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POWER OF 50 2011

Ever since The Globe and Mail honoured Reggie Fleming posthumously on last year's Power 50 list, the subject of concussions from head shots and blindsides hits has become kitchen-table fodder across the country. Fleming had donated his brain to science, and researchers found degenerative brain disease for the first time in a hockey player. A year later, the concern has filtered into minor hockey. Rest of the 50 inside »

JEFF BLAIR

jblair@globeandmail.com

It is a sometimes fuzzy world, this business of getting people to think about brain injuries. But Dr. Paul Echlin would like all of you – players, parents, coaches, fans and administrators – to know one thing about people such as himself and Dr. Charles Tator: They aren't trying to kill your favourite sport.

Really.

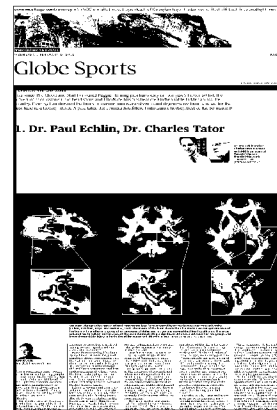
"We're not trying to stop sport or collisions in sports like football and hockey," Echlin said this week. "It's not about saying we can reduce the number of concussions to zero. But it is about saying we can significantly decrease the numbers."

More than anything it's about compiling cold, hard facts and numbers about concussions and the culture that contributes to their occurrence and misdiagnosis, and about cutting through the stubborn resistance and misunderstandings at a time when the best hockey player in the world sits at home in his parents' living room unsure of when he'll play another National Hockey League game.

Echlin, a sports medicine physician in London, Ont., was the lead researcher in a study of two unnamed junior hockey teams. The study was published in the November issue of *Neurosurg Focus*, and revealed that the rate of concussions was seven times more than previously reported and that players, coaches, referees and administrators were not taking the injuries as seriously as they should.

Tator is a neurosurgeon at Toronto Western Hospital and founder of ThinkFirst Canada. The Globe and Mail chose him last year as one of seven Canadians changing the world.

As far back as 1992, Tator was at the forefront of research and advocacy into spinal cord inju-



ries through his founding and stewardship of ThinkFirst Canada, an organization devoted to educating the public about head and spinal cord injuries. Tator is also part of a group gathering the brains of deceased athletes to study the long-term effects of concussions.

“This is an evolving picture, but I’m optimistic we’ve turned the corner,” said Tator, who considers the late Dr. Tom Pashby to be his mentor. Pashby’s research spearheaded the drive for Canadian Standards Association-approved facial protection for hockey and the introduction of facial protection in amateur play.

“Most people are now aware of what a concussion is,” Tator said. “It’s really quite amazing, the turnaround I have seen in the past 12 months that parents, referees, coaches and trainers are more aware of concussions. The majority of people now actually know what a concussion is, whereas before very few really labelled concussion correctly. You know, they were using terms like ‘having your bell rung.’”

Just this week, Tator and several of his peers finalized a 45-minute presentation on concussions that they are pushing to be included in preseason meetings for all players 18 and under on football and hockey teams.

“In 45 minutes,” Tator said, “we can get across enough information to players, parents, coaches, referees and trainers that will equip everybody to deal effectively with concussions. I’m talking about what the diagnosis consists of, the signs and symptoms of a concussion, and what the management of a concussed

