

Have an Eye on Kids' Sports Safety

(MS) — Heading a soccerball, returning a blistering tennis serve and driving the lane in a basketball game make for some exciting sports moments. But for those athletes who are participating without eye protection, these same thrilling moves can mean eye injuries and permanent vision impairment.

Every 13 minutes an emergency room in the United States treats a sports-related eye injury, says the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Forty percent of all sports eye injuries occur in children between the ages of 11 to 14. Unlike many other reasons for visiting the emergency room, sports related eye injuries are preventable.

To educate parents, coaches, health professionals and athletes about the importance of eye protection, The Coalition to Prevent Sports Eye Injuries (www.sportseyeinjuries.com) was established first in New Jersey, and is now a national movement. Working in partnership with the coalition is Liberty Sport, a company that supplies high-quality protective sports eyewear.

“Parents are often quick to ensure their children are equipped



All athletes should protect their eyes when engaged in sports play.

with helmets, knee and elbow pads and even mouth guards. However, many fail to address the needs of eye protection for the same players,” says Paul Berman, O.D., F.A.A.O who is the Chairman for The Coalition to Prevent Sports Eye Injuries and spokesperson for Liberty Sport. He says that it is important for parents to make sure that their children wear protective eyewear when participating in sports, including those that have a high-to-moderate risk of eye injury: basketball, baseball, lacrosse, tennis, soccer, volleyball, football, squash, and racquetball.

Eye protection is becoming a normal part of sports gear nationwide. Not only is it cool to wear, it can also ensure young athletes can enjoy sports for years to come.

Boost Your Sports Safety “Eye Q”

To begin the learning process about eye protection, Liberty Sport offers these safety and purchasing tips:

- Prescription glasses, sunglasses and even occupational safety glasses do not provide adequate protection during sports. Protective sports eyewear that meets the strict standards of ASTM F803 is needed. Similarly, wearing a helmet or face guard is not enough to protect the eyes.
- Polycarbonate lenses of safety thickness are the only type of lens recommended as protective sports eyewear.
- Injuries are the leading cause of vision loss in one eye — second in two eyes, says the National Eye Institute (NEI).
- Purchase protective sports eyewear at a reputable retailer or an eyecare professional, such as an optician, optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- Choose eye protection that is the right size for the child and provides a comfortable fit.

To learn more about sports safety eyewear and find the options right for your young athlete, visit www.libertysport.com.

FP075429