

**Mapping a Course for Growth *with* Prescription Sports Eyewear  
Elevate Your Performance with Rudy Project  
Rollie Stenson, ABOC**

**Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course participants will:

1. Learn of an untapped opportunity to grow the optical retail sales through specializing in sports performance eyewear and catering to the visual needs of athletes
2. Determine the best lens material for prescription sports eyewear
3. Understand all frame, lens and fit parameters and their influence on visual performance and color discrimination with sports eyewear
4. Know how to guide the sports enthusiast to the best lens and frame for comfort and visual performance

**Course Description:**



There has never been a better time to expand your practice into the sports performance eyewear market. Many weekend road warriors have discovered the health and happiness benefits of running, biking, skating, hiking, skiing, rowing, golfing and more. Whatever the sport, optimal vision and protection for the athlete's eyes are paramount. And, like other gear, the athlete looks for performance-enhancing high-tech features that will elevate their performance. Rudy Project has over 30 years of designing sports eyewear. It takes an athlete to understand the needs of athletes and at Rudy Project, the culture is sports from the owners to the sales team. Perhaps this explains the ergonomic, aerodynamic, hi-tech solutions that RP has designed for athletes including a long list of super cool Rx solutions. They get the sports fashion and function aspect of eyewear to complete the athletes gear. When you cultivate the sports enthusiast by becoming expert in performance-enhancing eyewear, you cultivate a customer for life, and, as the word spreads, you build a loyal following. You will see the sports eyewear category grow exponentially. In this course, you will learn how Rudy Project makes it easy for the ECP to enter the Rx sports eyewear market with their Rx program. We all know that consumers buy

things that evoke an emotion and colorful high tech frame solutions with quick-change interchangeable lenses and the many comfort and ventilation features of RP sports eyewear is sure to tickle the psyche of the athlete consumer in your practice. In this course, you will learn about sports performance eyewear with color-enhancing, glare eliminating, digitally optimized lens manufacturing tech that expands Rx range and field of view even in 8-base sports frames. You will be introduced to some of the innovations in sports performance eyewear that Rudy Project has developed in response to the very specific visual, comfort and convenience requirements of the athlete.

### **Grow the Rx Sports Eyewear Category - Catering to Athletes; Weekend Warriors and Pros Alike**

Hi, I'm Rollie Stenson, an endurance cyclist and big fan of the sponsor of this course, Rudy Project. I am also an optician of many years and today I am going to share my experience on how you can map out a course to expand your optical practice into the prescription sports eyewear market. Rudy Project designs it's breakthrough innovative products for athletes of all genres. And while I will defer heavily to my sport, cycling, I will share my appreciation for the ingenuity and technology that goes into the Rudy Project frames and lens technologies to enhance color and clarity for all sports and in all environments. Be sure to go through the interactive presentation that accompanies this course at [2020mag.com/ce](http://2020mag.com/ce) to see some fantastic videos demonstrating the innovative hi-tech solutions for frames and lenses to elevate the visual performance of the athlete.



The saddle of my bike is a great place to spend a few minutes or hours, feeling alive and frisky. As an endurance cyclist, the pure joy of rolling through the ever-changing parade of blossoms increases the production of the happy hormone, Serotonin, which boosts our immune system and puts a smile on every face. Riding is one of the best ways of being in the moment while "looking down the road" figuratively and literally.

We have seen a stark rise globally in the number of people turning to athletics as an outlet to combat the effects of social distancing and shelter-at-home orders to slow the progression of COVID-19. Even weekend warriors benefit from increased oxygen uptake, ramping up their metabolism, and exercising their cardiovascular system. As your customer/patients return to you, be prepared to explore and recommend products that enhance their newfound active lifestyle.

There has been a dramatic upswing in outdoor activities, particularly walking, running, and cycling. As an avid cyclist, I welcome the upsurge in my sport. I find joy knowing the benefits that these new road warriors will experience in health and their overall sense of wellbeing. And, for those of us with joint issues, cycling is a great low impact way to get and stay fit. So stay with me as I tend to focus on my sport, cycling, but know that Rudy Project has technically advanced eyewear for athletes of every variety.

