

# NFL concussion testimony sparks reaction

**BY AMY TENNERY**  
REUTERS

Current and former players had strong reactions the day after a top NFL official acknowledged for the first time a link between football-related concussions and the degenerative brain condition known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE).

Chris Kluwe, a former punter for the Minnesota Vi-

kings, mocked the NFL's concession in a tweet linking to a Deadspin article titled: "NFL Official Admits For First Time There Is 'Certainly' A Link Between Football And CTE."

"NFL also admits 'water likely wet,' as well as 'sky possibly blue on occasion,'" Kluwe (@ChrisWarcraft) quipped in a tweet on Tuesday. Kluwe has written for Deadspin, a sports blog owned by Gawker Media, in

the past.

The testimony from Jeff Miller, the NFL's senior vice president for health and safety, came during a hearing before the U.S. House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Committee on Monday.

During the forum on concussions and head injuries, Miller said that there is "certainly" a link between CTE and football, based on Boston University research

showing 90 out of 94 NFL players' brains examined postmortem had signs of the disease.

Miller also stated that "a number of questions" need to be asked on the subject, and players took to social media to air their response.

A tweet sent from Cleveland Browns wide receiver Brian Hartline's verified Twitter account, @brianhartline, cited the Boston University data.

"Boston University researchers have found evidence of CTE in 90 of 94 former NFL players studied," Hartline tweeted. "Ya there's a link."

Player safety has long been a topic of concern in the league but focus intensified over brain injury last year.

The 2015 film "Concussion," as well as the August 2015 posthumous induction of linebacker Junior Seau

into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, brought additional attention to the issue. Seau committed suicide in 2012 and a study of his brain later showed he had CTE.

Ravens' tackle Eugene Monroe (@TheSeventy-Fifth) also tweeted a link to an article about Miller's testimony Tuesday. Later, he tweeted: "If you're a player and you see this. Junior Seau and many others. Yes, it can be us too."



Hampden Academy's Kenny Brewer-Frazee (center) shoots past Lewiston's Za'mond Smith (left) and Travis Maier during the Unified basketball North regional championship game at Hampden on Tuesday. Hampden Academy won.

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## Hampden

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The sport, a partnership among the Maine Principals' Association, Special Olympics Maine and Project Unify, a branch of Special Olympics, increased its number of teams statewide this winter to 32 from 17 during its inaugural season.

"And we've continued to hear the wonderful stories, the opportunities this sport provides for these kids and what it means for the school itself," said Maine Princi-

pals' Association Assistant Executive Director Mike Burnham.

Burnham expects the growth to continue, but it won't come without some growing pains. In the case of unified basketball, that involves the level of competitiveness from team to team.

"I think there's some question in the state of Maine as to whether they might split it up and have some teams that are going to compete for a gold ball and some that just wish to play the season," said County. "I understand that. You kind of get a feel early in a game for which teams you're play-

ing that are going to be competitive and which teams are more concerned about playing time.

"I told my kids all season long that we were going to even out the playing time, and then come the playoffs, we were going to try to win the games. They did a great job of accepting that," he said.

Hampden's Lee shares a similar sentiment.

"You must uphold the integrity of the game of basketball, so absolutely there should be competitiveness," she said. "The fact that we're unified, we've already won in that sense. We are unified, and the rewards that

come off the court are greater than those on the court. We just happen to use basketball as our means."

That competitiveness was on full display as Hampden and Lewiston met for the first time this winter, particularly early in the contest before the Broncos outscored the Blue Devils 10-4 in the third quarter to build a 32-17 cushion.

"It's very important [to win]," said Hampden senior partner Kyle Townsend, the starting goalie on Hampden's varsity soccer team last fall. "But we're unified, we're all one, and that's what matters."

# Mets waive shortstop Ruben Tejada

WIRE SERVICE REPORTS

Ruben Tejada's time with the Mets may be coming to an end. The Mets have **MLB NOTEBOOK** placed the shortstop on waivers, industry sources confirmed.

The move could save the Mets around \$3 million.

While Tejada would provide experienced depth on the bench, the Mets have Matt Reynolds waiting in line to fill the role. The Mets had explored trades for Tejada but apparently couldn't find any willing partners.

