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**Prevent Blindness Texas Asks Kids, Adults to Make Eye Protection
Part of Uniform While Playing Sports**

***- Prevent Blindness Texas Declares September as Sports Eye Safety Month
in Effort to Help Keep Athlete's Eyes Healthy -***

Texas, (September 4, 2019) – According to the [National Eye Institute](#), every 13 minutes an emergency room in the United States treats a sports-related eye injury. And, eye injuries are the leading cause of blindness in children in the United States, while most eye injuries among kids aged 11 to 14 occur while playing sports. Fortunately, many injuries may be avoided by wearing proper eye protection.

Prevent Blindness Texas has declared September as Sports Eye Safety Month to help educate the public on the best ways to keep eyes healthy while playing sports. For those who wear prescription glasses, an eye doctor can provide a prescription for safe and effective sports protective eyewear. Monocular athletes (those with only one eye that sees well) should consult an eye doctor about what sports are safe to participate in.

“The first step towards preventing eye injuries from sports should be a visit to an eyecare professional,” said Heather Patrick, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Texas. “An eyecare expert can recommend the best types of eye protection based on the sport and an individual’s eyecare needs.”

Eye injuries from any sport may include infection, corneal abrasions, fracture of the eye socket, swollen or detached retinas or a traumatic cataract. Eye injuries from water sports may include eye infections and irritations, and scratches or trauma from other swimmers.

If an eye injury does occur, Prevent Blindness Texas provides the following recommendations.

For foreign objects in the eye:

- Do not rub the eye.
- Try to let tears wash the speck out or use a commercial eyewash.
- Try lifting the upper eyelid outward. Look down over the lower lid.
- Do not use tweezers or other items to try and remove the speck.

- If the speck doesn't wash out, see an eye doctor immediately.

For blows to the eye:

- Apply a cold compress without pressure.
- Seek emergency medical care in cases of pain, blurry vision, one eye sticking out more than the other, blood inside the eye, or discoloration (black eye), which could mean internal eye damage.

For cuts and punctures of the eye and eyelid:

- Do not wash out the eye with water or any other liquid.
- Do not try to remove an object that is stuck in the eye.
- Cover the eye with a rigid shield or the bottom half of a paper cup without pressure. Secure the shield or cup to the brow above the eye and the cheekbone below the eye without putting pressure on the eye.
- Seek emergency medical care immediately.

Liberty Sport, Prevent Blindness and Prevent Blindness Texas are once again partnering during September's Sports Eye Safety Month. To download free materials, including the Sports Eye Safety Guide, visit: <https://www.libertysport.com/sports-eye-safety-guide>. For additional educational tools on the importance of eye safety during sports, contact Angela Gerber, Liberty Sport, at (973) 882-0986 x972 or agerber@libertysport.com.

For more information on sports eye injury prevention, please call Prevent Blindness Texas at 1-888-98-SIGHT or visit www.preventblindnesstexas.org.

About Prevent Blindness Texas

Established in 1956 and incorporated in 1965, Prevent Blindness Texas is the state's leading eye health and safety nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. We focus on improving the state's vision and eye health by enhancing community capacity through our core competencies of early detection, patient support, systems enhancement, public policy, public awareness and health education. More than 50% of all blindness can be prevented, yet this can only occur through these essential interventions. While we encourage all individuals to seek regular professional eye care, we recognize that this alone is not enough. Interventions such as vision screenings are an essential element of a strong public health approach to vision and eye health care. Prevent Blindness Texas touches the lives of thousands of Texans through our sight-saving programs and services through our network of volunteers and offices located statewide. For more information, or to contribute to the sight-saving fund, call 1-888-98-SIGHT or, visit us on the Web at preventblindnesstexas.org or www.facebook.com/preventblindnesstexas or www.twitter.com/pbtexas.

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