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New Data Shows More Eye Injuries Due to Basketball than Any Other Sport

- Prevent Blindness Provides Tips on How to Help Prevent Serious Eye Injuries from Sports -

CHICAGO (Aug. 19, 2015) – More than 6,000 Americans suffered an eye injury related to playing basketball in one year, according to [estimates by Prevent Blindness](#). In fact, the top five sports with the most eye injuries were basketball, water and pool activities, use of guns (air, gas, spring, and BB), baseball/softball and football.

According to the [National Eye Institute](#), every 13 minutes, an emergency room in the United States treats a sports-related eye injury. Eye injuries from sports may include infection, corneal abrasions, blunt trauma, inflamed iris, fracture of the eye socket, swollen or detached retinas or a traumatic cataract. In the worst cases, some injuries may result in permanent vision loss.

Prevent Blindness has declared September as Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month to encourage wearing proper eye protection while playing sports. Parents, coaches, school staff and others can support children's sports eye safety by:

- 1) Knowing that almost all sports-related eye injuries are preventable. Whatever the sport or the athlete's age, appropriate protective eyewear is the best defense against eye injury.
- 2) Parents, teachers, school nurses and coaches should learn about the eye injury risks associated with sports before allowing children to participate.
- 3) Parents should consult an eye doctor for protective eyewear recommendations before enrolling a child in any sports program. And, make sure the child is seeing clearly by getting him or her an eye exam.

4) Parents, teachers and coaches should discourage participation in high risk contact sports such as boxing, since adequate eye protection does not yet exist for these types of sport.

5) Parents should only enroll children in afterschool organized sports through school districts, community centers, park districts and recreation centers where adults supervise all sports activity. Ideally, an adult trained in the prevention, recognition and immediate care of an eye injury should be present at all times.

6) Parents should meet with a child's coach or athletic trainer to make sure that proper procedures are in place to deal with a child's eye injury should one occur.

7) Parents, teachers, school nurses and coaches should familiarize themselves with the warning signs of a serious eye injury and know when to seek treatment.

"Any injury can happen in a split second, but the effects of a serious eye injury can have lasting negative effects for a lifetime," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "We encourage anyone, adult or child, to always make sure that eye protection is consistently part of their uniform, and to consult an eye care professional before starting any sport to make sure their vision is healthy and protected."

Prevent Blindness is teaming up with Liberty Sport to provide eye care professionals with free information and materials through the "September is Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month" campaign. For more information about Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month or to request a kit, please contact Angela Gerber, Liberty Sport, at (973) 882-0986 x972 or agerber@libertysport.com.

For more information on sports eye injury prevention and information on sport-specific eye protection recommendations, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020, or visit preventblindness.org/sports-eye-safety.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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, Prevent Blindness 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 or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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