I'm combining the Retired NFL Players' newsletter and the General Interest newsletter for a couple of reasons. First, there's limited concussion settlement news to report this time. I'm pulling several threads but have not yet unraveled them to the point of going to press. The second reason for consolidating goes to the time lost from technical issues over the past month. The last newsletter contained an SOS because my laptop had been infected with some really nasty malware and it seemed my trusty laptop was a goner. Thanks to a reader, I was finally able to eradicate the malware without having to replace the computer, but as it turned out, the malware infection was the first of a chain of events.

A day after finally cleaning the malware from the computer, our site went down due to technical problems with our web hosting platform. It took two days to get our site moved to a problem-free server and then we lost another day due to migration to the new server. Then, once I was ready to go back to work, I realized that somehow all my notifications had vanished and it took another 3 days to restore them so that I was once again receiving notices of court filings, breaking news, and private messages. Since then I've dealt with other small matters that seem to be a lingering after-effect of the malware, but (knock on wood) they seem to be resolved now and we're pretty much back to normal. Except for the fact, I'm running around like Alice in Wonderland's White Rabbit declaring, "I'm late!
I'm late!"

Despite the issues, I am getting caught up and we are still reporting important stories. I'll start with our latest Concussion Settlement report.



NFL Concussion Settlement, Funder Power Tugs Leave Players in a Knot

Power struggles between settlement funder Thrivest, settlement administration and the court(s) have left players who took advances from Thrivest Specialty Funding in a seemingly no-win knot that threatens to nullify their settlement awards should they manage to navigate the road of red-tape and receive one. The most recent ramifications of this point to two former players who've been sanctioned and stand the risk of jail time should they continue to fail to comply with an arbitration mandate that requires them to place disputed funds in escrow.... [Continue reading...](#)

Last month's featured story for Retired NFL players was an article based on an interview with Garrett Webster, son of Iron Mike Webster, who was the first NFL player posthumously diagnosed with CTE. I'm including it again for the benefit of our General Interest subscribers. You only know a fraction of Webster's story until you view it through the eyes of his son, Garrett.



When CTE Steals Your Dad: Garrett Remembers Mike Webster

Covering the NFL concussion settlement litigation as it plays out, it's easy to get caught up in the dockets and the numbers. It's essential to remind ourselves that behind those figures and words are families and personal stories.

One of the individuals who was instrumental in beginning the story was former Pittsburgh Steelers offensive lineman Mike Webster through his family. Webster, who anchored the Pittsburgh offensive line through a

dominant stretch of the middle and late 1970s, passed in 2002. Webster was also one of the first former NFL players to be diagnosed post-mortem with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). Witnessing most of Webster's story was his son, Garrett. [Continue reading...](#)

Here are some other stories we've reported that we think you'll find interesting:

NFL



When the Victim Becomes the Accused: The Kamrin Moore Story

by Habiba Yousouff and Sheilla Dingus

We are drawn to big headlines that flash across the bottom of our TV screens and the dramatic music accompanying developing stories, whether we are watching CNN or the NFL Network. Not to mention the grave facial expression, the solemn tone and delivery of the

information by the correspondent or "insider" as they constantly glance at their cell phones as if waiting for more details. Just as quickly as news breaks, someone jumps on Twitter in hopes of being first to report, as other reporters scramble to get to press before their competitors. As the frenzy in frantic in newsrooms and on social media ensues with various reporters competing to be the first to report any additional detail associated with the news item, often fact-checking, and investigation is a luxury many do not have time for in today's click hungry-media environment.

On Tuesday, Kamrin Moore was cleared of the domestic violence charges against him, but on July 15, he became the latest NFL player accused of domestic violence...[Continue reading...](#)

Kelechi Osemele's Saga Reminds Us of NFL's Toxic Culture

by Sheilla Dingus



New York Jets offensive guard Kelechi Osemele's ongoing and now public dispute with the New York Jets, highlights a problem anchored deeply within NFL culture. In case you somehow missed it, the Jets threatened to discipline Osemele for "conduct detrimental"—and then on Saturday afternoon followed through with the threat by hitting the player with a fine.

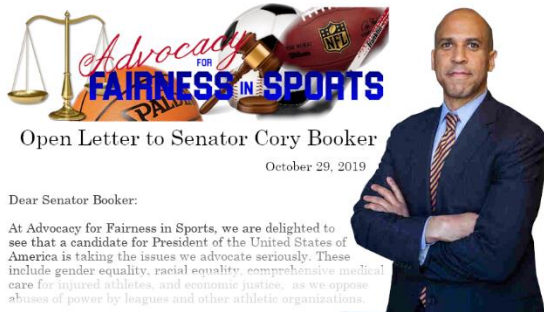
What conduct did the Jets organization deem to be detrimental? Mr. Osemele wants to have surgery to repair a torn labrum in his shoulder and the Jets want him to double down on pain pills and Toradol shots and get back on the field.

