

# Respect in Sports

[www.sportsalliancemn.org](http://www.sportsalliancemn.org)

A monthly newsletter for everyone interested in supporting a positive youth sports experience.



The Sports Alliance of Minnesota is a coalition of sports organizations whose mission is to provide tools for creating a positive sports environment.

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## APRIL is National Youth Sports Safety Month!

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## Safety at the Fields

David B Ericson  
Minnesota Youth Soccer Vice President  
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Summer sports are arriving. Practices and tryouts have been occurring and soon games will be starting. Coaches and players will be taking to the fields; spectators will be cheering and focusing on the game. Who is keeping an eye on the non-playing siblings?

We all worry about the potential safety issues for players. Often, the play fields are part of a recreational complex that contains playground equipment at a different spot than the playing fields. Younger siblings especially may get bored and want to go play on the swings, ropes, cargo ladders and so forth. Or even go and climb the back of a backstop at a field not being used. How often do we as parents leave a game to go watch them to make sure they are safe? Not only from physical injuries but from strangers?

I am not suggesting that every parent has to leave the game every time a sibling gets bored. The parents can alternate who gets to stay and watch the games and who provides play duty. Perhaps an older, responsible sibling can be asked to be a "sportsitter" for the event.

Whoever does provide the safety oversight should have a means of communication back to the main group or to emergency support services. Cell phones are probably the best means but only if both the game watchers and the sibling watchers have each others' numbers.

## Sport and Recreation Safety Facts:

- Most organized sports-related injuries (62 percent) occur during practice rather than games.
- Children ages 5 to 14 years account for nearly 40 percent of all sports-related injuries treated in hospital emergency departments. The rate and severity of sports-related injury increases with a child's age.
- Brain injury is the leading cause of sports-related death to children.

For more safety facts, visit: [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)

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