

Marathoner Leslie Sexton to Challenge for Canadian 10K Title  
By Paul Gains

TORONTO, ON, September 28, 2021 — Following her move to Vancouver last month, Leslie Sexton has joined two-time Canadian Olympian Natasha Wodak on long training runs. Their companionship has been helpful in the settling process. But don't expect the affability to be evident when the pair line up for the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon 10K October 17th.

The race course, which goes out and back along Toronto's Lake Shore Boulevard, is also the Athletics Canada Canadian 10K Championships held concurrently through a partnership between Athletics Canada, Canada Running Series, and Run Ottawa. With championship medals and a great deal of prize money — \$5,500 (1st), \$3,000 (2nd), \$1,500 (3rd), \$1,000 (4th), \$750 (5th), and \$500 (6th) — it will be a full-on head-to-head battle. "I don't know what the rest of the field is like yet, but training has been going well and I feel really fit," Sexton declared. "It's my intention to race well and compete for a medal and hopefully a PB in the 10K as well. I haven't officially gone under 33 minutes yet, but, if training is going well over the next four weeks, I will try to run a fast time and compete with the best in Canada."

Sexton earned the Canadian Marathon Championships title in 2017 but has excellent credentials at shorter distances too. At the moment, her best 10K time is 33:17.

"Just knowing that area and running on that STWM course, it looks like it should be fast," she added. "I am excited to have a good setup to run a good 10K. I am doing that and then the Philadelphia Marathon on November 21st. I will be in marathon training but doing some 10K's along the way. My best 10K's on the roads have been run in marathon training blocks. I think I will be ready to run fast."

Her move to Vancouver was the result of her partner and coach, Steve Weiler, being offered the job as endurance coach for the University of British Columbia. Sexton herself has also picked up a coaching position with the Vancouver Thunderbirds Track and Field Club. The pair had lived in Kingston, Ontario for much of the past two years.

"I have definitely been enjoying it," she said, laughing. "It's been milder weather than in Ontario which has been really nice and I am looking forward to the milder winter. I live close to UBC, which has the [University] Endowment Lands and Pacific Spirit Regional Park. I am running a lot of trails and soft surfaces, which has been really good. There's a lot more elevation change than I am used to in Kingston, so more challenging runs. I love it out here so far."

Like Wodak and fellow elites Luc Bruchet, Ben Preisner, and Canadian 10,000m track champion, Ben Flanagan, the lure of an actual in-person race is a tantalizing prospect.

"Overall, 2020 was tough," Sexton said. "I had two major injuries that I had to take some time off and come back gradually from. I have been healthy since the summer of 2020 and have had a good

consistent stretch of training. There weren't that many race opportunities in Ontario compared to other provinces."

"I was able to get out to the Canadian 10,000m championships (in Vancouver). Other than that, I did a mix of time trials and virtual races to see where my fitness is at. That has been going really well," she said. "I set personal bests at shorter distances. I'm looking forward to getting back to in-person races and being able to put down some official PBs that actually count."

Before the pandemic hit and before her injuries she raced the 2019 Prague Marathon finishing 8th in 2:31:51 which lowered her personal best. Then, nothing. No competitive racing - apart from that 2021 Canadian 10,000m championships in which she took the bronze medal.

"I haven't run a marathon yet in the new racing shoes," she admitted, referring to the enormous technological advances shoe companies have made in the past three years. "I ran that race in flats, so with footwear alone there is definitely some room to improve there and dip under 2:30." That would put in her the frame for a 2022 World Championships place. The importance of racing well in this Canadian 10K Championships is clear.

"I am really excited," Sexton confirmed. "I ran well in those solo time trials. It has been a good skill to have to push myself when no one else is around. But to have other people to race with and racing the best in Canada, hopefully I can get more out of myself. I'm also looking forward to seeing people I haven't raced again in two years."

- 30 -

Media interested in covering the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon 10K can [register for accreditation here](#). All media must receive advance accreditation to gain access to the in-person event on October 17.

### **About the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon**

The Scotiabank 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. During the 2020 event, participants raised over \$2.96 million for 163 community charities through the Scotiabank Charity Challenge. In 2021, the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon will host a 10K along Toronto's scenic lakeshore, the first in-person race for Canada Running Series since the pandemic began, which will also double as the Athletics Canada 10K Championships in partnership with Run Ottawa.

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. For more information, visit: <https://www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com/>

### **About Athletics Canada**

Athletics Canada is the national sport governing body for track and field, para athletics, cross-country running, and road running. Its purpose is to support high performance athletics excellence at the world level, and to provide leadership in developmental athletics. Athletics Canada is a not for profit, charitable organization operating under a board of directors elected by provincial / territorial members. For more information, visit: <https://athletics.ca/>

**About Run Ottawa**

Run Ottawa is the National Capital Region's premiere running organization and the organizers of Canada's most popular multi-day running event, The Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend. For more information, visit: <https://www.runottawa.ca/>

**Media Contact:**

Jenna Pettinato  
Manager of Communications  
[jenna@canadarunningseries.com](mailto:jenna@canadarunningseries.com)