

Bandits Elite to Battle at Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon 10K  
*The high-performance group's unique, tight-knit dynamic has driven their success*

TORONTO, ON, September 30, 2021 — [Bandits Elite](#), a high-performance track club based in London, Ontario, is gearing up to toe the start line at the in-person Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon 10K (“STWM”) on October 17. The group of Bandits heading to the race — held in partnership with Run Ottawa and doubling as the Athletics Canada 10K Championships — consists of two-time national cross country champion Mike Tate, as well as Phil Parrot-Migas, Connor Black, Jack Sheffar, Josh Lumani, Shawn Master, and Jeremy Coughler.

While the Bandits have raced individually throughout the pandemic, STWM will mark their first time competing together since February 2020, when Black placed second in the 5,000m at the BU David Hemery Valentine Invitational in Boston, MA. For those who joined the team during the pandemic, including Tate and Coughler, this will be their first time competing with the whole group.

The team has competed together virtually, however, winning the Athletics Canada 42K Relay Challenge in October 2020, a part of the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon Virtual Race, with a time of 2:09:01. The Bandits each ran roughly 10.55K, with Tate in 31:27, Parrot-Migas in 31:52, Chris Balestrini in 32:50, and Sheffar in 32:52. With the return of in-person racing, the group is eager to tackle the upcoming 10K.

“Always excited to race in person, especially now,” said Tate. “I’m excited to test ourselves against some of the best in Canada.”

The Bandits Elite train together three to five days per week, year-round, opting for indoor training throughout Ontario’s harsh winters. While Sheffar expressed some concern as he has not raced a 10K since 2019, and Black admitted to enjoying some downtime over the summer, Tate is confident that the team’s dedicated training will ensure their readiness heading into the 10K Championships.

More than just teammates and training partners, the post-collegiate athletes, ranging in age from mid- to late-twenties, are also a tight-knit group of friends. In fact, Tate, Black, and Parrot-Migas are currently roommates, while Tate, Sheffar, and Lumani had lived together until recently. But claiming kitchen space may be the biggest challenge for the group that spends a significant amount of time together, and this closeness has had a tremendous impact on building the group’s unique dynamic.

“It helps more than you’d think,” said Black. “If you have guys who are seeking high performance around you, living with you, it just makes it that much easier. And you’re reminded why you do it...I don’t think there’s anything like our group in Canada.”

“I think I could speak for all of us when we say our time when we’re working out and running together, that’s our escape from reality,” said Sheffar.

Whether working out, running, or just enjoying a beer together on the weekend, Parrot-Migas explained how the self-professed “blue collared athletes” have deeply benefitted from the

group's close bond: "We have two lives. We work, we run, we hang out, we do multiple things, and it's very unique...I'm enjoying running more now than I did back in university."

While the Bandits, who hold the 2019 Canadian Cross Country Championships title, push each other's high performance through their dedicated training regime, they remain laser-focused on their own individual goals as they prepare for the 10K Championships.

"It's going to be a deep field," said Tate. "I'd like to compete for the win, personally. I have a title on the grass and a title on the track. I just need one on the road now, so I'll try and go get that on October 17. And if not, it's just a fitness test and getting ready for the big one on November 27."

That race on November 27 is the Canadian Cross Country Championships, to be held in Ottawa, Ontario. After the pandemic forced the cancellation of the 2020 Championships, the Bandits Elite have their sights set on gold at this year's race.

"I think we would all agree that's the goal, to defend our title," said Sheffar. "And it's nice because we didn't have Mike when [we won the title in 2019]. And Mike won the race that year. And then we've added Jeremy as well who ran [5,000m in] under 14 minutes for the first time this summer. So our team only got stronger and so hopefully, we can defend."

As they consider the best timing for growing their Championships mustaches, the group admitted they are not looking far past the current race season.

"There's still a lot of uncertainty with what's going on right now, so it's kind of hard to look beyond anything that's guaranteed," said Sheffar. "I think we're all just happy that we get to do another nationals cross country after missing it last year and race on the road here in Canada. I think anything after that will be kind of the cherry on top."

The team shares videos, edited by Parrot-Migas, on the [Bandits Elite YouTube](#) channel, where they document their race experiences. The group plans to share a video recap of their experience at the AC 10K Championships.

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.

- 30 -

### **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:**

Sam O’Neill  
Marketing and Communications Coordinator  
[sam@canadarunningseries.com](mailto:sam@canadarunningseries.com)