League of Denial – Video guide and questions I
Part I – Mike Webster
0:00 - 21:37 minutes

Vocabulary

concussion - a stunning, damaging, or shattering effect from a hard blow; especially: a jarring injury of the brain resulting in disturbance of cerebral function.

neuropathologist - a doctor who practices neuropathology which is the study of disease of nervous system tissue, usually in the form of either small surgical biopsies or whole autopsy brains. Neuropathology is a subspecialty of anatomic pathology, neurology, and neurosurgery.

Questions and fill-in-the-blank

1. Who is Mike Webster and what does FRONTLINE propose happened to him and his brain?

2. What are reporters Steve Fainaru and Mark Fainaru-Wada investigating?

4. Webster’s favorite weapon was ____________________________________________________

3. How often are players hitting each others’ heads a year?

4. Often the force of the hits are ________ Gs or more.

5. Concussions are also know as _____________________________________________________

6. How did Mike Webster’s personality and behavior change after he retired from 17 years of NFL football? Describe his mental and physical decline:

7. The NFL found that Mike Webster’s disabilities were caused by ____________________________________________________
League of Denial – Video guide and questions II
Part II- The Growth of the NFL and Dr. Omlau’s Research
21:38 - 43:00

Vocabulary

clinician- a doctor who practices medicine with patients (as opposed to research)

Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy or CTE - a brain disease that gets worse over time as tau proteins surround brain cells choking them to death. It causes the patient’s brain to deteriorate which deeply affects their behavior and ability to function.

disability- a condition (such as an illness or an injury) that damages or limits a person's physical or mental abilities

neurologist- a scientist who studies the nervous system (the brain is part of the nervous system) and its diseases

retraction- a statement saying that something you said or wrote at an earlier time is not true or correct

tau protein- a protein found in the brain tissue that plays a role in stabilizing microtubules, but in excess can cause degeneration of the brain. Often found in the tissue samples of patients with Alzheimer’s.

tissue- a group of one particular type of cells, for example a group of neurons form brain tissue.

trauma- a serious injury to a person's body

Questions and fill-in-the-blank

1. The broadcast of Monday Night Football started in ___________ and marked a turning point in football’s popularity.

2. The _______________ and _______________ was beamed into _______________ American living rooms during _______________.

3. How did the NFL market the violence of the game?
4. What was the dark side to the big hits?

5. How did Troy Aikman’s concussion affect his memory?

6. How did the NFL respond to the growing concerns over concussions? Who did they blame?

7. What is a MTBI stand for?

8. Did the NFL do a good job choosing the doctor to lead the committee on concussion research? How do you know?

9. What did the NFL committee find?

10. In what ways was the first study flawed?

11. How did the 16 published papers shape common opinion on concussions and football?

12. Dr. Omalu found evidence of CTE in Mike Webster’s brain tissue. What does CTE stand for and what does it do to the brain? What behavioral changes does it cause?

13. Why was Dr. Omalu’s study groundbreaking?
14. What happened when Dr. Omalu tried to tell the NFL about his findings?

15. What reasons might cause a journal article to become retracted?

League of Denial – Video guide and questions III
Part III - The Discrediting of Dr. Omalu and his work
43:00 - 56:00

Questions
1. The NFL waged a smear-campaign against Dr. Omalu and his work. What motives did the NFL have to discredit Dr. Omalu? How would they benefit from it?

2. What were the implications of Dr. Omalu’s work and how might it change the way people felt about football?

3. What was the result of the NFL’s conference?

League of Denial – Video guide and questions IV
Part IV- Revival: Doctor McKee and Robert Nuwinski
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/youth-concussions
Questions

1. What role did Dr. Ann McKee and Christopher Nowinski play in reviving the investigation of CTE in football players? How were they able to do it?

2. Was the team of doctors - led by Doctor McKee - successful in presenting its research to the media in Tampa, Florida? What happened?

3. If Robert Goddell was unable to defend the NFL from the implications of the CTE research, what might the NFL stand to lose?

4. How was Doctor McKee treated at the meeting?

5. What were the two questions that the NFL doctors posed to Dr. McKee?

6. What reasons did the other doctors give as to why they didn’t believe Dr. McKee’s findings?

7. What did the leaked NFL retirement document show?

8. What impact did the wives of the NFL players have on the investigation?
League of Denial – Video guide and questions V

Part IV - Turning point
1:20:00 -

Questions

1. What was Robert Goodell’s response to the congressional committee?

2. What was the result of the congressional hearing? What did the NFL do?

3. What was so shocking about Owen Thomas’ brain?

4. What theory came out of that research? Specifically which players were most at risk for CTE and why?

5. An _____ year old High School athlete died ______ days after his ______ concussion.

6. How safe is it for children to play football?

7. What guidelines did Dr. Cantu give about children playing football?

8. No child under_____ should be playing football?

9. How is the youth brain different from the adult brain?

10. Why did Chris Nowinski blame the NFL for endangering children who play the game?
11. What arguments have been made against Dr. McKee’s research by other scientists?

12. One important question is why do some players get CTE and others don’t. What other factors may be at play in causing CTE?

13. Presently, out of the ____ brains of former NFL football players Dr. McKee has received and studied _____ had CTE.

14. Did CTE play a role in Junior Seau’s death?

15. What steps did the NFL take after the death of Junior Seau?

16. A lawsuit was brought against the NFL by ________________ former NFL players.

17. How much did the NFL agree to pay the retired NFL players?

Conclusion

1. Does football cause CTE?

2. Do you feel differently about the game of football and the NFL?

3. What should happen now?