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Spreading the Word about CTE

Chris Nowinski was in New York City late last week to join 1,200 former football players gathering for the [Ivy Football Association](#) (IFA) dinner at the Marriott Marquis. Earlier in the day, he and a group met for an informal breakfast at the Harvard Club in midtown,

where I met Chris and got a sense of his back-breaking schedule. At both events, there was considerable buzz about chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a long-term degenerative and incurable brain disease caused by repeated hits to the head—mild or otherwise.

[Cerebrum](#), the Dana Foundation's online neuroscience journal, had invited Chris to write about CTE. His recently posted story, "[Hit Parade: The Future of the Sports Concussion Crisis](#)," couldn't have been timelier. In the two weeks leading up to our publication date, a new study had been released, several Super Bowl participants had talked about the implications of CTE in their own lives, and President Obama had expressed his own concern in a magazine interview. As senior editor of *Cerebrum*, I told Chris how much I appreciated his keeping us current and updating our story.



Chris had come to New York directly from the Super Bowl in New Orleans, the first stop on a week-long whirlwind tour. At the Super Bowl, his [Sports Legacy Institute](#) (SLI) had held a press conference to urge state athletic associations to ban full-contact offseason football practices for high school players. Surrounding Chris were a group of current and former NFL players, including Matt Birk of the Baltimore Ravens, Matt Hasselbeck of the Tennessee Titans, and Eric Winston of the Kansas City Chiefs.

The IFA biennial dinner presented Chris with the opportunity to spread the word about CTE and raise money for the SLI and the [Boston University Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy](#). For the first time, both had been named the official charity partner of the dinner, an invitation that grew out of their work with the Ivy League as part of their concussion safety initiative. Dartmouth and Brown universities, for example, are among college football programs using the [Head Impact Telemetry System](#), which gathers head impact data from sensors in helmets.

Following the dinner, Chris went to Toronto, where he gave the keynote address at the [UHN Toronto Rehab Institute conference](#): "Challenges & Controversies in TBI: The Science & Clinical Management of Concussions." The following day a blizzard delayed his flight to California, where he was set to speak in Oakland on the topic of "Concussion: What you don't know can hurt you," a symposium for 175 medical professionals, followed by a fundraiser in Pebble Beach, co-hosted by Pro Football Hall of Famer Mike Haynes.

On Monday, Chris met with legislative, association, and foundation members to build SLI's California Concussion Coalition. Before returning to Boston, he made one last stop: a meeting on partnership opportunities with the medical team of De La Salle High School in Concord, CA. "I'm working towards my Ph.D., and the demand to get the word out there about CTE means I have to miss classes and put my academic goals on the back burner," Chris told me at breakfast. "But it's a critical time, and the sacrifice is well worth it."

--Bill Glovin

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Joanne said...

Please remember to include the BOXER in all your efforts. They have to many times been put to the side with many issues such as NO PENSION NO HEALTHCARE and NO UNION. They need our support to help them realize the dangers of the SPORT of BOXING.

Thank You

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