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Game Should Be Adjusted If Eyesight Is Defective

Over the years, golf has been viewed from just about every conceivable viewpoint. Now, Dr. William Vallotton, an ophthalmologist in S.C., looks at his favorite sport and comes up with some interesting comments on the ocular aspects of golf.

Distance shots from the tees and fairways depend more on physical than optical causes, according to Dr. Vallotton. In haze or fog the golfer will tend to overshoot his target because of the unusual optical conditions. The golfer who wears bifocals may damn or bless his poor eyesight as he drives for the green. With bifocals, the golfer tends to keep his head lower in order to peer over the near segment of the lens. This can cause a good shot by forcing the golfer to keep his head down, or a poor shot if the head is lowered too much.

Defective eyesight on short shots, especially putts, causes various distortions. Greens can appear overslanted and golfers

may overshoot or undershoot every putt. Others aim the ball to the left or right of the cup.

Good golf doesn't mean good eyesight, Dr. Vallotton points out. Many golfers who do not wear glasses compensate or adjust their game to their defective eyesight. One top amateur began wearing glasses after it was discovered he was nearsighted and his game went sour. The corrective lenses made the ball appear too small and distances were distorted.

Stroke Saving Tips

Dr. Vallotton has a couple of tips that might save a stroke or two on the green. When putting, the head is tilted slightly to see the cup and this may cause a mild eye muscle imbalance. In this case, depth perception may be affected. Also, distortions may be increased in those with a prominent bridge of the nose, especially when it obstructs vision from either side. Golfers with problems of this kind might do better by standing upright and copying the croquet player's between-the-legs stance.