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## Settlement in paralysis case

The De Molay International youth group has agreed to a settlement that will pay \$7.5 million over the lifetime of a Torrance man who was paralyzed in an impromptu game of tackle football more than two years ago.

The game struck up at Torrance Park in March 1984 left Tony Gatelein, then 20, a paraplegic and compelled the worldwide youth organization to ban football games for its members, said Torrance attorney Lawrence Booth.

Gatelein was tackled to the ground and then struck by a 16-year-old player with what is known in football as a "late hit." The blow broke his neck, Booth said.

An area oil refinery laborer before the accident, Gatelein sued the De Molays for negligence in allowing the game to be played without proper equipment or supervision. De Molay is an arm of the Masons.

"To allow people to play tackle football under these conditions where there is no referee, there are no rules and no way of stopping a play ... is extremely dangerous," Booth said.

The injury impaired Gatelein's ability to sweat, restricting his body's cooling system and confining him to the house on most days, Booth said.