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Subject: Mind. Blown.
Date: Sun, 02 Jun 2019 12:05:04 +0000

Greetings -

You know you're listening to almost an entirely different species of human when he tells you, "The first 20 miles felt really flowy," unless his rear-end is planted in the driver's seat of a motor vehicle. But in this case, these are the words of Jim Walmsley, who [broke the 50-mile record](#) — which has stood for 36 years — by 13 seconds, finishing in 4 hours, 50 minutes, 7 seconds. Many people would have a hard time riding a bicycle 50 miles in less time.

The event, called Project Carbon X, was part promotion (Carbon X is a racing shoe produced by a company called HOKA) and part athletic endeavor. You may remember a similar stunt and show of athletic display with [Breaking2](#), where three participants set out to run 26.2 miles in under two hours in pairs of Nike Vapor Fly Elite shoes. (I [wrote about this event](#) and terrific documentary in a previous email.) One key difference is that Project Carbon X was IAAF-approved for world record status while Breaking2 was not. (Spoiler alert: Kipchoge finished Breaking2 in 2:00:25, which is over a minute faster than the official world record, 2:01:39, [set by Kipchoge](#).)

Both are truly remarkable feats. Walmsley averaged a 5:48 mile for almost five hours, while Kipchoge averaged a 4:36 mile for a shade over two hours. To put this in perspective, imagine running on a treadmill at 10.3 mph for five hours or 13 mph for two hours, respectively!

Both feats also seemingly demonstrate a remarkable display of specialization. But note that Kipchoge, for example, [won the world championship in the 5K](#) at age 18 (try cranking up your treadmill to 14.5 mph to hold Kipchoge's pace on this one). Generalization and specialization have been on my mind recently as [REDACTED] looking forward to reading David Epstein's new book, [Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World](#). (Epstein also wrote a fantastic book called [The Sports Gene: Inside the Science of Extraordinary Athletic Performance](#).) Would love to have him on the podcast. [REDACTED] curious about the journey of not only the two individuals mentioned above, but of the many people who excel in a given field, and whether there are more similarities than

differences in how they got to that position.

- Peter

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