INTRODUCTION
Nowadays, no study has investigated both the influence of the knowledge of the exercise length (i.e., known running duration and distance) and the lack of it (i.e., unknown running endpoint) on Ratings of Perceived Exertion (RPE) and Estimated Time Limit (ETL). Consequently, the purpose of this study was to examine the influence of the knowledge of the exercise length and the lack of it on RPE and ETL while running at 90% Maximal Aerobic Velocity (MAV).

SUBJECTS
14 males (Age = 24.8, SD = 4.4 yr; Mass = 74.1, SD = 9.6 kg; Height = 180.4, SD = 6.7 cm) who ran regularly were recruited.

MATERIALS
Perceived effort was expressed with the RPE (Borg, 1970) and ETL (Garcin et al., 1999) scales. Heart rate (HR) was recorded with a cardiotachometer (Accurex+, Polar®).

METHODS
Each subject performed an exhaustive incremental test to measure MAV. Then, the subjects performed 3 tests at a similar intensity (90% MAV) and length. However, the exercise length was either unknown or known. During the test with unknown length, the subjects maintained the intensity until the exhaustion point to measure the voluntary exhaustion time (time limit, Tlim) and distance (distance limit, Dlim). During the tests with known length, the endpoint was either defined in terms of duration (100% Tlim) or distance (100% Dlim). During each test, RPE, ETL and % HR reserve were collected.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
RPE, ETL and %HR values were compared by using a two-factor (Exercise Time Duration x Tests) analysis of variance (ANOVA). Moreover, when differences were obtained, Bonferroni post hoc tests were used.

RESULTS
The results showed that RPE, ETL and % HR reserve increased significantly with exercise time duration (p<.001). Moreover, RPE values were significantly different between the test with unknown running endpoint and the test with known running distance at 40, 60 and 80% Tlim (p<.05).

DISCUSSION
This present study has shown that the athletes perceived the run as being lighter during the test with an unknown running endpoint in comparison with the test with a known running distance. This result suggests that a larger margin of safety, in order to prevent from any possible risk of catastrophic failure in any physiological system, was generated when the exercise endpoint was unknown. Moreover, it is possible that different dissociation strategies have been used by the anticipation of exercise length.

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REFERENCES

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