

AperTO - Archivio Istituzionale Open Access dell'Università di Torino

Physiological intensity profile, exercise load and performance predictors of a 65-km mountain ultra-marathon

This is a pre print version of the following article:

Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/1650359> since 2017-10-25T20:46:15Z

Published version:

DOI:10.1080/02640414.2017.1374707

Terms of use:

Open Access

Anyone can freely access the full text of works made available as "Open Access". Works made available under a Creative Commons license can be used according to the terms and conditions of said license. Use of all other works requires consent of the right holder (author or publisher) if not exempted from copyright protection by the applicable law.

(Article begins on next page)

This is the author's final version of the contribution published as:

Alessandro Fornasiero, Aldo Savoldelli, Damiano Fruet, Gennaro Boccia, Barbara Pellegrini, Federico Schena

Paper: Physiological intensity profile, exercise load and performance predictors of a 65-km mountain ultra-marathon

JOURNAL OF SPORTS SCIENCES. None, 2017, pp: 1-9

DOI: 10.1080/02640414.2017.1374707

The publisher's version is available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2017.1374707>

When citing, please refer to the published version.

Link to this full text:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2318/1650359>

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319473029>

Physiological intensity profile, exercise load and performance predictors of a 65-km mountain ultra-marathon

Article in *Journal of Sports Sciences* · September 2017

DOI: 10.1080/02640414.2017.1374707

CITATIONS

0

READS

126

6 authors, including:



Alessandro Fornasiero

CeRiSM, Sport Mountain and Health Researc...

8 PUBLICATIONS 21 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Aldo Savoldelli

University of Verona

19 PUBLICATIONS 78 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Gennaro Boccia

Università degli Studi di Torino

47 PUBLICATIONS 58 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Barbara Pellegrini

University of Verona

67 PUBLICATIONS 409 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Nordic Walking [View project](#)



fatigue and biomechanics [View project](#)

1 **Physiological intensity profile, exercise load and performance predictors of a 65-km Mountain**
2 **Ultra-Marathon**

3 Alessandro Fornasiero ^{1,2}, Aldo Savoldelli ^{1,2}, Damiano Fruet ¹, Gennaro Boccia ^{1,2,3}, Barbara
4 Pellegrini ^{1,2}, Federico Schena ^{1,2}

5 ¹ *CeRiSM, Sport Mountain and Health Research Center, University of Verona, Rovereto, Italy*

6 ² *Department of Neurosciences, Biomedicine and Movement Sciences, University of Verona,*
7 *Verona, Italy*

8 ³ *NeuroMuscularFunction research group, School of Exercise and Sport Sciences, Department of*
9 *Medical Sciences, University of Turin, Turin, Italy*

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21 **Corresponding Author**

22 Alessandro Fornasiero, CeRiSM, Sport, Mountain and Health Research Center, University of
23 Verona, via Matteo del Ben, 5/b, 38068 Rovereto, Italy

24 Tel: +39 0464483511; Fax: +39 0464483520

25 E-mail: alessandro.fornasiero@gmail.com

26 **Abstract**

27 The aims of the study were to describe the physiological profile of a 65-km (4000-m cumulative
28 elevation gain) running mountain ultra-marathon (MUM) and to identify predictors of MUM
29 performance. Twenty-three amateur trail-runners performed anthropometric evaluations and an
30 uphill graded exercise test (GXT) for VO_{2max} , ventilatory thresholds (VTs), power outputs
31 associated with these indices (PMax, PVTs) and heart rate response (HRmax, HR@VTs). Heart rate
32 (HR) was monitored during the race and intensity was expressed as: Zone I (<VT1), Zone II (VT1-
33 VT2), Zone III (>VT2) for exercise load calculation (training impulse, TRIMP). Mean race
34 intensity was $77.1\pm4.4\%$ of HRmax distributed as: $85.7\pm19.4\%$ Zone I, $13.9\pm18.6\%$ Zone II,
35 $0.4\pm0.9\%$ Zone III. Exercise load was 766 ± 110 TRIMP units. Race time (11.8 ± 1.6 h) was
36 negatively correlated with VO_{2max} ($r=-0.66$, $P<0.001$) and PMax ($r=-0.73$, $P<0.001$), resulting these
37 variables determinant in predicting MUM performance, whereas exercise thresholds did not
38 improve performance prediction. Anthropometric and physiological variables explained only 59%
39 of race time variance, underlining the multi-factorial character of MUM performance. Our results
40 support the idea that VT1 represents a boundary of tolerable intensity in this kind of events, where
41 exercise load is extremely high. This information can be helpful in identifying optimal pacing
42 strategies to complete such extremely demanding MUMs.

43

44

45

46

47 **Keywords:** *mountain ultra-marathon, heart rate, exercise intensity distribution, training load,*
48 *thresholds*

49 **Introduction**

50 Mountain ultra-marathons (MUMs) consist of running and walking on mountain trails over a
51 distance longer than the traditional marathon (from 42.2 up to 350 km) with a considerable
52 cumulative elevation gain (up to 25.000m). These events take place in mountain environments and
53 are performed on irregular terrain, presenting positive and negative slopes. Accordingly, to face
54 MUMs, athletes must perform prolonged concentric work against gravity force during ascents and
55 extensive eccentric work during downhill sections (Vernillo et al., 2015). In addition, MUMs
56 participants are exposed to multiple internal and external stressors, from exercise and environment,
57 including possible wide fluctuations in temperature and altitude, and generally have to sustain
58 extreme exercise loads (Millet, G. P. & Millet, 2012).

59 Because of their peculiarities some authors have suggested MUMs as an outstanding opportunity to
60 investigate the adaptive responses of the human body to the extreme load and stress of ultra-
61 endurance exercises (Millet, G. P. & Millet, 2012). Accordingly, recent studies have assessed the
62 acute consequences, as well as the adaptive responses induced by MUMs. MUMs have been
63 associated with musculoskeletal injuries and skin-related disorders (Vernillo et al., 2016b), negative
64 energy balance (Martinez et al., 2017; Ramos-Campo et al., 2016), severe muscular damage and
65 inflammation (Carmona et al., 2015; Saugy et al., 2013), marked neuromuscular fatigue (Easthope
66 et al., 2010; Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011b; Saugy et al., 2013), cardiac dysfunctions and myocardial
67 damage (Ramos-Campo et al., 2016; Vitiello et al., 2013), alterations in water diffusivity with
68 changes of the inter-cellular space at brain level (Zanchi et al., 2017), impairment in lung functions
69 (Vernillo et al., 2014a; Wuthrich et al., 2015) and in postural control (Degache et al., 2014). Besides
70 the acute consequences, recent studies reported physiological adaptations that seem to occur
71 exclusively following this specific ultra-endurance exercise. In particular specific metabolic
72 adaptation responses, like the reduction of running and walking uphill energy cost, have been
73 reported especially after extreme distance MUMs (Vernillo et al., 2016c; Vernillo et al., 2014b).

74 Despite the large number of investigations addressing the consequences of these extreme exercise
75 loads, limited information is available about the sustained exercise intensity and the physiological
76 demands faced during MUMs. The knowledge of the intensity profile and the physiological
77 requirements of MUMs can provide essential information for optimal training, nutrition and
78 participation, also considering the growing interest for these events, with annual numbers of races
79 and participants that are increasing considerably (Hoffman, Ong, & Wang, 2010).

