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## **U.S. Luge Team Exercises Their Eyes**

**LAKE PLACID, N.Y.** --- When sliding at speeds in excess of 90-miles-per-hour, down a mile-long twisting sheet of ice, it's safe to say it's pretty important to not only see, but rapidly identify what's in front of you. That's why the U.S. luge team has been spending almost as much time exercising their eyes as they do their bodies. During the off-season, the 13-member squad has been using the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer, which tests and evaluates vision, as well as provides exercises that evaluate and train essential visual skills.

“It's like weight training for the eyes—Vizual Edge is designed to help athletes improve visual skills which they use constantly during competition,” explains Dr. Barry Seiller, M.D., an ophthalmologist, who developed the software in 2002. “Athletes, coaches and trainers have long recognized the benefits of good nutrition, aerobic conditioning, weight training, and quality equipment. Today, no athlete who strives for excellence can ignore the visual system as a vital component of his or her training.”

Dr. Seiller first showcased his visual skills training program during the 1992 Albertville, France Olympic Winter Games before creating the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer 10 years later. The program allows athletes to undergo a series of tests to measure how well their eyes work together and individually. This includes visual alignment, depth perception, visual flexibility, visual recognition and visual tracking.

USA Luge began working with Dr. Seiller in 1996 and began using the Vizual Edge Program for elite and national team athletes in 2002. Today, the program is also used as a talent evaluation tool for new athletes entering the program, as well as to identify visual deficiencies among its national team athletes.

“Since we started using the program we've seen real improvement in visual test scores,” said USA Luge head athletic trainer and strength and condition coach, Dan Smith. “When you're talking about finding a single thousandth of a second, everyone is looking for an edge. I believe that since we've incorporated the program into our training, we've seen better performances on the track, but most of all it's given the athletes more confidence as to what they're really seeing in front of them.”

In addition to USA Luge, Dr. Seiller also works with two other national governing bodies, eight universities and two major league baseball teams. For more information on the Vizual Edge Performance Trainer, visit [vizualedge.com](http://vizualedge.com).

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