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**TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon**  
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## **Canadian Championship Lures Leslie Sexton to the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon**

By Paul Gains

Adding to her growing list of Canadian championship titles is an objective when Leslie Sexton returns to the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, October 20.

Once again, the World Athletics Elite Label race doubles as the 2024 Athletics Canada National Marathon Championship.

Sexton was crowned national marathon champion here in 2017, the year she also finished 5th overall in the women's category behind three Ethiopians and a Kenyan - all experienced international runners. And, she has a handful of national titles at shorter distances on both the roads and track.

The importance of racing the national marathon championships is even greater now as she explains.

"Since World Athletics has switched to this points ranking system it's even more important than before," the 37 year old declares. "Now the bonus points from a national championship are significant across all events and in the marathon, where you might only get two or three attempts in a cycle, it's an important consideration in qualifying for the world championships in Tokyo next year."

Sexton represented Canada at the 2022 World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon finishing a credible 13th place in the marathon (2:28:52). More recently she was a member of the Canadian team at the 2024 World Cross Country Championships in Beograd, Serbia. That latter event came on the heels of her personal best marathon performance at the 2024 Houston Marathon.

In the Texas city she finished 8th in a world class field, racing to a clocking of 2:28:14, although missing the Olympic standard of 2:26:50 made her achievement bittersweet.

"I think I went through halfway in about 1:13:15," she remembers. "So I went there with the intention to go for the Olympic standard but I had a bit of a rough patch between 20 and 30km then rallied for a PB in the final 12km. I am happy with the effort that day but it wasn't what I was looking for. "

Originally from Markham, Ontario, Sexton moved with her coach and partner, Steve Weiler to Vancouver two years ago. Clearly it has had an impact on her running career. Personal bests from 5,000m up to the marathon have since helped rewrite her resume.

“I really like it out here,” she explains. “The weather has been really good for running - I really don’t miss the Ontario winters. I am in a really good spot about a kilometre from Pacific Spirit Park. I run through the trails in there and being able to get there in the winter has been a big plus.

“I am doing some stuff on my own and with my coach Steve, we are starting to form a post collegiate group. Back in the winter we had four people from our group qualify for the World Cross Country Championships in Serbia. So we did a lot of workouts together. I have been training with Glynis Sim who beat me in the Vancouver Sun Run in the spring; good training partners within my own club.”

Sim won the Sun Run in 32:17 with Sexton a close second in 32:25. It’s a race Sexton won in both 2022 and 2023. The pair obviously benefit from their training sessions together. Occasionally she also goes for easy runs with Canadian marathon record holder and two-time Olympian Natasha Wodak, who is now 42 years of age.

As Wodak and fellow B.C. resident Malindi Elmore, 44, have proven, world-class marathon running is now possible into the 40’s. Their performances have served as inspiration for Sexton as she contemplates her running future.

“Yeah definitely (they are inspirational) and I know that the Australian Sinead Diver was running great times in her 40’s as well,” she confirms. “So definitely it inspires me to keep going. Going into this year my intent was always to be going through to LA in 2028.

“Missing this Olympics was a disappointment but I still have big goals to represent Canada at the Worlds and Olympics in the future and seeing other women do that in their early 40’s gives me confidence I can do that too.”

For now her focus returns to the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

“I am still pretty early in the training cycle. This is going to be a shorter buildup than I have done previously. I had some setbacks in July but I am healthy now,” she reveals.

“I will be looking to run a competitive time, something to maximize those Canadian championship points, but not necessarily going for a PB this time. I will have to see how the training goes.”

Then of course there is the thrill of possibly adding yet another national championship gold medal to her collection.

## **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](http://www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com).

## **About Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**

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As part of the Tata group, India's largest multinational business group, TCS has over 601,000 of the world's best-trained consultants in 55 countries. The company generated consolidated revenues of US \$29 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, and is listed on the BSE and NSE 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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