

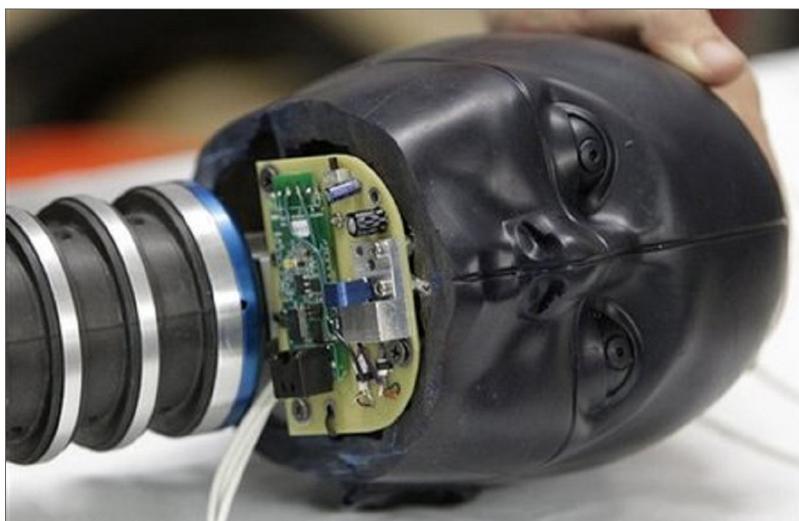


A Paralyzing Conclusion

by [KaptainKirk](#) on Oct 21, 2010 4:00 PM MDT in [Strictly My Opinion](#)

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Mark Duncan - AP

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30 days ago: A sensor array is shown in a test dummy used to research helmet to helmet collisions at the Cleveland Clinic's Lutheran Hospital in Cleveland Thursday, Sept. 23, 2010. Under the direction of Spine Research Laboratory director Lars Gilbertson, the Clinic will soon begin testing to research concussions and other sports-related head and neck injuries. (AP Photo/Mark Duncan)

Football is a Contact Sport. Just about everyone on the planet knows it. The players know it. It comes with the job and they are compensated well because of it. The fans know it. It's part of the allure, as well as a release for pent up frustration or aggression. The fact that the National Football League levied significant fines on [James Harrison](#), [Dunta Robinson](#) and [Brandon Meriweather](#) last week has drawn outbursts from players, fans, and the media. But where is this all coming from?

The league never did a thing when Jack Tatum paralyzed [Darryl Stingley](#) on August 12, 1978. Nor did the NFL waver in it's stance when [Mike Utley](#) was paralyzed on November 17, 1991. [Reggie Brown](#) (December 21, 1997), and [Kevin Everett](#) (September 9, 2007) are now able to walk again, but their careers were ended regardless. So why is this happening today?

Yesterday, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell sent a memo to teams informing them that more significant discipline, including suspensions, will be imposed on players that strike an opponent in the head or neck area in violation of the rules.

The NFL's crackdown on helmet to helmet collisions to suppress head and spinal injuries has had a mixed reception. Former Bronco Mark Schlereth called the league hypocritical.

The events are disconcerting to [Ray Lewis](#)

"My **opinion** is play the game like that game is supposed to be played, and whatever happens happens."

Said Joey Porter

"That's what our game is about. **It's a gladiator sport.**"

The NFL is trying to play both sides of the fence here. They will make their revenue through TV Ratings by trying to walk the thin line between the Entertainment factor and player safety. But the fact is, the players are bigger and faster, and the equipment is lighter. Heck, there are many players that sacrifice most of the protective gear to retain their speed.

There are other factors at work here and this development isn't as blind-siding as it sounds. It has only escalated in the past week or two, but it really goes further back than that.

May 30, 2007, It was **reported** that

According to the NFL News report, NFL and union officials say that the connection between NFL players and Alzheimer's is "anecdotal rather than scientific."

