A similar situation occurs when the reflective opto-switch is mounted on the Müller cycle. Experiments are presently being conducted by the authors to measure the maximum power generated during cycle ergometry. The timing of peak power cannot be predicted in advance so a precise measure of revolution frequency is essential which is made possible with this system. A change in the number of reflective strips will alter the sensitivity of the

system so the power generated by a single movement of the pedals may also be recorded. This principle can be extended to any rotational movement by adaptation of the ergometer and thus gives the opportunity for many forms of movement analysis. The digital display revolution counter is sufficiently flexible to support a large number of applications and it is hoped that the reader will find many opportunities to use the device.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*From Professor P. H. Fentem,
Professor of Physiology,
Department of Physiology and Pharmacology,
University Hospital and Medical School,
Clifton Boulevard,
Nottingham, NG7 2UH*

20th May, 1981

Dear Sir,

Re: Sudden, unexpected death in sport

In the March 1981 issue of the journal you included papers presented at the Medicine in Sport Symposium in April 1980. The report of Dr. J. E. Davies' contribution entitled "Sports Injuries and Society" contains (p. 83) the following quotation, "A recent review of sudden deaths in sport by Fentem and Bassey (1979), came to the conclusion that there was no increase in sudden death during sport".

This statement is incorrectly attributed to Dr. Bassey and myself and is misleading. In the "Case for Exercise", a Sports Council Research Working Paper published in 1978, we were at pains to point out in the preface that the report "does not attempt to include discussion of the risks which may be involved in sport".

Nowhere do we pronounce on this important topic, nor is the evidence sufficient to allow us to do so. It is important to determine whether the sudden deaths which occur in those sports which carry no specific hazard are more than fortuitous. The readers may wish to refer to "Soldiers, sport and sudden death", *Lancet* (1980) i, 1235-1237 where Dr. Lynch reviews the causes of 56 sudden unexpected deaths occurring within 24 hours of sport or other strenuous exercise among British soldiers during the 10 years 1968-1977. The risk was estimated at 3.5 per annum per 100,000 man years among a population believed to undertake heavy exercise at least once per week and usually every day. Whether the risk is increased for those in middle age engaging in a vigorous sport intermittently remains to be assessed.