



Remember those injured on the field

Published: 9/7/2009 12:00 AM

It is a new season for high school football, and I am optimistic that this year things might be different. After 10 years of doing my best to support Illinois players who sustain catastrophic spinal cord injuries, I am convinced change is imperative.

Who will listen? New attitudes and open-minded exploration of prevention and aftercare of football-related injuries are necessary. Parents and players need to take a hard look at the safety net not in place for them. After an injury, the once-fearless paralyzed football warrior wakes up and is forced to sacrifice so many dreams.

What help is available now to those paralyzed by the game they so loved to play?

Is money from game receipts, or programs sold, or insurance by the football organizers available?

The inescapable anguish and burden of adjusting is too often lonely. The main reason: paralyzed football players are a reality most people resist facing. True, the annual number of such football injuries is few (about 11 each year nationwide), It is essential that these paralyzed players are not forgotten.

The Gridiron Warriors of Illinois has recently formed an organization that intends to become the active voice of the paralyzed player community. The group is led mostly by former players who are paralyzed.

The group seeks to improve prevention and commence outreach efforts through education and training of players, coaches, parents, refs, trainers, and administrators. Ongoing charity funds are immediately needed to provide lifelong care support. Mentoring and spiritual and emotional outreach to newly injured players and family will be offered by previously injured players.

Please pass the word, pass the helmet, and get involved.

There is no known cure for paralysis; however, together, the community can move mountains.

Deacon Don Grossnickle

Founder

Gridiron Warriors.