About a year ago, there was a Congressional Judiciary hearing on "**Legal Issues Relating to Football Head Injuries.**" Rep. John Conyers Jr. (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, scheduled the hearing to examine the sport's reaction in dealing with findings by some medical experts that repeated concussions and brain trauma suffered by players can produce an increased risk of dementia and other memory-related diseases later in life.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) questioned Commissioner Goodell sharply about what the league is doing for retired players. She said the league has "not taken seriously your responsibility to players" and urged Congress to consider repealing the sport's exemption from federal antitrust laws.

Dr. Gay Culverhouse, daughter of former **Tampa Bay Buccaneers** owner Hugh Culverhouse, had some of the sharpest comments during the hearing. She has been an advocate for former NFL players and even **founded** Gay Culverhouse Players' **Outreach Program** which provides expanded services to retired players. Dr. Culverhouse said that team doctors in the NFL are hired by the team, and are not advocates for players' health.

"We've got to stop that. . . . Something has to be done about this medical care. You cannot leave it in the hands of the team physician to make these decisions."

Last month, Scientists found **evidence** connecting head injuries in athletes to a condition that mimics Lou Gehrig's disease.

A few days ago, the NFL and the NFLPA **agreed** to expand the '**88 PLAN**' Coverage to former players with ALS (Lou Gehrig Disease). If you're not familiar with the '**88 PLAN**', I wrote about it here. **The NFL Pension and Disability Plan**. Anyway, the two sides acknowledged that concussions are commonplace in the League and are trying to help those retirees that are suffering their effects. Especially after "**New Evidence** Links Football and Progressive Brain Damage" was proven as fact. To date, the "**88 Plan**" has awarded \$9.7 million toward the care of 132 former NFL players. If you are interested, here is the transcript from the **News Conference**.

This past week (10/16), at the New Meadowlands Stadium, a young man named **Eric LeGrand** was left paralyzed from the neck down during a game between the Scarlett Knights and Army. Let's see, the distance between New Meadowlands and the NFL Headquarters is less than 10 miles away.

So you tell me, is the proximity of this incident and the three stringent fines over the past week coincidental?

Or is it just about the money.

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The NFL doesn't take fines as revenue. They go into the NFL's general charity fund.

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by [JasonB](#) on Oct 21, 2010 4:14 PM MDT [reply](#)

Besides, in the scope of NFL revenue, fines are trifling.

Fines are an attempt to utilize the economic principle that people react to incentives. Fines are meant to be an incentive against whatever actions they are levied as punishment of. Unlike speeding tickets, which are collected by relatively under-funded agencies, NFL fines are collected by a huge industry. If enough fines were levied, they would start to be contested, and then arbitration would probably turn them into a net loss. It's just an incentive.

by [Orange Rush](#) on Oct 21, 2010 4:38 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

But even then it's not much of an incentive considering that these fines are essentially tax deductible charity donations. So for guy that are at the top tax write like an NFL player, these fines are all 100% deductible. So they're getting the money on the tax end essentially.

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by [JasonB](#) on Oct 22, 2010 7:10 AM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

Better?

*Character may be manifested in the great moments but it is made in the small ones -- Philip Brooks
My ship finally came in, but it was the Kobayashi Maru.*

by [KaptainKirk](#) on Oct 21, 2010 4:41 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

Of course. In every conceivable way.

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by [JasonB](#) on Oct 22, 2010 7:11 AM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

I, for one, am getting very tired of all the bs on the nfl.com about the hits from punks who have probably never once had their bell rung and are saying its all part of the game. Frankly there is no excuse for injuring a guy so badly that the rest of his life is a mess, no matter how much he may earn.

I hold the media partially responsible for the confusion because they are never shy of showing a big hit and they are well aware that it is good for the product to show big hits. Personally, I don't think the sport is worth crippling young men for and I think, and I'm prepared to be told I'm wrong, that defenders can play their game without endangering their opponents.

and the sing along songs will be our scriptures - we gotta stay positive!

by [Orange & Blue Badger](#) on Oct 21, 2010 4:40 PM MDT [reply](#) 1 recs

+100

oldcoachB

by [oldcoachB](#) on Oct 21, 2010 5:22 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

OSHA might have jurisdiction if devstating injuries continue...