**Getting Started:** Map out a course now that will create an innovative new niche for your optical business, setting you apart from your competition, and create a new ongoing income stream unattached to insurance. Growing your sport eyewear business means attracting the athlete to your practice and uncovering the athletes you already serve for their everyday eyewear needs. Colorful sports eyewear and sleek displays makes visual merchandising easy, drawing the eye of patients visiting your dispensary. Using lifestyle dispensing will uncover the athletes that already come to you for eye exams and their everyday glasses. Be sure to include sports eyewear news, product videos and other sports talk on your

website and your social media platforms. Manufacturers like Rudy Project have impressive media assets that you can utilize to promote this high-ticket specialty. By the end of this CE, you will be ready to grow this exciting category, expand your customer base, increase your average sale, and start generating a new revenue stream.

**Where to start?** Establish a business relationship with a reputable sports eyewear company and add a good variety of sport-specific frame inventory (Plano and Rx). Your sports eyewear partner should have an excellent Rx program, including frames that are made to accommodate prescription lenses and state-of-the-art digitally optimized lens design and surfacing capabilities; to accommodate the high base wrap frames needed to provide the protection and comfort the athlete needs. Part of your plan should include education for you and your staff regarding any proprietary technologies and the story behind the brand. Make sure this brand story resonates with you and your customers. Look at magazines and websites related to sports. Visit retailers who specialize in sports gear and cater to athletes. How do they market to athletes? How do they communicate the need for protective, functional, fashionable sports gear? Now apply this to promoting sports performance glasses and sunglasses! You'll learn that most optical practices carry Plano sunglasses, not prescription sports eyewear specifically designed to enhance the athlete's visual performance. Visit shops that specialize in sports gear, in your area, and ask them how often they have athletes inquiring about prescription sports performance eyewear. Drop your card, invest in your website, and social media to get the word out that you are a destination for athletes in need of sports performance eyewear. This is the gap in optical retail, which you will slip neatly into and set the pace.





Driven by the pursuit of excellence and drawing from over years of experience, the Rudy Project collection elevates the performance of athletes at every level. Since 1985 all Rudy Project products masterfully blend cutting-edge technology and aesthetically sculpted design, along with Italian styling and attention to detail, to make some of the world's best eyewear, hi-tech prescription solutions, helmets, and sports gear. Legends of cycling, motorsports, triathlon, and many other disciplines represent Rudy Project as they wear the brand's helmets and sunglasses in training and competition across the globe. By using athlete feedback, Rudy Project has developed unique products with the latest designs, aerodynamics, and technology. For this reason, Rudy Project supports and offers gear solutions to thousands of professional athletes and sports enthusiasts all around the world. The result is a collection of products that elevate the athlete's safety, comfort, and visual performance in any field of play. Rudy Project is a worldwide developer, manufacturer, and distributor of performance sunglasses, helmets, goggles, and prescription solutions of the highest technical level. Founded in Treviso, Italy in 1985, Rudy Project has been a global leader in the field of sports eyewear for over 35 years. By selling products in more than 60 countries worldwide, the company has re-affirmed its international vocation with its second generation of entrepreneurs, Cristiano and Simone Barbazza.



First and foremost, a good pair of sports glasses will protect the eyes from the sun, wind, and environmental debris while providing excellent coverage and impact protection in the event of a crash. As an eye care professional, it's our duty to steer customers to a pair of sports glasses for safety's sake. And today, beautiful, elegant technologies are available that provide unsurpassed visual performance, clarity, and comfort. My focus is primarily on eyewear for bicycling, but the information can easily translate to other activities; running, hiking, climbing, skiing, etc.