80 Only few studies reported the intensity sustained during a MUM event. In a 54-km ($\approx 2900\text{m d+}$)
81 MUM the mean intensity reported was 64% of maximal heart rate (HR_{max}) for the $\approx 14\text{h}$ of its
82 duration (Clemente-Suarez, 2015). Conversely, the mean intensity of 82% of HR_{max} was reported
83 in athletes completing a 54-km (2700 d+) MUM in $\approx 7\text{h}$ (Ramos-Campo et al., 2016). Despite
84 measuring two MUMs with similar characteristics, the mean exercise intensity was markedly
85 different between the two studies, thus making the scenario not clear. Moreover, the lack of a
86 description of participants' exercise capacities does not help the understanding of the elevated time-
87 difference observed in MUMs, that can be related to differences in performance level as trained
88 athletes are typically able to sustain higher exercise intensities for prolonged periods of time (Joyner
89 & Coyle, 2008; Lucia, Pardo, Durantez, Hoyos, & Chicharro, 1998), but also the differences in
90 athletes' motivation in competing or simply being able to complete such extremely demanding
91 races.

92 In this regard, a detailed analysis of MUM participants' characteristics would certainly enhance the
93 comprehension of the determinants of MUM performance, where many factors have been shown to
94 be involved (Millet, G. Y., Hoffman, & Morin, 2012). In addition MUMs competitions can present
95 large withdrawal rates (Wegelin & Hoffman, 2011). Among the reasons for the considerable drop
96 out in MUMs inadequate pacing strategies (i.e. choice of exercise intensity) must be certainly
97 considered.

98 In the light of these observations, further investigations seem to be required to characterize the
99 exercise intensity sustained during MUMs, as well as how athletes' efforts are distributed among
100 the intensity spectrum for this kind of ultra-endurance exercise. Accordingly, the aim of the study
101 was to measure the sustained intensity during a 65-km MUM, characterizing the effort on the basis
102 of well-defined exercise intensity thresholds and quantifying the physiological load associated with
103 the competition. The second aim was to identify predictors of MUM performance by means of
104 multiple regression analysis between standardized laboratory testing measures (predictors) and race
105 time (dependent variable).

106 **Methods**

107 *Participants*

108 Twenty-three recreational healthy trail-runners (age 40.2 ± 7.3 yr), 17 males and 6 females, were
109 recruited for the study through advertisements on the official website of the race. None of the
110 participants involved had clinical evidence of cardiovascular, neuromuscular, or articular diseases.
111 Information about subjects' training history was collected through a questionnaire (Vernillo et al.,
112 2016b). Participants had 7 ± 7 yrs of training experience in running and 3 ± 3 yrs of experience in
113 MUMs. Usually they ran 7 ± 3 h/week covering 55 ± 31 km weekly. They participated in the
114 competition with the aim to complete it in the best time possible. Before data collection, all
115 participants were properly informed about the experimental protocol and gave their written
116 informed consent for the measures. The experimental protocol was approved by the Ethics
117 Committee of the University the investigators belong to.

118 *Experimental Protocol*

119 The study was conducted in two phases consisting of preliminary laboratory testing and during-race
120 monitoring. This study examined the HR response during a 65-km MUM in relation with HR-based
121 intensity markers: maximal heart rate (HR_{max}), heart rate at the first and at the second ventilatory

122 threshold (HR@VT1, HR@VT2). All participants visited our laboratories within the two weeks
123 before the competition for the preliminary testing session. Athletes performed a measure of
124 anthropometric characteristics and an uphill running graded exercise test (GXT) to identify
125 physiological parameters, including $\text{VO}_{2\text{max}}$ and ventilatory thresholds (VT1, VT2), as well as the
126 HR response. Athletes were asked to refrain from caffeine, alcohol and heavy exercise on the day
127 before the tests. All tests were conducted under controlled conditions ($20 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$, 40-60% relative
128 humidity).

129 *Anthropometric characteristics*

130 Body mass (BM), was measured to the nearest 0.1 kg with a digital weighing scale (Seca, Hamburg,
131 Germany). Height was measured to the nearest 0.001 m with a wall-mounted stadiometer (Gima,
132 Milan, Italy). Body composition was performed with plicometry method by an experienced
133 investigator. Skin-fold data were obtained using a skin-fold calliper (Gima, Milan, Italy) and
134 recorded to the nearest 0.2 mm. Measurements were taken twice, and a mean of the two measures
135 was used for body fat calculation. To calculate values of fat mass (FM) and free-fat mass (FFM),
136 the percentage of body fat (%BF) was estimate according to estimated equations (Jackson &
137 Pollock, 1978; Jackson, Pollock, & Ward, 1979).

138 *Graded exercise test*

139 An uphill graded exercise test (GXT), by means of power increments (combined increases of speed
140 and inclination), was conducted on a motorized treadmill (Rodby Innovation AB, Vänge, Sweden).
141 Mechanical power expressed (W/kg) was calculated as $[\text{Power} = g \cdot v \cdot \sin(\alpha)]$, where g was the
142 gravitational acceleration (m/s^2), v the belt speed (m/s) and α the angle of treadmill inclination.
143 Before the test, each athlete performed a 10 min warm-up at a constant power of 0.5 W/kg. The test
144 started at a workload of 0.5 W/kg with increments of 0.5 W/kg (0.3 W/kg for females) every 3 min
145 until the volitional exhaustion. Cardio-respiratory measures were collected continuously with

146 breath-by-breath method using an automated open-circuit gas analysis system (Quark PFT Ergo,
147 Cosmed Srl, Rome, Italy). HR was recorded continuously during the test by a HR monitor
148 incorporated into the gas analysis system. Careful calibrations of flow sensors and gas analyzers
149 were performed before each measurement according to the manufacturer's instructions.

150 *Competition measurements*

151 The competition was a 65-km MUM, the second edition of Vigolana Trail® (Vigolo Vattaro, TN,
152 Italy) and was held in the first week of June. It involved 4000 m of cumulative elevation gain. The
153 starting point and the finish line were at 725 m altitude. Overall, the race was performed at medium
154 altitude, with an altitude range between 725 and 2100 m. The race started at 6.30 am with a
155 temperature of 20 °C. The recorded temperatures (minimum-maximum) were 20-33 °C. Maximal
156 allowed time for the 65 km MUM was 15.5 hours and the winner completed it in 7.1 hours. 154
157 participants of 188 starters finished the race (82%) with a mean time of 11.3 ± 1.7 h.

158 During the race, HR was continuously monitored using portable HR monitors (Polar RS800 SD,
159 Polar Electro, Kempele, Finland) averaged at 5 s intervals. Racing VO_2 was estimated for every
160 subject from the HR responses, according to the equations for the linear relationship between
161 oxygen uptake and HR obtained during the GXT. Due to technical problems related to difficulties
162 of such long-distance events not all participants were successfully monitored during the whole race.
163 The main reason was the discomfort caused by the thoracic belt for HR recording. Thus only 12 (8
164 males) out of 23 participants' HR profiles were available for the analysis. The characteristics of this
165 sub-group were not significantly different from the whole group of the study, all p values were
166 >0.05 .

167 *Data Analysis*

168 The maximal power output (PowerMax), achieved at athlete's exhaustion, was determined
169 according to the equation: $\text{PowerMax (W/kg)} = \text{power output last stage completed (W/kg)} + [t$

170 (s)/step duration (s) * step increment (W/kg)], where t is the time of the uncompleted stage
171 (Kuipers, Verstappen, Keizer, Geurten, & Van Kranenburg, 1985). VO_{2max} was defined as the
172 highest values of a 20-s average (Robergs, Dwyer, & Astorino, 2010). Other breath-by-breath data
173 were averaged over 10s for further analysis of other physiological parameters that have been shown
174 to be important determinants of performance in endurance exercise (Lucià, Hoyos, Paèrez, &
175 Chicharro, 2000). The first and the second ventilatory thresholds (VT1 and VT2) were determined
176 from visual inspection by two independent operators according to methods described in detail
177 elsewhere (Ahmaidi et al., 1993; Wasserman, Hansen, Sue, Stringer, & Whipp, 1999). Therefore, it
178 was possible to establish the specific heart rate (HR@VT1 and HR@VT2) and power values
179 associated with these intensities. Exercise intensity distribution during the race was calculated using
180 HR profile and expressed into three zones: Zone I (<VT1) low intensity, Zone II (VT1-VT2)
181 moderate intensity, Zone III (>VT2) high intensity. Total exercise load was calculated by means of
182 the time spent in the three zones multiplied by arbitrary weighting factors, according to Lucia's
183 training impulse method (Lucia's TRIMP) (Lucia, Hoyos, Santalla, Earnest, & Chicharro, 2003).
184 Accordingly, 1 min in Zone I was given a score of 1 TRIMP unit, 1 min in Zone II was given a
185 score of 2 TRIMP units, and 1 min in Zone III was given a score of 3 TRIMP units. The total
186 TRIMP score was obtained by combining the results of the three zones.