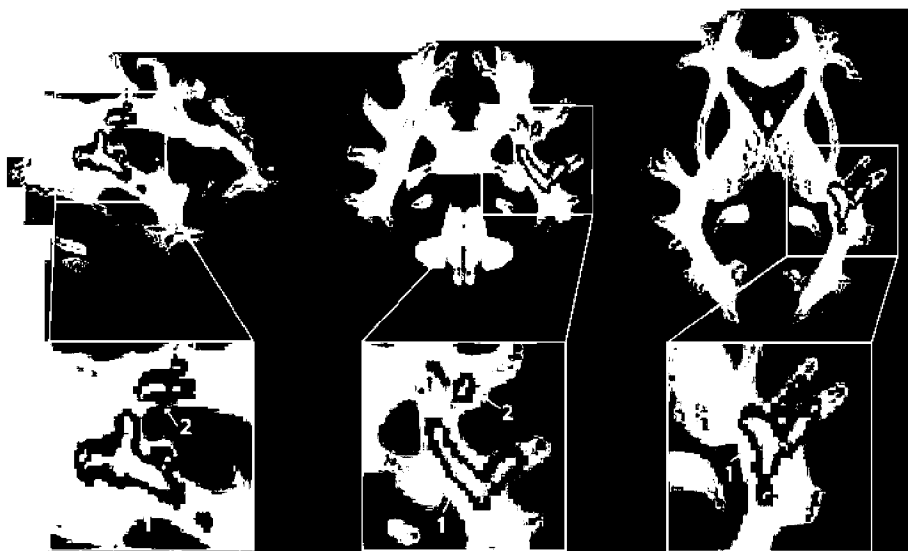
athlete consists of, including return-to-play guidelines.”

Echlin and Tator are due their status atop The Globe and Mail’s Sports Power List. Out of their advocacy is born research; out of that research is born advocacy. While that may not lead to a smarter NHL approach to dealing with head shots and concussions – you can’t have a battle if one side isn’t interested in becoming engaged – at the very least it contributes to the empowerment of people who might have a role in saving kids’ lives.

1. Dr. Paul Echlin, Dr. Charles Tator



Dr. Paul Echlin and Dr. Charles Tator are seen with MRI brain scans at Toronto Western Hospital this week. JENNIFER ROBERTS FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL



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Structural changes after sports-related concussions have been reported by researchers at Princeton University (Cubon, Putukian, Boyer and Dettwiler, 2011). The image of the brain shows the fibre tracts that connect one area of the brain with another in a group of 10 concussed athletes and 10 age- and sex-matched healthy athletes. The areas coloured red to yellow are the areas of the brain demonstrating a significant difference between the two groups and hence demonstrate injury in the brains of the concussed athletes. JOURNAL OF NEUROTRAUMA © MARY ANN LIEBERT

2

DONALD FEHR

Takes over as executive director of the National Hockey League Players' Association toward the twilight of a collective agreement with troubling issues, including the salary cap and floor, escrow payments, participation in the Winter Olympics, free agency, roster size and, not least, player safety.

3

GARY BETTMAN

By eliminating clutching and grabbing, the National Hockey League commissioner made the product more entertaining. Yet the league continues to sell violence, and with U.S. television rights coming up for bid, Bettman must weigh stiffer headshot and blindside-hit rules against the potential effect on ratings. Bettman has avoided a damaging credibility blow to his Sunbelt strategy by preventing Hamilton or Winnipeg from landing a seventh Canadian franchise, specifically by repatriating the Phoenix Coyotes. Now Quebec City beckons, as does a bloated pot of gold for an expansion team in Toronto.

4

SIDNEY CROSBY

The Pittsburgh Penguins' captain and scorer of the gold medal-winning goal at the Vancouver Games is positioned to lead beyond the act of chasing Stanley Cups. Currently out with a concussion sustained on Jan. 1 (the Washington Capitals' David Steckel) and/or Jan. 5 (the Tampa Bay Lightning's Victor Hedman), Crosby said: "Direct hit to the head on both of them. ... Those

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are things that hopefully [the league] pays more attention to.”

5

KEITH PELLEY

Is this the dawn of Canada’s fiercest sports-media battle? You bet your ratings it is, and the dynamic Rogers Media president – who moved over from a stunned CTV last year – has hired Scott Moore from the CBC as his right-hand man. Pelley has probed a take-over of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, as of Tuesday landed tennis for a refocusing Sportsnet, and rebranded the radio network. On the agenda: NHL broadcast rights, the National Football League hunt and a rebuilding baseball team to oversee.

