



Perlmutter
& Schuelke, LLP

Capitol Tower
206 E. 9th Street
Ste. 1511
Austin, Texas 78701
(512)476-4944
FAX (512)476-6218

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KIDS AND SPORTS — How Much Is Too Much?

Earlier this month, the Austin American Statesman ran an article entitled “Kids and Sports — How Much Is Too Much?”

The premise of the article, which was written by a Dallas doctor, is that kids and parents’ increasing focus on some sports is dangerous for our kids.

There are a number of issues. Kids now are much more likely to play one sport year-round, leading to over-use injuries. Kids now engage in weight-training that is far superior to anything a few years ago, which leads to kids being bigger, stronger and faster, but also over-taxing their bodies, particularly their weaker growth plates. And, the doctor argues, more and more parents and kids are trying to force themselves back into action before the kids are fully healed.

The doctor also focuses on two things that have been an emphasis for us. One is the rise of competitive cheerleading. The United States Sports Academy finds that cheerleading is responsible for the most catastrophic female sports injuries in the US (second only to football overall). The USAA reports that many cheerleading injuries and falls do more damage than being tackled by a professional football

player.

The second issue is the rise in head injuries. According to the Centers for Disease Control, almost half a million kids visit emergency rooms each year for traumatic brain injuries — many from sports. The doctor said that in the week before writing the article, she had treated a volleyball player with a head injury and two dancers who sustained head injuries as a result of a head-to-head collision.



We are unwittingly hurting our kids, and that shouldn't be acceptable.

Even worse, we may be destroying their love of the various games. The doctor cites a study that finds that by age 13, 70 percent of kids drop out of youth sports. As the doctor says, “What could have been a lifelong source of exercise or fun competition is discarded due to injuries, stress and burnout.”

The article hits home with me. I have a 13 year old daughter who is passionate about her dance team, and I have a 10 year old son who loves to play baseball. I hope to take the article to heart and make sure that we're not making the same mistakes as others.

— Brooks Schuelke

Distracted Driving From Daydreaming?

Earlier this month, Popular Mechanics reported on the dangers of daydreaming while driving. The report is based on the Erie Insurance Group's study of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's database of traffic fatalities. That study concludes that 62 percent of the traffic fatalities in the US over the last two years have been caused by daydreaming.

Unfortunately, there's no way to completely minimize the risk that your mind wanders off, but the risk can be reduced. The report makes the following recommendations to help reduce the risk of daydreaming while driving:

- Keep your eyes moving. Change your gaze every 2 seconds. Any longer and you tend to stare, which induces mind wandering and narrowing of peripheral vision. Tiring? No. The eyes were designed to keep in motion.
- To keep alert, interact with your environs by imagining "what-if" scenarios. What if that oncoming car crosses over? What if that truck ahead suddenly stops? All those what-ifs you're visualizing feed your subconscious with some valuable data to reprogram your brain for your benefit. They may provide you with a better accident-evasion plan than the one you've imagined should a similar event actually happen.
- Chew something. Really. Crunchy foods will keep you alert. Even chewing gum works. One psychology professor advised drivers to chew peanut brittle, calories notwithstanding. Besides the noise made from crunching, he said that searching for the peanuts was oral therapy.
- Try different driving routes when possible. Driving the same long route is boring, and your mind is more prone to wander when it encounters the same repetitive conditions. It's called habituation. Perry Buffington, a medical columnist, says, "simply put, we get used to things, and when we do, they're no longer important to us." Daydreaming results. And you notice fewer things when you're bored, even if you're not daydreaming.

Quotes Of The Month

You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.

— Mark Twain

Those who dream by day are cognizant of many things that escape those who dream only at night.

— Edgar Allan Poe

(But don't dream while driving.)

— Brooks Schuelke

If you organize your life around the things you are passionate about, nothing is a time burden. You end up spending time with people you want to spend time with and doing what you love.

— Jeffery Bores

If you have fun at your job, I think you're going to be more effective.

— Meg Whitman

Distracted Driving Comes In Many Forms — Even Pizza

I hear a lot of stories about distractions that cause people to have wrecks, but this was a new one for me.

In late September, Detroit Lions wide receiver Nate Burleson, who was driving, leaned over to try and adjust one of the pizza boxes falling off the seat off his SUV. Unfortunately, when leaning over, he veered a bit, over-corrected, and hit the median wall. He broke his arm in two places and will be out of commission for several weeks.



This is just another reminder of all of the things we don't consider as potential distractions that can have an adverse affect on us when we get in our cars. Whether it's a phone, a pile of papers sliding around, an empty water or soda bottle rolling around on the floor, we should look to see what distractions we can easily eliminate. There will always be things we can't control, but there are also obvious things that we could adjust that would make us all safer drivers.

Halloween Safety Tips

Halloween is a big celebration for my family. The kids get dressed up, the cousins and aunts and uncles come over, and we all head out to go trick-or-treating. But the fun of Halloween also brings increased risks. This year, follow these Halloween safety tips to protect your kids.



- Go with your kids. I know, we used to roam the neighborhoods, play in the middle of the street, etc. But things aren't as safe as they used to be. Accompany your kids to keep them safe. At a minimum, if you don't go with them, make sure you know the route they'll take.
- I don't want to be an alarmist, but go on the internet and check your local area for registered sex offenders. Make sure your kids avoid these houses.
- If your kids are going out with others, know what activities they'll be attending, such as parties or school functions. If they're going to a friend's home, make sure you have met their parents and have their phone numbers.
- Make sure that your kids have safe costumes. All costumes should be fire proof or treated with fire retardant. If your kids are wearing a mask, make sure the eye holes fit and are large enough for good peripheral vision.
- If you're driving around a neighborhood, remain extra vigilant looking for kids. Similarly, if you're walking around a neighborhood, make sure you keep the flashlight out and that you can be seen.
- For your own house, make sure your front porch and steps are well-lit so kids don't get hurt coming to or going from your home.

This newsletter is informational and not legal advice. If you need legal advice, feel free to call us to set up a consultation.

Halloween Trivia

- Americans purchase nearly 600 million pounds of Halloween candy each year. That would be about 158 trillion pieces of candy corn.
- Chocolate is the clear favorite among Halloween candy.
- Writing Halloween poetry? Can you think of a word that rhymes with “orange”?

WHAT DO WE DO?

While we’re happy to help you find a lawyer in any practice area, I did get a question about what types of cases we typically handle. We generally represent clients in two types of cases.

PERSONAL INJURY CASES, including

- Motor vehicle accidents
- Trucking accidents
- Bicycle accidents
- Wrongful death cases
- Workplace injuries
- Construction injuries
- Products liability claims
- Other serious personal injuries

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