187 *Statistical Analysis*

188 All test data are presented as means \pm standard deviations (SD). All the data were tested for their
189 normal distribution (Shapiro–Wilk test). The relationships between performance and subjects
190 characteristics were analyzed using Pearson's correlation. To assess the relationship between
191 performance and laboratory variables we conducted a forward stepwise hierarchical multiple
192 regression analysis. We used performance time as dependent variable, and subjects' characteristics
193 as independent factors. Independent factors entered in four steps into the regression model in the
194 following order:

- 195 1. Anthropometry (Age, BMI and Body Fat)
- 196 2. Anthropometry + maximal values (PowerMax and VO_{2max})
- 197 3. Anthropometry + maximal values + values@VT2 (Power@VT2 and VO₂@VT2)
- 198 4. Anthropometry + maximal values + values@VT2 + values@VT1 (Power@VT1 and
- 199 VO₂@VT1)

200 All statistical analysis was completed using a statistical software (SPSS Inc, Chicago, Illinois,
201 USA). The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

202 **Results**

203 Descriptive statistics of preliminary laboratory testing were reported in Table 1. Mean race time for
204 participants in the study was 11.8 ± 1.6 h (range 8.2-14.3 h), 11.5 ± 1.7 h (range 8.2-14.3 h) in HR
205 monitored sub-group. Athletes performed the race at a mean intensity of 140.3 ± 8.6 bpm, $77.1 \pm$
206 4.4% of HRmax equal to $89.1 \pm 6.1\%$ of HR@VT1. Mean estimated VO₂ was $63.2 \pm 9.1\%$ of
207 VO_{2max}.

208 *****Table1 about here*****

209 Representative example of HR response was reported in Figure 1.

210 *****Figure1 about here*****

211 HR distribution during the race was reported in Fig2a. During the race the exercise intensity
212 distribution was: $85.7\% \pm 19.4\%$ Zone I, $13.9\% \pm 18.6\%$ Zone II, $0.4\% \pm 0.9\%$ Zone III (Fig2b).
213 Total exercise load was 766 ± 110 TRIMP units. Correlations between laboratory variables and
214 performance time were reported in Table2.

215 *****Figure2 about here*****

216 *****Table2 about here*****

217 Race time was negatively correlated with maximal physiological parameters, VO_{2max} ($r=-0.66$,
218 $P<0.001$) and PowerMax ($r=-0.73$, $P<0.001$), resulting these variables determinant in predicting
219 MUM performance. In contrast, despite the strong relationships observed with race time,
220 Power@VT2 ($r= -0.70$, $P<0.001$) and Power@VT1 ($r= -0.71$, $P<0.001$), sub-maximal parameters
221 associated with exercise thresholds did not improve performance prediction.

222 *****Figure3 about here*****

223 Results from multiple regression analysis were reported in Table 3.

224 *****Table3 about here*****

225 **Discussion**

226 *MUM exercise intensity*

227 Despite the high number of recent investigations performed on MUMs, limited information is
228 available about the sustained exercise intensity and the physiological demands of these events. Most
229 of the knowledge available on ultra-marathons is based on flat running performance, where
230 intensities have been reported to be 60%-70% of VO_{2max} in 6-h events (Davies & Thompson, 1979),
231 decreasing to 40%-50% of VO_{2max} in 24-h events (Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011a). Only few studies,
232 based on HR monitoring, reported the intensity sustained during MUMs. The mean intensities of
233 64% of HRmax and 82% of HRmax were respectively reported for participants completing a 54-km
234 MUM in ≈ 14 h (Clemente-Suarez, 2015) and ≈ 7 h (Ramos-Campo et al., 2016).

235 In our study the intensity observed, $\approx 77\%$ of HRmax, equal to an estimated intensity of $\approx 63\%$ of
236 VO_{2max} , was comparable to other ultra-endurance events of similar duration ($\approx 10-11$ h) (Barrero,
237 Chaverri, Erola, Iglesias, & Rodriguez, 2014; Laursen et al., 2005). In ultra-endurance triathlons
238 mean intensities observed were 78% (Barrero et al., 2014) and 83% (Laursen et al., 2005) of
239 HRmax during cycling and 77% HRmax during running (Barrero et al., 2014; Laursen et al., 2005).

240 Differently, for events of longer duration lower HR values have been usually observed together
241 with a decrease of intensity with time (Gimenez, Kerhervè, Messonnier, Fèasson, & Millet, 2013;
242 Neumayr, Pfister, Mitterbauer, Maurer, & Hoertnagl, 2004). Gimenez and colleagues (2013)
243 observed a decrease from 72% to 62% of HRmax between the first to the last 6 h of a 24-h treadmill
244 running, with mean intensity sustained of 68% of HRmax (Gimenez et al., 2013). Accordingly, our
245 results obtained during a MUM event seem to be in line with other studies on ultra-endurance
246 exercise.

247 To the best of our knowledge this is the first investigation analyzing the exercise intensity
248 distribution during a MUM, characterizing the effort by means of well-defined exercise thresholds
249 (VTs). In previous mentioned investigations (Clemente-Suarez, 2015; Ramos-Campo et al., 2016)
250 MUM exercise intensity was found to be below the onset of blood lactate accumulation (OBLA),
251 however no evaluation tests were conducted in order to characterize athletes' effort continuously
252 during the competition. According to exercise intensity distribution found in this investigation most
253 of the race was spent in Zone I, below HR@VT1 (Fig2b). In line with our findings, previous
254 authors have suggested that the intensity associated with VT1 cannot be maintained throughout an
255 ultra-endurance event (Laursen et al., 2005), showing that in the running phase of ultra-endurance
256 triathlons athletes performed below HR@VT1 (Barrero et al., 2014; Laursen et al., 2005).
257 Accordingly, in ultra-endurance exercise the existence of an ultra-endurance threshold lower than
258 VT1 and 80% of HRmax has been previously proposed (Laursen et al., 2005; O'Toole, Douglas, &
259 Hiller, 1998). In our study the mean exercise intensity maintained was slightly below
260 90%HR@VT1. It has been suggested that exercise intensities marginally below VT1 allow a better
261 balance of substrates oxidation, promoting higher fat to carbohydrate utilization, sparing
262 carbohydrate reserves, delaying muscle and liver glycogen depletion, and maintaining blood
263 glucose concentration (Barrero et al., 2014; Laursen et al., 2005; Laursen & Rhodes, 2001). This
264 strategy has been recommended to help ultra-endurance athletes in reducing fatigue and improving
265 performance (Laursen & Rhodes, 2001). Moreover, during ultra-endurance events athletes present

266 large energy expenditures and require constant energy refuelling (Jeukendrup, 2011; Kreider, 1991).
267 Particularly, despite nutritional strategies adopted by the athletes, MUMs competitions, are
268 associated with large energy deficits (Martinez et al., 2017; Ramos-Campo et al., 2016). Thus, the
269 adoption of an optimal exercise intensity, together with an adequate nutritional intake (Jeukendrup,
270 2011; Martinez et al., 2017), probably represent the best solution to delay the onset of fatigue and
271 compete in MUMs. Accordingly, an intensity slightly lower than VT1 could represents a boundary
272 of sustainable intensity for runners in >10h MUMs, since athletes sustaining a large part of the race
273 in Zone I could manage their energy reserves, avoid nutrient-related fatigue and optimize
274 competitive result. This information observed in runners that successfully completed a 65-km
275 MUM can be helpful for athletes and coaches in order to better plan the trainings and the
276 participation in this kind of events. In particular our findings can help athletes' pacing strategy
277 during MUMs competitions, providing a reference threshold for athletes who aim to complete such
278 extreme races.

