

PRESS RELEASE



TO: Editor in Charge
CONTACT: Janet Scheffer/Brandin Shim
Mana Means Communications, (808) 521-1160
DATE: April 4, 2016

For Immediate Release

**Photo Attached*



Don't Sport an Injured Eye April is Sports Eye Safety Month

(Wahiawa, Hawaii) April 4, 2016 – There's an estimated 100,000 sports-related eye injuries each year, according to the National Eye Institute. April is designated Sports Eye Safety Month to help raise awareness of the importance of wearing protective sports eyewear to significantly reduce the risk of serious injuries that can damage vision or cause blindness.

"Eye injuries occur most often in baseball/softball, basketball and water sports, ranging from abrasion of the cornea and bruising of the eyelid to retinal detachment and internal bleeding," said Christopher Tortora, M.D., Medical Director of Hawaiian Eye Center. "According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, over 90 percent of these injuries are preventable."

Blunt trauma is the most common sports-related eye injury and occurs when the eye is hit with force. Not surprisingly, contact sports that use balls, rackets or sticks have a higher rate of these types of injuries. Contact sports also have a higher rate of penetrating eye injuries that result when the eye is pierced by an object, such as debris from equipment or the environment.

With water sports, radiation eye injuries are often overlooked. Water, snow and ice create a reflective surface for ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun and can cause photokeratitis, or UV keratitis, which is when the cornea is sunburned and becomes inflamed. Extended exposure to UV light can lead to serious eye diseases, including cataracts and macular degeneration—when the central part of the retina, or macula, starts to deteriorate.

-continued-

Athletes should wear protective eyewear that’s appropriate for their sport. Polycarbonate sports eyeguards for popular sports—like baseball, basketball, soccer, football and hockey—are highly recommended by experts. (This is in addition to helmets and faceguards for select sports.) Polycarbonate swimming goggles are recommended for water sports. Those who wear glasses or contacts should speak with their doctor about prescription sports eyeguards.

Christopher Tortora, M.D., and Steven Rhee, D.O., are board-certified ophthalmologists at Hawaiian Eye Center. Dr. Tortora and Dr. Rhee also host “The Hawaiian Eye Show,” a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision broadcast live every Saturday at 8 a.m. on KHVH 830 AM/rebroadcast at 9 p.m. on KHBZ 990 AM. Hawaiian Eye’s dedicated doctors and support staff 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 621-8448 or visit HawaiianEye.com and Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter. “For over 40 years, life has never looked better.”

#