

## PRO FOOTBALL

# ***NFL Exec Admits to CTE-Football Head Trauma Link***

By **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS** MARCH 14, 2016, 9:01 P.M. E.D.T.

WASHINGTON — An NFL official has acknowledged a link between football and the brain disease CTE for the first time.

Jeff Miller, the NFL's senior vice president for health and safety, spoke about the connection during an appearance Monday at a congressional committee's roundtable discussion about concussions.

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois) asked Miller: "Do you think there is a link between football and degenerative brain disorders like CTE?"

Miller began by referencing the work of Boston University neuropathologist Dr. Ann McKee, who has found CTE in the brains of 90 former pro football players.

"Well, certainly, Dr. McKee's research shows that a number of retired NFL players were diagnosed with CTE, so the answer to that question is certainly 'yes,' but there are also a number of questions that come with that," Miller said.

Schakowsky repeated the question: "Is there a link?"

"Yes. Sure," Miller responded.

The NFL had not previously linked playing football to chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a disease linked to repeated brain trauma and associated with symptoms such as memory loss, depression and progressive dementia. It can only be detected after death. Among the players found to have CTE in their brains were Hall of Famers Junior Seau and Ken Stabler.

During Super Bowl week, Dr. Mitch Berger, a member of the NFL's head, neck and spine committee, would not draw a direct line from football to CTE.

Miller appeared at a roundtable discussion of concussions before the House Committee on Energy & Commerce. ESPN first reported Miller's appearance before the committee.

Last month, Berger, chair of the department of neurological surgery at the University of California-San Francisco, repeatedly said that while the types of degenerative changes to the brain associated with CTE have been found in late football players, such signs have also been found "in all spectrums of life."

Tao, a protein that indicates the presence of CTE, "is found in brains that have traumatic injuries," Berger said, "whether it's from football, whether it's from car accidents, whether it's from gunshot wounds, domestic violence — it remains to be seen."

Miller said he was "not going to speak for Dr. Berger" when asked by Schakowsky about those comments.

Just before Miller spoke, McKee was asked the same question about the link between hits in football and CTE. She responded "unequivocally" there is, and went into details about her research findings.

Miller told the committee that the issue's entire scope needs to be addressed.

"You asked the question whether I thought there was a link," he said. "Certainly based on Dr. McKee's research, there's a link, because she's found CTE in a number of retired football players. I think that the broader point, and the one that your question gets to, is what that necessarily means and where do we go from here with that information."