

Review of: "Comparing a Marathon Attempt to a Personal-Best Deadlift as They Relate to Their Respective World Records"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Pennington provides interesting insight regarding whether the author was closer to matching either the deadlift or marathon world record. However, there are significant areas that need to be addressed for improvement, such as clarity in presentation, structure/organization of the information presented, and the informal narrative the manuscript brings. If the article is intended to be exploratory, there should still be a strong, underlying research question or conceptual focus driving the inquiry. As written, the entire manuscript reads more as disconnected ideas rather than a cohesive argument.

General Comments

Introduction

The current iteration of the introduction faces several serious issues, primarily related to tone, structure, and focus. The tone consistently shifts between casual, humorous, and informal, creating an inconsistent voice that ultimately impairs reading comprehension, as this approach detracts from the authenticity of the author's intended message. As a result, this blending of differing tones causes the manuscript to appear as though it has no clear intended purpose. While lacking a clear and cohesive narrative, the manuscript struggles to communicate its intent effectively. This inconsistency undermines the manuscript's potential to deliver a meaningful or impactful story, as the tone fails to align with the overall goals of the writing. For example, the author provides excessive detail regarding personal information about diet, body composition, and past running habits that are overly detailed and feel irrelevant to the central narrative of attempting a marathon.

Another major issue within the introduction is that the structure is extremely unfocused, quickly shifting between topics like fitness habits and the actual marathon attempt, which detracts from the story's clarity and purpose. This lack of a clear thesis statement or message makes it hard for readers to understand the main takeaway, and the pacing feels slow due to excessive detail in areas that don't contribute meaningfully to the overall point. For example, although unfortunate, it does not feel relevant to mention Kelvin Kiptum's tragic passing. The author should consider truncating these details, focusing on the marathon experience, and establishing a clear central idea; this would help the introduction become more cohesive and engaging for the reader.

Methods

Overall, the methodology chosen lacks significant scientific rigor, and similarly to the introduction, the methods - albeit the author highlights its imperfection - have no real strong purpose alongside little scientific backing from previous literature. This causes a few questions to arise, like what is the ultimate aim of these methods? Is it to critically examine how different approaches yield different conclusions, or to simply show the limitations of each? Moreover, the entire methods section is unnecessarily informal. For example, the author includes the following phrase, "no pun intended," in the opening sentence, which disrupts the flow of a more technical and appropriate discussion.

The Pace-Based Approach for deadlifting is not as well-developed as the running analysis, as well as having some of the "results" being included in the methods, which is not appropriate. For example, the authors explain that "tempo bore no comparable effect" and this should belong in the results section. Another concern with this pace-based approach is their rationalization and definition of tempo in powerlifting. The author does not fully elaborate on the intricacies regarding tempo in resistance training and poorly relates it to deadlifting, especially in the context of sanctioned competitions. Powerlifting is a maximal strength sport, wherein power and speed are not important factors. Therefore, the reviewer does not believe that this approach is sufficient to compare the differences between marathon running and maximal deadlifting.

Additionally, the author has a section about the anthropomorphic approach and could benefit from a more in-depth explanation of why body mass or height should be considered when comparing marathon running versus deadlifting. Another important factor to consider is that while the world record holder for the deadlift weighs significantly more than the author, powerlifting features different weight classes and age categories (i.e., Junior: 19 to 23, Master 1: 40 to 49, Master 2: 50 to 59, Master 3: 60 to 69, Master 4: 70 plus), each with its own respective world records. These topics should be explored more to better provide a comparison between the author's attempted goal.

Results

With the methodology and introduction provided, the results being about how to adequately assess the marathon world record to the deadlift world record reinforces that this manuscript seemed to lack a clear purpose and is a series of disconnected thoughts. Having only three kinesiology researchers answer the survey does not provide a sufficient sample size nor statistical analyses to adequately address the question.

Discussion

This section briefly mentions that the methods are not rigorous, but it does not dive into why they fail to provide a concrete answer. A more detailed breakdown of the specific limitations of each approach (e.g., why comparing percentage achieved or anthropomorphic factors might be misleading) would help readers better understand the complexity of the question. Moreover, there is also little engagement with how the different methods might be refined or used in a more formal setting. Expanding on how these approaches could be adapted or what improvements could be made would add depth to the discussion. The statement that the article is a "think-piece exercise" continues to leave the purpose of the paper unclear.

Specific Comments

-Table 1: This table could be easily formatted differently to be more easily interpreted, as currently it is very difficult to read since the numbers bleed into other lines. Thus, the author should consider altering the table into a more reader-friendly layout. For example, having the mile number be at the top of the table rather than the side and having the time be on the left-hand side, making it easier to see and compare how the pacing changed throughout the course of the race.

-The phrase "no pun intended" in the opening sentence is unnecessary and informal, disrupting the flow of a more technical discussion. Please remove it.