

THE DEREK SHEELY FOUNDATION

SPORTS CONCUSSIONS

AWARENESS AND PREVENTION



CHILDREN SHOULD ENJOY SPORTS

- **Sports are great**
 - ▣ They are fun
 - ▣ They encourage healthy lifestyles
 - ▣ They develop important teamwork skills

- **Concussions are serious**
 - ▣ They are brain injuries
 - ▣ They can cause memory problems, learning disorders, or death

- **OUR GOAL** is to ensure that children can enjoy all the benefits of sports while minimizing the risk of concussions

A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

- **This is NOT medical training**
 - ▣ We are parents
 - ▣ We are not doctors
 - ▣ We want to share what we know now that we wish we knew then

- **We are NOT trying to change sports**
 - ▣ We do want to change the stigma about reporting concussions
 - ▣ We want you to know that concussions are an injury not a weakness

- **OUR GOAL** is to provide easy to understand facts and recommendations from a parent's perspective so that you can make informed decisions

INCREASED AWARENESS

- **Known Risks...Lead to Smart Choices**
 - Car accidents...
 - ...seat belts, airbags, four-wheel drive
 - ...speed limits, drivers tests, insurance,
 - ...no drinking and driving, no texting and driving

- **Unknown Risks...Lead to Serious Injuries**
 - You don't need to be afraid, but you do need to be smart

- **OUR GOAL** is to increase awareness among young athletes, their parents and coaches to the signs, symptoms, dangers, and prevention of concussions

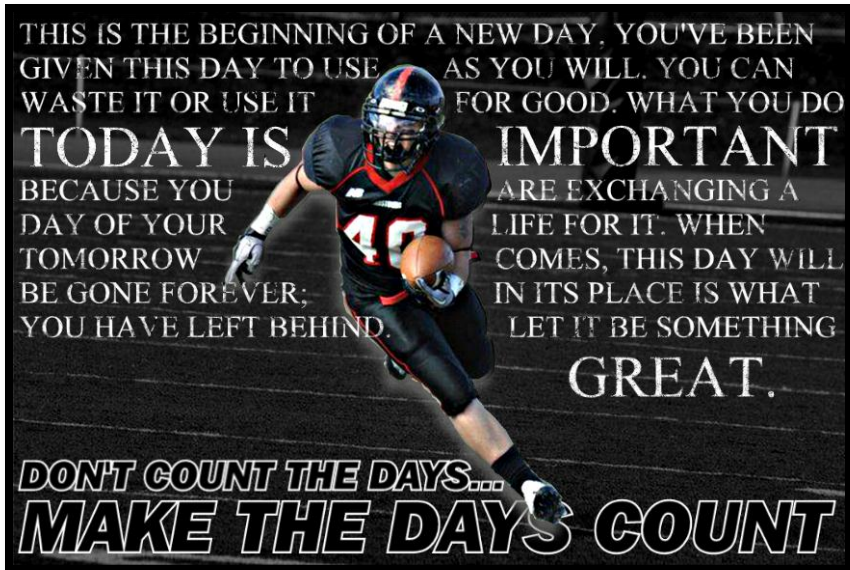
DEREK SHEELY



- A bright, strong, and healthy 22-year-old college senior
- Dean's list, double major, and academic all-conference football player
- In the best shape of his life at 5'11" and 220 pounds – no braces, no cavities, and no documented concussions



DEREK SHEELY



- In August 2011, during preseason football practice, Derek suffered a brain injury and died one week later on August 28
- It is suspected that Derek died from Second Impact Syndrome, when a second concussion is sustained before the brain can recover from the first
- **KEY POINT:** If this can happen to Derek it could happen to anyone

CONCUSSION FACTS

1. Concussions happen more often than you may think
 - CDC estimates 3.8 millions sports-related concussions every year
 - That's one concussion every 8 seconds
 2. Concussions happen in all sports not just football
 - Soccer, cheerleading, gymnastics, basketball, hockey, and others
 3. Many concussions occur during practice
 4. Most concussions occur without the person being unconscious
 5. Concussions can occur without a big helmet-to-helmet hit (whiplash)
 6. All concussions are serious because they alter brain functions
 7. The concussed player may not know they are injured
- **KEY POINT:** What seems like a mild bump, ding, or stinger may be serious

CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- ❑ **Thinking:** confusion, memory problems, or difficulty concentrating
- ❑ **Physical:** headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, slurred speech, slow reaction time, sensitive to noise/light, or nausea/vomiting
- ❑ **Mood:** irritability, sadness, or anxiety (suicides)
- ❑ **Sleep:** sleeping more or less than usual, trouble falling asleep
- ❑ **Loses Consciousness** (even briefly)

- ❑ Symptoms
 - ❑ May worsen with physical or mental exertion
 - ❑ May not appear for hours or days after the injury
 - ❑ Can last minutes, days, weeks, or months

- ❑ **KEY POINT:** Proactively look for concussions and do not ignore symptoms

CONCUSSION DANGERS

- Repetitive concussions can cause serious memory problems, learning disorders, or death
- **Second Impact Syndrome** is when a second concussion occurs before the brain recovers from the first concussion – this results in rapid uncontrollable brain swelling, permanent brain damage, or death
- Unreported concussions are untreated concussions
- You can replace your arm, leg, kidney, lung, and even your heart – but there is no replacement for your brain
- **KEY POINT:** Never play with a concussion; always report concussions, as treatment when they first occur can prevent further injury or death

WHAT CAN ATHLETES DO?

- **ACTION: Report All Concussions**

- Concussions are a wound not a weakness
- Never be pressured into playing with a concussion
- Protect your teammates – they might not know they are concussed
 - ▣ All of a sudden you start beating your friend in Xbox or Play Station
 - ▣ Your friend tells you to turn down your music
 - ▣ Your friend has headaches, dizziness, blurred vision, or mood swings
- Don't be afraid, know the risks, and know the smart choices

- **KEY POINT:** Early reporting leads to a less severe injury, faster healing, and quicker return to play

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- **ACTION: Seek Expert Medical Attention**
- This is a rapidly evolving science and you need to take your child to a specialist (e.g., neurologist)
- You wouldn't ask your family physician, school nurse, or coach to treat you for heart disease or cancer – you'd want a specialist
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of concussions especially mood swings
- Physical and mental rest will help the brain heal
- **KEY POINT:** Concussions are brain injuries – if your child has a concussion then your child has a brain injury

WHAT CAN COACHES DO?

- **ACTION: Create a Safe Environment**
- Most concussions go unreported because the player is afraid of losing playing time or is afraid the coach will think they are soft
- Concussions are a wound not a weakness – encourage/reward players for reporting concussions
- Ensure equipment fits properly and that safe techniques (e.g., tackling) are followed at all times
- Limit contact in practice (e.g., heading the ball drills)
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- **KEY POINT:** The most important way to reduce the risk of concussions is to increase reporting of concussions – be a hero, break the stigma



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QUESTIONS?

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT

WWW.THEDEREKSHEELYFOUNDATION.ORG