



## Tips from the battlefield: Eyebrow Cuts

With Wakefield Sports Clinic's James Ilic: Team Doctor for Adelaide United, Woodville-West Torrens; Australian Beach Volleyball; Matildas.



**Wakefield Sports Clinic (WSC):** A player has just taken an errant elbow or head clash to the eyebrow and is bleeding profusely, how would you manage that?

**James Ilic (JI):** Initial emphasis will be on removing the player safely from the field and stopping the blood flow. You can apply a compression dressing, pressing down firmly to stem the bleeding. If you can stop the bleeding, then you can wrap up the wound with a 'turban dressing'.



Generally lacerations occur on the eyebrow, which is there to protect the eye, so normally the eye is OK, but it's mandatory to check the vision to make sure that everything is normal. Provided the bleeding has stopped and you've excluded any other eye injury, the player can retake the field.



**WSC:** When do you stitch?

**Ji:** With the majority of eyebrow lacerations, they'll be dealt with during or after the game by a doctor. If it's a large laceration, widely separated, then stitching, but nowadays the other option is glue. Once the bleeding has stopped, and the wound is dried and the edges can be brought together easily, then you can use a specialised glue for wound closures. It works well, and has the same strength as stitching, and the glue itself comes off within a week or so.

**WSC:** What if there's bleeding in the white of the eye or the eyelid?

**Ji:** Bleeding or swelling in the eyelid is fine, unless the swelling significantly affects vision. Bleeding in the white of the eye must be assessed professionally before the player is allowed to return to the field, because bleeding in the white of the eye can indicate there has been a fracture around the orbit or base of skull fracture.



**WSC:** What are the tell-tale signs of a fracture around the eye socket?

**Ji:** There are several indicators, including the presence of a 'step' in the bone when feeling around the eye socket; also bleeding over the white part of the eye; the player may have double vision looking in a certain direction, for instance looking upwards because the muscles that move the eye might get caught in the bony fracture which prevents the eye moving normally; there is also a little nerve that comes down underneath the eye - if that gets caught up you may get some numbness around the face and nose. If any of these occur, the person *must not play*, and should be referred for further assessment.

For more sports injury-related and high-performance information, visit [www.wakefieldsports.com.au](http://www.wakefieldsports.com.au) Wakefield Sports Clinic is responsible for the care of many of the nation's elite athletes, including players from the Adelaide Crows, Adelaide United, 36ERS, Matildas, Young Socceroos, six out of nine SANFL Teams, the SAAFL, NetballSA and much more.

Pics: Foxsports.com.au ; heraldsun.com.au