

Steve Jordan helps kick start new CTE study

Former Minnesota Vikings tight end Steve Jordan was one of nine former NFL players submitting to testing for a new study on CTE.

Tim Yotter - Mar 30, 9:38 AM



(Photo: Kirby Lee, USA TODAY Sports)

Former Minnesota Vikings tight end Steve Jordan was one of nine former NFL players in Phoenix on Wednesday to help kick start a study aimed at trying to detect chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) in living people.

Currently, CTE is only detectable when studying the brains of the deceased, but a study last year suggested that biomarkers in the blood, urine and saliva can indicate CTE in living people and Jordan wants to help advance that cause. The results of the previous study found levels of the tau protein, which is associated with Alzheimer's and other brain diseases, in the blood of 78 former NFL players were nine times higher than in the control group.

The new study by Translational Genomics Research Institute (TGen) and Aethlon Medical in San Diego is hoping to test the blood, urine and saliva of 200 former players.

"If we can detect CTE in living patients, that's going to be a huge win," Jordan, who played with the Vikings from 1982 to 1994, told the Arizona Republic.

Jordan also has a son, Cameron, who plays defensive end for the New Orleans Saints. Steve wanted to contribute to the study to help protect kids in all sports and improve treatment for those who have suffered brain injuries.

Jordan said he remained in one NFL game after suffering a concussion in the second quarter and couldn't remember one play after his head injury.

His stories aren't much different from others who played in the NFL during his time and before. If a player was "dinged" on a play back then, they were often encouraged to stay in the game or quickly return to it. These days, the NFL provides an independent spotter at every NFL game who looks for signs of a potential concussion among players. If the spotter believes a concussion may have incurred, he or she signals down to the sideline to have that player removed from the game and go through the NFL's concussion protocol.

Players can't return to the game until they pass the protocol, and those that are diagnosed with a concussion will often miss the next game or two before they pass the protocol.

"I really appreciate now that there are independent people who will pull a player out of the game," Jordan told the Republic. "I know it's not 100 percent [perfect], but that's so much better than what it was before."

The NFL is also considering eliminating kickoffs, according to Green Bay Packer president Mark Murphy, because statistics show concussions are five times more likely to happen on kickoff returns versus other plays, despite changes the NFL has made in attempts to make kickoff returns safer and less frequent.

The goal of the new TGen study is to improve treatment for those that have suffered brain injuries.

<https://scout.com/nfl/vikings/Article/Former-Minnesota-Vikings-TE-Steve-Jordan-helps-kick-start-new-CTE-study-116849238>