Never mind that continuing to aggravate and re-aggravate a torn labrum is likely to result in joint looseness and dislocation, and often irreparable and permanent damage to the shoulder...[Continue reading...](#)

Other NFL Headlines:

- [Ryan Claridge's Story Highlights the Fragility of Careers in Professional Sports](#) by Derek Helling
- [Perspective: The NFL Doesn't Need Headhunters](#) by Irv Eatman
- [Jets Safety Calls Foul on Referees in New Lawsuit](#) by Sheilla Dingus

NCAA, College, and Olympic Sports



Advocacy for Fairness in Sports' Open Letter to Cory Booker

Dear Senator Booker:

At [Advocacy for Fairness in Sports](#), we are delighted to see that a candidate for President of the United States of America is taking the issues we advocate seriously. These include gender equality, racial equality, comprehensive medical care for injured athletes, and economic justice, as we oppose abuses of power by

leagues and other athletic organizations.

Senator Booker, many of these issues are central to your campaign platform regarding [justice and opportunity for athletes](#). After a review of the content of your plan, we applaud all the measures listed. They would certainly be steps toward a better experience and governance for everyone involved when it comes to sport in the United States.

We feel, however, that in some respects, the statements lack clarity and do not go far enough to ensure the stated goals. To those ends, we have some questions we'd like to ask, and recommendations on how to maximize the effect of your desired policies... [Continue reading...](#)

Almost a Year After Hirshland's Appointment, Little Has Changed in the USOC
by Derek Helling



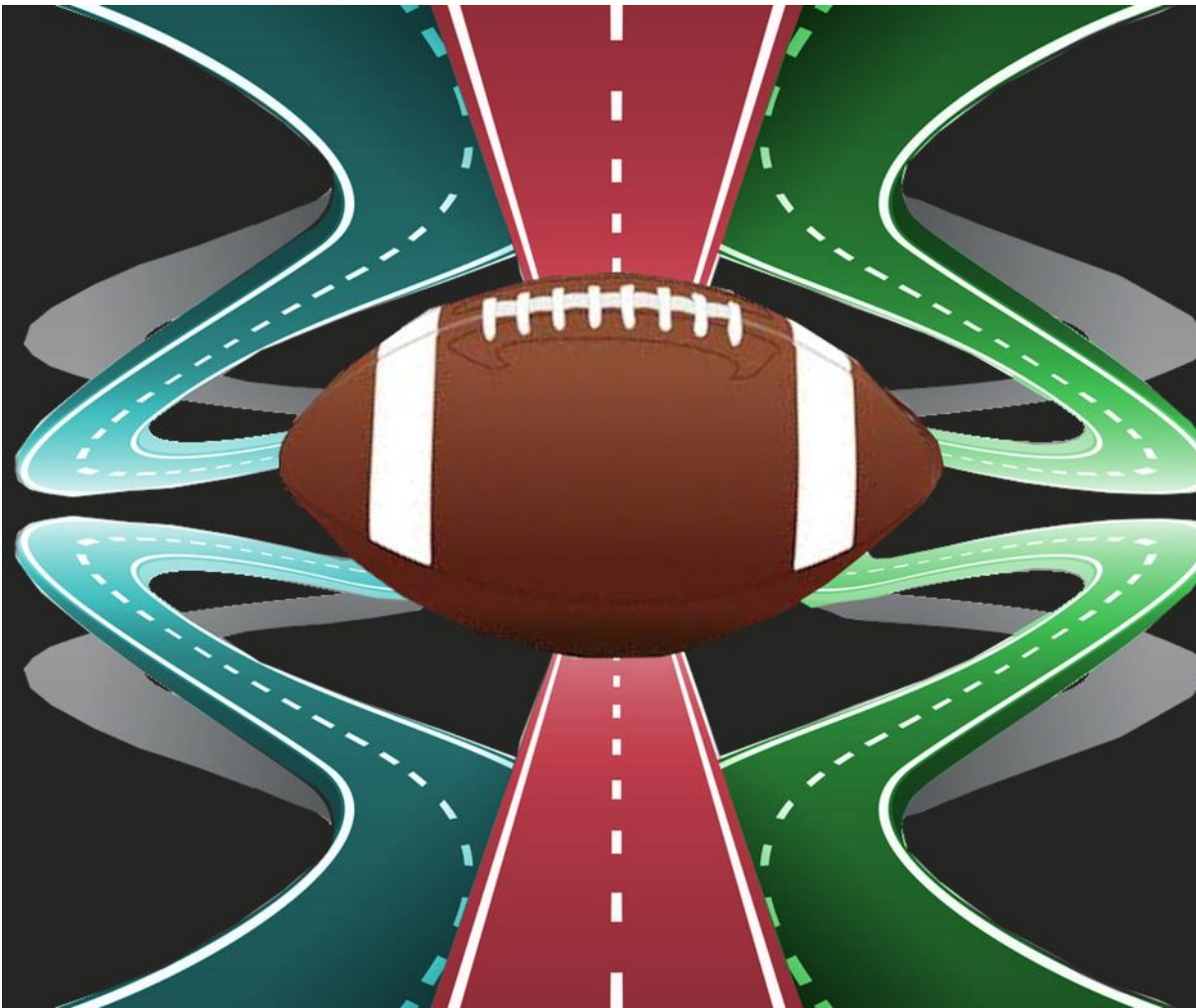
In the wake of several scandals like the Larry Nassar travesty and resulting coverup, changes were made at the top of the United States Olympic Committee. A line of demarcation in what was supposed to be a “new era” for the USOC was the hiring of current chief executive officer Sarah Hirshland. When Hirshland took over in Nov. 2018, she made a tearful promise to listen to athletes and declared the future is bright. Despite her assurances, the USOC has continued the same practices of excluding athletes from governance, paying lavish severances to disgraced executives, denying healthcare for athletes and actually waging legal battles against the very athletes it profits from.

