

Injury Reduction Due To Batter's Faceguard In Dixie Youth And Dixie Boys Baseball 1994-2008

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The use of the batter's faceguard was mandated by Dixie Youth Baseball, Inc. (ages 5-12) and Dixie Boys Baseball, Inc. (ages 13-14) in 1995 due to concerns about facial injuries to batters as a result of being struck by pitched balls. The batter's faceguard was not mandated for ages 15-18 under Dixie Boys Baseball, Inc.

A study of the accident claims filed under the endorsed Dixie Insurance program for the periods 1994 to 2008 reveals that the batter's faceguard was effective in eliminating a significant percentage of facial injuries as a result of batters being struck in the face by pitched balls and by base runners being struck in the face by thrown balls. The combined 1994 claim data shows that the percentage of facial injuries to offensive players in the absence of the mandatory faceguard as compared to total injuries was 3.2%. On the other hand, the 1995-2008 claim data shows that the percentage of facial injuries to offensive players during the period the faceguard was mandated as compared to total injuries dropped to .4%.

	Before Faceguard Mandate			After Faceguard Mandate		
	Facial Injuries	Total Injuries	Pct	Facial Injuries	Total Injuries	Pct
Dixie Youth	7	238	2.9%	7	2371	0.3%
Dixie Boys	4	105	3.8%	5	952	0.5%
Dixie Youth & Boys	11	343	3.2%	12	3323	0.4%

Interpretation

Batter's faceguards are effective in reducing the number of facial injuries to batters / base runners, dropping such injuries from about 3% to less than ½ of 1% of all claims

It is important to note that these data are based only on Accident claims filed under the endorsed Dixie Insurance program. Injuries for which no claims was filed with the Dixie Insurance program (e.g. injury costs were fully covered under parent's Health insurance) would not be included in this study.

It is also important to note that prior to the batter's faceguard mandate, facial injuries to batters and base runners were a low proportion of all injury claims (about 3%).

Conclusion

Mandating the batter's faceguard resulted in a reduction of facial injuries to batters and base runners in the 5 to 12 age group and 13 to 14 age group in Dixie Baseball. The USA Baseball Medical and Safety Advisory Committee considers that, as a result of the overall low risk of facial injuries due to pitched balls, that the batter's faceguard does not need to be required as a mandatory piece of equipment in youth baseball. However, the Committee considers that the batter's faceguard does offer protection to the batter and its use should be encouraged by leagues and organizations. Furthermore, the Committee is satisfied that the addition of a faceguard to a batting helmet does not pose an increased risk of injury to the batter, base runner, or to the other players on the field.

The following precautions should be taken when using the batter's faceguard:

1. It must meet ASTM F910-04 standards and Protective Eyewear Certification Standards.
2. It must be properly installed per manufacturer's instructions, must fit properly, and must be used for its intended purposes.
3. Batter's ball avoidance techniques for wild pitches must continue to be taught.

REFERENCES

Sadler & Company, Inc.:

Dixie Youth Baseball, Inc. And Dixie Boys Baseball, Inc. Accident Insurance Injury Report And Analysis 1994-2008.