DR MICHELE ZANINI

Professional Summary

I am a lecturer at The Open University, teaching modules related to sport and physiology. The focus of my research is on applied physiology to endurance sports, with an aim to translate scientific knowledge to support elite athletes training and performance. Alongside my academic role, I have 8 years of experience in supporting elite endurance athletes, and I currently work as a physiologist and head of strength & conditioning for the Italian Triathlon Federation.

Education

PhD in exercise physiology
2020 – 2024 (School of Sport, Exercise & Health Sciences, Loughborough University, UK)

Thesis title: "Durability of Running Economy and Other Physiological Determinants in Well-Trained Male Runners: The Influence of Performance, Training Status, and a Strength Intervention"

Master's degree in applied sciences to sport performance
2016 – 2018 (Università degli studi di Milano, ITA)

Employment Summary

Lecturer in applied sport and exercise science
Jan 2025 – Present (The Open University, UK)

Module leader on sports and physiology related modules; research focused on endurance physiology.

Physiologist and head of strength and conditioning
2022 – Present (Italian Triathlon Federation, ITA)

Coach and physiologist for the Italian Triathlon Federation (FITRI) Olympic and under 23 teams.

Associate lecturer in exercise physiology
2023 –2024 (University of Exeter, UK)

Module leader on physiology and sports related modules.

Relevant Publications

- **Zanini M**., Shaw A., Ferguson, R. (2025) "Sub-4-minute Mile: Best Case Scenario from Female World Records". J Appl Physiol, 139(1), 249–250.

- Wang, B., **Zanini M**., Blagrove, R. (2025) "Strength Training for Middle-Distance Running: A Neuromuscular Pathway to Breaking the Women's Sub-4 Minute Mile". J Appl Physiol, 139(1), 251.

- **Zanini, M**., Folland, J., Blagrove, R. (2025) "The Effect of 90 and 120 Min of Running on the Determinants of Endurance Performance in Well-Trained Male Marathon Runners". Scand J Med Sci Sports. 2025 May;35(5):e70076.

- **Zanini, M**., Folland, J., Wu, H., Blagrove, R., (2025). "Strength training improves running economy durability and performance following a 90 min run in the heavy-intensity domain: a randomised controlled trial." Medicine and Science in Sport and Exercise, 2025 Feb 28

- **Zanini, M**., Folland, J., Blagrove, R., (2024). "Durability of running economy: differences between quantification methods and performance status in male runners." Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2024 Nov 1;56(11):2230-2240

Relevant Communications and Presentations

European Congress Sport Science – ECSS, 2025 (Rimini, ITA), Oral presentation
"The effect of 90 and 120 min of running on the determinants of endurance running performance in well-trained male marathon runners"

European Congress Sport Science – ECSS, 2024 (Glasgow, UK), Invited Symposium
"Physiological resilience, the 'new' determinant of endurance exercise performance: mechanisms and potential intervention" with Prof A. Jones and Prof C. Nicol.

European Congress Sport Science – ECSS, 2023 (Paris, FRA), Oral presentation
"Strength training improves time to exhaustion following a prolonged run in well-trained male endurance runners: a randomized control trial."

European Congress Sport Science – ECSS, 2022 (Sevilla, SPA), Oral presentation
"Effect of performance level on changes in economy during prolonged running"

Grants and Awards

ECSS Young Investigator Award – 3rd place oral presentation (ECSS, 2025)

NSCA Foundation young investigator grant – Co-investigator (NSCA, 2022)

Professional Development Award (The Physiological Society, 2023)

John Philips Award – 2nd place (Loughborough University, 2022)