

**The experience and expertise of Yamamoto Kogaku, a leader in the sports sunglasses market established over a 100 years ago**



More and more people are wearing sports sunglasses when jogging or running marathons. This is due to their effectiveness in protecting the eyes from ultraviolet rays and improving concentration.

The catalyst for their popularization was the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. When Yuko Arimori won the silver medal in the women's marathon, she was wearing sunglasses, which generated a lot of interest.



The model worn by Yuko Arimori

Ms. Arimori was wearing SWANS sports sunglasses made by Yamamoto Kogaku Co.,LTD, headquartered in Osaka.

The polycarbonate lenses, with their excellent transparency and impact resistance, block more than 99.9% of UV rays and provide a high degree of strength that is required for sports. In addition, the lenses and frames are produced in an integrated process to create a shape that fits the facial structure of a Japanese person.



The new 2018 model “SPRINGBOK” was developed to meet the needs of professional golfer Ryo Ishikawa.

SWANS’ technological excellence is based on the experience and expertise of Yamamoto Kogaku, which has been in business for over 100 years. The company, which was founded in 1911 as an eyeglass lens machining business, has a history of developing dustproof glasses for factory workers since before World War II.

Mr. Yamamoto, the fourth generation president of the company, says, “During the war, we protected our celluloid, the raw material for frames, by placing it in a well. Then, after the war was over, we began to manufacture and sell goggles using those materials that miraculously survived.

In 1946, the company named its product “SWAN Mark Goggles” after the swan, which was synonymous with luxury goods at the time. This was followed by the launch of SWANS brand ski goggles. Name recognition of SWANS increased dramatically after the 1972 Sapporo Winter Olympics.



Newspaper advertisement featuring the “Swan Mark,” which was created when the company’s goggles launched in 1946.

Then, during the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the Japan Association of Athletics Federations asked Yamamoto Kogaku to make sunglasses for marathon runners to wear. In addition to the need for functional features that would protect against the strong sunlight of Spain and comfort while running, Ms. Arimori requested that the lenses be designed so that rivals would not be able to see the state of her eyes.

The company accepted and developed sunglasses that met the needs of the athletes by incorporating their ideas into the product development process. This wonderfully contributed to Arimori winning the silver medal. The product development conducted at that time is said to have led to the model worn by Mizuki Noguchi, who won the gold medal in the women's marathon at the 2004 Athens Olympics.



Ryo Ishikawa wearing the new 2018 model "SPRINGBOK"

Furthermore, from 2008 onwards, the company welcomed professional golfer Ryo Ishikawa as an advisory staff member, and the market for golf sunglasses has seen rapid growth.

Mr. Yamamoto says that, in addition to using top athletes to raise awareness of the brand in this way, "our strategy is to feed back the opinions of athletes to the product development side to build up expertise, and then infuse that into products for the general public, opening up new markets."

At the Tokyo Olympic Games held in 2021, table tennis player Jun Mizutani won two medals wearing SWANS sunglasses. "We were able to open up new possibilities for eyewear by wearing sunglasses to increase visibility in indoor competitions." The lenses, which were designed to reduce strong lighting and make it easier to see the movement of the ball, attracted a great deal of attention.



The E-NOX NEURON20 worn by Jun Mizutani at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

"We would like to continue collaborating with small and medium-sized venture companies that have technological capabilities and unique materials. Let's work together to liven up the Japanese sports scene!" -The company's challenges will continue as it prepares for the Paris Olympic Games in 2024.



President and Representative Director, Naoyuki Yamamoto

(Reporting and text: Takeo Takahashi)

---

Yamamoto Kogaku Co., Ltd.

President and Representative Director

Naoyuki Yamamoto

<https://www.yamamoto-kogaku.co.jp/en/>

Business: Manufacture and sale of sports sunglasses and industrial personal protective equipment