Tejada hit .261 with three home runs, 28 RBIs and 36 runs in 116 games last season.

Tejada had his left leg fractured after a violent takeout slide by Chase Utley of the Dodgers in Game 2 of last year's NLDS. Tejada missed the remainder of the playoffs.

The Mets signed shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera, who may not be ready by Opening Day after suffering a strained patella tendon in his left knee, and second baseman Neil Walker this offseason, leaving Tejada as a bench player.

### Jays' Encarnacion out at least one week

Toronto Blue Jays designated hitter Edwin Encarnacion was shut down Tuesday for at least a week with what manager John Gibbons termed a "little oblique issue."

Gibbons said the injury was minor at a pregame huddle before the spring training game against the Baltimore Orioles.

The 33-year-old has not played in a game this spring.

Encarnacion had an abscessed tooth removed and was ready to take the field last Thursday when he felt pain in his side.

"He won't do anything

that involves twisting or turning," Gibbons said. "It's minor. But those things can turn into bad things if you don't watch it, so (Encarnacion) is on hold."

Encarnacion should be ready for the regular season April 3, Gibbons said, because he's "one guy who probably doesn't need as many at-bats. At least he's shown that."

### Rockies' Descalso breaks left hand

Colorado Rockies infielder Daniel Descalso will be sidelined for more than a month after breaking a bone in his left hand.

Descalso suffered the injury when hit by a pitch from Cleveland's Tom Gorzelanny on Friday. X-rays were negative but intense swelling continued and prompted the club to have Descalso undergo an MRI exam on Monday.

The Rockies received the

results back on Tuesday and announced that Descalso has an avulsion fracture — where a small chunk of the bone attached to a ligament or tendon — gets separated from the main part of the bone.

The injury will leave the Rockies shorthanded in the infield as starting shortstop Jose Reyes is on paid leave while waiting to face domestic-violence charges.

Descalso, 29, is in the second season of a two-year, \$3.6 million deal with Colorado. He batted just .205 last season.

"People get caught up in the numbers," Rockies manager Walt Weiss told reporters. "It's a very tough role to have pretty numbers. It's very rare that guys in that role have pretty numbers. It's about how many ways can they help you win a game, versatility, the leadership and the professional at-bat that he takes. He got some big hits for us."

## LaBree

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He also admitted he wanted job security.

When he lost his job at WZON, it was the third time it had occurred while working in broadcasting.

He had a job at a radio station in Lincoln only to have it go out of business, and then he was at the radio stations under the WABI-TV Channel 5 umbrella in Bangor before it was sold and his position was cut from full time to part time.

"I decided that I wanted to have options so I went back to school," said LaBree, who began working toward his degree online at the University of Phoenix in the fall of 2012, just before he went with Duff to Bangor radio station The Sports Ticket, 92.9 FM.

LaBree said he still intends to do some play-by-play for The Ticket when his schedule allows and is glad he will be keeping his hand in broadcasting.

He will be working an overnight shift at EMMC.

He pointed out that the money will be better at EMMC, "but that certainly isn't why I did this."

"I've never had an issue with pay or anything like

that. It's more of a career decision," he said.

"It's a good move for him," said Duff, the brand manager at The Ticket.

LaBree had been the assistant brand manager and had worked with Duff for 22 years between WZON and The Ticket.

"He'll be tough to replace," Duff added. "He has intimate knowledge about everything concerning broadcast sports, on and off the air. You need to be able to do a little bit of everything, and he could certainly do anything you asked of him."

LaBree, who intends to eventually seek a master's degree in medical administration, developed a love of sports medicine before he got into broadcasting.

He said he struck up a friendship with the late Wes Jordan, the former longtime trainer at the University of Maine, and attended Jordan's summer clinics.

LaBree did some athletic training when he was at Old Town High School.

"But then I got bitten by the broadcasting bug," he said.

Duff said he is hoping to name a replacement for LaBree "sooner than later."



Duff

## Barron

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the Southeastern, Atlantic Coast, Big Ten, Big 12 or Pac 12.

"There's nothing negative about the situation, it's all positive on both sides," Creech said.

