

# Settlement shows difficulty of proving brain damage from concussion

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

Thursday's \$765-million settlement between the National Football League and 4,500 retired NFL players underscores two key facts about traumatic brain injury: that it is difficult to prove and measure – especially many years after the fact – and that its link to neurocognitive problems that appear years later remains an enigma.

A mediated agreement does not mean that the retired NFL players' injuries were caused by football, or even that they could have proven as much, said former U.S. District Judge Layn Phillips, the court-appointed mediator who brokered the proposed settlement. Nor, Phillips added, does it mean they could not prove it.

What's clear is that proof either way will take years of further research – and litigation. While evidence of a link between concussion and long-term cognitive and psychiatric consequences is mounting, it may take many more studies to clarify the relationship. And hard proof of cause-and-effect may remain elusive.

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