

THE HARD HITTING CONSEQUENCES OF CONCUSSIONS

Within the past five years, college student-athletes across the nation have suffered an average of about 10,500 concussions, according to the National Collegiate Athletic Association.



Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, known as CTE, is a disease caused by repeated head traumas — sometimes found in athletes who play contact sports such as football, soccer, basketball, wrestling and hockey — and can eventually cause brain degeneration.



Though multiple concussions have been speculated to be the cause of CTE, in reality CTE happens because of many factors. According to Sun Devil Athletics Team Physician Shanyn Lancaster, there are several factors that can cause CTE such as the number of concussions, how bad the symptoms are, the severity of the hit, level of the damage from concussion, type of head trauma, potential substance abuse and potential mental health issues.



For 24 hours following the concussion impact, athletes must refrain from attending practice or even going to class to minimize movement as much as possible.



Lancaster also mentioned that sometimes student-athletes are not happy with the restrictions, but eventually come to an understanding of why it is important.



Lancaster says this information could also help contrast and address a traditional attitude stemming from various team cultures of choosing not to address a problem or injury from a set “deal with it” mentality.

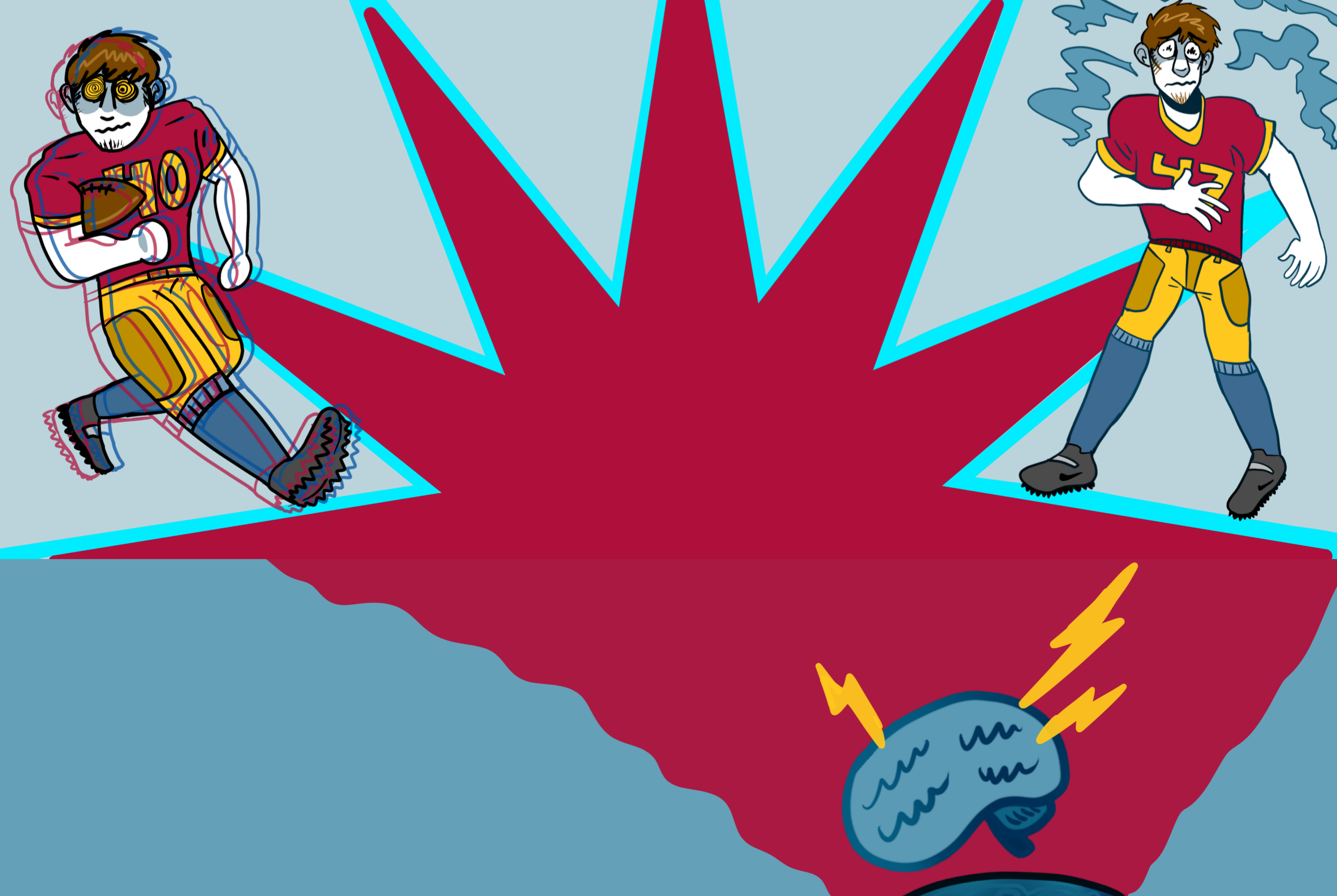


In 2016, the Center for Strategic Communication was awarded a \$400,000 grant by the NCAA to study how interests and team culture can influence concussion self-reporting.



Steven Corman, professor at the Hugh Downs School for Human Communication and director of the ASU Center for Strategic Communication says, “If you’re a football player and you know there is a pro-scout in the stands, you want to have time playing in front of that scout. You get your head dinged and your ears are ringing. Your vision might be a little blurry. But you decide you’re going to go ahead and play because you want to have this opportunity with the scout. It’s easier to do that when you view concussion as a low-immediacy problem. At individual attitude levels, we think that is a big part of the problem. Athletes don’t realize that there are more immediate consequences to concussions.”

Biomedical sophomore Corey Wittenwyler says he experienced fuzziness, dizziness, stumbling and headaches. The next week, regular academic concentration became a challenge as he says it felt like his mind would wander. He says he would also suffer headaches throughout the week.



For professionals, scholars, student-athletes and coaches, the concussion conversation continues as new research comes up often.



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