279 *MUM exercise load*

280 The three zones approach defining exercise intensity by means of the HR at the two ventilatory
281 thresholds has been extensively used to calculate the exercise load of trainings and competitions
282 (TRIMP), as well as the optimal training intensity distribution, both in endurance and ultra-
283 endurance athletes (Muñoz, Cejuela, Seiler, Larumbe, & Esteve-Lanao, 2014; Seiler & Kjerland,
284 2006; Stöggl & Sperlich, 2015). HR-based TRIMP score in literature showed training loads of
285 ≈ 1000 -1500 TRIMP units/week in professional cycling (Lucia et al., 2003) , ≈ 1000 units/week in
286 ultra-endurance tri-athletes (Muñoz et al., 2014), ≈ 800 units/week elite runners (Billat et al., 2003),
287 ≈ 400 units/week sub-elite runners (Esteve-Lanao, San Juan, Earnest, Foster, & Lucia, 2005) and
288 ≈ 800 units/week in elite junior Nordic skiers (Seiler & Kjerland, 2006). Moreover, taking into
289 account competition loads, values of ≈ 2000 TRIMP units/week during professional road cycling
290 competition (Lucia, Hoyos, Carvajal, & Chicharro, 1999), ≈ 1000 units during Ironman triathlon

291 (Muñoz et al., 2014) and ≈ 800 units during a 24-h cycling race were reported (Bescos et al., 2012).
292 In the light of the above, the ~ 750 TRIMP units observed in this study can be considered extremely
293 high, especially for amateur athletes, as such values are often reached by endurance athletes during
294 an entire week of training.

295 *MUM performance*

296 The 65-km MUM performance was highly correlated with athletes' VO_{2max} and peak power output
297 reached in the graded exercise test (Fig. 3). By including the oxygen consumption and mechanical
298 power exerted at the ventilatory thresholds, despite being highly correlated with MUM
299 performance, the prediction of race time did not improve (see the results of steps 3 and 4 of
300 hierarchical regression analysis reported in Table 3). Considering the submaximal intensities
301 sustained in MUMs, it was plausible that the oxygen consumptions associated with sub-maximal
302 indices ($VO_2@VTs$) represented parameters able to predict the performance. Particularly, for
303 endurance exercise, submaximal indices (e.g. power output or speed exerted at the ventilatory
304 thresholds) seem to be more reflective of athletes' performance capability (Impellizzeri, Marcora,
305 Rampinini, Mognoni, & Sassi, 2005; Lucia et al., 1998), as well as better descriptive of training
306 status especially in an homogenous group of athletes (e.g. similar VO_{2max}) (Joyner & Coyle, 2008).
307 Nevertheless for ultra-endurance exercises values associated with these intensity markers seem to
308 be not so determinant (Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011a), resulting maximal values the best performance
309 predictors (Barrero et al., 2014). In line with existing ultra-endurance literature our analysis,
310 conducted in a heterogeneous group of athletes, further showed the importance of maximal values
311 over those associated with exercise thresholds in ultra-endurance exercise, as previously reported
312 for ultra-distance running (Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011a; Millet, G. Y. et al., 2012) and ultra-endurance
313 triathlon (Barrero et al., 2014). In particular, VO_{2max} is still associated with performance also in
314 ultra-endurance events up to 24-h in duration (Lazzer et al., 2012; Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011a). The
315 importance of a high VO_{2max} has been also explained by a favorable metabolic condition, connected

316 with an advantageous substrates utilization, during low intensities observed in ultra-endurance
317 exercises (Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011a). In this regard, high values of VO_{2max} could represent also a
318 beneficial aspect for the sub-maximal intensities and long duration of a MUM.

319 In the present study the power outputs exerted in graded exercise test, calculated at the level of
320 ventilatory thresholds and VO_{2max} , were better correlated with performance (r coefficients ranged
321 from -0.73 to -0.71) than the measure of oxygen consumptions at the same intensities (r coefficients
322 ranged from -0.66 to -0.56, see Table 2). Differently from the measure of oxygen consumptions, the
323 measurement of external power output takes into account the efficiency of converting metabolic
324 power in mechanical power (Ettema & Loràs, 2009), representing one of the main determinants of
325 endurance performance (Joyner & Coyle, 2008). Thus, the power output that an athlete can produce,
326 determined by an uphill GXT, may represent an important factor, determining the ascent rate and
327 consequently performance time in uphill sections of a MUM.

328 The variables derived from anthropometry and a GXT were found to explain only the 59% of MUM
329 performance variance. In this regard, in ultra-distance running events other factors, associated with
330 the extreme character of the races, as the resistance to muscle damage and mental abilities, can play
331 an important role in determining the final result (Millet, G. Y. et al., 2012). In addition an
332 extensively investigated variable in ultra-distance running that was not evaluated in this study is
333 energy cost of locomotion (Lazzer et al., 2012; Millet, G. Y. et al., 2011a; Vernillo et al., 2016c;
334 Vernillo et al., 2015; Vernillo et al., 2014b). The role of energy cost in determining ultra-running
335 performance is still a topic of discussion (Millet, G. Y. et al., 2012). Previous authors have shown
336 that mean energy cost of level running together with VO_{2max} and its fractional utilization can
337 explain the 87% of performance in multi-day running (Lazzer et al., 2012). In addition, as acute
338 consequence of MUM participation, changes in energy cost in different running conditions have
339 been reported (Vernillo et al., 2016c; Vernillo et al., 2015; Vernillo et al., 2014b), with variations
340 that have been shown to be related to MUM performance (Vernillo et al., 2015). For instance,

341 Vernillo and colleagues (Vernillo et al., 2015) reported a positive correlations between race time
342 and the energy cost variation in level and uphill running, after a previous edition of this MUM (65-
343 km). In this study we did not measure the energy cost in different running conditions, and its
344 variation after the race, this may explain why anthropometric and physiological characteristics
345 measured with a GXT accounted only for the 59% of MUM performance variance. Accordingly,
346 these results and the factors above mentioned can further underline the multi-factorial character of
347 MUM performance (Millet, G. P. & Millet, 2012).

348 *Limitations*

349 Some issues should be considered when interpreting the present results. The long distance, the
350 alternation of high elevation gain and loss of the MUM may have favoured the use of conservative
351 pacing strategies, decreasing the risk of premature exhaustion. In addition, several factors might
352 have influenced the HR response during the MUM. The effect of altitude (Bartsch & Gibbs, 2007)
353 as well as subjects' hydration status (Lambert, Mbambo, & Gibson, 1998) could have indeed caused
354 increases in HR. Furthermore, reductions in HR have been observed after ultra-endurance exercise
355 (Lucas et al., 2008; Mattsson et al., 2010) due to plasma volume expansion (Robach et al., 2014)
356 and the desensitization of the heart's adrenergic receptors (Hart et al., 2006; Welsh et al., 2005).
357 The downhill sections of the MUM, generating more exercise-induced muscle damage and fatigue-
358 related outcomes (Giandolini et al., 2016), may have played a direct role on the physiological load
359 not considered in the study. If the athletes stayed for most of the time at an intensity $< \text{HR@VT1}$
360 during downhill sections the physiological stress may have been quite blind by the intrinsic features
361 of the downhill locomotion (Giandolini et al., 2016; Minetti, Moia, Roi, Susta, & Ferretti, 2002;
362 Vernillo et al., 2016a). Nevertheless, prolonged eccentric loads can lead to an increase of the
363 oxygen consumption, mainly related to the exercise-induced muscle damage (Giandolini et al.,
364 2016; Vernillo et al., 2016a), and thus in the physiological strain. In this regard GPS data could be

365 helpful to contextualize the different contribution of uphill and downhill sections and, thus, the
366 physiological load of MUMs (Kerhervè, Millet, & Solomon, 2015).

