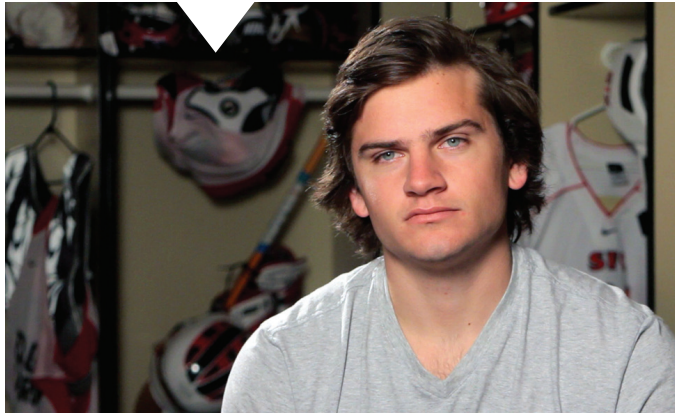




is a program of  
Advocates for Injured Athletes



**ASA Ambassador:** Tommy Mallon

**Hometown:** San Diego, California

**ASA Focus:** Helping to educate student athletes about the signs and symptoms of concussion, and head and neck injuries

**Message:** “Understanding and recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion and head and neck injuries can make the difference between life and death when an athlete is injured.”

## Tommy’s Story

In Spring 2009, while playing in his final high school lacrosse game, Tommy Mallon headed downfield after a ground ball and collided with a player from the opposing team. Initially, the “hit” did not appear to be anything out of the ordinary, but Tommy did not immediately get up off the field. He was experiencing slight numbness at the back of his head, but his impulse was to “shake it off” and get back into the game.

Tommy’s teammate, Matt, was the first person to come to Tommy’s aid. He encouraged Tommy to stay down until he could be evaluated by the team’s Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC), Riki Kirchoff. Riki evaluated Tommy and determined that his injury needed emergency care. She did not permit Tommy to get up, despite his request to do so. Tommy was spine-boarded and taken by ambulance to a nearby trauma hospital. He was told that his neck was fractured and that one of his vertebral arteries had been dissected, which had allowed blood to leak out of the artery and caused a dangerous clot

to form. He was transferred to the ICU and subsequently underwent months of challenging treatments and therapies.

Although Tommy will never play contact sports again, the combination of actions by his teammate and the ATC saved his life during the final minutes of his high school lacrosse career and were the inspiration for his co-founding Advocates for Injured Athletes.

*Tommy, who is now a junior at the University of San Diego, has turned his career-ending injuries into powerful lessons to help educate athletes, coaches, and parents about the need for better education and care on the sidelines. As an ASA Ambassador, Tommy tells his story at every ASA program and has been featured in many local and national news stories. He has worked with neurologists and neurosurgeons to create a local hospital concussion education program and helped to create an educational video for the ASA curriculum.*

**Website**  
[www.injuredathletes.org](http://www.injuredathletes.org)

**Contact**  
Beth Mallon  
858 361 6553

**Advocates for Injured Athletes**  
3830 Valley Center Drive  
Suite 705-523  
San Diego, CA 92130

*Advocates for Injured Athletes is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.*