6

PHIL KING

As CTV’s head of sports (and as of Tuesday, also conventional programming and independent Canadian production), King appears to be implementing the full-scale business model of minority owner ESPN, as TSN president Stewart Johnston and senior vice-president of production Mark Milliere haul in more broadcast rights (notably soccer) and complement the leading sports television enterprise with a national radio network, anchored by a new Toronto station and morning man Mike Richards. What’s next – a journalistically credible website? In 2011, TSN will produce what most Canadians see and hear about sport.

7

MURRAY EDWARDS

An executive with several companies, including major oil-sands player Canadian Natural Resources, in his spare time the part owner of the Calgary Flames serves as the only Canadian franchise governor on the NHL’s pow-

erful executive committee (think: broadcast rights, franchise relocation, expansion, head shots). As owner-operator of ski resorts in the Canadian Rockies, Edwards supports the Winterstart World Cup races in November and December.

8

DAVID BRALEY

The perfect storm could take place if his two major-market Canadian Football League teams, the Toronto Argonauts and B.C. Lions, meet in the Grey Cup at newly renovated B.C. Place. The Conservative Senator and philanthropic supporter of McMaster University’s athletic department, Braley also served as a director of Ontario’s bid for the 2015 Pan Am Games.

9

STACEY ALLASTER

The most powerful female executive in international sport, Allaster, of Welland, Ont., is commissioner of the Women’s Tennis Association, which will have 52 events in 33 countries and \$87-million in purses this year. She’s recently signed four sponsors and reworked a deal with global partner Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications Ltd.

10

LARRY TANENBAUM

If MLSE (Maple Leafs, Raptors, Toronto FC, Air Canada Centre and the hottest sports bar on the planet) is to be taken over or combined into a powerful Blue Jays/NFL operation, the deal will go through Tanenbaum, the 20.5-per-cent minority owner with first right of refusal on the shares owned by the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan Board. Also a National Basketball Association governor, he would be influential in the league’s return to Vancouver.

11

MARK COHON

With its broadcast contract expiring in 2012 and at least three media companies hungry for properties, the CFL commissioner – and rumoured candidate for the MLSE presidency – has the league positioned to benefit from a bidding war.

12

ALEX ANTHOPOULOS /PAUL BEESTON

Anthopoulos, the youthful general manager from Montreal, is making the Toronto Blue Jays matter again under the guidance of long-time CEO Beeston. With Vernon Wells traded to the Angels, the team is trending toward small ball (so long, Cito) and strong starting pitching.

13

FRANCESCO AQUILINI /MIKE GILLIS

His Canucks playoff-bound for a third successive year, Aquilini has huddled with Tanenbaum in Toronto. Could the NBA be returning to the Northwest? Gillis, the innovative president and general manager, leads the country’s top Stanley Cup contender.

14

GEORGES ST-PIERRE

Ultimate Fighting Championship world welterweight champion and headliner at Toronto’s 2011 UFC debut in April, St-Pierre has not lost a single round in almost three years and, in the debatable opinion of UFC honcho Dana White, has become the most popular Canadian athlete ever.

15

CHRISTINE SINCLAIR

Among the world's top female soccer players, and in advance of the Women's World Cup, Sinclair is leveraging improved player compensation and a voice for the players in the team's future.

16

GEOFF MOLSON

Brothers Geoff, Andrew and John head an ownership group that paid a reported \$575-million (U.S.) to buy the Canadiens and the Molson Centre, and Geoff is assuming the presidency of the storied franchise that means so much to so many.

17

KIRSTINE STEWART

Who? On Jan. 10, she became executive vice-president of CBC English services and is expected to soon name a head of the sports division, as the network approaches a crossroads decision on remaining a player for NHL, Olympics, soccer, baseball and other pricey rights.

18

DON CHERRY

After Boston's Daniel Paillé received a lenient four-game suspension for a blindside head shot, Cherry, from his pulpit on *Hockey Night in Canada*, called Dallas forward Raymond Sawada a "dum-dum" for skating into the slot with his head down, and ripped into Boston defenceman Andrew Ference for violating dressing-room code by describing the hit as "bad." With such pronouncements, Cherry remains the stalwart vanguard of ancient hockey culture, personifying all those who willfully ignore the likes of doctors Tator and Echlin.