**Fun in the sun!** Discovering your potential customers for sports eyewear is almost too easy. Men and women of all ages are seeking fulfillment in some outdoor physical activity. The more time and energy a person invests in a sport, the more attached they become to the culture and functional fashion of that sport. And whether we are talking about runners, skiers, cyclists, or triathletes, visual performance will strongly influence the participant's enjoyment and success.

Once someone has crossed the line from a casual, occasional participant to the fanatic realm, you know you will hear about it, probably more than you wanted to hear. They will be ready to invest in the cool attire and accessories to take them down the road, across the line, to the fist-punching podium finish. Price is not the issue; performance is key. So start the conversation by uncovering their passion. And if they lean forward and begin to tell you they've taken up cycling, you can provide a unique product that will greatly enhance their enjoyment and improve their performance.

We have a tendency to think "sunglasses" when a customer requests information about sports eyewear, and although sun protection is obvious for outdoor sports, don't think there isn't a need for clear lenses or lighter tints. As an endurance cyclist, I've headed out on rides long before the sun is up and not finished until late into the night. Protection should always be our first concern, and coverage can always be provided with clear lenses. But what do I do when Sol rises and I'm heading straight into the sun?



I bet I caught you thinking "sunglasses" again. Okay, let's consider several options but let's keep it simple so the customer doesn't start backing away and sprinting for the exit. The darker the tint the more light they filter. If your patient is sensitive to bright light, recommend dark tinted lenses with a solid or flash mirror to further reduce the light transmittance. If you live in an environment where the sun plays peek-a-boo with the clouds, your patients will love one of the most remarkable and affordable technologies available in the optical world: photochromic or changeable tints. Rudy Project has proprietary photochromic, ImpactX, with HDR selective spectral filtering for increased contrast under virtually all light conditions. In addition to faster activation, the innovative photochromic pigments modulate the wavelength of light passing through the lens filtering disruptive portions of the visible light spectrum while optimizing the transmission of beneficial wavelength bands of the spectrum. Rudy Project HDR technology provides extraordinary visual performance including superior depth perception, sharper image recognition, and enhanced contrast definition.

Selling a pair of photochromic lenses does not preclude you selling an additional pair of fully tinted sun lenses for a frame that has the **interchangeable** lens feature. More about frame options further down the road. But consider how awesome it would be to have a set of clear lenses, a set of fully tinted lenses, and a set of photochromic lenses. I have them all and find interchangeable lenses to be a fantastic option. I often start my ride with clear lenses in the predawn stretch, switch to polarized dark gray with a flash silver mirror once the sun is up, and finish in the dusk with yellow tinted lenses for contrast. The additional pairs of lenses nest nicely in my jersey pocket along with a cleaning cloth. Switching lenses is quick and easy. You can add up the cost of these three pairs (don't forget AR

coatings) to see how this option would enhance your business' bottom line while providing an elegant solution to an imposing problem.



Your instinct may be that your customer will be scared off with the cost of all these interchangeable lenses, but remember you do the athlete a disservice if you don't make them aware of the options. Plus, they can build their collection of interchangeable lenses over time. To avoid confusing your customer, focus first on their most frequent visual need relative to their sport. Virtually every customer needs a "general purpose" set of lenses. If they love cycling or other speed sports, they may see themselves wearing wrapped, eight base curved tinted lenses with the full mirror. Go there first, but steer their thinking in the direction of building additional options over time. Or advocate changeable tints for minimalists. Photochromic lenses provide excellent performance for a wide variety of light conditions in a single, reasonably priced set of eyewear. Remember, athletes invest in their gear to elevate their performance, and that isn't cheap! But the beauty of Rudy Project is that they make sports performance eyewear to meet every budget!"

