Lessons from the Gridiron: The impact of concussions – Concluding discussion questions and writing prompts

1. How much do you think the NFL knew and when did they know it?

2. How much responsibility for damage stemming from head trauma should rest on the NFL players, who knew they were putting their bodies at risk? How much should the NFL be held responsible for?

3. Why do you think that ESPN pulled out of the documentary partnership at the last minute?

4. Compare and contrast today’s football players with the ancient gladiators from Rome.

5. Did the NFL shape public opinion about violence in football?

6. Outline how the NFL shaped public opinion about concussions over two decades.

7. Should the NFL have done something differently with respect to how they approached concussions and CTE? If so, what should they have done and when should they have done it?

8. Outline how CTE occurs in football players. Make sure to include how it affects younger players as well.

9. Imagine you are the parent of a child who wants to play football, how would you make your decision whether to let them play or not?

10. What happens to the brain when a concussion happens? What are the short-term and long-term side effects?

11. Imagine you are a lawyer for the NFL. How would you defend the NFL’s treatment of concussions in their players? What evidence could you use to prove that you had no knowledge that concussions can cause CTE?

12. Imagine you are a lawyer for the players and players’ wives. What case you build against the NFL? Outline your offense against the NFL lawyers.
13. Imagine you are a football player and your team has made it to the state finals. During the practice before the game you sustain a concussion. Would you lie about it so you could play? Why or why not?

14. What questions still need to be answered about CTE?

15. What did you think of Dr. Omalu? Was he an ethical doctor or just trying to get into the spotlight? Explain your answer.

16. What should the sports community do about concussions on the professional, college, high school and Pop Warner level?

17. How do concussions affect children differently than adults?