



Children's eye protection in football

A guide for referees, coaches and parents



Eye protection in football

The eye is a vulnerable and precious organ. It is recognised that sight is arguably our most precious sense. Clearly, in situations where there is a potential

threat to eye health, we should protect it in all hazardous situations.



In all impact sports (ie ball sports) there is an eye danger/hazard

for the individual who wears spectacles. Children tend to be more fearless than adults and they lack the experience to deal with dangerous situations. Any injury, especially to the eye, could have serious long-term effects.

How do we protect our children?

Currently the laws of the game state:

"In view of the new technology that has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the wearer and for other players, referees should show tolerance when authorising their use, particularly for younger players."

It is the intention of this booklet to offer further guidance to what can be interpreted from that outlined above.

There are three important elements to consider when considering children wearing spectacles whilst playing football:

1. **Safety**
2. **Stability of fit**
3. **Optimum efficiency**

Lenses

The minimum requirement is standard plastic ('CR39') lenses, although it is recommended that both polycarbonate and Trivex materials be strongly considered due to their increased safety properties.

Frames

Any conventional spectacle frame, but without adjustable pad arms as normally found on most metal spectacle frames, that provides full coverage of the orbit and is fitted with an effective sports band is likely to be suitable.

The preferred option is a purpose made wrap-around frame with full cushioning and sports band attachment.

Contact lenses

If there are no contra indications, contact lenses are an excellent alternative to wearing spectacles and offer a specific and safe alternative for the purposes of playing football.

Guide for referees

1. Prior to kick-off, ensure that any child wearing spectacles has a correctly fitting sports band
2. Do not allow a player to take the field of play wearing spectacles with adjustable metal pad arms (as normally found on most conventional metal spectacle frames)
3. When a substitution occurs, the referee, or assistant referee, should ensure similar checks are completed
4. If a child is injured (especially in the case of a head injury), check there are no wounds or other damage caused by the spectacle frame and that the lenses are still intact - should a lens breakage be apparent, immediate professional help should be sought to ensure that no lens fragments have entered the child's eye or surrounding area
5. The referee is not held liable for any kind of injury sustained by a player. Refer to Law 5 of the Laws of the Game
3. If a child is injured (especially in the case of a head injury), check there are no wounds or other damage caused by the spectacle frame and that the lenses are still intact - should a lens breakage be apparent, immediate professional help should be sought to ensure that no lens fragments have entered the child's eye or surrounding area
4. Recognise that if the player's equipment is damaged beyond repair, normal spectacles will not suffice in most cases

Guide for parents

1. Ensure that your child has impact resistant lenses suitable for sports use as recommended by a registered dispensing optician, optometrist or medical practitioner
2. Ensure that the minimum frame and lens requirements are met
3. Be aware that it is recommended that all children should have regular eye examinations - please note there is no charge for children's eye examinations in the UK by an optometrist
4. Ensure your child's spectacles are dispensed and fitted by a registered dispensing optician, optometrist or medical practitioner

Guide for coaches

1. Prior to any training session or match, check that any child requiring the use of spectacles in order to participate safely has their sports spectacles with them and has a correctly fitting sports band
2. Do not allow a player to take the field of play wearing spectacles with adjustable metal pad arms (as normally found on most conventional metal spectacle frames).

Guide for the player

Enjoy playing football - safely!





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