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TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
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Tristan Woodfine Eyes Paris Berth at TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon by Paul Gains

TORONTO, ON (*August 3, 2023*) - Tristan Woodfine's pursuit of an Olympic Games berth resumes October 15th at the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

The event is once again a World Athletics Elite Label race and will also serve as the 2023 Canadian marathon championship. This presents the 30 year old native of Cobden, Ontario with a splendid opportunity to earn enough valuable world ranking points to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

This is his second attempt at becoming a Canadian Olympian.

In 2020 he ran a personal best of 2:10:51 at the London Marathon - well under the 2020 Olympic qualifying standard - and looked to have secured his place in the Canadian team bound for the Tokyo Games. But then Vancouver's Ben Preisner ran 34 seconds faster to bump him from the third position.

Despite an appeal he remained at home.

For the past year he has been coached by Reid Coolsaet, himself a two time Canadian Olympic marathoner (2012 and 2016). The pair went about choosing Toronto for his Olympic attempt methodically.

"It minimizes travel so I don't have to worry about jet lag," Woodfine explains. "Second, the Canada Running Series puts on a great series. They take care of the elites well and it's well run. So that limits the unknown stress of doing a foreign race where you don't know how things will go. I have complete trust in (race director) Alan (Brookes) and his team."

The 2024 Olympic automatic qualifying standard is 2:08:10, a time which has been bettered by only one Canadian in history, Cam Levins. So the prospect of earning valuable points, which come with winning a national championships, on top of a fast time, was too much to resist.

Coolsaet pointed out that winning a national championship is worth an additional 45 points, which on the World Athletics scoring tables, is equivalent to running 2 minutes 30 seconds faster. In other words, if Woodfine were to run a personal best and win in Toronto it would be like running 2:08:00 in a World Marathon Major like Berlin.

"You can hit Olympic qualifying standard," Woodfine continues, "but if you have to get through on points there are extra points available because it is the Canadian championships. So for those reasons it made sense.

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“We were trying to figure out how to maximize the points. You want to maximize time and you want to maximize points and you try and find the balance. If you maximize the points but run too slow then it doesn’t matter. It felt like Toronto was the best of both worlds.”

Woodfine ran the 2019 Toronto Waterfront Marathon finishing 13th in 2:13:16 but since then has really gone from strength to strength.

A year ago he won the TCS Toronto Waterfront Half Marathon in a personal best of 62:45. The race is run simultaneously with the marathon and since the emphasis is on the classic marathon distance there are some restrictions.

“Alan has strict policy you (half marathoners) can’t go ahead of the marathoners because of TV coverage and all that,” he reveals. “So I felt in that half I could have gone faster. I was thinking ‘this is actually too easy for a half,’ but obviously I couldn’t go and had to wait for the last kilometre.

“At the same time I ran my 2:10:51 (in London) when my personal best in the half marathon was 63:30. I tend to do better the longer the distance gets. I don’t necessarily need a fast half marathon PB to run a good marathon. It’s nice to have the faster half marathon PB but mentally it doesn’t affect me quite as much.”

Woodfine has had some impressive races over shorter distances already this year with a 10km personal best of 29:06. That came at the chaotic Valencia 10km where many of the elite racers collided at the start and fell to the ground. Although he wasn’t directly affected he was slow off the line in an attempt to avoid the mayhem. A sub 29 clocking was in his grasp that day.

He won the Under Armour Toronto Waterfront 10km in 29:12 on June 17th running alone from 3 kilometres onward. All this has him in a positive mood as he begins his twelve week marathon buildup.

“If the weather cooperates Toronto is a pretty fast course,” he says. “You can still run fast if you don’t hit some horrendous weather days. I think it’s the best blend of both worlds.”

Not once during a telephone interview does Woodfine mention the \$8,000 winner’s purse allocated for the Canadian champion, an amount that would surely come in handy for he and his wife Madeline in their home near Eganville, Ontario.

Although he graduated from the Ontario College of Health and Technology he has put his career as a paramedic on hold to continue running. A three month clinical placement involving long exhausting shifts was enough to convince him that he could not combine serious running with that vocation. To make ends meet he has an online coaching service.

“For right now it’s fine,” he says of his income. “In the future, looking at having kids, you know certainly that means you have to make more money supporting another human being. Down the road I will have to look at another career but right now it’s fine for the lifestyle I am currently living.”

Woodfine will stand on the Toronto start line with high expectations but knowing he is chasing an Olympic dream that very few realize.

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“It would be great (to be Canadian champion),” he acknowledges. “I think I have won just one Canadian championship - the 2019 Canadian Half Marathon - so adding the marathon to that would be awesome.

“Everything is just focused on the 2024 Olympic cycle and doing everything I can to maximize performance over the next year basically. That’s my priority - I haven’t thought too much beyond the next summer.”

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About the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

The TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon is Canada’s premier running event and the grand finale of the Canada Running Series (CRS). Since 2017, the race has served as the Athletics Canada national marathon championship race and has doubled as the Olympic trials. Using innovation and organization as guiding principles, Canada Running Series stages great experiences for runners of all levels, from Canadian Olympians to recreational and charity runners. With a mission of “building community through the sport of running,” CRS is committed to making sport part of sustainable communities and the city-building process.

To learn more about the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, visit www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com

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A part of the Tata group, India's largest multinational business group, TCS has over 614,000 of the world’s best-trained consultants in 55 countries. The company generated consolidated revenues of US \$27.9 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023, and is listed on the BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) and the NSE (National Stock Exchange) in India. TCS' proactive stance on climate change and award-winning work with communities across the world have earned it a place in leading sustainability indices such as the MSCI Global Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good Emerging Index.

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