Barron is in the final year of his original five-year contract signed in 2001. It pays him \$122,000 this year as he received \$3,000 increases each year for four years on top of his original \$110,000 salary.

However, money was not the most important factor in his decision to accept the

UMaine job five years ago. He had stepped away from a more lucrative assistant's position at Baylor in 2009, citing a busy, hectic pace that limited spending quality time with his wife, Maureen, and children Lane, Rae and Billy.

His experience at North Carolina reinvigorated his desire to become a head coach, and UMaine was in need of someone to turn its program around.

"You want to be somewhere where you're wanted, where you're needed," Barron said after coming to UMaine.

Even so, Barron will have the opportunity this spring to re-evaluate his situation and consider his next move.

## Patriots

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backup Jabaal Sheard and 2015 draft picks Geneo Grissom (third round) and Trey Flowers (fourth round).

### Ebner to try for Olympic rugby team

Another big-time football player has announced his intention to take a shot at the 2016 Summer Olympics.

New England Patriots safety Nate Ebner was granted a leave of absence on Tuesday and plans to join the U.S. rugby team at its Chula Vista training camp.

"We are proud to support (at)Natebner34 in his effort to earn a place on the United States National Rugby team," the team tweeted.

Earlier, Buffalo Bills receiver Marquise Goodwin and USC star Adoree' Jackson said they would try to qualify for the U.S. track team in the long jump.

At 6-foot-2, 220 pounds, Ebner was an All-American in rugby at Ohio State before being selected in the sixth round of the 2012 NFL draft.

In four seasons with the Patriots, he has become a staple on special teams and was re-signed by the team this week.

## Stony Brook's first Big Dance a Cinderella ball

**BY GREG LOGAN**  
NEWSDAY

Like it or not, Stony Brook's Seawolves were fitted for Cinderella's slipper when the NCAA selection committee slotted them opposite Kentucky in a first-round East Regional game Thursday night in Des Moines, Iowa.

Tournament officials always swear story line is not a factor in arranging the bracket. But the chance to match the first-time NCAA participant with the quaint name against a hoops Goliath making its 55th appearance in the 9:40 p.m. start, where it should draw a huge television rating, was too good to pass up.

"Is that the story line?"

SBU coach Steve Pikiell asked Monday after practice. "We've embraced all the challenges ... I hope our experience helps us. You've got to be poised. I mean, they have lottery picks, the best high school players in the country.

"Let's put it this way: I didn't put in one phone call to a kid who said, 'Kentucky is recruiting me.' ... It's great for a young university that's been swinging at the fence here for a few years to get an opportunity to play the king of college basketball. That's what Kentucky is."

The elation that swept over Stony Brook on Saturday when the Seawolves captured the America East title and automatic NCAA bid could have been dampened when

the daunting matchup was announced Sunday night. But they are embracing the moment. There was a phalanx of local television crews on hand Monday afternoon, and Pikiell was scheduled later for seven TV and radio interviews.

The prospect of facing a roster loaded with future NBA pros thrills the Seawolves. "They're one of my favorite teams to watch because they're so entertaining," said Seawolves star Jameel Warney, who also was scheduled for an ESPN interview. "They've got one of the best defending guards in Tyler Ulis, a lottery pick in Jamal Murray and a great guard in Isaiah Briscoe. It's a great matchup for all of us,

and we'll see what we do on Thursday."

Stony Brook wing man Ahmad Walker, who will be tasked with alternating between guarding Murray's all-around game and the slashing moves of Briscoe, was aglow. "What better way than to go up against one of the most prestigious institutions in basketball?" Walker asked. "They're a team everyone dreams of playing, especially coming from a small school like Stony Brook to play a team like Kentucky is exciting."

Greenlawn's Lucas Woodhouse will be alternating with Walker on Briscoe and Murray, and as Stony Brook's top assist man, he has to find ways to get the ball to Warney in good spots to score.



Creech

has not been used for basketball since 2013.

"We didn't consider it at all," Creech said. "Cross Center is our home court, so we only considered hosting the dates it is available."

That's not to say there was any guarantee UMaine would have been awarded a first-round home game had the Bangor Boat Show not

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