<http://www.oshalawblog.com/2010/01/articles/osa-legislation/concussions-in-professional-athletes-is-there-a-role-for-osa/>

Denver first.

by [margabelle](#) on Oct 21, 2010 5:02 PM MDT [reply](#)

I read that link the other day

when you posted it, thanks.

*Character may be manifested in the great moments but it is made in the small ones -- Philip Brooks
My ship finally came in, but it was the Kobayashi Maru.*

by [KaptainKirk](#) on Oct 21, 2010 5:06 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

It is all about the money and its a smart move...

The NFL makes money by having their best players on the field. They can't have those players getting their heads bashed in and being out for significant stretches of time.

So no, the NFL probably is not doing this purely out of the goodness of their own hearts. But who cares? I don't get why that is the deciding point.

Someone made a great point in a post yesterday. Its funny that Schlereth can bitch about the league not taking care of him after his 29 surgeries, but now they take some steps to protect player health and he has a fit.

I mean, is the argument that since the NFL didn't do anything after the Jack Tatum hit that they shouldn't do anything now?

That's like saying since we only had lap belts in cars in the beginning that we shouldn't allow air bags now.

by [charlesnelsonreilly](#) on Oct 21, 2010 5:34 PM MDT [reply](#)

well said

"Iron sharpens Iron."

by [vdisciple](#) on Oct 21, 2010 5:47 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

Interesting Idea

http://rivals.yahoo.com/ncaa/football/blog/dr_saturday/post/JoePa-didn-t-wear-a-facemask-He-doesn-t-think-t?urn=ncaaf-278329

I think Paterno makes a good point. If you don't have that face mask, you're not going to go flying head first into an opponent. Plus, football players will start looking like brutes again lol. Instead of the big hits, we'll have the hockey/rugby faces to look forward to (and the NFL can market off those instead of selling pictures of the hits it fines players for).

None of us go out and play for stats. You just do whatever you can to help the team out. -- Eddie Royal

by [Royal_Fan](#) on Oct 21, 2010 6:00 PM MDT [reply](#)

My own opinions

I believe that it is necessary to regulate to SOME extent the contact involved in the game. There are, off the top of my head, roughly 3 distinct types of hits. 4-5 if you want to get more specific but I'm going to stay entirely general here.

1 Malicious hit – Defined by me and me only as – a hit meant to purposely injure another player, usually for purposes of taking that person out of the game.

2 Punishing hit – A hit meant to make a statement to another player that if they are going to put themselves in that position (i.e. running across the middle of the field and not paying attention to the coverage) they are going to remember why its a bad idea. This type of hit is separated by intent to bruise vs. intent to break.

3 Regular hit – usually in a situation where the player simply makes a tackle and is commonly unspectacular.

I may end up doing a fan post to fully explain my thoughts more but its 8:15 and I'd like to get out of the office soon.

so to make a long story VERY short...football is a game of contact. These players make MILLIONS to put their bodies on the line. They make those millions because they know at any moment their career could be over. If they want to keep making ridiculous salaries then only hit type 1 should have any penalties. Very rarely does a player make a play with intent to actually INJURE another player.

If they want to eliminate type 2 as well...salaries need to be drastically reduced.

unfortunately its time for me to leave the office so I have to leave it here, but I say the best you can do is try to call someone for a hit that looks intentionally dangerous...otherwise teach these players to save early and spend later... A smart player can retire after 3-5 years and never work a day in his life (assuming he is a starter).

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

- Thomas Alva Edison

"Success is not a place at which one arrives, but rather... the spirit with which one undertakes and continues the journey."

- Alex Noble

by [DenBronx](#) on Oct 21, 2010 6:16 PM MDT [reply](#)

I would agree to some extent except for this...

I think the hits that need to be regulated aren't just the malicious ones.

It is a cultural thing that needs to change.

I don't think Dunta Robinson meant to hurt DeSean Jackson, but he did. Why? Because he was trying to make that "car crash" hit that everyone is supposed to make.

This is why the league will need to make some unpopular decisions and levy some suspensions and fines against hits that don't seem to be malicious but are maybe dangerous.

by [charlesnelsonreilly](#) on Oct 21, 2010 7:25 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

At the same time...