367 **Conclusions**

368 Mean exercise intensity during the 65-km MUM was $\approx 77\%$ of HR_{max} and most of the race time
369 was spent at intensity below HR@VT1. This finding supports the idea that the first ventilatory
370 threshold represents a boundary of tolerable intensity for amateur runners in a MUM longer than
371 10h, where the exercise load was found to be extremely high (>750 TRIMP units). The results can
372 be helpful for athletes and coaches in order to better plan the training strategies and the participation
373 in this kind of events. In particular our findings can help athletes' pacing strategy during MUMs
374 competitions, providing a reference threshold for athletes who aim to complete such extreme races.

375 In addition, the study showed that parameters associated with VO_{2max} were determinant in
376 predicting MUM performance, whereas exercise thresholds did not improve performance prediction
377 in this heterogeneous group of athletes, which is in line with previous research in ultra-endurance
378 events. However, the variables derived from anthropometry and a graded exercise test explained
379 only 59% of race time variance, further underlining the multi-factorial character of MUM
380 performance.

381 **Disclosure of interest**

382 The authors report no conflicts of interest.

383 **References**

- 384 Ahmaidi, S., Hardy, J. M., Varray, A., Collomp, K., Mercier, J., & Prefaut, C. (1993). Respiratory
385 gas exchange indices used to detect the blood lactate accumulation threshold during an
386 incremental exercise test in young athletes. *European journal of applied physiology and*
387 *occupational physiology*, 66(1), 31-36
- 388 Barrero, A., Chaverri, D., Erola, P., Iglesias, X., & Rodriguez, F. A. (2014). Intensity profile during
389 an ultra-endurance triathlon in relation to testing and performance. *International journal of*
390 *sports medicine*, 35(14), 1170-1178

- 391 Bartsch, P., & Gibbs, J. S. R. (2007). Effect of altitude on the heart and the lungs. *Circulation*,
392 116(19), 2191-2202
- 393 Bescos, R., Rodriguez, F. A., Iglesias, X., Knechtle, B., Benitez, A., Marina, M. (2012). Nutritional
394 behavior of cyclists during a 24-hour team relay race: a field study report. *Journal of the*
395 *International Society of Sports Nutrition*, 9(1), 1
- 396 Billat, V., Lepretre, P.-M., Heugas, A.-M., Laurence, M.-H., Salim, D., & Koralsztein, J. P. (2003).
397 Training and bioenergetic characteristics in elite male and female Kenyan runners. *Medicine*
398 *and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 35(2), 297-304
- 399 Carmona, G., Roca, E., Guerrero, M., Cussò, R., Iruiria, A., Nescolarde, L. (2015). Sarcomere
400 Disruptions of Slow Fiber Resulting From Mountain Ultramarathon. *International journal of*
401 *sports physiology and performance*, 10(8), 1041-1047
- 402 Clemente-Suarez, V. J. (2015). Psychophysiological response and energy balance during a 14-h
403 ultraendurance mountain running event. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*,
404 40(3), 269-273
- 405 Davies, C. T., & Thompson, M. W. (1979). Aerobic performance of female marathon and male
406 ultramarathon athletes. *Eur J Appl Physiol Occup Physiol*, 41(4), 233-245
- 407 Degache, F., Van Zaen, J., Oehen, L., Guex, K., Trabucchi, P., & Millet, G. (2014). Alterations in
408 postural control during the world's most challenging mountain ultra-marathon. *PLoS One*,
409 9(1), e84554
- 410 Easthope, C. S., Hausswirth, C., Louis, J., Lepers, R., Vercruyssen, F., & Brisswalter, J. (2010).
411 Effects of a trail running competition on muscular performance and efficiency in well-
412 trained young and master athletes. *Eur J Appl Physiol*, 110(6), 1107-1116
- 413 Esteve-Lanao, J., San Juan, A. F., Earnest, C. P., Foster, C., & Lucia, A. (2005). How do endurance
414 runners actually train? Relationship with competition performance. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*,
415 37(3), 496-504
- 416 Ettema, G., & Loràs, H. W. (2009). Efficiency in cycling: a review. *European journal of applied*
417 *physiology*, 106(1), 1-14
- 418 Giandolini, M., Vernillo, G., Samozino, P., Horvais, N., Edwards, W. B., Morin, J.-B. t. (2016).
419 Fatigue associated with prolonged graded running. *European journal of applied physiology*,
420 116(10), 1859-1873
- 421 Gimenez, P., Kerhervè, H., Messonnier, L. A., Fèasson, L., & Millet, G. Y. (2013). Changes in the
422 energy cost of running during a 24-h treadmill exercise. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*, 45(9), 1807-
423 1813
- 424 Hart, E., Dawson, E., Rasmussen, P., George, K., Secher, N. H., Whyte, G. (2006). Beta-Adrenergic
425 receptor desensitization in man: insight into post-exercise attenuation of cardiac function.
426 *The Journal of physiology*, 577(2), 717-725
- 427 Hoffman, M. D., Ong, J. C., & Wang, G. (2010). Historical analysis of participation in 161 km
428 ultramarathons in North America. *The International journal of the history of sport*, 27(11),
429 1877-1891
- 430 Impellizzeri, F. M., Marcora, S. M., Rampinini, E., Mognoni, P., & Sassi, A. (2005). Correlations
431 between physiological variables and performance in high level cross country off road
432 cyclists. *British journal of sports medicine*, 39(10), 747-751
- 433 Jackson, A. S., & Pollock, M. L. (1978). Generalized equations for predicting body density of men.
434 *British journal of nutrition*, 40(03), 497-504
- 435 Jackson, A. S., Pollock, M. L., & Ward, A. N. N. (1979). Generalized equations for predicting body
436 density of women. *Medicine and science in sports and exercise*, 12(3), 175-181
- 437 Jeukendrup, A. E. (2011). Nutrition for endurance sports: marathon, triathlon, and road cycling.
438 *Journal of sports sciences*, 29(sup1), S91-S99
- 439 Joyner, M. J., & Coyle, E. F. (2008). Endurance exercise performance: the physiology of
440 champions. *Journal of Physiology* 586(1), 35-44

441 Kerhervè, H. A., Millet, G. Y., & Solomon, C. (2015). The dynamics of speed selection and
442 psycho-physiological load during a mountain ultramarathon. *PloS one*, *10*(12), e0145482

443 Kreider, R. B. (1991). Physiological considerations of ultraendurance performance. *Int J Sport Nutr*,
444 *1*(1), 3-27

445 Kuipers, H., Verstappen, F. T., Keizer, H. A., Geurten, P., & Van Kranenburg, G. (1985).
446 Variability of aerobic performance in the laboratory and its physiologic correlates.
447 *International journal of sports medicine*(6), 197-201

448 Lambert, M. I., Mbambo, Z. H., & Gibson, A. S. C. (1998). Heart rate during training and
449 competition for longdistance running. *Journal of sports sciences*, *16*(sup1), 85-90

450 Laursen, P. B., Knez, W. L., Shing, C. M., Langill, R. H., Rhodes, E. C., & Jenkins, D. G. (2005).
451 Relationship between laboratory-measured variables and heart rate during an ultra-
452 endurance triathlon. *Journal of sports sciences*, *23*(10), 1111-1120

453 Laursen, P. B., & Rhodes, E. C. (2001). Factors affecting performance in an ultraendurance
454 triathlon. *Sports Medicine*, *31*(3), 195-209

455 Lazzer, S., Salvadego, D., Rejc, E., Buglione, A., Antonutto, G., & di Prampero, P. (2012). The
456 energetics of ultra-endurance running. *European journal of applied physiology*, *112*(5),
457 1709-1715

