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NFL players' health disregarded

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Written by [contentmen](#) on 06/25/2010 9:46:39 PM

Some NFL critics joke that the league's acronym stands for Not For Long. While that usually references a coach or player's job security, it could just as easily stand for a player's ability to stay healthy if the owners get their way.

By now you might have heard the NFL's interest in expanding its regular season by two games to 18. (The preseason would be shortened by two contests.) It's been a rumored expansion for over a year and is closer to reality given that NFL and player's union officials discussed the expansion in New York June 16.



Although NFL owners are likely frothing at the mouth at the thought of more revenue from two additional games in a league which has brought in \$3.6 billion since 2006, players are far less excited. Owners might have to worry about their pocket books but players must stay concerned with the toll football takes on their body. Witness these recent comments from notable NFLers about an expansion in regular season games:

Tom Brady, New England Patriots quarterback:
"The long-term impact this game has on our bodies is well documented."

Ray Lewis, Baltimore Ravens linebacker:
"Swapping two preseason games for two end-of-season games -- when players already play hurt -- comes at a huge cost for the player and the team."

Shaun O'Hara, New York Giants offensive lineman:
"The season is long enough and it is tough enough to get the postseason healthy as it is right now."

DeMarcus Ware, Dallas Cowboys linebacker:
"We only have 16 games because of how brutal it is on your body."

NFL fans certainly might grow to dislike an expanded regular season since it would leave players open to more injuries before the start of the postseason. That would result in playoff teams unable to play at full strength, which decreases the competitiveness the postseason is supposed to inspire. But there is a bigger issue at work here.

For years, the NFL player's union has claimed the NFL doesn't properly compensate its retired players who depend on what is often a meager NFL pension. By attempting to expand what is already considered a lengthy regular season for what appears to be solely an attempt to make more money, the NFL risks gaining a stigma as careless brutes who couldn't care less about the physical and mental well-being of their players.

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