You change the entire dynamic of the game if you take away those hits. I understand you have to watch out for player's health, that is unquestionable. But asking a guy not to try and create an incomplete pass out of a reception by knocking the daylight out of the receiver is similar to asking an MLB pitcher not to brush back a batter who is crowding the plate.

When you brush a guy back you are not intentionally trying to hit them, you are trying to make a play. Of course your going to say getting hit with a baseball is not the same...well...you are right. but the principal of the thing is the same.

I know I'm going to come off sounding heartless or ignorant, but I am fully aware of the dangers that these guys put themselves in. But to be fair, I bring up the money again. If you are going to make millions of dollars, you have to assume the risk that the money brings with it. If they are going to change the rule then I am absolutely a proponent of capping salaries much lower and I mean fairly drastically.

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
- Thomas Alva Edison

"Success is not a place at which one arrives, but rather... the spirit with which one undertakes and continues the journey."
- Alex Noble

by [DenBronx](#) on Oct 21, 2010 8:14 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

I see people making their arguments from an emotional standpoint....

This is not about some altruistic stand to save the players from themselves. Its about maintaining the product.

I agree with you that all the NFL players go in to the game knowing full well the risks. But I believe, that left unchecked, they will get bigger and faster and bash each other silly. A league where guys are getting beat down every game or two and are then out for the next 4 – 6 weeks is not going to be a profitable league.

The NFL is built around having their stars on the field. When your stars get hurt, you lose money.

So the league can leave the league as it is and let it be a tough guy contest. But all that's going to get you is a bunch of guys out 4 -6 weeks with concussions. Then all you have is a bunch of back ups playing. I don't watch the NFL for the hits. I watch it to see if my team can beat the other.

This whole subject needs to be looked at from a reasoned viewpoint, not an emotional one.

by [charlesnelsonreilly](#) on Oct 21, 2010 8:21 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

There's also the other emotional side...

How can us Broncos fans forget how painful the sudden death of a young uprising star can be? I don't know about any of you, but I don't want to even contemplate a fourth loss to our team. I shudder just trying to avoid the though of one of our receivers taking his last breath on the field with us all watching...

None of us go out and play for stats. You just do whatever you can to help the team out. -- Eddie Royal

by [Royal_Fan](#) on Oct 21, 2010 8:47 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

umm.....

When did the last Bronco die on the field or directly from a game related injury?

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
- Thomas Alva Edison

"Success is not a place at which one arrives, but rather... the spirit with which one undertakes and continues the journey."
- Alex Noble

by **DenBronx** on Oct 22, 2010 12:16 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

He just doesn't want to mourn another Bronco.

Character may be manifested in the great moments but it is made in the small ones -- Philip Brooks

My ship finally came in, but it was the Kobayashi Maru.

by **KaptainKirk** on Oct 22, 2010 12:48 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

and I do?!!

No! But my question stands...when was the last player killed from a game related injury? btw I mean directly killed. Not during practice cuz he was too (insert word) to get water.

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."

- Thomas Alva Edison

"Success is not a place at which one arrives, but rather... the spirit with which one undertakes and continues the journey."

- Alex Noble

by **DenBronx** on Oct 22, 2010 12:51 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

You're right, there have been no deaths in the NFL directly related to a hit

The only death in an NFL game was due to a heart attack. But that doesn't mean it can't happen. There even was one in the AFL in April 2005:

<http://nbcsports.msnbc.com/id/7455663/>

And by bringing up our recent losses, I was just recalling how horrible it feels to lose a player off the field. I'd imagine it'd be multiplied ten-fold to watch it happen.

None of us go out and play for stats. You just do whatever you can to help the team out. -- Eddie Royal

by **Royal_Fan** on Oct 22, 2010 2:01 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

Tackle!

We in Broncoland have had the PERFECT example of how to play great defense in Champ Bailey, he TACKLES players, hits them, wraps up and they get nowhere. That's how to play great football, not clobbering guys in the head when they're defenseless. I'll take 11 Champ Baileys on my D anyday over the James Harrison's in the league!

by **buckeyebronco** on Oct 21, 2010 6:26 PM MDT via mobile [reply](#) 1 recs

Champ is the embodiment of a tough but clean player.

by **admill** on Oct 22, 2010 7:11 AM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

My only problem is the kneejerky response. Very un-NFL like

The Dunta Robinson was a shoulder to shoulder hit...how is that a fine?

