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TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
2 Berkeley St, Unit 305 | Toronto, ON M5A 4J5
416-944-2765 | torontowaterfrontmarathon.com

**Molly Bookmyer Overcame Cancer and Now Challenges TCS Toronto
Waterfront Marathon**
by Paul Gains

TORONTO, ON (*September 7, 2023*) - Marathoners endure much suffering in order to excel in their sport but few have struggled with brain cancer.

American Molly Bookmyer underwent two surgeries eight years ago following diagnosis of a brain tumour while finishing up her degree at Ohio State University.

With that awful period behind her now, as an elite marathoner, her path has led her to the 2023 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon where she, and a growing number of American elites, will attempt to qualify for the 2024 US Olympic Trials, to be run in Orlando, Florida on February 3.

Her current best is 2:31:39 and she sees Toronto Waterfront - her first international race - as an opportunity to knock off a significant chunk of time.

"I want to run 2:27," she reveals. "I feel I haven't had a breakthrough in my marathon I have had some good races at shorter distances. I ran a 1:10:51 half marathon last fall. So I have had some success at the shorter distances and I haven't quite figured out the full marathon distance yet.

"My first goal is to get the world championship standard and the second goal is to get the Olympic standard."

Bookmyer graduated from Ohio State in 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Management and Operations. While she was a member of the Buckeyes' cross country and track teams she was not a scholarship athlete. Now she has a better understanding as to why she was limited.

"I was a walk-on at OSU. I got better but I wasn't a star in college," she explains. "When I look back at it, it was probably because I was sick at the time. I didn't know I had a brain tumour. I competed on the team but my times weren't spectacular. I lettered in cross country and track but I wasn't All American and I didn't make it to the NCAA's."

A series of stress fractures also held her back and it was by a stroke of luck that the tumour was discovered.

"In different blood tests to try to find why I got stress fractures they found one of my hormones prolactin was high," Bookmyer says. "This (hormone) is associated with tumours near your pituitary gland. They did a scan and they found the tumour in my ventricle. It was kind of luck. I probably had symptoms but thought it was normal."

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Following the diagnosis she underwent a spinal tap to determine if the cancer cells were in her spinal column. Fortunately, it came back negative. But the surgery to remove the growing tumour was vital.

Originally from Cleveland she moved to Columbus to study at OSU and remained there ever since. That's also where she met her husband, Eric.

Immediately after graduation she worked for the Abercrombie & Fitch company. Then, having dealt with her own serious illness, Eric was diagnosed with testicular cancer. Running was helpful in both relieving the stress of being a full-time caregiver to him as well as helping in her own recovery.

"I am healthy now," she says through a smile. "I get a brain scan every year. It used to be every six months. After the first surgery I had complications from the surgery. The tumour has not come back.

"Eric just had his 5-year checkup, He had a couple of surgeries and 'chemo' so now he is healthy as well, I guess we are lucky we went through a lot and came out the other side healthy."

Two years ago she was recruited by one of her former contacts at Abercrombie & Fitch to work for Hawthorne Gardening Company which is involved in the hydroponics industry selling lights, pots, containers, benches and other gardening equipment in both the cannabis and general botany industry. Most importantly, the job allows her to work remotely, something that helps while training full time.

Down time is limited but she says she enjoys spending time with Eric and her dog Cooper. Listening to music is another relaxing pastime with Rob Thomas of Matchbox Twenty remaining a favourite. With the Toronto Waterfront Marathon rapidly approaching she is confident she will perform at her best on the big occasion.

"Training is going really well," Bookmyer declares. "I had a little setback in the spring. I tore my plantar fasciitis but that's fully healed. My mileage has gone to 115 to 120 miles (185km - 193km) a week which is higher than I have been before; paces are good, I am feeling strong. I am excited for what that means."

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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.

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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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