Rodenstock Innovation in Athletic Sunglasses

October 22 2007, by Mary Anne Simpson

The prototype athletic sunglasses Informance can display the heart rate, and monitor performance. The German lens maker Rodenstock has made every effort to make the sunglasses light weight and unobtrusive. Additionally, Informance designers are considering the ability to show distance and directions by a GPS devices.

Rodenstock the world acclaimed lens maker is in the development stage of producing athletic sunglasses. The prototype is currently called, Informance. The unique aspect of the Informance is the ability to monitor the athlete´s performance and heart rate and show it in the peripheral vision. The sunglasses display a stop watch and heart rate at one edge. The additional feature added only 7 grams to the weight of the sunglasses.

A thin wedge-shaped prism is built into the left edge of the lens on the left side of the glasses. A small polymer battery inside the left arm of the glasses projects an image into the prism from the side. The image is

reflected twice before reaching the individuals eye.

New Scientist quotes Rodenstock optical engineer, Mike Hazel as saying that the focus of the new design was to make a sunglass that could be styled like a normal spectacle. The features only take up about 12 percent of the field of vision on the left side making it barely noticeable from a straight on view. The other feature is the ability to run for 12 hours without recharging.

Other similar sunglasses for pilots and other professionals are generally more cumbersome and heavier and would not be acceptable for mass appeal. The Informance is designed for use by avid sports enthusiasts, outdoor professional work and professional athletes.

According to the head of research in optics at Rodenstock, the lens display is 160 x 120 pixels and could be expanded. The ability to show distance and directions by a GPS device is an area Rodenstock is considering at this point.

The Informance will be priced at the minimum of $1,000 USD. It should be available in the commercial sector by 2009.

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