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TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
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Canadian International Justin Kent To Race TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon By Paul Gains

While the international field for the 2024 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon has rarely been stronger the number of elite Canadian entries continues to grow.

Justin Kent, who represented Canada at the 2023 World Championships in Budapest, has now added his name to the medal contenders for this Canadian Championships which are run concurrently within this World Athletics Elite Label race.

Kent says he has prepared well and is looking to beat his personal best time of 2:13:07, recorded while finishing 10th in the 2023 Prague Marathon. That race led to his call-up for a place on Canada's 2023 World Championships team with his long-time training partner, Ben Preisner (2:08:58 personal best).

"Budapest was definitely a memorable experience," Kent remembers, "Having my team-mate Ben there, and we ran kind of side by side which was really cool. It was pretty special. You get to wear that Canadian singlet longer than in any other event. It was awesome.

"It was hot so Ben and I had pretty strict orders to run conservatively the first half then swallow up as many bodies as we could in the second half. I still have this sensation of us - it felt like we just hopped into the race that last ten kilometres as we were going by guys that were just zombies because they were so depleted. We were like 80th at halfway and we ended up 27th (Preisner) and 29th."

Preisner will be in Toronto alongside his friend as he has offered pacemaking duties. The pair will no doubt bring that commonsense approach to the race taking the weather conditions into account. During this buildup Kent has been encouraged by the fact both coach Richard Lee and Preisner have seen workouts that indicate Kent is more than capable of running around 2:10.

Only nine Canadians have gone under 2:11 and just four have beaten the 2:10 barrier.

"I don't necessarily want to get ahead of myself. I have definitely learned the hard way of being too ambitious," Kent says. But I know, definitely, I am the fittest I have ever been. It depends on the weather and the pacing.

"There is a pace group (going for) 2:10 I'd like to be maybe a little bit quicker the

first half and see what I can do that would set me up well to run in the 2:10's. That's easier said than done."

Kent will also be accompanied in Toronto by his wife of two years, 800m runner Lindsey Butterworth, who represented Canada at the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, and their four-month-old daughter, Willa.

With a family to support Kent continues to do coaching work with Mile2Marathon which he views as a chance to connect to the running community. His main source of income, however, is working as a marketing specialist for a Vancouver-based startup company called Stoko, which manufactures supportive apparel used to overcome injuries.

"I am in the office four days a week. They are flexible with my hours to get my training in or sneak out early to get my training in," he explains. "I have been with the company for just coming up to a year."

Meanwhile Butterworth is on maternity leave from her job as a community health specialist for Fraser Health Authority. She is back running and will, in fact, compete in the Toronto Waterfront 5km.

As for his objectives with this year's Toronto Waterfront Marathon, Kent recognizes that a national championship offers bonus World Athletics points used in the qualification for next year's World Championships in Tokyo. The automatic qualifying standard in the men's marathon has been lowered to 2:06:30

"Definitely I think with the new standard of 2:06:30 a lot of guys are going to be trying to get bonus points at races," he concedes. "I think that is more my aim this whole build is to win a national championship. I think the (fast) time will come with that.

"I haven't thought too much beyond October 20th. I know if I can run well it would give me a great opportunity to make the team next year. But the main goal is still to come away with a national title or at least contend for one."

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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

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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.

About Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

Tata Consultancy Services is an IT services, consulting and business solutions organization that has been partnering with many of the world’s largest businesses in their transformation journeys for over 65 years. Its consulting-led, cognitive powered, portfolio of business, technology and engineering services and solutions is delivered through its unique Location Independent Agile™ delivery model, recognized as a benchmark of excellence in software development.

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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