

Santa Ana High School Article of the Week #15

Soccer Star Brandi Chastain Says She Will Donate Her Brain to Science (1290L)

Instructions: READ and ANNOTATE using CLOSE reading strategies.

Step 1: Skim the article using these symbols as you read:

(+) agree, (-) disagree, (*) important, (!) surprising, (?) wondering

Step 2: Number the paragraphs. **Read** the article **carefully** and **make notes in the margin**.

Notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
- Observations about how the **writer's strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

Step 3: A reread noting anything you may have missed during the first read.

Student _____ Class Period _____

Soccer Star Brandi Chastain Says She Will Donate Her Brain To Science

Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:



U.S. soccer player Brandi Chastain clears the ball during a friendly match against Iceland in 2004.

Retired soccer player Brandi Chastain, who became a superstar when she scored the game-winning goal for the U.S. in the 1999 World Cup final against China, says she will donate her brain to science.

In an interview with USA Today, Chastain said she wanted scientists to use her brain to try to understand concussions and chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative disease that has been found in the brains

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of athletes who have taken repeated blows to the head.

"Hopefully, what can be learned is, can doctors and scientists and neuroscientists look at the brain of someone like me, who has been playing soccer a majority of my life, and really dissect the brain and say, 'Here's where we see it beginning?' Could we then use that information to help say that before the age of 14, it's not a good idea to head the ball?" Chastain told *USA Today*.

As we've reported, scientists can detect CTE only by dissecting brains after death. Many football players have donated their brains to science, but The New York Times reports that scientists have not had access to many female brains.

The *Times* reports:

"No female athletes have been found to have had C.T.E. — it has been found in the brains of women with histories of head trauma — but the sample size has been small. Researchers at Boston University have examined 307 brains, most of which belonged to athletes. Only seven of them were women's.

"But with soccer's worldwide popularity and its growth among girls inspired by the likes of the United States' women's national soccer team, researchers are eager to learn more."

Cindy Parlow Cone, another former U.S. national team player, has also donated her brain to science.

When Chastain was asked by the *Times* if she had talked with teammates, she said: "I haven't had conversations with present players. I've had conversations with Cindy Parlow, Kristine Lilly, Mia. I don't really think it's a topic of conversation at this level. I think Abby Wambach — I'm trying to get her to come onboard because I think she will be an interesting brain study, decades from now, as the player who scored 75 goals with her head and probably put her head into places, like Michelle Akers, where they probably didn't belong. How many times did she hit her head on the ground after being run over by somebody?"

Chastain's brain will go to Boston University, which has led the way in the study of CTE.

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Comprehension questions – answers may be in phrases.

1. *What sport other than soccer is closely associated with CTE?*
2. *Name one other soccer player, aside from Chastain, who has agreed to donate her brain to science.*
3. *Define **dissect** as used in the article.*
4. *List three news agencies that contributed to this article.*

Answer each question in one or more complete sentences and by providing complete explanations.

5. *Explain why there seem to be few female CTE brains to study thus far. Cite evidence from the text to support your conclusion.*
6. *Based on inference, does Brandi Chastain support heading in youth soccer, or is she opposed to it?*