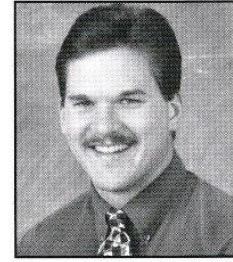


## Breathe Right™ research experiment conducted on UC campus



by Jeffrey W. Wimer, MS, ATC, EMT, Assistant Professor of Sports Medicine

*Authors of this study, which was published in the September 1995 issue of "Journal of Athletic Training," are: Marc Trocchio, ATC, a May 1995 graduate in sports medicine with an emphasis in athletic training; Jeffrey Wimer, ATC, assistant professor in the sports medicine department, coordinator of clinical education for athletic training students and head athletic trainer for the men's soccer and baseball teams; Anna W. Parkman, MBA, RRT, associate professor and program director of respiratory care program; and Jean Fisher, MBA, RRT, assistant professor of respiratory care and coordinator of clinical education for respiratory care students.*

**J**erry Rice of the NFL San Francisco 49ers wears one. Talk show host Rush Limbaugh talks about them, and *People* magazine has advertisements for them. The Breathe Right™ nasal dilator is the correct name for a product that looks like a bandage for a broken nose. Originally designed for the treatment of congestion and snoring, the Breathe Right™ nasal dilator has recently emerged on the sports performance market. Professional football players first attracted media attention by wearing the device. Most athletes now believe that wearing a nasal dilator device will increase their performance. Although the company that manufactures the Breathe Right™

has made no claims about its performance effects, their marketing campaign targeting professional athletes would make one think differently.

We decided to conduct a research project in response to a Breathe Right™ advertisement that appeared soon after last year's NFL Superbowl. An advertisement stated "8 out of 10 Superbowl touchdowns were scored by players wearing a Breathe Right™" nasal dilator. The primary investigator for our project was Marc Trocchio. Trocchio graduated in May 1995 from UC with a bachelor's degree in sports medicine. The study was completed last semester when Trocchio was on campus finishing athletic training course work. At that time he was enrolled in my course entitled "Tests and Measurements in Sports Medicine." The basic objective of the course is to introduce students to writing theses in graduate school and to conducting research in the field. With the help of Anna Parkman, UC respiratory care director, and Jean Fisher, UC respiratory care professor, we conducted an experiment to examine the performance-enhancing effects associated with the Breathe Right™ nasal dilator.

The subjects for this study were UC athletes. A physician for our department determined that each athlete was in good health. Under the supervision of a registered respiratory therapist, the athletes were tested while riding a stationary bicycle that was wired to a computer. All subjects

had to fill out a written consent form before the test. Two individual trials, lasting about an hour each, were conducted at the same time of day and after similar daily events (i.e., amount of sleep the night prior and approximate time after ingestion of meals). We measured the physiological responses with an ECG machine, a MedGraphics Cardio2 system and other specialized equipment. The MedGraphics Cardio2 System was donated by Gary Kelemen of Medical Graphics Corporation of St. Paul, Minn.

Computer generated data analysis showed that wearing the Breathe Right™ nasal dilator did not significantly improve performance. Statistical tests also showed no significant differences in performance. All subjects, however, mentioned that the Breathe Right™ device in some way opened up their nasal passages and made them feel comfortable. Perhaps there is a psychological explanation for the popularity of the Breathe Right™ nasal dilator in sports. Athletes may associate the comfort of breathing easily with the notion that the device will help them run faster or throw the ball farther. For many athletes, the comfort associated with decongested nasal passages is priceless, especially for those who suffer from upper respiratory dysfunctions such as allergies.

A more detailed article about the Breathe Right™ was published in the refereed "Journal of Athletic Training."