**Where did you get those glasses?** Fitting sports frames is a subtle art of blending function and fashion. The lenses should follow the shape of the face without resting on the patient's cheeks. The temples should gently but firmly hug the sides of the head. Rudy Project frames are the result of years of experience and testing on the famous cycling events in Europe, so they are functional, fashionable, and comfortable. Most manufacturers provide a good variety of designs appropriate for different head shapes and sizes, but remember: not all sports frames are made for prescription lenses. Be especially wary of frames purchased at a bike shop, internet, or sporting goods store. Make sure the preferred sport frame is compatible with the customer's helmet. Everything has to fit together comfortably and look sharp. You might encourage your customer to bring their helmet with them when choosing the eyewear frame. Confirm the frame's compatibility with the helmet and find a frame color that matches or creates a striking contrast.

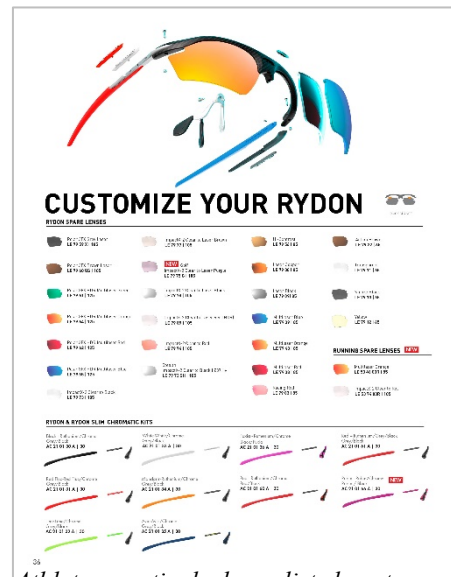
**Color Counts in Sports Gear – Get Fit in Your Kit**



Let's use the cyclist 'kit' as an example. That skin-tight, pour yourself into it, suit that cyclist wear! It's called a kit. Seriously, the term 'kit' comes from the British military, and it means standard equipment and attire. The full cycling kit is both dramatically functional and revealing. It takes a level of panache to wear and carry off the look. With everything bright, bold, matching, flashy, and very tight, anybody can look like an Olympian or Superhero. Okay, maybe not anybody, but the kit makes the rider look serious, and every element is there for comfort and

protection: helmet, shoes with cleats, fingerless gloves, revealingly tight shorts, and jersey are designed for safety, comfort, and visibility. Protective eyewear is the last item of the kit to be donned before the ride. But appropriate eyewear is of primary importance. Without anything shielding the eyes, a cyclist is likely to be temporarily or permanently blinded by the impact of a bug or road debris. Athletes, in general, will invest in their gear, and eyewear is essential sports performance-enhancing gear. Newbies will be dipping their toes in the water and will appreciate that Rudy Project has economical options, too. At the same time, your customer who is bragging about their weekend ride in the hills on their cycling vacation in Italy will want the very best available so as not to miss any of the wonders of their next epic ride, due to poor optics. If they've crossed the line from casual to fanatic, the look and performance of cycling eyewear will be worth the expense to them.

**Smokin Hot Glasses to Complete the Kit!** Your customer determines what his cycling kit should look like, and you get to help complete their 'athlete' image. They have probably already invested in a bike (or two, or more), and that machine is the platform from which the rest of the image is derived: casual, commuter, mountain bike, road bike, or triathlon bike. Let's imagine this customer has invested in a road bike and is preparing for his first organized century bike ride: one hundred miles in a day. This is a doable ride and is a common social event that indicates a level of commitment to the sport. Chances are good they will want to talk about it, so ask how they are preparing for the ride. Show them a pair of Rudy Project Rydon or Defender eyewear and talk to them about protection and enhanced vision. If they already have a pair of sunglasses, show them how the sports frame is specifically designed to fit in close



*Athletes, particularly cyclists love to sport color and they want all their gear color-coordinated including their eyewear. They will love the Chromatic Kits as shown here.*



to the cheeks and brow to keep out wind, sun, and debris while providing a full panoramic view. If they don't buy today, they will after their first-century ride and before their second. Cycling is a social sport and bragging rights are all about technology and how much it will enhance the riding experience. So give your customers something to really crow about. Like a turn-by-turn route sheet for the century ride, the ECP should guide the customer through the selection of tints and lens materials based on the customer's needs. Since sun tints are generally the first need, many cyclists are only aware of gray a nice neutral tint that maintains color balance. Gray tints reduce transmittance equally without affecting the true color of observed objects.



