

## Concussion Awareness Event Coming to Keuka



*Ray Ciancaglini travels across the country addressing the dangers of ignoring the symptoms of concussions. He will address Keuka's intercollegiate athletics teams as well as the community during a free speech Thursday night.*

### **By John Boccacino/Sports Information Director**

As a successful middleweight boxer, **Ray Ciancaglini** experienced tremendous success in the ring, never suffering a knockdown during his seven-year career while posting a 31-9-4 record in 44 career bouts. But whenever he addresses current athletes during his frequent visits across the region, the 61-year-old Ciancaglini has a more pressing story to tell than reminiscing about a particular knockout win in the ring: he's focused on raising awareness of concussions among athletes, and the dangers of not recognizing when one has suffered a concussion.

Ciancaglini, a resident of Romulus and a Geneva native, will address members of the community and the student-athletes on Keuka College's 16 intercollegiate sports teams during a free concussion awareness event from 8 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 11 inside the Weed Physical Arts Center on Keuka's campus. The event is titled: "Concussion Awareness: Not to Be Ignored," and his talk will address the growing issue of concussions among athletes, including how to recognize when a concussion has occurred, the dangers of improperly treating concussions and the risks of ignoring potential symptoms of concussions. "No one should have to suffer through what I'm going through as a result of not properly treating my concussion," said Ciancaglini, who has experienced headaches since he was 16 and lives with dementia and persistent tremors.

"We have to protect athletes from themselves, and concussion prevention is so easy. If you get your bell rung, you have to be honest about the symptoms, get it properly addressed and wait until a doctor examines you before returning to action. If you start thinking you're tough and can battle a concussion, that's when you'll run into big problems. I challenged my concussion, but I got beat and I live with that fact every day of my life."

Ciancaglini was heavily involved in the recent passing of the Concussion Management and Awareness Act, a state law that requires school districts to have a policy in place for dealing with head injuries. Each day, Ciancaglini must take medications to help control his tremors and his persistent headaches. He travels the country speaking to athletes, coaches and parents about the dangers of ignoring concussions. Ciancaglini, who has spoken at hundreds of high schools and colleges, has a clear message to today's athletes: even if you are the most competitive person in the world, ignoring concussion symptoms or attempting to play through a concussion will only harm your future, and that's a big price to pay for winning a game.

“It’s always better to err on the side of caution,” Ciancaglini said. “If you suffer a concussion or have concussion-like symptoms and rush back onto the field before you’ve been properly cleared by a doctor, that’s a mistake that you’ll live with for the rest of your life. If it turns out a mistake was made and you didn’t suffer a concussion, you made the right choice sitting out and you can live with erring on the side of safety. But boy, if you make the mistake of playing with a concussion and then suffer another injury to the head, that’s something you’ll never forgive yourself for. I would trade all of my wins in the ring to be free of these headaches and tremors.”

Admission is free and the event is open to Keuka College students, faculty, staff and members of the community.

To find out more about Ciancaglini’s efforts to prevent concussions through the Second Impact group, visit [www.thesecondimpact.com](http://www.thesecondimpact.com)