458 Lucas, S. J. E., Anglem, N., Roberts, W. S., Anson, J. G., Palmer, C. D., Walker, R. J. (2008).
459 Intensity and physiological strain of competitive ultra-endurance exercise in humans.
460 *Journal of sports sciences*, *26*(5), 477-489

461 Lucia, A., Hoyos, J., Carvajal, A., & Chicharro, J. L. (1999). Heart rate response to professional
462 road cycling: the Tour de France. *International Journal of Sports Medicine*, *20*(03), 167-172

463 Lucìa, A., Hoyos, J., Paèrez, M., & Chicharro, J. L. (2000). Heart rate and performance parameters
464 in elite cyclists: a longitudinal study. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, *32*(10),
465 1777-1782

466 Lucia, A., Hoyos, J., Santalla, A., Earnest, C., & Chicharro, J. L. (2003). Tour de France versus
467 Vuelta a Espana: which is harder? *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, *35*(5), 872-
468 878

469 Lucia, A., Pardo, J., Durantez, A., Hoyos, J., & Chicharro, J. L. (1998). Physiological differences
470 between professional and elite road cyclists. *International journal of sports medicine*,
471 *19*(05), 342-348

472 Martinez, S., Aguilo, A., Rodas, L., Lozano, L., Moreno, C., & Tauler, P. (2017). Energy,
473 macronutrient and water intake during a mountain ultramarathon event: The influence of
474 distance. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 1-7

475 Mattsson, C. M., Enqvist, J. K., Brink-Elfegoun, T., Johansson, P. H., Bakkman, L., & Ekblom, B.
476 (2010). Reversed drift in heart rate but increased oxygen uptake at fixed work rate during 24
477 h ultra-endurance exercise. *Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports*, *20*(2),
478 298-304

479 Millet, G. P., & Millet, G. Y. (2012). Ultramarathon is an outstanding model for the study of
480 adaptive responses to extreme load and stress. *BMC Med*, *10*, 77

481 Millet, G. Y., Banfi, J. C., Kerherve, H., Morin, J. B., Vincent, L., Estrade, C. (2011a).
482 Physiological and biological factors associated with a 24 h treadmill ultra-marathon
483 performance. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*, *21*(1), 54-61

484 Millet, G. Y., Hoffman, M. D., & Morin, J. B. (2012). Sacrificing economy to improve running
485 performance-a reality in the ultramarathon? *Journal of applied physiology*, *113*(3), 507-509

486 Millet, G. Y., Tomazin, K., Verges, S., Vincent, C., Bonnefoy, R., Boisson, R. C. (2011b).
487 Neuromuscular consequences of an extreme mountain ultra-marathon. *PLoS One*, *6*(2),
488 e17059

489 Minetti, A. E., Moia, C., Roi, G. S., Susta, D., & Ferretti, G. (2002). Energy cost of walking and
490 running at extreme uphill and downhill slopes. *Journal of applied physiology*, *93*(3), 1039-
491 1046

- 492 Muñoz, I., Cejuela, R., Seiler, S., Larumbe, E., & Esteve-Lanao, J. (2014). Training-intensity
493 distribution during an ironman season: relationship with competition performance. *Int J*
494 *Sports Physiol Perform*, 9(2), 332-339
- 495 Neumayr, G., Pfister, R., Mitterbauer, G., Maurer, A., & Hoertnagl, H. (2004). Effect of
496 ultramarathon cycling on the heart rate in elite cyclists. *British journal of sports medicine*,
497 38(1), 55-59
- 498 O'Toole, M. L., Douglas, P. S., & Hiller, W. D. (1998). Use of heart rate monitors by endurance
499 athletes: lessons from triathletes. *The Journal of sports medicine and physical fitness*, 38(3),
500 181-187
- 501 Ramos-Campo, D. J., Ávila-Gandia, V., Alacid, F., Soto-Méndez, F., Alcaraz, P. E., Lòpez-Roman,
502 F. J. (2016). Muscle damage, physiological changes and energy balance in ultra-endurance
503 mountain event athletes. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*(ja)
- 504 Robach, P., Boisson, R. C., Vincent, L., Lundby, C., Moutereau, S., Gergele, L. (2014). Hemolysis
505 induced by an extreme mountain ultra-marathon is not associated with a decrease in total red
506 blood cell volume. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*, 24(1), 18-27
- 507 Robergs, R. A., Dwyer, D., & Astorino, T. (2010). Recommendations for improved data processing
508 from expired gas analysis indirect calorimetry. *Sports Medicine*, 40(2), 95-111
- 509 Saugy, J., Place, N., Millet, G. Y., Degache, F., Schena, F., & Millet, G. P. (2013). Alterations of
510 Neuromuscular Function after the World's Most Challenging Mountain Ultra-Marathon.
511 *PLoS One*, 8(6), e65596
- 512 Seiler, K. S., & Kjerland, G. Å. v. (2006). Quantifying training intensity distribution in elite
513 endurance athletes: is there evidence for an optimal distribution? *Scandinavian journal of*
514 *medicine & science in sports*, 16(1), 49-56
- 515 Stöggel, T. L., & Sperlich, B. (2015). The training intensity distribution among well-trained and elite
516 endurance athletes. *Frontiers in physiology*, 6
- 517 Vernillo, G., Giandolini, M. n., Edwards, W. B., Morin, J.-B. t., Samozino, P., Horvais, N. (2016a).
518 Biomechanics and physiology of uphill and downhill running. *Sports Medicine*, 1-15
- 519 Vernillo, G., Rinaldo, N., Giorgi, A., Esposito, F., Trabucchi, P., Millet, G. P. (2014a). Changes in
520 lung function during an extreme mountain ultramarathon. *Scand J Med Sci Sports*
- 521 Vernillo, G., Savoldelli, A., La Torre, A., Skafidas, S., Bortolan, L., & Schena, F. (2016b). Injury
522 and illness rates during ultratrail running. *International journal of sports medicine*
- 523 Vernillo, G., Savoldelli, A., Skafidas, S., Zignoli, A., La Torre, A., Pellegrini, B. (2016c). An
524 Extreme Mountain Ultra-Marathon Decreases the Cost of Uphill Walking and Running.
525 *Frontiers in Physiology*, 7
- 526 Vernillo, G., Savoldelli, A., Zignoli, A., Skafidas, S., Fornasiero, A., La Torre, A. (2015). Energy
527 cost and kinematics of level, uphill and downhill running: fatigue-induced changes after a
528 mountain ultramarathon. *Journal of sports sciences*, 1-8
- 529 Vernillo, G., Savoldelli, A., Zignoli, A., Trabucchi, P., Pellegrini, B., Millet, G. P. (2014b).
530 Influence of the world's most challenging mountain ultra-marathon on energy cost and
531 running mechanics. *Eur J Appl Physiol*, 114(5), 929-939
- 532 Vitiello, D., Rupp, T., Bussière, J.-L., Robach, P., Polge, A., Millet, G. Y. (2013). Myocardial
533 damages and left and right ventricular strains after an extreme mountain ultra-long duration
534 exercise. *International journal of cardiology*
- 535 Wasserman, K., Hansen, J. E., Sue, D. Y., Stringer, W. W., & Whipp, B. J. (1999). *Principles of*
536 *exercise testing and interpretation: including pathophysiology and clinical applications*
537 (Vol. 206): Lippincott Williams & Wilkins Philadelphia.
- 538 Wegelin, J. A., & Hoffman, M. D. (2011). Variables associated with odds of finishing and finish
539 time in a 161-km ultramarathon. *European journal of applied physiology*, 111(1), 145-153
- 540 Welsh, R. C., Warburton, D. E. R., Humen, D. P., Taylor, D. A., McGavock, J., & Haykowsky, M.
541 J. (2005). Prolonged strenuous exercise alters the cardiovascular response to dobutamine
542 stimulation in male athletes. *The Journal of physiology*, 569(1), 325-330

