



**STOP Sports Injuries Campaign
Fact Sheet
02/25/10**

There are alarming trends in “professional-level” injuries among youth sports participants. Orthopaedic surgeons see two trends: the number of youth injuries is reaching epidemic proportions and youth are experiencing overuse injuries at a younger and younger age. The high rate of youth sports injuries is fueled by an increase in overuse and trauma injuries and a lack of attention paid to proper injury prevention.

To address these issues, the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine (AOSSM) and its collaborators created the *STOP Sports Injuries Campaign*. The Campaign is designed to help parents, coaches, healthcare providers and athletes learn more about the prevention, treatment and long-term consequences of overuse and trauma injury. Armed with the correct information and tools, today’s youth athletes can remain healthy, play safe and stay in the game for life.

Overuse injuries impact young athletes in the short term and often lead to long-term consequences. This type of injury may become apparent during the course of play. Using proper preventative measures such as pre-participation physicals, stretching, cross-training, hydration and open communication about pain among all participants (coaches, athletes, parents and healthcare providers) can help aid recovery and avoid long-term consequences.

It is important for everyone who plays a role in a young athlete’s life—parents, coaches and healthcare providers—to put the athlete’s health and safety first and to quickly and honestly communicate about issues of pain, injury and the need for proper recovery.

Youth sports with the highest rates of overuse injury:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cheerleading
- Dancing
- Football
- Gymnastics
- Running
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Volleyball

AOSSM is joined by leading health, wellness and safety organizations that are in a position to help educate the youth sports community about their responsibility to help reverse these trends.

- American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
- National Athletic Trainers' Association
- National Strength and Conditioning Association
- Safe Kids USA

Professional athletes and celebrities have seen the effects of the problem firsthand and have volunteered to help raise awareness of the STOP Sports Injuries Campaign.

Some of the members of the Campaign's Council of Champions include:

- Bonnie Blair, Former Olympic Speed Skater
- Eric Heiden, MD, Former Olympic Speed Skater
- Howie Long, Former NFL Star
- Hank Aaron, Former MLB Star
- Jack Nicklaus, Professional Golfer
- John Smolz, Professional Baseball Player

The STOP Sports Injuries Campaign will reach out to the youth sports community through a variety of resources, including:

- Public service announcements
- STOP Sports Injuries website with podcasts, videos and educational information for parents, athletes, healthcare providers and coaches
- National media campaign
- Injury prevention tip sheets on 12 sports

Important Facts:

Every year, more than 3.5 million children aged 14 years and younger are treated for sports injuries. *American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Play it Safe (Fact Sheet), 1999.

Overuse injuries account for nearly half of all injuries sustained by middle school and high school students during sports. *American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, *AAOS Now*, 2009

In recent years, overuse injuries have quadrupled, and half of all pediatric sports injuries are linked to burnout. *Positive Coaching Alliance, 2007

The American College of Sports Medicine estimates that half of overuse injuries in children and adolescents are preventable. *American College of Sports Medicine, August 2005

21% of youth athletes say they have been pressured to play with an injury. *NYSSF National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, 2001

For more information about the STOP Sports Injuries Campaign, visit our website at www.StopSportsInjuries.org