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Data from Prevent Blindness Shows More than 26,000 Eye Injuries Related to Sports Treated Last Year

***- September Declared as Sports Eye Safety Month by Prevent Blindness to
Educate Public on Importance of Sports Eye Protection -***

CHICAGO (Aug. 25, 2022) – [Prevent Blindness](#), the nation’s leading volunteer nonprofit eye health organization, has declared September as Sports Eye Safety Month to help educate the public on the importance of wearing the proper eye protection while playing sports. [Annual data from Prevent Blindness](#) shows that there were more than 26,000 sports-related eye injuries treated in the United States last year.

The new data also showed that the category of “non-powder guns, darts, arrows, and slingshots” had the overall highest rate of eye injuries for the previous year. For children ages 0-12, “pools and water sports” had the highest rate of injuries. These types of injuries may include eye infections, irritations, scratches or trauma.

Prevent Blindness strongly recommends that athletes of any age wear protective eyewear when participating in sports. Prescription glasses, sunglasses and even occupational safety glasses do not provide adequate eye protection.

Prevent Blindness offers the following guidelines to help find the best eye protection for sports:

- If you wear prescription glasses, ask your eye doctor to fit you for prescription eye guards.
- Purchase eye guards at sports specialty stores or optical stores. At the sports store, ask for a salesperson who is familiar with eye protectors to help you.
- When purchasing eye guards with lenses, make sure the lenses either stay in place or pop outward in the event of an accident. Lenses that pop in against your eyes can be very dangerous.
- Fogging of the lenses can be a problem when you are active. Some eye guards are available with anti-fog coating and others include side vents for additional

ventilation. Try on different types to determine which is right for you.

- Polycarbonate eye guards are the most impact resistant. Polycarbonate lenses are also thinner and lighter than plastic, shatterproof, and provide UV protection. For sports use, polycarbonate lenses must be used with protectors that meet or exceed the requirements of ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) International, a global standards development organization.
- Each sport has a specific ASTM standard, so check the package and/or protector to make sure the appropriate ASTM standard designation for the sport is on the product before buying it. Do not buy the product if there is no ASTM code provided.
- Eye guards which are certified by an organization such as [Safety Equipment Institute](#) (SEI) or independently tested by an accredited laboratory provide independent verified evidence of protection and performance. Do not buy a product that is labeled as 'ASTM Certified' as ASTM does not certify products.
- Sports eye guards should be padded or cushioned along the brow and bridge of the nose. Padding will help prevent the eye guards from cutting your skin.
- Try on the eye protector to determine if it's the right size. Adjust the strap and make sure it's not too tight or too loose.

According to the [American Academy of Ophthalmology \(AAO\)](#), spectators at sporting events should also be careful. Balls, bats, and players can end up in the stands at any time. Spectators should keep their eyes on the game and watch out for foul balls and other flying objects. The AAO also advises that for those who already have reduced vision in one eye, check with your ophthalmologist to see what appropriate eye protection is available and whether they advise participating in any high impact or other high-risk sports.

“Wearing the proper eye protection while playing sports is essential to protecting healthy vision today and in the future,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO at Prevent Blindness. “An eyecare professional can help to make sure you are using the correct eye protection for your sport and your individual needs.”

For more information on sports eye injury prevention, please visit Prevent Blindness at [PreventBlindness.org/sports-eye-safety](https://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, visit us at preventblindness.org, and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

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