

Future of Fitness Apps in Question as Adidas Files Lawsuit Against Nike

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The ongoing rivalry between Adidas and Nike hit a new milestone this week when Adidas filed its first federal lawsuit against Nike. The [lawsuit was filed in East Texas federal court](#) with Adidas alleging Nike infringed on nine of its patents related to smartphone apps and adjustable shoe tech. The apps include Nike Run Club, Training Club, and SNKRS apps. The alleged infringed patents relate to app capabilities such as audio feedback during workouts, GPS tracking, training plans, and integration with third-party accessories like heart rate monitors.

The ability to reserve and buy limited-edition sneakers is also at issue because Adidas' Confirmed app, introduced in 2015, allows customers insider access to its brands and exclusive sneaker releases, and Nike's SNKRS app, launched soon thereafter, allows for similar capabilities.

Regarding adjustable shoe tech, Adidas said in the complaint that in 2004, "it launched the world's first intelligent running shoe, the Adidas 1 which sensed and adjusted the comfort of the shoe while the shoe was worn." Furthermore, in 2005, Adidas introduced "the first fully integrated training system combining sensors in shoes and wearable devices." Adidas alleged that Nike's adjustable Adapt sneakers infringe the Adidas 1 sneaker.

This suit comes after Nike filed a complaint against Adidas in December in Oregon federal court and the U.S. International Trade Commission, alleging Adidas' shoes infringed on Nike's Flyknit sneaker design. This rivalry goes even further back, with Nike suing Adidas in East Texas in 2005, alleging several of Adidas' shoes violated two patents related to shoe design.

While this is the first time Adidas has filed a lawsuit against Nike in federal court, the features in question have a long history of litigation. Adidas previously sued Under Armour for its Map My Fitness app. This case was settled, with Under Armour agreeing to pay Adidas a licensing fee. Here, Adidas is seeking damages and a court order preventing Nike from "directly or indirectly infringing one or more" of the patents involved. Because the features at issue, such as GPS route tracking, are very common with fitness apps today, this case could have major implications for the future of fitness apps.

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