

Are women better athletes than men?

By Amanda MacMillan, Outdoors

Without launching a full-out battle-of-the-sexes competition between you and your wife, it's hard to say exactly who is the better athlete. But it is true that she may have some ingrained sex-based advantage over you. Specifically, it seems that members of the fairer sex are better at pacing themselves on long runs, at least according to one new study.

Researchers from Marquette and Grand Valley State Universities and the Mayo Clinic looked at nearly 92,000 marathon performances that took place in 2011 and discovered that women were only about a third as likely as their male counterparts to slow dramatically (by 30 percent or more) during the second half of a race.

On average, men ran the last 13 miles 15.6 percent slower than they did the first 13, while women only slowed by 11.7 percent. The difference held across all age groups and experience levels, and remained even after adjusting women's times to address men's greater oxygen intake and typically faster performances.

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