

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information:**  
Prevent Blindness  
Sarah Hecker  
(312) 363-6035  
shecker@preventblindness.org

## **Prevent Blindness Data Shows Water and Pool Activities Remain the Cause of Most Sports-related Eye Injuries**

***- September is Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month at Prevent Blindness, designed to Educate Public on Need for Proper Eye Protection While Playing Sports -***

**CHICAGO (Aug. 17, 2017)** – According to [recent data from Prevent Blindness](#), more eye injuries occur from water and pool activities than any other sport. Basketball is the second highest cause of sports-related eye injury. Basketball is followed by the use of guns (air, gas, spring and BB), darts, arrows and slingshots, and baseball/softball.

Eye injuries from water sports include eye infections and irritations, and scratches or trauma from other swimmers. Wearing contact lenses during water activities also increases the risk for [Acanthamoeba keratitis](#), a severe, painful infection of the cornea, which usually causes scarring and, if undiagnosed and untreated, can lead to blindness. The infection is believed to be caused through exposure of the eye to water contaminated with the amoeba Acanthamoeba, a free-living organism.

Eye injuries from any sport may include infection, corneal abrasions, fracture of the eye socket, swollen or detached retinas or a traumatic cataract.

As part of September's Sports Eye Safety Awareness month, Prevent Blindness has these recommendations for parents, teachers, school nurses, coaches and others:

- Understand that most sports-related eye injuries are preventable. Whatever the sport or the child's age, appropriate protective eyewear is the best defense against eye injury.
- Learn about the eye injury risks associated with sports before allowing children to participate.
- Parents should consult an eye doctor for protective eyewear recommendations before enrolling a child in any sports program.
- Parents should enroll children in organized sports through school districts, community centers, park districts, recreation centers or licensed facilities 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.

- 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.
- Parents, teachers, school nurses and coaches should familiarize themselves with the warning signs of an eye injury and know when to seek treatment.

"Most eye injuries from sports can be prevented with the proper eye protection," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "An eye accident only takes an instant to impact your vision for a lifetime. We encourage everyone to speak with an eye care professional on the best eye protection options for any sport."

Once again, Prevent Blindness and [Liberty Sport](#) have teamed up to offer free materials to assist eye care professionals in educating consumers and raising awareness through the "September is Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month" program. To request a kit, please contact Angela Gerber, Liberty Sport, at (973) 882-0986 x972 or [agerber@libertysport.com](mailto:agerber@libertysport.com).

For more information on sports eye injury prevention or contact lens safety, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020, or visit [www.preventblindness.org/sports-eye-safety](http://www.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](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

###