



PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

CONTACT: Rose Begonia, Mana Means Advertising & Public Relations, (808) 521-1160

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eye Protection Recommended for All Athletes

The American Academy of Ophthalmology Marks April as Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month to Encourage the Use of Sports Protective Eyewear

(Honolulu, Hawaii), April 16, 2009 – Every year, 90% of 42,000 sports-related eye injuries in the United States could have been prevented. In recognition of April as Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month, the American Academy of Ophthalmology urges all athletes to avoid eye injuries by wearing appropriate sport-specific protective eyewear when on the playing field.

“Eye protection should be a major concern for every athlete,” said Christopher Tortora, M.D., Medical Director of Hawaiian Eye Center in Wahiawa. “With the use of protective eyewear, athletes from children to adults can safeguard their eyes from unnecessary injuries.”

Sports-related eye injuries can cause serious damage. Internal bleeding, retinal detachments, and even loss of the eye can occur. Corneal abrasions and bruised or lacerated eyelids also take place commonly, to name just a few of the risks. In addition, the risk for glaucoma is greater for patients who have sustained eye injuries in the past.

All sports are categorized into three groups classed as low risk, high risk, and very high risk. Low risk sports, such as running and swimming, do not include bodily contact or the use of a ball, puck, stick, or racquet. Sports that are considered high risk, such as racquetball, basketball, hockey, and baseball, use a ball, puck, stick, or racquet and usually involve physical contact. Very high risk sports, such as mixed martial arts and boxing, include significant body contact and in some cases, require little eye protection.

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Before choosing the right protective eyewear, it is important to first understand that prescription glasses, sunglasses, and safety glasses do not provide adequate protection for sports use. Proper sports protective eyewear is made of polycarbonate material, which is 20 times stronger than typical lenses and has the ability to withstand the impact of a ball or other object hitting them. Polycarbonate lenses are also shatterproof, scratch-resistant, and include built-in ultraviolet protection.

“Amateur and professional athletes alike should also pay a visit to their local eye care professional when considering sports protective eyewear,” said Dr. Tortora. “It’s essential for athletes to discuss the options available for vision protection, correction, and enhancement.”

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of “The Hawaiian Eye Show,” a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 where “*life has never looked better.*”

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MANA MEANS ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS 1088 BISHOP ST. STE. 1209

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813 PH 808.521.1160 FAX 808.521-1104