

Malindi Elmore To Race 2022 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon by Paul Gains

Enticed by the opportunity to lower her Canadian marathon record, Malindi Elmore will race the 2022 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon October 16, 2022. Elmore smashed the record with her 2:24:50 clocking at the 2020 Houston Marathon in what was only her second time competing at the distance.

Although the Kelowna, B.C. mother of two is widely respected—enough to receive an invitation to run the 2022 Boston Marathon—it is easy to overlook the fact she has run only four marathons. Toronto will be her first in Canada.

“I definitely feel I haven’t had my best race yet,” she explains. “That’s why I am excited to do Toronto. I think it’s going to line up with the perfect conditions to put together a fantastic build and have a great opportunity to run really well.

“It’s a home race—although it’s 5,000 kilometres away—and has a strong tradition of marathoners coming through. So that is pretty special. I know that it’s flat and has the potential to be very fast on the day. And I know Alan (Brookes) puts on a great race. So, all those factors are compelling reasons for me wanting to race it.”

The TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon has earned the distinguished World Athletics Elite Label and always attracts a strong international field, which is another reason for Elmore’s commitment. The course record of 2:22:16, which is also the Canadian women’s all comers record, is held by Kenya’s Magdalyne Masai. It was set in 2019.

Not quite a year ago, Elmore beat the heat and humidity of Sapporo, Japan to finish 9th in the 2021 Olympic Games. Only Sylvia Ruegger amongst Canadian women has ever finished higher. What was most remarkable was that Elmore’s first Olympic experience came at the 2004 Athens Games where she failed to advance from the first round of the 1,500m.

“It was really special to go back and finish in the top ten in the Olympics,” she says of her marathon achievement. “And, in a way, kind of redeem myself, seventeen years later, for the performance I would have liked to have in 2004. I definitely did not harbour any expectations of being a marathoner when I was running 1,500ms. I wanted to run 800m and break two minutes. That was my goal. I thought the 5,000m was too many laps. I am pretty shocked that my mind and body have come around to being a distance runner in the end.”

The invitation to race Boston came in following the Olympics and she enjoyed everything apart from the legendary hills along the course. Yet, she earned an 11th place finish in a time of 2:27:58.

“I thought, ‘Oh, I am from B.C., and I am used to hills. It won’t be that big a deal,’” she recalls. “But I found it beat me up really quickly even after only 9 or 10km. I felt the toll of the ups and downs—the relentless rollers—it was hard to get into a rhythm. It was really different than Houston and Tokyo (Sapporo) which were flat courses. I knew what to expect, what my pace should be. This was really



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gruelling when you threw in the change in terrain. I wasn't thrilled with my performance. I guess I did the best I could do on the day."

Coached exclusively by her husband, Graham Hood—the former Canadian international 1,500m runner who was 7th in the 1997 World Championships in Athens—she admits her build-ups for marathon racing are still evolving as she looks ahead to the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. And at the age of 42, she must be more careful that she takes on workouts she can handle without injury risk. There are other factors younger marathoners might not have to encounter.

"All week, I have had a kid home sick," Elmore reveals before adding with a smile, "I tell you, the best investment anyone can ever make is a treadmill. The kids don't mind they get to watch TV while I am on the treadmill. It's a win-win."

Most of her 150 kilometres a week is done alone, although Canadian Olympic triathlete, Joanna Brown, occasionally jumps in for a long run. Another sometime training partner is 2019 Canadian Marathon Champion Trevor Hofbauer, who now lives two kilometres away and will run with her on his easy days. If all goes according to plan, she will be in the shape to achieve specific goals.

"I do want to put together a really good buildup for Toronto. I would like to be able to get to the fitness level I had leading into Boston and Tokyo (Sapporo), and I hope that would put me below my Canadian record and PB, and that would be really cool," she allows.

"Another goal, absolutely, I want to get on the podium. I would love to win a race. It's fun to be the first person across the line."

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About the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

One of only two World Athletics Elite Label races in Canada, 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 Canadian Marathon Championship and has doubled as the Olympic trials. During the 2021 event, participants raised over \$3.08 million for 151 community charities. 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, please visit www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com.

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