The NFL needs to be consistent. Leave the clean hits alone, and SUSPEND the players who are known head hunters. One helmet to helmet in an entire season shouldn't qualify for an automatic suspension unless it was totally egregious. It's unfortunate that the NFL is kneejerking so hard as to change how the game is played. Maybe I'm just a purest. Did the Dunta robinson hit make me cringe? Yes. Was I happy to see them get up from it? Yes. Do I want to see that kind of hit again? No. Do I think the NFL can regulate the way the game is played? NONONONO

buckeybronco has it right...NFL players should just tackle, but sometimes it is necessary to try to jar the ball loose from the player.

Verbose in style, dispersion of thought, procrastination in life.

The guy formerly known as ZAPPA

by [Tim Lynch](#) on Oct 21, 2010 7:26 PM MDT [reply](#)

Bunch of nannys out there telling grown men how to play football.

If it is egregious then so be it, fine or suspend, but I will vehemently defend the play made by Dunta Robinson.

Verbose in style, dispersion of thought, procrastination in life.

The guy formerly known as ZAPPA

by [Tim Lynch](#) on Oct 21, 2010 7:27 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

I dont think that is the point...

Its not about toughness. Its about safety and maintaing the viability of players.

I don't think the DeSean Jackson hit was dirty or illegal either. But if that kind of thing continues, you get your star players, like Jackson, beat to hell and out for long periods of time. Not good business.

by [charlesnelsonreilly](#) on Oct 21, 2010 7:53 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

Of course the NFL can regulate the way the game is played, it's called the rulebook

Blocking in the back, chop blocking, facemask, holding, pass interference, false starts, roughing the kicker\passer, late hits...all regulating how the game is played. The rules in question are not subjective, leading with the helmet or hits directly to the head are illegal. You can argue whether a call is correct on a certain play but the rules are clear and justified.

And the best way to jar the ball loose is to put a shoulder into the ball, not hit a guy in the head.

by [admill](#) on Oct 22, 2010 7:29 AM MDT [up](#) [reply](#) 1 recs

Injuries may grow into legal problem with bancruptcy potential

If current trend continues and NFL does nothing, situation will get worse. More players will be crippled and some may die. Then NFL will have a legal problem on its hands. And you need look no further then tobacco industry to see what looking the other way gets you. Once legal briefs start flying, hounds will go after the money. They will look for proof NFL knew the situation was dangerous but willfully ignored that. Repercussions may be so severe as to cripple the whole NFL business. This means NFL needs to measure the public temperature and act before it is too late.

by [si_ice](#) on Oct 21, 2010 7:31 PM MDT [reply](#)

I don't think its a legal issue so much as a business one...

I agree that unless things change, a player will die on the field from a hit in the next 5 – 10 years. But the NFL doesn't fear the lawsuit. They have deep enough pockets. What they fear is an impact to their revenue stream.

If a player gets killed during a game, I think people start to question the league and they begin to stop watching. That's where the big money is lost that the NFL fears.

by [charlesnelsonreilly](#) on Oct 21, 2010 7:55 PM MDT [up](#) [reply](#)

There have always been big hits in the NFL and it isn't anything new...

What I don't like is the quick draw flag throwing refs they are around the league...Place a different ref on the same play and chances are there won't be a flag...Parity?I don't think so and maybe a replay would show some of those hits were legal...People are going to get hurt in a contact sport, no matter what the game and it won't stop just because they spank the hands of a few...The flag thrown on Hill in Sundays game against the Jets should dictate the outcome of the game. Give Hill a 15 yard face mask penalty and let the best team win...Oh, and by the way...In the history of Nfl football and the number of plays played, how many have been paralysed or killed? .0001? It can't be much...

by [bfree2bronc](#) on Oct 21, 2010 10:28 PM MDT [reply](#)

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