

FROM A LEFT WING: THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF SOCCER

COMMENTARY ON TOPICS IGNORED BY MAINSTREAM SPORTS MEDIA: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FOOTBALL, GRASSROOTS SOCCER IN LOS ANGELES AND OTHER LOCALES, ART/MEDIA ABOUT SOCCER, CRANKY COMMENTARY & LOVE LETTERS TO THE BEAUTIFUL GAME AND THE PEOPLE WHO PLAY IT.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17, 2010

"Blood Equity": has gridiron football become a blood sport?



"You have a broken back. But you can play with it." These words were spoken to Tony Dorsett, in a Monday meeting after a game in which he took a late, hard tackle that ended with a knee to his back. In the middle of renegotiating his contract, Dorsett absorbed this surreal news and returned to the field wearing the

flap jacket team doctors recommended to absorb the impact of the blows he would surely take. He considers himself lucky. He can't run today, but he can function.

That is a lot more than many retired NFL players can say. A 2009 documentary, [Blood Equity \(available on hulu.com\)](#) uncovers the ugly story of how the NFL player's union has turned its back on the men who have made billions of dollars for the league. This betrayal is often the last act in a series of ruthlessly exploitative decisions - in which team doctors underrepresent the nature of injuries to players, robbing them of the chance to make informed decisions about their own health, in which coaches opt to field players with concussions, torn ACLs, and, incredibly, in Dorsett's instance, a broken back. These players suffer from a range of horrific disabilities - crushed disks, destroyed rotator cuffs, useless knees. But these problems pale in comparison with the frightening dementia caused by the repeated blows to the head and body that make for such fantastic television.

Named site of the month (December 2009) by When Saturday Comes, UK's "half decent football magazine."

C O N T E N T S

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