

Eli Manning and Football Hall of Famers Discuss Concussions and the Risks and Rewards of America's Favorite Game

Brain Injury Awareness Celebrity Sports Forum: Protecting School-Aged Athletes from Concussions

WOODBURY, NY – MARCH 27, 2019: NY Giants quarterback **Eli Manning** this week joined football Hall of Famers, professional boxers, board-certified doctors, pro-athletes and sports safety advocates for a forum focused on protecting school-aged athletes from concussions.

NFL athletes in attendance included: **Harry Carson**, *NY Giants*; **Curtis Martin**, *NY Jets*; **Randy Cross**, *San Francisco 49ers*; **Marty Lyons**, *NY Jets*; **John Nitti**, *NY Jets*; and **Wesley Walker**, *NY Jets*. Professional featherweight boxer **Chris Algieri**, champion jockey **Ramon Dominguez**, heavy weight boxer **Gerry Cooney**, and medical experts **Dr. Hallie Zwibel**, *director of the Center for Sports Medicine at NYIT*, and **Dr. Barry Miskin**, *medical director of the Joe Namath Neurological Research Center in Florida*, also sat on the panel.

In a Q&A session moderated by CBS Channel 2 medical reporter **Dr. Max Gomez**, Eli Manning praised his former teammates **Ahmad Bradshaw**, **Brandon Jacobs** and **Chris Snee** and named **Odell Beckham Jr.** as the most gifted athlete he's ever played with. The two-time Super Bowl champion and MVP commended the NFL for taking measures to protect athletes from head injuries and spoke of the importance of football to himself and his family.

"I love what I do," Manning said. "I love playing football. I love playing quarterback for the New York Giants."

Approximately 300 community members, coaches and school representatives attended the event, which was held at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 27, at the Fox Hollow Inn in Woodbury. The annual Celebrity Sports Forum was organized by the **Head Injury Association** in partnership with **NYIT Center for Sports Medicine**.

Among the highlights of the event was a speech from keynote speaker **Jenna Winokur**, who lost of her brother to suicide after he suffered multiple concussions as a high school athlete.

In recent years, sports related concussions have become a hot issue, with hundreds of thousands of children across the country suffering sports injuries each year. In the United States alone, a brain injury occurs every 12 seconds and there are more than 5 million Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors across the country.

"When it comes to head injuries, no sport is off limits," said Liz Giordano, CEO of Head Injury Association. "We see concussions in boxing, horse racing, football, cheerleading, soccer and more."

Athletes spoke of the importance of proper safety equipment and helmets and discussed various safety improvements in football, like new NFL rules and regulations aimed at eliminating unnecessary hits and protecting player's heads.

Although there was some disagreement over whether or not each athlete would do it all over again if they could, everyone agreed on one thing: protecting young athletes from injury and concussion is a top priority.

About Head Injury Association: The Head Injury Association is an independent, not-for-profit agency widely recognized for its innovative programming for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and survivors of TBI, or traumatic brain injury. Since 1988 the organization has provided a network of services, including residential and day programs, specifically designed to meet the needs of survivors and their families. Head Injury Association serves hundreds of people across Long Island and the five boroughs.



Top: Harry Carson, John Nitti, Dr. Hallie Zwibel, Randy Cross, Dr. Max Gomez, Jerry Cooney, Eli Manning, Marty Lyons, Chris Algieri and Wesley Walker. Bottom: Ramon Dominguez, Maxine Agee, Jenna Winokur, Liz Giordano, Ann Liguori and Curtis Martin.