

DIVING IS SAFE

"DIVING" INJURY HISTORY VERSUS COMPETITIVE DIVING SAFETY RECORD

From US Diving's "Diving Safety" March 1993

(The reader must have some familiarity with the literature before facts and figures may be interpreted. Many of these sources are not readily available. Some are highly technical. The decision was made to present the literature by agency.)

The data collection in the "diving" injury research began with general categories. These data collection systems made the incidence of "diving" related cervical spine injury known as a public health hazard that needed to be assessed. The large information collection systems lumped 'diving' accident data into a generic "diving" category. Readers confused the activity of "diving" with the sport of competitive diving. The resulting misinformation has grossly distorted the safety record of competitive diving. Administrators and insurance underwriters reading that "Sports Diving" was the fourth ranked category of SCI understandably moved to take diving boards out. Diving boards have been removed from motel and apartment pools as well from pools used by competitive divers with a blindfold mentality

NATIONAL ELECTRONIC INJURY SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM OF THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION (NEISS-CPSC)

NEISS-CPSC is a national injury information clearinghouse. NEISS issues the following caution, "NEISS data and estimates are based on injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms that patients say are related to products. Therefore it is incorrect, when using NEISS data, to say the injuries were caused by the product.'

According to the Lancaster Report text, "Of the 3.4 million sports injuries reported by emergency rooms in 1977 to the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission the general category of 'Swimming (pools, diving, scuba)' rated number nine... behind the categories of 'Football', 'Basketball', 'Motorbikes', 'Playground Equipment', and Kickball, Stickball, Tetherball, Other Ball Games'.

The CPSC has refined its information gathering activity since 1979 considerably. Sports associated with specific apparatus are now documented in terms of the safety record of the "consumer product" upon which they rely. From NEISS sample data, national estimates are generated using statistical techniques. In 1984 under the still broadly inclusive category of "Diving or Diving Boards" there were 271 counts of injury. The national estimate was 14,526 with a .15 Coefficient of Variance (CV) i.e. Relative Standard Error. This represents more clearly-delineated reporting since "Swimming Pools, Not Specified" is another category for which the national estimate for injury was 39,760.

In 1984 "Diving or Diving Boards" ranked number fourteen with such categories as 'Bleachers, 'Golf (Activity, Apparel or Equipment)' and Bowling (Activity, Apparel or

Equipment)' recording higher national estimates for injury. However, as late as May of 1986, upon inquiry by Merna Dawson on behalf of the LSDBC, a letter from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicated that statistics could not be provided by the National Injury Information Clearinghouse for springboards only.