

True to Proform

Andent's pressure laminated mouthguards are designed to fit better and last longer

By Danny Chan

"To be perfectly clear, the main advantage of wearing a mouthguard is to protect one's teeth or jaw bone from harmful impact," says Matthew Smith, General Manager and Group Director for Production at Andent.

With that comment, the experienced leader of the Melbourne-based dental lab derailed my thought locomotive.

I had just cited a study conducted at the University of Pittsburgh which found that pro athletes wearing a custom-fitted mouthguard – as opposed to wearing a boil-and-plate guard or not wearing one at all – helped them project a higher degree of force and power.

Other research exploring the same correlation applied to taekwondo athletes and pro golfers also suggest similar findings – of boosted performance when the custom-made device was worn.

Of course, Smith would be right in choosing to tread cautiously. None of the research has concluded any physiological relationship between donning the device and the wearer's performance.

Don't be distracted

Andent is one of Australia's leading purveyors of Proform mouthguards, the lab-processed professional grade mouthguards used by both pro and amateur athletes.

You would be hard-pressed (pun intended) to find another mouthguard blank in the world that could rival in the area of softness, tensile strength, shape-retention and density.

It's the same product elite athletes playing contact sports at the highest level count on to protect their pearlys. Some of them would even go as far as to claim performance boosting attributes, real or imagined.

As far as Smith is concerned, that's a hearsay benefit that detracts from the real issue. Concussion, knocked out teeth, broken jaw, cut cheeks, split lips, cuts to the face ... now these are the primary reasons why athletes wear a mouthguard.

And only a custom-fitted mouthguard, Smith maintains, can comprehensively protect an athlete from these injuries.

"The most important aspect of a custom-fitted mouthguard is exactly that –



because it's made and crafted precisely for that individual patient," he says.

"It's moulded to their dentition so it's a perfect fit."

Achieving a perfectly fitted mouthguard, the technical honcho would have you know, is a major preoccupation at Andent.

"If it's loose and moving around, it's not really adding any comfort or any sort of protection," he asserts.

"The comfort and robustness of the

mouthguard primarily depends on how well it fits in the mouth then followed by the proper use of impact material."

Play it safe, sport

You don't have to be an athlete to know the importance of playing it safe. The mouthguard is one of the most important pieces of safety equipment for both pro-level and amateur athletes – imperative for protecting one's teeth, jaw and even neck.

With so much at stake, Andent is not mucking around. Their Proform range of mouthguards, night guards and snore appliances are recognised for being competitively priced and living up to their stated purpose.

In the case of the sports mouthguards, the manifest goal is maximum protection for high-contact sports. Boil-and-bite mouthguards, in Smith's estimation, simply do not cut it.

"There are so many things that could go wrong with a boil-and-bite," he adds, "for example, if they are not heated or fitted properly."

With a custom-fitted mouthguard, Smith says every element, every material and process are controlled for optimum efficiency and accuracy.

"We're using all the thermoplastic materials designed for mouthguards.



We're working off the correct stones and everything else to make sure that we get it clean and accurate. It's all temperature controlled and pressure controlled," he explains.

"This controlled process is what keeps everything as consistent as possible. The mouthguards are also moulded and cut by skilled technicians to ensure they conform specifically to each user's dimensions."

Impacting your decision

Andent offers three different types of mouthguards according to size and case use.

PROFORM Professional Mouthguard:

Suitable for ages 13 to adult, the advanced features including triple layer coverage of the dentition, offer a professional level of protection suitable for high impact sports including boxing, karate, kickboxing and taekwondo.

PROFORM Double Laminate Mouthguard:

Suitable for ball players aged 11 and above, this style offers dual coverage of the dentition. It is designed for all sports with medium-low impact such as AFL, rugby and hockey.

PROFORM Single Laminate Mouthguard:

Designed for ages 5 -10, this single layer mouthguard is suitable for all low-impact sports such as basketball, soccer and Auskick.



All the above are professional grade ProForm mouthguards prescribed for different users, but offering a high level of protection, retention, comfort and fit.

The additional layers (double or triple) of laminated sheet vinyl significantly reduce the incidence of tooth breakage by distributing the stress of impact to the entire length of the tooth.

Matter of form

Offering the highest level of dental fit, Andent's pressure laminated guards are thermoformed to provide outstanding protection. The layering of mouthguard material (known as lamination) helps to achieve a specific thickness under a high heat and pressure environment.

According to Smith, this type of

mouthguard fits tighter and last longer than vacuum formed ones.

"Many dentists believe the vacuum formed product will do the job, but it tends not to have a tight fit that is suitable for sporting use," he says.

"We use the vacuum product for an occlusal split when a super tight fit isn't required – but we insist on pressure formed units when it comes to Proform mouthguards."

Perform with Proform?

The design of the custom-fitted mouthguard has shown to have practically zero effect on breathing.

"Users are able to talk, breathe and focus on their game," Smith adds, "Instead of worrying if their mouthguard will slip out."

Athletes often talk about having the confidence to make a play when it matters or the ability to focus during matches as crucial but sometimes elusive commodities.

Whether the factors are physiological or purely psychological, you would think they matter less than the perceived benefits from the player's point of view.

So if a mouthguard helps athletes perform or focus better because it gives them a firmer clench or the ability to breathe normally would it be fair to say the custom-made option enhances the athlete's sporting output?

Okay, I'll admit it. I'm still a little fixated on the performance benefits. ♦

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