



# HEADSTRONG

Hamilton Brain Injury Association  
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## CASS' CORNER

### Continuing Rap on CTE

It has not been terribly long, of course, since you have read my sometimes rambling writing regarding chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in numerous sports.



I have told my readers about the effects CTE has had, certainly in football players. Too, of course, athletes in hockey, soccer, basketball, rugby, in any sport that involves physical contact between its players.

One of my more recent efforts centred on football, my having played (on the offensive line, primarily), at my Dad's behest, as well as talking about his history in the game, excelling in the sport, while he was in high school, in Wisconsin.

He was always so proud, I recall, of his football acumen, while growing up, as well as how he excelled at every level of the game.

Pride goeth before a fall, though; have we not all heard that in our readings of Greek mythology, if not from the biblical Book of Proverbs?

Well, it may not be a 'fall,' per se, but, rather, a change in attitude and/or opinion, regarding the health and physical well-being of a grandson of his (and nephew of mine. . . .).

Dr. Henry M. Heller is using his medical expertise, along with fatherly wisdom, to supplement his request to my youngest sister that said young man ('older boy?') not be made to play football, in these days where the sport and our society's attitudes, in general, are becoming more violent and self- concerned ('less' concerned?).

I have been 'encouraged' in recent days and weeks, too, only insofar as my writings' arguments are being supported, in seeing numerous hockey players, even from our own Hamilton Bulldogs Ontario Hockey League team falling prey to the inevitable physical maladies.

This is all well and good, and I certainly hope and trust what I write and have been shown, from various sources. I suspect, too, that you appreciate the growing realization and understanding I have elicited, from 'Dr. Dad.'

None of you know him, though. You have not been made as intimately aware of his past football glory as I. You may as well be listening to Mr. Bob Costas, of media and sports telecast fame, saying similar things. . .

"Bob Costas, you say?"

Yes, my friends, noted sportscaster, Bob Costas.

The reality, he says, is "football destroys people's brains."

Costas was speaking on a panel at the University of Maryland, alongside additional sports journalists and personalities. He reportedly called the decline of football the most significant story in American sports.

"The cracks in the foundation are there," Costas said, as told by USA Today Sports. "The day-to-day issues, as serious as they may be, they may come and go. But you cannot change the nature of the game. I certainly would not let, if I had an athletically gifted 12- or 13-year-old son, I would not let him play football."

Costas was joined on the show by sports columnist Christine Brennan, along with Tony Kornheiser and Mike Wilbon, from ESPN.

Kornheiser hosts "Pardon the Interruption" with Wilbon; he and Costas were in agreement.

"It's not going to happen this year, and it's not going to happen in five years or 10 years," Kornheiser added. "But Bob is right." At some point, the cultural wheel turns just a little bit, almost imperceptibly, and parents say, 'I don't want my kids to play.' And then it becomes only the province of the poor, who want it for economic reasons to get up and out."

'If they don't find a way to make it safe, and we don't see how they will . . . the game's not going to be around. It's not."