

BASKETBALL SAFETY BRIEF

LOSSES

Navy and Marine Corps losses involving basketball for FY 91 through 95 include 5 fatalities. Injuries commonly involve the ankle, foot and lower leg. Basketball mishaps are the leading cause of injuries to Navy and Marine Corps personnel.

BACKGROUND

A review of basketball mishaps shows a variety of factors contribute to the typical mishap. Identifying hazards such as players exceeding their physical condition limit, not warming up and cooling down, landing on other player feet when rebounding is one step of the risk assessment and risk management steps to eliminate basketball mishaps. However, no one is immune to being injured in a fast-paced game.

EXAMPLES

The following examples are typical of basketball mishap reports received at the Safety Center:

- a. LT collapsed while playing basketball with family members. He died as the result of coronary arrest.
- b. A SNM was playing basketball when he became ill. He went home and his condition became worst. He died as the result of overexertion.
- c. A SNM collapsed while engaged in command sponsored intramural basketball practice. He died from coronary arrest.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessing risks, making risk decisions and implementing controls to eliminate basketball mishaps include the following:

- a. Stay in shape, not only during basketball season, but also after the season.

- b. Wear shoes appropriate for the playing surface. Running shoes should not be worn, as the soles are not designed for quick turning, stopping and jumping. Taped ankles or ankle supports with high-top tennis shoes will reduce the severity of ankle injuries.

- c. Wear pads to protect the knees and elbows from bruises and floor burns. Additionally, a knee brace can be useful, if you have a history of knee injuries.

- d. Wear a mouth guard. This device will not only protect your teeth from being chipped or knocked out but will protect your tongue as well. If your local dental command can't provide one, buy one from a local jock-shop.

- e. Don't wear chains, rings, and metal wristband. If you wear glasses, they should be secured and have shatterproof lenses.

- f. Don't drink alcohol before or during a game. It slows reflexes and makes a poor player even worse.

- g. Do 10 to 15 minutes of warm-ups before and after play. Your Command Fitness Coordinator and OPNAVINST 1610.1D are excellent sources for guidance.

- h. Don't tolerate horseplay or unsportsmanlike conduct. Avoid purposeful pushing and tripping.

- i. Use your legs like springs when rebounding to absorb shock and be alert to other players' positions so you can land safely.

- j. During non-league games use the "no dunk" rule. Glass backboards and rims can be broken if too much stress is placed on

them and the change in momentum can cause you to lose your balance and fall.

k. Check the floor for slip hazards and wipe-up as needed.

k. If an injury is sustained, remember the acronym “RICE”. “**R**est” the sprain, put “**I**ce” on it, wrap something around the injury to “**C**ompress” it and “**E**levate” that part of the body. Seek medical attention if any of the following symptoms are experienced: inability to move your arm or leg, a locked joint, persistent swelling or a grinding feeling.

SOURCE:

Amateur Basketball Association
of the U.S.
1750 East Boulder St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909