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## Ex-player Adrian Arrington suing NCAA

Associated Press

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CHICAGO -- The NCAA has been sued in federal court by a former college football player who says the organization has failed to protect student-athletes from concussions.

In the lawsuit filed this week, Adrian Arrington said he suffered "numerous and repeated concussions" during his years playing at Eastern Illinois, perhaps best known as the alma mater of Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo and Saints coach Sean Payton.

“

**(The NCAA) has failed its student-athletes -- choosing instead to sacrifice them on an altar of money and profits ...**

”

-- Adrian Arrington

A team captain in 2009, Arrington said he suffers from memory loss, depression and near-daily migraines as a result of his injuries and says he was never coached on how to play more safely.

Arrington's lawsuit seeks class-action status, covering a group he says includes thousands of NCAA student-athletes who have suffered head injuries because of NCAA's negligence. He's seeking unspecified monetary damages and changes in policy including the establishment of a long-term medical monitoring program for injured athletes and new concussion guidelines for schools and coaches.

Arrington's suit claims the NCAA "has failed its student-athletes -- choosing instead to sacrifice them on an altar of money and profits" by neglecting to adopt stricter standards for the kinds of play and tackling most likely to cause head injuries. Arrington claims that the message to players was to "play hard and play fast" even after getting hurt or risk getting cut from the team.

Arrington, 25, has had trouble finishing his degree at EIU because of his injuries, according to his attorney, Joseph Siprut, who said he hasn't pursued legal action against the school or the coaching staff led by coach Bob Spoo, who plans to step down at the end of the season after 25 years in charge of the Panthers.

The lawsuit said the school sent Arrington to a neurologist for testing only after he started having seizures.

The NCAA said Friday it was examining the allegations but its initial review found "gross misstatements" about the organization.

"The NCAA has been concerned about the safety of all of its student-athletes, including those playing football, throughout its history," the Indianapolis-based organization said. "We have specifically addressed the issue of head injuries through a combination of playing rules, equipment requirements, and medical best practices."

Estimates for the number of sports- and recreation-related concussions in the United States each year are as high as 3.8 million, according to the Brain Injury Association of America.

In response to growing concerns about head injuries among young athletes, the NCAA now requires member schools to have concussion-management plans in place. The plans requires

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schools to inform students about the signs and symptoms of concussions, to have a process for removing students who show signs of a concussion from play and to prohibit students with concussions from returning to play the same day they're injured.

Siprut said the NCAA's rules don't go far enough and put the burden on injured athletes to seek out medical attention, rather than schools and coaches.

"In practice, the NCAA concussion-management plan is really nothing more than saying every individual school has to adopt its own plan," Siprut said. "It has no teeth."

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