543 Wuthrich, T. U., Marty, J., Kerherve, H., Millet, G. Y., Verges, S., & Spengler, C. M. (2015).
544 Aspects of respiratory muscle fatigue in a mountain ultramarathon race. *Med Sci Sports*
545 *Exerc*

546 Zanchi, D., Viallon, M., Le Goff, C., Millet, G. g. P., Giardini, G., Croisille, P. (2017). Extreme
547 Mountain Ultra-Marathon Leads to Acute but Transient Increase in Cerebral Water
548 Diffusivity and Plasma Biomarkers Levels Changes. *Frontiers in physiology, 7*
549
550
551

552

553

554

555

556

557

558

559

560

561

562

563

564

565

566

567

568

569

570

571

572

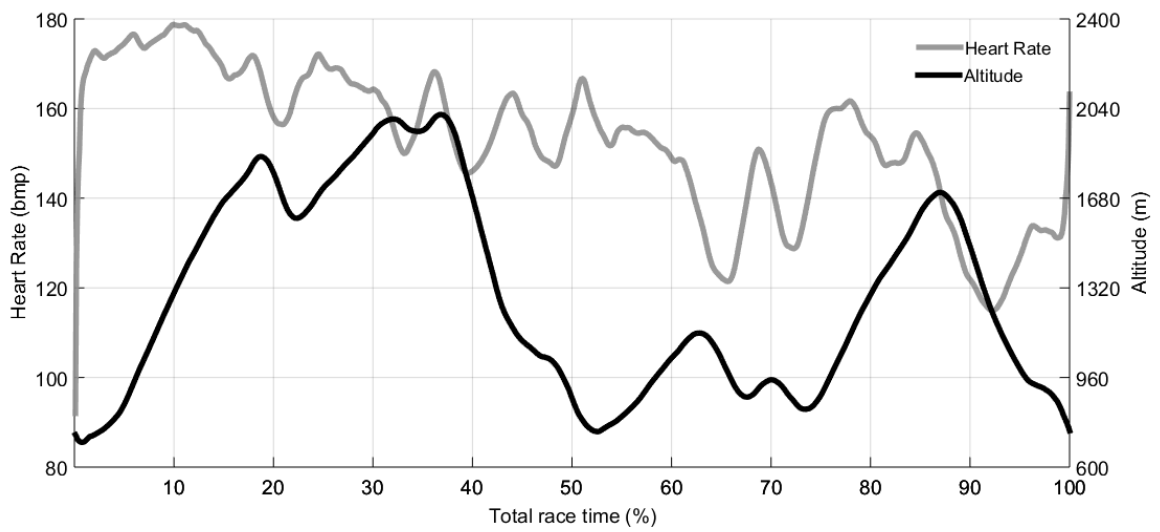
573 **Figures captions**

574

575

576 **Figure 1.** Heart rate response (bpm) and change in altitude (m) during the MUM expressed as % of
577 total race time in a representative participant.

578



579

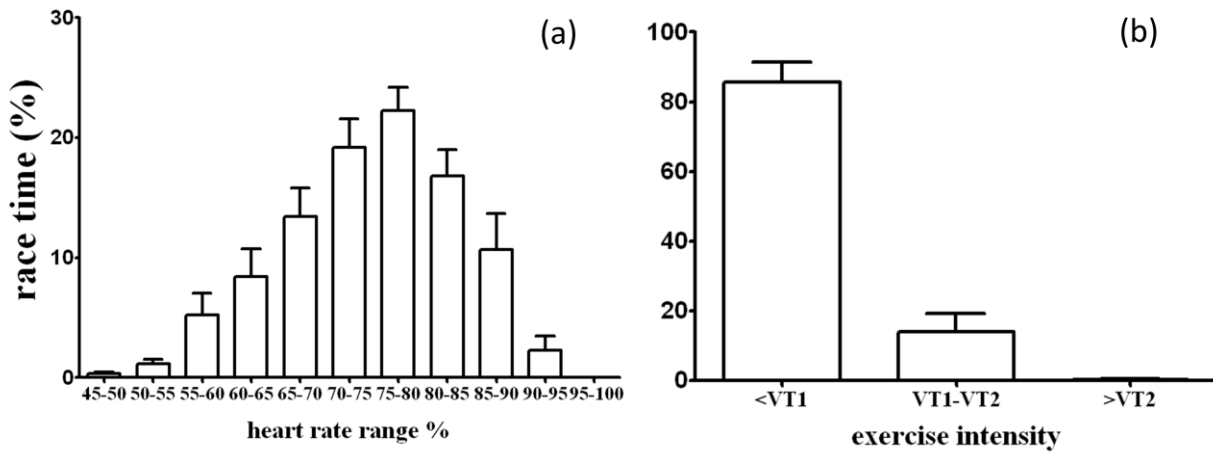
580

581

582

583

584 **Figure 2. (a)** Heart rate distribution during the race. Time spent at different ranges of maximal heart
585 rate expressed as % of total race time. **(b).** Exercise intensity distribution during the race. Time
586 spent in Zone 1 (<VT1), Zone 2(VT1-VT2), Zone 3 (>VT2) expressed as % of total race time.
587

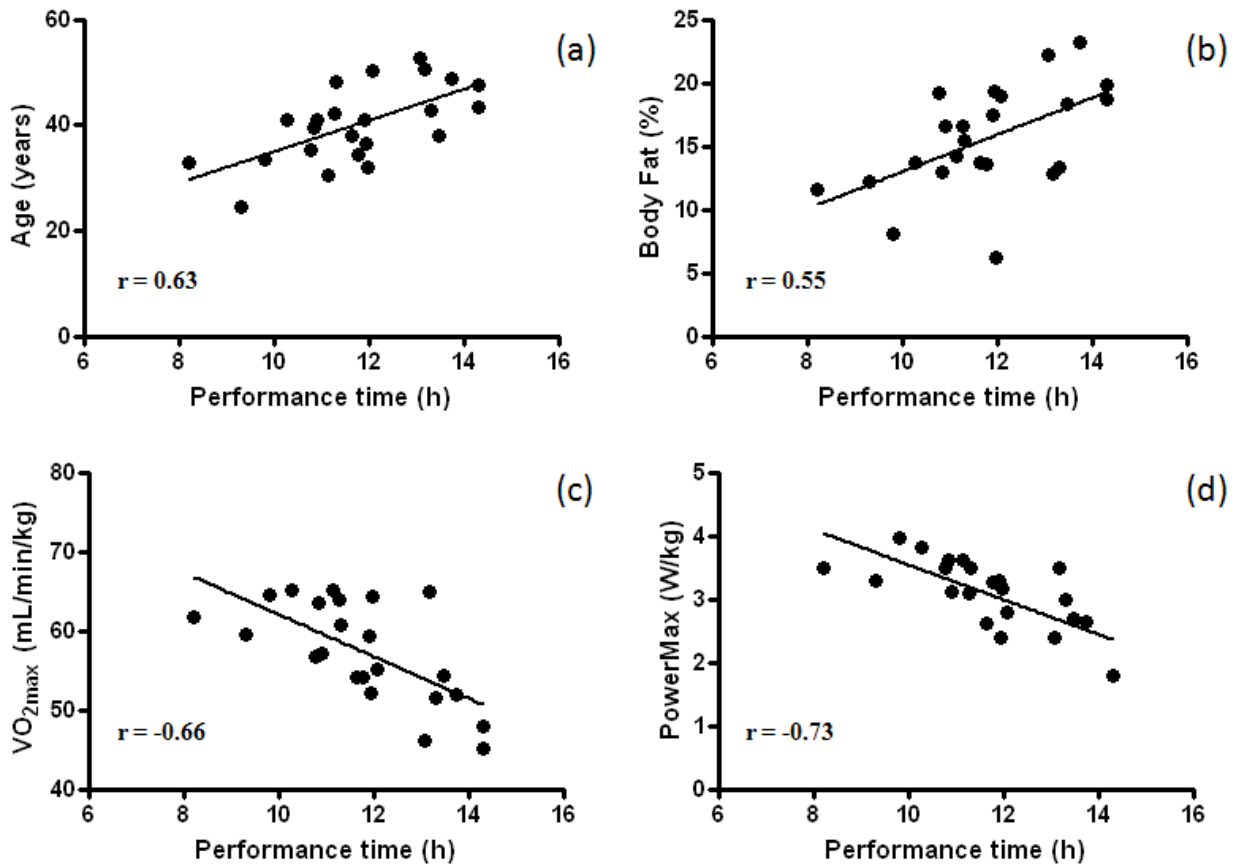


588
589
590
591
592
593
594
595
596
597
598
599
600
601

602 **Figure 3.** Correlations with performance time in MUM (a) Age (years) (b) Body Fat (%) (c)

