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The Buzz About "The Quiet Eye" For Putting

By Jack Moorehouse

What's the difference between a good putter and a bad putter? Usually, we attribute the difference to mechanics. Good mechanics produces good putting. Bad mechanics produces bad putting. At least, that's what I've always stressed and taught in my golf lessons and golf tips.

However, research shows that mechanics may not be the only difference between good putters and bad putters. According to Dr. Joan Vickers, University of Calgary, the difference may lie in how you use your eyes. The secret to good putting, she says, may be using your eyes to detect the right information about distance and direction; then using your mind to relay the information to the rest of your body, so you can consistently sink the putt. The Quiet Eye, as it is called, may someday help explain what being "in the Zone" means, she says.

So what exactly is the Quiet Eye? It's when your gaze remains absolutely still on the ball just before and as the stroke is performed. There are two important aspects to this basic yet essential skill: location and duration. Which is better? Both are effective in improving accuracy, but evidence is beginning to favor the back of the ball. In putting as well as other hand-eye-target skills, the Quiet Eye is emerging as an indicator of optimal focus and concentration. And it's something that can be taught in golf instruction sessions.

Good Putter versus Bad Putter

Having watched many players putt during golf lessons, I can see how the eyes play a part in good putting. The good putter focuses his gaze on a precise spot, his or her scans from the hole are more precise, and he or she fixates his or her gaze on a specific spot inside the cup. A good putter picks out a specific location at the hole, like a blade of grass on the lip. The target isn't the hole and certainly not around it. Instead, the putter's gaze focuses on a target only a few millimeters wide.

The poor putter does not fixate on a specific target, but instead directs his gaze to a number of locations in and around the hole. There's no clear definition of his target or his line of gaze from the ball to the target. His gaze is all over the place. He has a shorter Quiet Eye duration because he is unable to keep his gaze quiet as he strokes the ball. The end result, of course, is missed putts.

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Under stress, the Quiet Eye is often the first thing to go. It moves with the stroke, and golfers lose their ability to stabilize their gaze as they putt. When you choke, the billion cells in your brain lose their effective complexity in solving the slope, curvature distance and location problems. So even dozens of golf instruction sessions focused on mechanics may not always be able to save you when the pressure is on, but proper mechanics builds confidence and that helps.

Developing a Quiet Eye

Research shows that the average player can develop a Quiet Eye. A Quiet Eye routine on straight, flat putts has the following characteristics, which can be learned through golf lessons like any other skill.

- Focus on the hole As soon as your putterhead is set behind the ball, pick a specific location on the hole where you want the ball to go, such as a blade of grass or a small feature on the front of the cup.
- "See" the ball go in Look at this location for about two second, and visualize the ball going into the hole. Visualization is a keep technique in this procedure.
- Scan from the hole to the ball Smoothly shift your gaze without interruption from the target to the back of the ball. Your gaze should move efficiently and calmly.
- Eye on the ball Fixate on the back of the ball and imagine just the right contact of the putterhead on the ball. Picture a line through this contact point to your spot on the hole.
- Stay steady Maintain a Quiet Eye on the one spot on the back of the ball during the backstroke and forwardstroke, and through contact. Don't peek! Take a look at your ball going in the hole only after putting.

The idea of being in the Zone, or the "flow," has been around for a long time. It's when you absolutely can't miss. But until now there has been little scientific evidence that the Zone exists, let alone can be measured. Perhaps the Quiet Eye will emerge as one of the objective measures of being in the Zone. Learning the Quite Eye technique can only help you lower your golf handicap.

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." He is NOT a

golf pro, rather a working man that has helped thousands of golfers from all seven continents lower their handicap immediately.

Yahoo! Does It Again... But We're Not Sure What `It' Is!

By Eddie SanMarco

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If you've searched with Y! lately - at least in some browsers - you may have noticed a new addition to their search result's page. If you use Netscape or Firefox, the upper right-hand corner of your search result's page now holds an orange box that holds - The Buzz. Yahoo!'s Buzz Log has been around for a few years, but you used to have to go looking for it to find out what people were Buzzing about. Now Y! puts it in your face - and frankly, I'm not sure what all it's good for.

For those of you who aren't up to speed on the Yahoo Buzz, here's a quick recap. Every day, Yahoo records all the searches that are entered on its pages. Over the next twenty four hours, those searches are indexed, tabulated, calculated and sorted, and the next day - 48 hours later - Y! publishes 'the Buzz Index' in a number of different forms. Want to know what was on people's minds two days ago? You can get a quick snapshot by checking today's Buzz Index page. There's a Buzz Index for entertainment, movies, music, sports, movie stars and overall. But what's it all mean? Here it is straight from the horse's mouth:

A subject's buzz score is the percentage of Yahoo! users searching for that subject on a given day, multiplied by a constant to make the number easier to read. Weekly leaders are the subjects with the greatest average buzz score for a given week.

So... it's an index of the most popular searches on Yahoo! The Buzz publishes daily, weekly and monthly stats, so you can track trends over time. You can even get a subscription to the Yahoo Buzz Index and personalize it with customized search terms - but those don't show up in your search results page when you do a search—you have to go to your Buzz Index page for them. What does show up is the top ten general daily searches. In fact, for today, no matter what I'm actually searching for, here's what I get in that little box:

1.pussycat dolls 2.NFL draft grades 3.the ultimate fighter 4.may 1 boycott 5.Madonna tickets
6.Howard stern 7.Chinese astrology 8.project runway 9.Terence Howard 10.Bahamas hotels

So exactly what is the point of plopping that orange box in one of the prime pieces of SERP real estate? It doesn't tell me anything relevant to my search (I searched for test scores, for nursing degrees and for consumer index). If I click on one of the ranked items, it feeds me the search results for that term. If I click on 'More Buzz' at the bottom, it takes me to the Buzz Index where I can read the latest blog entry.

To make it even more useless, the Buzz box only works in a few browsers. In the others, there's either a blank column - or the Sponsor Results - which at least are contextually related to what I'm searching. Where's the value added? About the only thing that it does is clutter up a space that could be used so much more profitably.

Now if Y! wanted to actually make this thing useful, here are a few suggestions.

First - make it contextually sensitive. If I type in a search for 'tests,' I'd find a list of related popular searches a WHOLE lot more useful than knowing that most of America is searching for info on the Pussycat Dolls two days ago.

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Second, never mind the ranking - give me the numbers! How many people searched for Pussycat Dolls? Maybe it's something I should know about, hmm?

Third - move it! I don't refer to that place as `prime real estate' for nothing. The upper right hand corner of your browser is one of the first places the eye lands on a page. It's one of the reasons that you put important things in that space when you're designing your pages. Why waste it?

<http://www.TheBlogMarket.com>



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