

RANSOM EVERGLADES IS A LEADER IN SPORTS SAFETY

Excerpted from September 13, 2010 assembly address

DAVID GOLDSTEIN '13

The reason we are having this assembly, as you may have already guessed, is to raise awareness about concussions. The better we understand concussions, the safer every one of us will be. The roots of my attachment to concussion prevention and management trace back to my own experiences with concussions and the lessons I took from those experiences.

As you may know, I am a soccer player. I've played the sport since I was four years old, and I love it. My weapon of choice in soccer is my head, both in the tactical sense of knowledge of the game, and to pummel headers out of my side of the field. Since heading the ball was a strong suit of mine, it made sense that I always was looking for the opportunity to head the ball. This meant I increased my chances of being involved in a collision involving my head. [After suffering two concussions], I made the decision to wear a protective headgear whenever I played soccer from then on. I chose to use a headgear that only covered my forehead, rather than a full head headgear [because I was] self-conscious about looking ridiculous. I might have made a different decision if I had been under the supervision of

a concussion expert. The lack of a full head headgear came back to bite me last year in the District Final against Gulliver. With about twenty minutes left in this ferocious contest, a ball floated towards me in the air [and] I jumped up for the header. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Gulliver's six foot four monster midfielder launching himself toward the ball and me. I met the ball first, but he followed through with his head, which knocked into the back of mine, just under my headgear. I was not knocked out, nor was I incoherent, so I played the rest of the game even though my head was hurt. Now that I have been well informed about concussions, I know that no one should ever keep playing after having a head trauma. I should have taken myself out and been evaluated by someone certified and trained. After the game, the first thing I did was to find my parents and to tell them that something was wrong. I had a club soccer practice the next morning [and] my club coach would have been furious that I couldn't play for him because I was injured in a school game. We made a decision that may have caused me months of additional pain, to play soccer the day after my head trauma without consulting a

doctor. Right after my club practice the next day, I hurried to the car and collapsed because of the pain. My family and I then realized, of course too late, that I might have suffered another concussion the previous night, my third in four years.

We began to consult various doctors; some advised me to never play soccer again. This possibility crushed me, as I couldn't imagine life without the sport that I loved. My headaches continued for over 3 months. After suffering for so long, I eventually found Dr. Kester Nedd and Dr. Gillian Hotz at the University of Miami Sports Medicine Clinic. With their expertise and care, my pain went away, and I hope to play Ransom soccer this winter. Their management of my concussion was essential to my recovery.

At my first meeting with Dr. Hotz and Dr. Nedd, they told me that they were going to put me through something that was called the ImpACT Test. I had heard about the ImpACT Test before and wanted to see what it was like. After taking it, I realized how easy it was and how it could be of help to me. They also made me realize that all of the activity that I had been doing wasn't good for my [recovery].



Claude Grubair, RE Athletic Director, Adam Goldstein, Ellen Mocer, Head of School, Marc Buoniconti, David Goldstein '13, Dr. Gillian Hotz and Cheryl Goldstein

I had been under their care earlier, my situation would have been a lot better. They also explained the source of my headaches and prescribed medication that was very beneficial.

In the following days, I began to think about my situation. I [wanted] to turn my negative experience into a positive for others so I asked Dr. Hotz to bring ImpACT testing to RE. Coach Grubair arranged for Dr. Hotz to give a presentation about ImpACT to the school administrators [and] everyone who was there agreed that we owed Ransom Everglades students a safer sports environment.

Sometime during the conversation, I mentioned the possibility of spreading the testing to other schools. I felt the more student-athletes we could help, the better off our community would be. Coach Grubair approved of the idea and pointed out that we should try to spread ImpACT testing at these schools and at RE to as many sports as possible because concussions are prevalent in sports such as

sailing and volleyball, not just in football like everyone thinks. This year, we will be the first school in Miami to ImpACT test all of its high school athletes. He also said Ransom would sponsor a public school that wouldn't be able to afford the licensing. This idea eventually snowballed into a goal: to raise enough money to provide ImpACT testing for every public school in Miami-Dade County and to raise money for concussion research. I began to work with The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, the amazing research center driven by Marc Buontoconti, who is an unbelievable inspiration. And now, after months of hard work, Countywide Concussion Care is here. With the assistance of the KiDZ Neuroscience Center, which is part of The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis and the UHealth Sports Medicine Center at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, the time has come to accomplish our mission.

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TO SUPPORT
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