But this is an opportunity to make your customers aware that there are colors available to enhance the view in a specific environment or light conditions. A great selling point for Rudy Project's Optical Dock where you can pop out the dock that holds say a polarized lens and replace it with a photochromic lens or if your a contact lens wearer whose eyes start feeling dry you can switch from a Plano lens to your Rx lens dock. There are also a plethora of interchangeable lens options in plano. Red or pink

lenses will provide better contrast on overcast or rainy days. Endurance cyclists, triathletes, road racers, mountain bikers, or multi-day event participants may be interested in investing in multiple lens color options. For me, one of the most distressing situations is being caught in a cold rain in the mountains with dark sun lenses. It is not fun riding down a long, fast pass in the rain without any lenses shielding your eyes. A set of the interchangeable yellow lenses are the perfect solution to this fairly frequent occurrence for rides in the high country. Photochromic lenses may be the most elegant solution of all. Since the tint density of photochromic lenses automatically adjusts to the light conditions, they are the perfect solution for dawn to dusk rides. Again, a red photochromic such as Rudy Project's ImpactX Clear to Red will provide great vision even if the day turns rainy. The lenses not only lighten but the red tint enhances contrast and definition in low light.

Although your athlete patient may be acutely aware of the difference between a steel and a carbon fiber bike frame, they probably aren't aware of the differences in high-performance spectacle lens materials. And this is where your expertise comes into play, be informed so that you can provide the information that the athlete needs to make an informed decision. Lens material choices for prescription sports eyewear are only two: polycarbonate and Trivex (ImpactX is a proprietary Trivex formula, Polar 3FX and RP Optics are polycarbonate)). Rudy Projects, Polar 3FX (polarized lenses) are made from hi-index polycarbonate, which is thin and impact-resistant, and provide the absolute best protection from blinding reflected glare. For superior optical performance and quick adaptation to light environments, guide them to Rudy Project's ImpactX photochromic lenses made from a proprietary Trivex formula. They are lightweight, have superior optics with a high abbe value, the highest impact-resistance, a scratch-resistant hard coat; they come in clear to black, clear to red, clear to brown and NEW clear to purple. All colors are available with a laser mirror coat. (The clear to purple, clear to brown, and clear to red feature the HDR color-enhancing tech). ImpactX is finished with a premium anti-reflective coating to

improve both the visible light transmittance and eliminate surface reflections for the best vision possible in all light environments.

Is it realistic to build slick-looking cycle glasses for highly myopic, presbyopia patients? These patients may define a good chunk of your target market: middle-aged men and women looking to maintain or improve their physical condition in a low impact socially active sport. This demographic is also more likely to have discretionary income and not be overly concerned about whether their insurance will contribute to the purchase. After all, their insurance didn't help them buy their Trek or Cervello bike. Many a doctor or dispenser has been bullied by a customer with an inappropriate prescription into forcing his lab to build a set of 8 base curve lenses for a highly curved, oversized sport frame that was never designed to carry a set of prescription lenses in the first place. When the job comes in from the lab, not only does it look horrible, but the customer is offended by the thickness, and weight of the glasses and the truly horrible the vision is. Sale lost; patient lost; opportunity botched; confidence shattered. What a wreck! Let's pick up the pieces and see what can be salvaged.

