In honor of Sports Eye Safety Awareness Month, we at The New England Ophthalmological Society have prepared some information to help educate you about how to prevent sports related eye injuries. We hope you will find this information useful and that it will help protect your eyes year-round while you enjoy your chosen sport(s). Please share this information with your friends and your family.

Tens of thousands of sports-related eye injuries occur each year. **About 90 percent of serious eye injuries can be prevented through use of appropriate protective eyewear.** The risk of eye injury varies depending on the type of activity. Sports-related eye injuries occur most commonly during baseball, basketball and racquet sports. Boxing and martial arts also pose high risk of eye injury. It is important to make sure the level of eye protection you or others in your family use is appropriate for the type of activity. **Regular eyeglasses do not offer proper eye protection.**

In baseball, ice hockey and men’s lacrosse, a helmet with a polycarbonate (shatterproof, lightweight plastic) facemask or wire shield should be worn at all times. In addition, hockey facemasks should be approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). In basketball, racquet sports, soccer and field hockey, protective eyewear with polycarbonate lenses should be worn. It is important to choose eye protection that has been tested and meets the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. For more information please visit the EyeSmart Protective Eyewear page of the American Ophthalmological Society website (www.AAO.org).

If you already have reduced vision in one eye, please consider the risks of injuring the stronger eye before choosing to participate in contact or racquet sports. Please check with your ophthalmologist prior to participating in sports to find out what eye protection is available for the particular sport you choose.

Sincerely,
The Public Health and Education Committee
The New England Ophthalmological Society