

Blake Hunt, paralyzed in Flushing HS football scrimmage, receives \$8 million settlement from city

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Lanzilote for NewsBlake Hunt plans to use his \$8M settlement from the city to pay for his college education.

[Blake Hunt](#), the [Flushing High School](#) football player who was paralyzed during a scrimmage and has spent the past three years at a nursing home, received a settlement on Wednesday in his lawsuit

against the city in the amount of \$8 million.

Hunt, 20, filed suit against the city, the [Department of Education](#), the Parks Department and the PSAL for negligence after he shattered the C5 vertebra in his neck during a scrimmage on Sept. 1, 2007, against [Erasmus Hall](#) at the outset of his senior year.

Reached at his nursing home in the [Bronx](#) Friday night, Hunt, who is paralyzed from the waist down with little movement in his upper body, said he was still in shock over the news but was already planning to move out and get his own apartment and start college.

"I'm just thankful it's over," he said. "I can move on with my life now. Now, I can really go back to school. I don't have to think about it anymore."

The attorney for Hunt, [Barry Greenberg](#), said the ruling may have lasting effects on how the PSAL and its football coaches prepare players for competition. Greenberg argued that Blake had not been trained properly and wasn't ready to take the field and participate in scrimmages or games when he was injured.

"The hope is that this case has effects on how the athletic programs are run and that they are safer and better for kids in the future and that they are more careful," Greenberg said in a phone interview. "Blake definitely deserves this and to the extent that (the settlement) will make his life better, I'm very happy for him."

Greenberg said Hunt will most likely not receive the amount in one lump sum but rather in increments over time. Hunt, whose mother died in 2000 from sickle cell anemia and who is estranged from his father, said he had told almost no one the news, aside from a friend, [Diana Kuen](#), who befriended him after he was injured.



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Hunt grew up in foster care, and he will remain a ward of the state until he turns 21, [Karen Dixon](#), the deputy director of [Harlem Dowling Child Services](#), an agency that does contract work for the city [Administration for Children's Services](#), told the Daily News in July.

In a complaint against the city, Hunt alleged that his injury stemmed from improper and inadequate supervision, training, officiating and medical personnel at the scrimmage. The complaint said Hunt, who weighed 140 pounds, was too small to be competing against larger players and was already suffering from a leg injury when he was struck in the head by a player he was attempting to tackle.

During an interview three years ago with The News, Hunt opened up about the various pills he was taking to help deal with depression, anxiety and the muscle spasms that often left him exhausted. He spoke of the repeated visits to the emergency room to deal with recurring infections and of feeling isolated in a Bronx nursing home filled with mostly older residents. But after being befriended by a number of celebrities, including the movie director [Penny Marshall](#), his spirits seemed to brighten over the past year, and now this.

"Given the particular facts of this case, the life-altering injury suffered by Mr. Hunt, and the uncertainties of a jury verdict, we determined that the resolution of this case was in the best interest of all parties," a spokeswoman for the [New York City Law Department](#) said in a statement. "This was a tragic accident, and our sympathies are with the plaintiff and his family."



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