Like swerving to miss a pothole in the pavement, this situation can be avoided by following some simple road signs. The sign says, "BE REALISTIC!" Not every prescription can be filled in every frame. Learn to say "NO" to an unrealistic request from an over-enthusiastic customer. If the frame they are enamored with is not a good match for 8 Base Curve lenses in their prescription, show them a reasonable alternative. Alternatives exist, such as a prescription insert or Rudy Project's lens Docking system. Both of these options provide wearers with higher prescriptions with the look and safety of highly wrapped eyewear without compromising vision. For example, behind-the-lens optical inserts, available for the Cutline, Defender, Tralyx, Sintryx, Fotonyk, and Rydon frames, can handle prescriptions from -7.00 to +4.00 for single vision RX, and -5.00 to +3.00 for progressive. Direct to frame Rx parameters are more limited, but let's keep it simple enough that even a kid with training wheels could make a great pair of sports eyewear: keep the 8 base curve prescription lenses within Rx range guidelines of the manufacturer.\* Use your lens cutout charts and take the time to confirm your measurements with the lab. Just don't overpromise. \*On the flip side, always check with the manufacturer when the Rx is outside the published guidelines...they are only guidelines, and based on all the parameters, the manufacturer/lab may give the go-ahead and avoids disappointing the athlete.

You can successfully fit progressive addition lenses in a high wrap, 8 BC sports eyewear, and alternatively, the cool Rx Optical docks and Rx Inserts are two amazing options. Boomers on Bikes are not your only prospects, but they may be your best target. To prove their commitment to stay younger longer, they go all-in on equipment and accessories.

**Rx Sports Eyewear Requires Expertise Leverage the Experience of your Partner Manufacturer.** Today, position-of-wear (POW) measurements are the standard of care and include: Monocular pupillary distance, fitting height, back vertex distance, and frame pantoscopic tilt and wrap angles. Even with FreeForm technology, be aware that you can push the limits of this new technology in 8 base wrap frames. If your patient's pupillary distance is narrow, and the Rx power high, don't expect the lab to squeeze 8 base curve lenses into a 62-17 (79mm) frame. For optimal lens performance, minimize lens decentration. This is an opportunity to utilize behind-the-lens optical inserts or even cooler Optical Docks so that the Rx can be cut on a 4 or 6 base curve. At Rudy Project, the ECP needs only provide the refracted Rx, and the lab will optimize and compensate the prescription lenses for minimizing aberrations to maximize optics and field of view. The finished product arrives with an invoice with the refracted Rx and the compensation and the actual Rx (within ANSI standards). This is important because the finished lenses may differ when reading in the lensometer from the written Rx. This compensated

Rx will provide the vision as worn that the eye doctor intended. The doctor refracts with flat trial lenses perpendicular to the line of sight, but we all know that frames have tilt and face form when worn. Tilts and angles produce power errors and introduce aberrations such as oblique astigmatism. By digitally compensating the power for the as worn tilt and wrap, the patient experiences the Rx power that the eye doctor intended. When working with experts in prescription sports eyewear, like Rudy Project, they offer Rx programs using the best in digital FreeForm and a Collection of Rx frame solutions.

**Fabulous Finish!** You want to build a loyal, long-term business relationship with your patient/customers. Give them something they want that is difficult to find elsewhere, eyewear that will give them bragging rights and enhance their performance in this fun, healthy activity. Feed their passion! Just like other elements of their kit, their sports eyewear will need replacement regularly due to changes in prescription, normal wear, and tear, or the dictates of fashion. Don't worry about the price tag; cyclists can easily go through three or four pairs of tires in a season. High-



performance bike tires are not inexpensive, yet no cyclist in his right mind will hesitate to replace tires as needed. Help them understand the margin of safety and enjoyment they will get from their new sports eyewear. Look for their photos on Facebook and ask them to post on your page as well. Moreover, if you do it right, you're going to make a lot of new friends. Do not be afraid if they invite you on a club ride. Follow the map, know where you are going, jump out on a breakaway, and set your practice miles ahead of the peloton. *Current news regarding Rudy Project support for athletes and event sponsorships at <https://www.rudyprojectna.com/blogs/news>*

**Be sure to take the interactive course at [2020mag.com/ce](https://2020mag.com/ce). It takes a deep dive into color enhancement and color vision, and you will see some fabulous videos that feature the amazing quick-change frame release design that allows rapid change of interchangeable lenses and other fun RP tech.**