



The Flyby: Eye Protection from ESS

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I have been lucky enough over the last 18 months to have the opportunity to test a pair of sunglasses made by Eye Safety Systems, Inc., otherwise known as ESS. The company is a supplier of eye protection to our U.S. military currently serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. For that reason, I was excited to give these glasses a run around the block by a domestic bike cop.

On first assessment, the Flyby is definitely a departure from my normal style of sunglasses. For a number of years now, I've worn full "shield" style glasses from a couple of different manufacturers. I've tried Smith's, Smith & Wesson, and Rudy Projects and have good things to say about all of them. The Flybys are a captive dual lens style, meaning that there are two lenses and they are not interchangeable. I wasn't real sure how I would like this. They are solid black with a dark tinted lens. When I first looked at them, I thought, "Men in Black"! They came in a brushed soft case with a lens cloth for cleaning them. The lenses are a high impact 2.2mm polycarbonate, providing broad coverage, comfort, safety, and sporty style. They also provide 100% UVA/UVB protection.

The Flyby fits close to the face and as I was to find out, this was a blessing as well as a curse. The blessing part was that they did a wonderful job of keeping particles and wind away from my eyes. The downside of it was that they would fog up at a moment's notice. The fit was secure with not a lot of movement even during heavy cycling. Here was where I also began to notice something else that I had not experienced with any of my other sunglasses. Due to the tall temple arms and how they attached to the front frame of the glasses, I found that my peripheral vision was somewhat limited. To do rear scans that usually I could accomplish with a slight turn of my head, I had to dramatically turn my head to see what was coming up behind me. For some folks this would probably not be a problem, for those with some neck issues it could be. I did find that the longer I wore them, the less I noticed it. Another issue that reared its ugly head was the temple arms themselves. As I mentioned earlier, the arms are tall but not very thick. I'm not sure what the process is for making them but it left what felt like a seam on the bottom of the temple arm. After wearing the glasses for a couple of hours, this seam began to irritate the tops of my ears where they connect to my head. I tried hobby sandpaper to smooth it but still have not gotten it to the point where I do not feel any discomfort.

Despite the couple of sniggling little irritants, I do like my Flybys. They currently are my backup glasses behind my Rudy's but in front of my Smith Moab glasses, that is, when I can get them back from my wife, who has taken a liking to them.

You can see all the eye protection that ESS offers at their website, www.esseyepro.com. ESS participates in IPMBA's Product Purchase Program, offering 30-40% off list price. Contact Scott Leighner at scottl@esseyepro.com.

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