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New Prevent Blindness Data Shows More than 30,000 Eye Injuries Were Sports-related in One Year Alone

***- Prevent Blindness Declares September as Sports Eye Safety Awareness
Month, Provides Tips on Best Ways to Protect Vision While Playing Sports-***

CHICAGO (Aug. 21, 2018) – New [annual data from Prevent Blindness](#), the nation's oldest eye health non-profit organization, shows that there were more than 33,000 Americans treated for sports-related eye injuries last year. More eye injuries occur from water and pool activities than any other sport with basketball as the second highest cause. Prevent Blindness has declared September as Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month to help educate the public on the need to protect vision while playing sports activities.

A recent study, "[Epidemiology of Sports-Related Eye Injuries in the United States](#)," found that patients with primary sports-related ocular trauma were most commonly male. And, the proportion of injuries resulting in impaired vision was highest for those injuries associated with paintball (10.2 percent), shooting an air gun (8.2 percent), racket sports (5.8 percent), and soccer (5.7 percent).

The newly published study, "[Trends in US Emergency Department Visits for Pediatric Acute Ocular Injury](#)" found that although there was a decline in the rate of overall ocular injuries in the study period (2006-2014), there were increases during the study in injuries related to sports (12.8%) and household/domestic activities (20.7%).

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.

As part of September's Sports Eye Safety Awareness month, Prevent Blindness provides tips on buying sports eye protectors:

- Always consult an eye care professional to get the best eye protection for your sport and lifestyle

- If you wear prescription glasses, ask your eye doctor to fit you for prescription eye protection. If you're a monocular athlete (a person with only one eye that sees well), ask your eye doctor what sports you can safely participate in.
- Do not buy eye protection without lenses. Only "lensed" protectors are recommended 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 your eyes can be very dangerous and cause serious injury.
- Fogging of the lenses can be a problem when you're active. Some eye protection options are available with anti-fog coating. Others have side vents for additional ventilation. Try on different types to determine which is most comfortable for you.
- Check the packaging to see if the eye protector you select has been tested for sports use. Also check to see that the eye protector is made of polycarbonate material. Polycarbonate eye protection is the most impact resistant.
- Sports eye protection should be padded or cushioned along the brow and bridge of the nose. Padding will 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. Consult your eye care professional to ensure it has a comfortable, safe fit.

“Wearing eye protection should be part of any athlete’s routine, just as putting on equipment like shin guards, gloves, or a helmet are,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “Eye accidents happen so quickly, but the effects can be painful and last a lifetime. Consulting an eye care professional can protect healthy eyesight without compromising on performance.”

[Liberty Sport](#) and Prevent Blindness are partnering for the annual “September is Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month” program. The program provides printed materials to assist eye care professionals in educating consumers on the importance of eye safety during sports. To request a free kit, please contact Angela Gerber, Liberty Sport, at (973) 882-0986 x972 or 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.

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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