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## **New Data Shows Basketball, Water Sports as Leading Causes of Sports-related Eye Injuries**

***- Selecting the Right Sports Eye Protection Today can Keep Eyes Healthy in the Future -***

**CHICAGO (Aug. 27, 2013)** – Every year, close to 6,000 Americans suffer an eye injury related to playing basketball, according to estimates by [Prevent Blindness America](#). In fact, [The Coalition to Prevent Sports Eye Injuries](#) reports that 1 in 10 college basketball players will sustain an eye injury.

In addition, eye injuries from water sports and activities were the second most-reported sports-related eye injury. These include swimming, surfing, scuba diving, and water skiing/tubing. The use of guns, including air, gas, spring, and BB, caused the most eye injuries in those ages 14 and younger.

Eye injuries from any sport can include infection, corneal abrasions, blunt trauma, inflamed iris, fracture of the eye socket, swollen or detached retinas or even a traumatic cataract. And in some cases, a significant eye injury can cause permanent vision loss.

Because most eye injuries can be avoided by wearing proper eye protection, Prevent Blindness America has dedicated September as Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month to educate the public on the best ways to keep eyes safe to stay in the game. The group has put together guidelines to help consumers find the best eye protection including:

- Those who wear prescription glasses should ask their eye doctor to be fitted with prescription eye protection.
- Monocular athletes (those with only one eye that sees well), should consult with an eye doctor to determine which sports are safe to participate in. Monocular athletes should always wear sports eye protection.
- Sports protective eyewear should be labeled as ASTM F803 approved. Check the packaging to ensure that the eye protector selected has been tested for sports use.

- Make sure the lenses either stay in place or pop outward in the event of an accident. Lenses that pop in against the eyes can be very dangerous.
- Fogging of the lenses can be a problem. Some types of protective eyewear are available with anti-fog coating. Others have side vents for additional ventilation. Try on different types to determine which is most comfortable.
- Sports eye protection should be padded or cushioned along the brow and bridge of the nose. Padding will prevent the eye protection from cutting the skin.
- Try on the eye protector to determine if it's the right size before purchasing. Adjust the strap and make sure it's not too tight or too loose.
- All athletes should get an eye exam from an eye care professional. An expert may be able to detect a vision problem and improve performance in addition to saving sight later in life.

As part of the Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month initiatives, PBA has also joined with The Coalition to Prevent Sports Eye Injuries and Liberty Sport to provide eye care professionals with free information and materials through the "September is Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month" campaign.

"An eye injury can happen in a moment but have an effect that lasts a lifetime," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. "We encourage adults and children to take steps today to find the right sports eye protection to protect their vision and consistently make their eye safety a priority every time they enter the game."

For more information on sports eye injury prevention and information on sport-specific eye protection recommendations, please call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020, or visit [preventblindness.org/sports-eye-safety](http://preventblindness.org/sports-eye-safety). For more information about Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month or to request a kit, please contact John Minnick, Liberty Sport at 973-882-0986, ext. 977 or [jminnick@libertysport.com](mailto:jminnick@libertysport.com).

### **About Prevent Blindness America**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates and regional offices, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at [preventblindness.org](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

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