

Tipping the scales in the NFL



A.M. SPORTS

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"Always give one-hundred percent, and you'll never have to second guess yourself."
- Tommy John

The evolution of sport has often meant bigger, faster, and stronger. While this is great when watching athletic freaks like LeBron James, Calvin Johnson or Usain Bolt dominate their opponents, it becomes an issue when concussion and injury problems rise to the forefront.

Currently, more than 1,500 players are teaming up to sue the NFL for allegedly hiding the dangers of concussions from them. But the brain damage caused by repeated blows to the head is going to be a minor problem compared to the sleeping giant that lies beneath the sheets in the NFL.

The real problem that is ready to explode onto the scene is the exponential rise in 300 plus pound athletes playing in the NFL over the past 30 years and the health issues that arise for those carrying that extra weight. The statistics are startling and downright scary.

According to information provided by Stats LLC, there was one 300-pound player in the league in 1970, three in 1980, 94 in 1990, 301 in 2000 and 394 at the start of the 2010 season.

When the Green Bay Packers won the first Super Bowl in 1966, the heaviest player on their roster was 265 pound Hall of Fame guard Jerry Kramer. The famed Steel Curtain defense that led the Pittsburgh Steelers to four Super Bowl titles in six seasons in the '70s was led by "Mean Joe" Greene at a relatively slim 275 pounds.

The list of medical conditions related to carrying an extra 50-100 pounds of weight is long and deadly. High blood pressure, obesity, sleep apnea, arthritic joints, diabetes and elevated blood pressure and cholesterol levels have all been linked to past and current NFL players. Over the next 10-20 years, a lot of these 300 plus pound players will be reaching the end of their road.

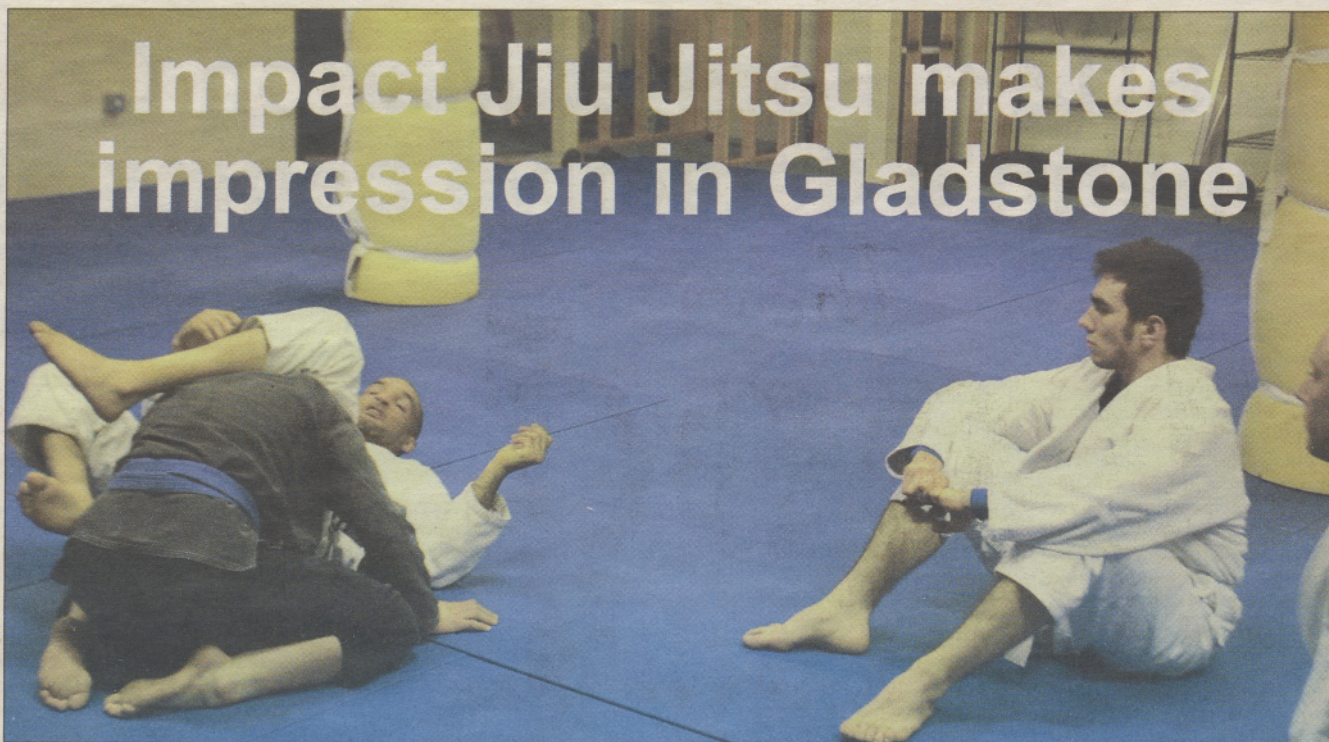
When Minnesota Viking Corey Stringer, a 335 pound offensive lineman, died from complications of heat stroke at training camp in 2001, the NFL revised its workout policies and began to test more effectively for heart issues. Although, the NFL has not had another heat related death since, early deaths are common for former players.

