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## concussion that 'ended my career'

**Henry Schulman**

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Mac Williamson (51) is congratulated after a score at the Giants vs. Marlins game at the AT&T Park on Wednesday, June 20, 2018 in San Francisco, Calif.

Photo: Liz Moughon / The Chronicle

Former Giants outfielder Mac Williamson is suing the organization over the concussion he sustained in 2018 when he tripped over a bullpen mound at what was then known as AT&T Park and hit his head on the wall, saying he continues to have symptoms that include blurred vision, and that the incident “ended my career.”

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The rare action by a player against his former team over an on-field injury names China Basin Ballpark Company LLC as the defendant. That firm is controlled by the Giants' partnership group.

The suit, filed in Superior Court in San Francisco, alleges negligence and seeks unspecified actual and punitive damages. It says Williamson was "one of the best power hitters in Major League Baseball" when he got hurt. In a Zoom news conference Tuesday, Erlewine said Williamson could have earned "tens of millions of dollars" had the injury not occurred.

Williamson alleges the Giants maintained a dangerous risk for players by having the mounds on the field and did not move them to a safer spot even after players got hurt.

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The late owner Peter Magowan apologized to Williamson months after the incident. Williamson alleges that Magowan told him that when the ballpark was built, the Giants placed the mounds on the field over the objection of then-Commissioner Bud Selig, who deemed them unsafe.

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Williamson appeared on the Zoom news conference and said the realization that the injury ended his career was “devastating to me. Everybody’s career ends at some point, but to have it taken from me because the bullpen mounds were unnecessarily placed on the field is very hard to cope with.”

“Although I will never be made whole, my intent on filing the lawsuit is holding park owners accountable for not only taking away my career, but carelessly risking every other great player’s careers by needlessly placing the bullpen mounds on the field,” he said.

Neither Erlewine nor Williamson took questions.

Giants officials declined to comment, but the team issued a statement to The Chronicle that suggested Williamson’s suit might not fly because he had other potential remedies to pursue.

“MLB and its clubs have a longstanding practice of addressing claims arising from player injuries through the collectively-bargained grievance procedure and the worker’s compensation system,” the statement said.

“Williamson’s claims are properly resolved through these processes, not through the courts.”

Williamson, 30, was the Giants’ third-round pick in 2012. He made his Giants debut in 2015 and played parts of five seasons in San Francisco, struggling to find a way into the everyday lineup.

Hopes were high as the 2018 season began. Williamson remade his swing over the winter under the guidance of Los Angeles-based private instructor Doug Latta. Williamson’s bat showed promise after his April 20 recall from Triple-A; he hit three home runs in his first five games.

In his fifth game, against the Nationals on April 24, Williamson hit a tape-measure home run after tripping over the home bullpen mound beyond the left-field line while chasing

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the Samsung Lions of the Korean Baseball League.

“The concussion ended my career and left me with lifelong injuries that have also taken a significant toll on my personal life,” Williamson’s statement read. “I suffer nausea, trouble sleeping, mood swings, and other issues.

“I wake up every day hoping that today is a better day and that I will get closer to how I felt before the injury.”

In the news release, the attorney Erlewine said the injuries “never should have happened, and we believe that (ownership’s) decision to use on-field bullpens, and its failure later to move them, put his and other players’ careers in jeopardy.”

Such a lawsuit is rare but not without precedent. Former 49ers running back Reggie Bush won a \$12.8 million jury judgment against the Rams after he slipped on a strip of uncovered concrete after going out of bounds in a 2015 game in St. Louis, before the Rams moved back to Los Angeles.

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