On July 3 of this year, the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee released its 990, seemingly hoping to bury it in the long holiday. The reasons for that hope become clear with an inspection of the document... [Continue Reading...](#)

More Headlines:

- [Whistleblower Swim Coach Seeks Relief After Retaliation for Exposing Abuse](#) by Derek Helling
- [Melissa Martin's Lawsuit Highlights Neglect Larger than Cal](#) by Derek Helling

Features



Intersection Football: Headlines Converge as UNC Tries to Hide the Ball

The theory of relativity states that for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction. Recent headlines have driven that point home and some seemingly unrelated stories intersect at one common point—football. Upon closer examination of the stories however, you see how they are entwined and how certain actions produce the reactions that mimic physical law.

The first headline revolves around a [paper authored](#) by economist Ted Tatos and NeuroLabs scientific consultant Don Comrie in *The Journal of Scientific and Research Integrity*, published

in June. The article was based on three years of detailed analysis of documents released by the University of North Carolina in the aftermath of their highly publicized academic scandal.

The data analyzed came from among nearly two-million documents that were publicly released pursuant to public records requests from Charlotte News Observer and The Daily Tar Heel and covers the period between 2004 and 2012... [Continue reading...](#)



CTE Risk More Than Doubles after Just Three Years of Playing Football

by Lisa Brown

For every year of absorbing the pounding and repeated head collisions that comes with playing American tackle football, a person's risk of developing chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a devastating neurodegenerative disease, increases by 30 percent. And for every 2.6 years of play, the

risk of developing CTE doubles. These new findings from an analysis of 266 deceased former amateur and professional football players—reported in *Annals of Neurology* by a team of researchers from the [Boston University CTE Center](#)—are the first to quantify the strength of the link between playing tackle football and developing CTE.

In a critical distinction between many previous CTE studies, the analysis included dozens of brains of former football players who did not have CTE. That sizable control group provided enough data for the researchers to be confident in their discovery that there is a strong relationship between CTE risk and the number of years a person plays football... [Continue reading...](#)



Be sure to check in on the blog for other stories and also our [Document Cloud](#) archive of court documents. We track more cases than we have man or woman power to report on but you can follow the cases and read the original court filings for yourself by using our free archive. Also, if there's a case you're interested in that's not listed, let us know. There's a good chance we're already tracking it but haven't added it to the listing yet, or if we aren't it's probably something we'd be interested in following and could quickly add to our document resources.

Many of you are probably aware of the terrible situation at Deadspin which prompted all the reporters to walk out rather than cave to management's pressure to "stick to sports." This hits us at Advocacy for Fairness in Sports especially hard in that we've lost a kindred spirit dedicated to

independent reporting. Most of you are probably aware that Dom Cosentino, who formerly worked at Deadspin was the only writer in what could be called mainstream media who consistently covered the NFL Concussion Settlement debacle and tried to hold the powers to accountability. Ryan Boysen at Law360 has as well, but that publication is behind a pricey paywall and largely inaccessible to the public. I've seen so many independent accountability reporting sites silenced during our three years of existence--Vocativ, Vice Sports, ThinkProgress, not to mention numerous independent newspapers. Then you see the massive layoffs at Sports Illustrated and ESPN, including the near shuttering of Outside the Lines, whose groundbreaking "League of Denial" reporting is largely responsible for the public's awareness of the dangers of concussions and risk of CTE.

Seeing this makes me feel that our mission of hard-hitting investigative accountability reporting is all the more vital. It seems independent journalism, especially within the sports realm is becoming an endangered species. To be honest, what's happened at Deadspin has hit me like a ton of brick, and strengthened my resolve to push on, but in order to do this, we need funding.

I realize that many of you, especially those within the retired NFL community are short of funds and impacted by the delays and denials inherent in the concussion settlement, but for those who are able, please consider donating to our cause. I'd like to be able to hire at least one full-time reporter but it will take money to pay his or her salary. I also realize that's more money than normal donations will cover. Please consider helping with our present expenses and if you have some spare time, helping to research charitable foundations and grants that might enable our expansion. Even if you can only volunteer one hour a week, it would be helpful. Remember, each hour that I spend on managerial and administrative tasks is one less I have to spend on investigation and reporting. Together, however, I'm convinced we can prevail!

[Donate Now!](#)



Regards,
Sheilla

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sheilla', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