603 VO_{2max} (mL/min/kg) (d) Maximal power in uphill graded exercise test

604



605

606

607

608

609

610

611

612

613

614

615

616

617 **Table 1.** Characteristics of the participants resulting from preliminary laboratory testing session.

Characteristics of the subjects										
	Whole group (n=23)					Subgroup HR monitored (n=12)				
	mean	±	s.d	range		mean	±	s.d	range	
Age (years)	40.2	±	7.3	24.4	- 52.7	38.6	±	6.1	30.4	- 48.9
Anthropometry										
Body mass (kg)	69.2	±	11.8	47.0	- 86.1	65.8	±	12.1	47.0	- 83.5
Height (cm)	173	±	8	157	- 187	171	±	9	157	- 181
BMI (kg/m ²)	22.9	±	2.5	18.8	- 27.3	22.2	±	2.7	18.8	- 27.3
Fat-free mass (kg)	58.4	±	9.9	39.6	- 73.0	55.8	±	10.5	39.6	- 68.8
Fat mass (kg)	10.8	±	3.8	3.9	- 19.4	10.0	±	4.1	3.9	- 19.4
Body fat (%)	15.6	±	4.2	6.2	- 23.3	15.1	±	5.0	6.2	- 23.3
Graded exercise test										
VO _{2max} (ml/min/kg)	57.4	±	6.3	45.2	- 65.1	58.4	±	6.2	48.0	- 65.1
VO ₂ @VT2 (ml/min/kg)	51.9	±	5.5	40.3	- 59.5	52.9	±	5.0	45.5	- 59.5
VO ₂ @VT1 (ml/min/kg)	45.3	±	5.1	33.0	- 52.1	46.3	±	4.5	36.8	- 52.1
HRmax (bpm)	181	±	8	166	- 196	182	±	8	166	- 196
HR @VT2 (bpm)	169	±	10	150	- 186	171	±	10	154	- 186
HR @VT1 (bpm)	155	±	11	128	- 175	158	±	11	136	- 175
PowerMax (W/kg)	3.1	±	0.6	1.8	- 4.0	3.1	±	0.6	1.8	- 4.0
Power@VT2 (W/kg)	2.3	±	0.5	1.4	- 3.0	2.4	±	0.4	1.6	- 3.0
Power@VT1 (W/kg)	1.7	±	0.4	1.0	- 2.2	1.7	±	0.3	1.0	- 2.2
Performance										
Total race time (h)	11.8	±	1.6	8.2	- 14.3	11.5	±	1.7	8.2	- 14.3

VO_{2max} : maximal oxygen consumption; VO₂ @VTs: oxygen consumption at ventilatory thresholds;
 HRmax: maximal heart rate; HR @ VTs: heart rate at ventilatory thresholds; PowerMax: maximal
 mechanical power output; Power @VTs: power output at the ventilatory thresholds

618

619

620 **Table 2.** Relationship between participants' anthropometric and physiological characteristics and
 621 MUM performance (race time).

622

Performance Correlation Analysis

(n=23)				
	r	90% CI		p
Age (years)	0.63	0.44	0.77	<0.001
Anthropometry				
BMI (kg/m ²)	0.07	-0.27	0.40	0.384
Fat-free mass (kg)	-0.26	-0.56	0.08	0.112
Fat mass (kg)	0.40	0.12	0.64	0.028
Body fat (%)	0.55	0.29	0.76	0.004
Graded exercise test				
VO _{2max} (ml/min/kg)	-0.66	-0.83	-0.44	<0.001
VO ₂ @VT2 (ml/min/kg)	-0.65	-0.74	-0.35	<0.001
VO ₂ @VT1 (ml/min/kg)	-0.56	-0.83	-0.44	0.003
PowerMax (W/kg)	-0.73	-0.87	-0.56	<0.001
Power@VT2 (W/kg)	-0.70	-0.87	-0.46	<0.001
Power@VT1 (W/kg)	-0.71	-0.90	-0.45	<0.001

VO_{2max} : maximal oxygen consumption; VO₂ @VTs: oxygen consumption at ventilatory thresholds; HRmax: maximal heart rate; HR @ VTs: heart rate at ventilatory thresholds; PowerMax: maximal power output; Power @ VTs: power output at ventilatory thresholds

623

624

625

626

627

628

629

630

631

632

633 **Table 3.** Model Summary resulting from forward stepwise hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

Model	Coefficients B	90% CI for B		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Partial R	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	R ² Change	Sig. Change
		Lower	Upper								
1 (Constant)	7.844	3.323	12.365		0.007						
Age	0.103	0.026	0.180	0.481	0.032	0.470	0.682	0.465	0.381	0.465	0.007
BMI	-0.088	-0.279	0.103	-0.142	0.435	-0.180					
Body Fat	0.116	-0.023	0.255	0.311	0.166	0.313					
2 (Constant)	13.961	7.437	20.486		0.002						
Age	0.097	0.033	0.160	0.451	0.016	0.542	0.827	0.684	0.591	0.219	0.011
BMI	0.025	-0.150	0.200	0.040	0.808	0.060					
Body Fat	-0.057	-0.216	0.103	-0.151	0.545	-0.148					
VO _{2max}	-0.016	-0.155	0.123	-0.065	0.843	-0.049					
PowerMax	-1.583	-2.898	-0.268	-0.593	0.052	-0.453					
3 (Constant)	14.479	7.449	21.509		0.003						
Age	0.096	0.029	0.163	0.448	0.024	0.543	0.834	0.696	0.554	0.012	0.743
BMI	0.007	-0.185	0.199	0.011	0.950	0.016					
Body Fat	-0.046	-0.217	0.124	-0.124	0.640	-0.122					
VO _{2max}	0.135	-0.258	0.529	0.547	0.555	0.154					
PowerMax	-2.591	-5.449	0.267	-0.971	0.133	-0.380					
VO ₂ @VT2	-0.170	-0.577	0.236	-0.595	0.474	-0.186					
Power@VT2	1.279	-2.027	4.585	0.379	0.508	0.172					
4 (Constant)	15.641	7.974	23.309		0.003						
Age	0.099	0.032	0.166	0.464	0.021	0.589	0.869	0.756	0.587	0.060	0.242
BMI	0.052	-0.141	0.245	0.084	0.640	0.132					
Body Fat	-0.124	-0.315	0.068	-0.331	0.273	-0.303					
VO _{2max}	0.156	-0.243	0.554	0.630	0.501	0.189					
PowerMax	-3.714	-6.726	-0.701	-1.391	0.048	-0.518					
VO ₂ @VT2	-0.446	-1.105	0.213	-1.559	0.252	-0.316					
Power@VT2	5.020	0.072	9.968	1.487	0.096	0.446					
VO ₂ @VT1	0.268	-0.088	0.625	0.865	0.206	0.347					
Power@VT1	-3.272	-6.885	0.341	-0.744	0.133	-0.406					

634 Dependent Variable: Performance time (h)

635