When Athletes Retire: Problems Leaving the Sports Arena

David R McDuff, M.D
Clinical Professor, University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore USA

www.mdSports.net dmcduff52@gmail.com
Retirement Problems

- Loss of camaraderie & identity
- Social isolation
- Loss of appropriate outlet for aggressive feelings
- Bankruptcy (78% NFL in 2 yrs; 60% NBA in 5 yrs)
- New Career (in sports vs out of sports vs school)
- Gambling (sporting events, horses, dogs, casinos)
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Injury & Chronic Pain (Rx Med Misuse)
- Family Conflict & Divorce
- Arrests (Driving while intoxicated, partner violence)
- Depression (identity crisis, stress, substances, pain)
- Suicide (Depression & chronic traumatic encephalopathy)
Why Athletes Go Bankrupt

- Unrealistic salary expectations
- Unqualified or Unethical Financial Advisors
- Make Bad Investments
- Invest in Ponzi Schemes
- Try to Run A Business
- Too Much Real Estate
- Too Many Children
- Partying, Alcohol & Drugs
- Divorces

SI Vault, Pablo Torre, 2009
Business Insider, Lawrence Delevingne, 2009
Problem Gambling

- Casinos (slots, blackjack, poker)
- Sporting Events (football, basketball)
- Golf & Billiards
- Dice (craps) & Cards
- Fantasy Football

John Daly  Charles Barkley  Michael Jordan  Pete Rose

Gilbert Arenas  Charlie Samuels
Post-Competitive Depression


NHL Player Rick Rypien
8/15/2011 Age 27
Suicide

- Mike Flanagan (Firing, Depression, Alcohol)
- Junior Seau (Depression, Prior Attempt & CTE)
- Kenny McKinley (Injury, Depression & Gambling)

8/24/11 Age 59  5/2/12 Age 42  9/20/10 Age 23
Partner Violence

- Jovan Belcher & Kasandra Perkins
- Chamique Holdsclaw & Jennifer Lacy
- Chris Benoit & Nancy/Daniel Benoit

- 21 of 32 NFL teams carried at least one player with domestic violence or assault charges on their rosters during the 2012 season...

Murder-Suicide
12/1/2012

Double murder-suicide
6/25/2007

Aggravated Assault
11/15/2012
Alcohol & Drug Abuse
Prescription Drug Misuse

- Alcohol (DUIs, Fights, Gambling, Urine Alc)
- Marijuana (relaxation, anger, sleep, pain)
- Cocaine (mood instability, insomnia)
- Pain Killers & Muscle Relaxants (injury, chronic pain)
- Steroids (injury recovery, comeback)
NFL Pain Killer Study
Cotter et al, Drug Alcohol Depend 2010:188-94

**OPIOID USE IN PAST 30 DAYS**
Excerpts from the study that show the characteristics of 644 retired NFL players by opioid use in the past 30 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>No use</th>
<th>Used as prescribed</th>
<th>Misused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean age in years</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American/other</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently unemployed</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NFL Pain Killer Study

• 52 percent of the retired players said they used prescription pain medication during their playing days. Of those, 71 percent said they misused the drugs then, and 15 percent of the misusers acknowledged misusing the medication within the past 30 days.
• Those who misused prescription painkillers while playing were three times more likely to misuse the drugs today than those who used the pills as prescribed while playing.
• 63 percent of the retired players who used prescription pain pills while playing obtained the medications from a nonmedical source: a teammate, coach, trainer, family member, dealer or the Internet.
Family Conflict & Divorce

- Houses & Cars
- Parenting, Custody, & Paternity
- Ongoing Family Financial Support
  (often for multiple families)
- Maintaining Lifestyle
- Separation & Divorce
- Career Transition
- Social Withdrawal
New Career

- Sports: coaching, broadcasting, ownership, administration, strength & conditioning
- Business: restaurants, car dealerships, equity partner
- Education: (complete bachelors, masters, doctorate)
- Philanthropy (foundation, board of directors-non profits)
Summary

- Athlete Assistance During College/University
- Athlete & Family Assistance During Pro Career
- Career and Personal Transition Services for athletes and family members
- Ongoing diagnostic assessments and coordinated treatment of preexisting and new conditions
- Former Player MH & Substance Services