19

MARCEL AUBUT

The president of the Canadian Olympic Committee is trying to raise the profile of the organization, pushing a Quebec City Olympics bid and, in tandem, an NHL-worthy arena.

20

PAT BRISSON/J.P. BARRIE

Heading the hockey division at Creative Artists Agency, California-based Brisson and Calgary-based Barrie flexed their muscles after star client Sidney Crosby went down with a concussion, calling on the NHLPA and fellow agents to get more involved.

21

BOB NICHOLSON

Fresh off the gold medal at the Vancouver Games and, ahem, consecutive silver medals at the world juniors tournament, the Hockey Canada CEO is moving the operation to a new facility at Canada Olympic Park in Calgary. The organization can churn cash – the next junior tourney, in Calgary and Edmonton, is already sold out – but where does it stand on the concussions issue?





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Dr. Paul Echlin and Dr. Charles Tator: Their advocacy contributes to the empowerment of people who might have a role in saving kids' lives. JENNIFER ROBERTS/FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

22

BRIAN BURKE
/BRYAN COLANGELO

The general managers of the Maple Leafs and Raptors, respectively, have been decidedly unsuccessful in their missions to turn around the franchises and, more egregiously, to clarify what their strategies may be. Colangelo's employment status – continuing as GM, possible MLSE president, fired? – is to be deliberated next week.

23

GORD NIXON

The president and CEO of Royal Bank of Canada leads the way for corporate Canada into amateur and pro sports sponsorship, as the bank supports golf, hockey, snowboard, freestyle skiing, track and field and, preceding the Vancouver 2010 Games, the torch relay.

24

SCOTT SIMMONS

While challenged to increase Canadian Open sponsorships and general revenues, the executive director of the Royal Canadian Golf Association is attempting to rejuvenate the sport with grassroots school programs and a \$3-million, three-year membership drive via Golf Canada.

25

CHRISTINE NESBITT

Canada's top performing female athlete won 2010 Olympic gold in the 1,000-metre speed-skating event and is dominating the World Cup circuit this season, most recently acquiring the World Cup sprint overall title.

26

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CAROLINA MORACE

Having installed a ball-control system in place of the former kick-and-chase philosophy – thus positioning the team to contend at the Women’s World Cup in Germany this summer – the recently installed national coach is threatening to resign if the meddlesome Canadian Soccer Association doesn’t let her be.

27

ALEX BAUMANN

Gold medal swim star of the 1980s returned from Australia to introduce funding machinery and lead the Canadian team into the 2012 Summer Olympics, via the Own the Podium program.

28

DAVID BRANCH

Canadian Hockey League president put in a zero-tolerance head-shot rule. He is testing the popularity of major junior hockey in a major urban market by bringing the Memorial Cup to the Toronto suburb of Mississauga in May.

29

MICHAEL DOWNEY

Tennis Canada CEO crosses his fingers as the Canadian Open will be played in the same week for the first time, the women in Montreal and the men in Toronto.

30

CHRISTOS NIKITPOULOS

Shaw Communications (Global TV) quietly appointed a vice-president of sports and the initial reaction was, why? With control of the next generation of mobile delivery in play, Shaw needs to get into the rights game to extend the brand, perhaps with an Olympic bid or even challenging

for NHL rights in partnership with another media company.

31

DAVID THOMSON /MARK CHIPMAN /PIERRE KARL PÉLADEAU

Thomson and Chipman, through True North Sports & Entertainment, came this close to relocating the Phoenix Coyotes to Winnipeg. Péladeau, president and CEO of Quebecor, recently pledged millions toward the primary requisite for a franchise, a new arena in Quebec.

32

DOUG MITCHELL

If Canadian Interuniversity Sport is to progress from its perennial state of inertia, the lawyer, former CFL commissioner, Calgary Stampeders owner and UBC benefactor could be, would be most influential.

