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## **Wearing the Proper Eye Protection While Playing Sports Today Can Help Prevent Injury, Save Sight for Years to Come**

**CHICAGO (Aug. 12, 2014)** – Every year, thousands of Americans suffer an eye injury related to playing sports according to [new data from Prevent Blindness](#). To help educate the public on the importance of proper eye protection while playing sports, Prevent Blindness has declared September as Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month.

Eye injuries can range from corneal abrasions, inflamed iris, fracture of the eye socket, swollen or detached retinas or even a traumatic cataract. And in some cases, a significant eye injury can cause permanent vision loss. For individuals with vision issues, especially those who can only see clearly or have limited vision through one eye, proper eye protection is even more essential.

When Ari Rosenthal was five years old, he was diagnosed with amblyopia, or more commonly known as lazy eye. In Ari's case his right eye was significantly farsighted. The imbalance led his brain to significantly favor the stronger, left eye. If left untreated, the result would have been permanent vision loss in the right eye.

Unfortunately, one day while playing dodge ball, a ball accidentally struck Ari directly on his stronger left eye, causing multiple corneal abrasions.

"When the ball hit me I opened my eye and couldn't see. I was scared. I thought I might have permanent vision loss in that eye. How could I do the things I wanted to do? How could I be myself? It was very frightening," explained Ari.

During Ari's recovery, his stronger left eye was patched. The strain was too much for his weaker right eye and he couldn't read or do homework. Now fully recovered Ari wants to do more to help others understand the importance of protecting their vision. He also realizes how quickly accidents can happen and why eye protection is critical when playing sports.

Today at age 16, Ari is now an active, athletic student and has joined the wrestling team at his high school. And, makes a point to always wear eye protection during any sporting activity.

“By taking the simple step of consistently wearing the proper eye protection today, we can help protect our vision for a lifetime,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “Today, there are different styles to choose from for any sport, including some that offer UV protection. We encourage everyone to consult their eye care professional for the best advice on how to protect their eyes from injury.”

Prevent Blindness has once again joined with The Coalition to Prevent Sports Eye Injuries and 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 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](http://preventblindness.org/sports-eye-safety). For more information about Sports Eye Injury Prevention Awareness Month or to request a kit, please contact John Minnick, Liberty Sport at 973-882-0986, ext. 977 or [jminnick@libertysport.com](mailto:jminnick@libertysport.com).

### **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).

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