



Local Eye Doctors Volunteer Services for Tampa Bay Rays

Feeling Fit, SUN Newspapers

For the fifth consecutive year, Dr. Neil Zusman and colleagues performed eye-screening exams on the Tampa Bay Rays during spring training at the Charlotte Sports Park. "Healthy eyes and excellent visual acuity is essential for an athlete to perform at the major league level. One can imagine how accurate the players vision must be to follow a hard ball coming at them at 100 miles per hour, whether it's in the batter's box or in the field," according to Dr. Zusman. This year, close to 70 players were pushed to see if their vision exceeded the normal 20/20 level. Many of the Rays had 20/15 or better vision and two players had 20/10 vision!

In addition, a new technology was offered this year thanks to Taaron Medley with Heidelberg Engineering. Taaron performed a detailed scan of each player's retina and optic nerve with state of the art Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT). Dr. Marc Levy, neuro-ophthalmologist from Sarasota, sat with each player and discussed the findings, as they were able to look at a computer monitor and see crystal-clear images of the back of their eyes!

"To our knowledge this technology has only been used once before to screen Major League baseball players," according to Zusman. "The exquisite details amazed the players and are useful in screening for eye disease," he added.

Local optometrist, Doug Radish, brought a state of the art machine to check eye pressures. Fortunately, no excessive high pressures that could indicate glaucoma were noted.

"Fans may recall the talented Kirby Puckett from the Minnesota Twins whose career was ended due to blindness in one eye from glaucoma complications," states Zusman. "Unfortunately he wasn't checked for this treatable disease even though he had a positive family history. As a result, we are trying to set the highest standard for all professional athletes in regards to vision and eye health screening."

Dr. Jody Abrams, neuro-ophthalmologist from Sarasota, also assisted with testing depth perception, color vision, eye alignment and motility.

Doctors Jon Mines and Mark Sibley were gracious enough to come from Clearwater and St. Petersburg to assist with the exams at 6:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning!

Any players with unusual findings or suboptimal vision are referred to Zusman Eye Care Center for further evaluation.

Zusman worked with the Texas Rangers for years when the team came to Port Charlotte for spring training.

The team of eye doctors will also be volunteering their time on March 9th for over 100 minor league players and staff from the Charlotte Stone Crabs.

“It’s fun to get to know the players and at the same time provide a needed service. The athletes are very nice and appreciative as well!” said Zusman.

Since 1988, Dr. Zusman, Board Certified in Ophthalmology, provides a range of services from routine eye exams to medical and surgical treatment of eye diseases. [Zusman Eye Care Center in Port Charlotte, FL](#) prides itself on offering state of the art equipment in a modern, comfortable office setting. Dr. Zusman has been named a "Top Florida Doctor" (Florida Monthly) and a "Most Recommended Physician" by National Consumers Survey for Florida.