33

CHRISTIANE AYOTTE

Leader of the INRS-Armand Frappier testing lab, Ayotte is an international leader in the fight for drug-free sport, a member of the International Association of Athletics Federations doping commission since 1995, and part of the International Olympic Committee’s working group on harmonization of lab protocols.

34

BOB YOUNG

The Tiger-Cats’ owner battled publicly with the City of Hamilton on a new stadium location and wound up with the right solution, with Ivor Wynne to be rebuilt in the less than ideal location and the Ticats to play at (fill-in-the-blank) for a season.

35

JEFF MALLETT/JOEY SAPUTO

Co-owner of baseball’s San Francisco Giants, Mallett is bringing Major League Soccer to Vancouver this season with Greg Kerfoot and Steve Nash in the ownership group. Saputo’s Montreal Impact will become the third Canadian franchise in the league in 2012.

36

STEVE NASH

Social activist, benefactor and future Hall of Famer, the point guard is still playing basketball at an elite level at 37.

37

HAYLEY WICKENHEISER

Captain of the Canadian women’s team and a multiple gold medalist, Wickenheiser is involved in the international campaign to improve the state of women’s hockey before Sochi 2014.

38

STEVE YZERMAN

Headed up Canada’s gold medal Olympic hockey win at home as Hockey Canada’s executive director, and is now demonstrating his managing ability at the pro level with Tampa Bay.

39

COLIN CAMPBELL

The NHL’s discipline czar has the public support of Bettman, but with suspensions seemingly inconsistent and the reasons for them poorly communicated, the question is, for how much longer?

40

DARRYL KATZ

The reclusive Edmonton owner is

campaigning to build a new arena for the Oilers and revitalize the downtown.

41

SEAN FOLEY

From a home base in Orlando, is Canada's golf instructor to the stars, including Tiger Woods, Hunter Mahan and Justin Rose.

42

CHRIS ARMSTRONG

Agent left IMG to join the Wasserman Media Group and has signed Stephen Ames, Morgan Pressel, Sean Foley, Nick Taylor and Chris Baryla.

43

MIKE WEIR

Still the biggest name in Canadian golf, he's battling to save his PGA Tour card while overseeing a business empire that includes a clothing line, a top-selling wine, and a course design business.

44

JENNIFER HEIL

**/DOMINICK GAUTHIER
/J.D. MILLER**

The B2Ten crew has a private finishing school for serious Olympic medal hopefuls, including corporate funding, therapy, trainers and mentoring.

45

FRAÇOIS DUMONTIER

Best known as Montreal's NASCAR and Formula 1 promoter, his company, Octane Racing, has taken over the money-losing Edmonton Indy.

46

LEO EZERINS

With concussions in high school football a growing concern, the head of the CFL Alumni is encouraging players to donate their brains to research. Former Montreal Alouette Tony Proudfoot, who died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, did so.

47

KEVIN MARTIN

Edmonton's Olympic gold-medal curler has become the most important person in the sport, on

and off the ice. His profile can make or break an event.

48

CLARA HUGHES

Right to Play spokesperson is the only Canadian to have won Olympic medals at both Summer and Winter Games and hasn't finished yet.

49

MARK TEWKSBURY

Canada's 2012 Olympic chef de mission for the London Olympics, backstroke gold medalist, and an authoritative gay rights voice, has battled the IOC over reform issues and spoken at the United Nations.

50

LAUREN WOOLSTENCROFT

The only Canadian nominated for a Laureus Sports Award, Woolstencroft won five gold medals in front of her home crowd at the Winter Paralympics in Whistler, and continues to be an active proponent of disabled sports in retirement.

- James Christie



4 The Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby is in a position to lead. GENE J. PUSKAR/AP



NHL commissioner Gary Bettman. KARL B. DEBLAKER/AP

ON OUR WEBSITE

The 2010 Power 50

1. Gary Bettman
2. Keith Pelley
3. Reggie Fleming

To view the complete list, go to

globesports.com



9 Stacey Allaster, WTA commissioner. MATTHEW STOCKMAN/GETTY IMAGES



2 Donald Fehr, NHLPA executive director. CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES