

Soccer Legend Briana Scurry Dedicates Herself to Concussion Awareness

Hello, my name is Briana Scurry, I am 42 years old. I served as the starting goalkeeper for the United States women's national soccer team from 1994 – 2008. During that time, I helped lead the team in winning two Olympic gold medals (1996 and 2004) and played in 173 international games over 15 years...which is a record amongst female soccer players.

In the summer of 1999, my 20 amazing teammates and I captured the hearts of America by beating China in a penalty kick shootout live in front of 90,000 screaming fans at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, CA. I was the one that made the single save during the penalty kicks before Brandi Chastain took off her shirt. Yes, now, I'll bet many of you likely recall where you were at that moment. It was the kind of event that transforms lives forever for the better. My passion and my mission was soccer. My ultimate reward was living my dreams and inspiring the dreams of countless others.

Today, I stand here before you to share my *new* mission with you. My *new* mission is to provide a new face and voice to those who have and may suffer the long and difficult recovery of a devastating Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)/concussion.

My life story reads like a script from Oprah's "*Where are they Now?*" Like many of Oprah's guests, I too have been lost in deep, dark places with my face in the dirt, and have only recently begun to claw my way back to "my life".

On April 25th, 2010 my life changed forever. I suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury during a game that abruptly ended my beloved soccer career. That was nearly 4 years ago.

I struggled with intense piercing headaches that were so bad that by the evening it was all I could do to not cry myself to sleep. I had to take naps on a daily basis because my sleep was so disrupted, I couldn't concentrate, and I was moody. I felt disconnected from everything and every one. I was anxious and depressed every day and I wondered if I'd ever get better.

I recently moved to DC to have bilateral occipital nerve surgery at Georgetown to eliminate severe headaches that plagued me daily. Fortunately, the surgery appears to have helped me, however I'm still being treated for symptoms such as lack of concentration, balance issues, memory loss, anxiety, and depression.

I've purposely and intentionally had my concussion recovery story documented by media outlets such as the *USA Today*, *The Washington Post* and Brainline in order to bring attention and a ray of hope to those suffering from TBI, like me.

In September I was alarmed to learn that the number of reported concussions in soccer was 2nd highest in the United States, with only American football having more cases. Additionally, a recent article published in November stated that 1 of 2 female youth soccer players will suffer a concussion while playing. I feel the numbers of reported cases are likely understated and didn't designate those who've suffered multiple concussions. Statistics like these have solidified my urgency of purpose to shed light on the high frequency of concussions in Youth and the devastating emotional toll that prolonged symptoms often cause yet are too frequently dismissed.

I sincerely hope that my presence here today will inspire increased awareness, understanding, and assistance to help the thousands of young TBI sufferers across this country. I thank you all for allowing me to give testimony. I am grateful and humbled to be invited to do so.

Briana Scurry
Former Professional Goalkeeper
U.S. Women's National Soccer Team