In 2002, former New Orleans Saints lineman Frank Warren died at age 43 from a heart attack. In 2004, Hall of Fame defensive lineman Reggie White also passed away at 43 due to a cardiac arrhythmia that was related to sleep apnea. The following year, San Francisco 49ers offensive lineman Thomas Herrion collapsed and died after a pre-season game due to heart disease from a blocked coronary artery. All three players were well over 300 pounds in their playing days.

All of these guys were big, strong men in what should have been the prime of their life. All were very good at pushing other, smaller men around and they paid the ultimate price for being too big, too strong and too good at what they did.

Was it all really worth it?

Impact Jiu Jitsu makes impression in Gladstone



Photos by Brittany Bell The Clackamas Print

Student Josh Manfredi watches as instructor KC Thompson demonstrates a triangle choke at Impact BJJ in Gladstone. Wrapping his left leg around Zack Force's neck, he brings the right leg over left ankle and squeezes the head and arm to finish the choke.

David Beasley Associate Sports Editor

Among the plethora of popular martial arts available to practitioners in various locations around the Portland Metro area is Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. The art is defined by leverage and technique; it is the chess of grappling combat. Closer than any other prominent Jiu Jitsu school in Clackamas County is Impact BJJ of Gladstone.

Regularly roaming the mats at Gladstone is purple belt KC Thompson. He knew BJJ was the sport for him after winning his first competitive match by Kimura arm lock submission.

"I've been training almost five and a half years now," said Thompson.

He has recent first place finishes in BJJ competitions at the 2012 U.S. Open, 2012 Las Vegas Open and 2012 Pan-Ams. Thompson is also a self proclaimed adrenaline junkie.

"I was skydiving before I started [Jiu Jitsu] and I still skydive now," said Thompson.

Originally called Straight Blast Gym in 1998, Impact BJJ offers classes in numerous locations, including Portland Community College. The Gladstone school is conveniently located at 17763 Southeast 82nd Dr. This new addition to the local combat community brings high quality Jiu Jitsu instruction closer than ever before.

Impact took over 10th Planet Jiu Jitsu which was located just down the road on Jennifer Street. Shortly after that, Impact BJJ moved to 82nd Drive. Josh Manfredi is a student who has made the transition as well.

"I trained at this place before it



BJJ blue belt Zack Force practices a basic arm lock with Josh Manfredi, grabbing the collar and controlling the arm, he will kick off of Manfredi's left hip with his right foot and swing his left leg over the right shoulder to lock the arm.

was Impact. It started out as 10th Planet Jiu Jitsu," said Manfredi. "It's not really a martial arts class. It's like a community which is really cool."

The school has a strong lineage linking them to the most famous BJJ family, the Gracies. Impact BJJ owner Michael Chapman received his black belt in 2004 from Chris Haueter, one of the first Americans ever to earn a BJJ black belt. Haueter studied under Rigan Machado, a Brazilian who in turn received his black belt under Carlos Gracie. Brothers Carlos and Helio Gracie are the founders of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

Chapman has assembled a competent team of instructors to

provide quality training at their numerous schools. One of the talented staff members at Gladstone is Thompson. As a purple belt, Thompson brings his experience of competing in BJJ tournaments to his coaching style. He also has an uplifting sense of humor and lightens the mood with tension breaking jokes or funny explanations of techniques.

Steven Chang, a student at Impact, has been training in BJJ for about 15 months. He likes the community feeling offered at Impact.

"We've got a pretty tight group of people training every day," said Chang. "Training with people you don't trust, or don't know what to

do, you can get injured."

Impact BJJ of Gladstone is the perfect meeting place for seasoned grapplers and novices alike. It is a great environment to refine basic techniques and learn new strategies.

Offering different levels of membership and a punch card type payment system, students can plan their workouts around busy schedules. Chapman himself leads some of the sessions at Gladstone, along with other high ranked instructors. Classes are offered in the afternoon and evening Monday through Friday.

Full schedule and more details are available at www.impactjj.com.



Grabbing Zack Force's right sleeve, KC Thompson begins to demonstrate a sweep transition reversing position. Thompson plants his left foot and grabs Force's right pant leg and swings Force over with leverage rather than pure strength.

