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TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
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Aduigna Takele Joins Strong Ethiopian Team for TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon by Paul Gains

TORONTO, ON (*August 31, 2023*) - Ten years after his first appearance on Canadian soil Aduigna Takele will chase victory at the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon October 15th.

The Ethiopian won the 2013 Ottawa 10k and has since transformed into a world-class marathon runner with enormous experience across four continents. Now 34, he recorded a best time of 2:05:52 at the 2022 Seville Marathon and believes he can run even faster.

"I am preparing myself very well for Toronto," he says from his home in Ethiopia's capital of Addis Ababa. "I'm trying to cover 170 kilometres per week as I am feeling better from my (Spring-time) hamstring injury.

"I do have some information about Toronto from my friends and fellow athletes like Lemi Berhanu, and Gebretsadik Abraha who have been to race there and from my Coach Gemedu Dedefo. They say the course is good and challenging. If I feel healthy I will run faster (than 2:05:52)"

Lemi Berrhanu was the 2016 Boston Marathon champion and finished 2nd in the 2019 Toronto Waterfront Marathon (2:05:09) while Gebretsadik Abraha has raced in Toronto twice finishing 6th in 2014 and 5th in 2017. The trio are part of a large and talented group coached by Gemedu Dedefo and managed by the Italian Demadonna Athletics Productions.

On previous visits to Canada Aduigna has run the Ottawa Marathon twice finishing 3rd in 2018. After running 2:10:12 in Barcelona this past March he was expecting to run again in Ottawa but didn't receive his passport and Canadian visa in time. The disappointment was tangible.

"Yes, I had been preparing for the race but didn't go because of the visa problem," he explains. "You can imagine how it affects the mind because, as an athlete, I had been working the whole time in aiming to win that race. When I heard that the visa was not ready I was speechless."

Like his training partners he is dependent upon earning money from competitions to support his family - he and his wife have a young son Gadisa Aduigna - so the financial impact was immense.

"I was very much expecting to win the prize money as well, but it didn't happen," he says. The disappointment led him to a break in training. "Yes, {the break} was not actually the whole summer but just a few weeks and then I started to prepare myself for the next race."

Toronto Waterfront Marathon has \$160,000 total prize money with \$20,000 to the winner which is obviously of great interest to him.

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Adugna comes from the town of Huruta in central Ethiopia and like many Ethiopian runners was inspired by the achievements of the country's Olympic runners especially Haile Gebrselassie. But it is his father's brother whom he credits with being the biggest influence upon him.

"When I was a student our school use to make us run during our sport period but of my uncle is the one to help me involve in running," he adds. "I began running in school then by the time I joined an athletic club I assured myself that I will become a world-class athlete."

That uncle, Worku Bikila, was a world-class 5,000m athlete who finished 6th at the 1992 Olympic 5,000m final and was 4th in the World Championships the following year. Asked if he had seen videos of Worku in action when he was child he says not.

"No, I was a kid at that time and there wasn't television to watch or radios to listen to. But after I became an athlete I have got a chance to see him on social media," he reveals.

"When I was a kid I grew up watching him having a good life and I just wanted to be just like him in every way. Then I realized that he was an athlete. So I wanted to become an athlete like him; to live just like him."

In 2008 Adugna moved to Addis Ababa and lived with Worku for a couple of months until he got established. When he received his first salary from his running club - Oromio Police Club - he went to live in a rented house with some of his friends. The influence and support he received from his uncle has continued and Adugna adds with pride: "In 2015 he watched me run the Great Ethiopian Run in Addis Ababa."

On that occasion Adugna finished 3rd in what is Africa's biggest 10km race with more than 40,000 competitors. Founded by Haile Gebrselassie, it can be the pathway to greater things as many foreign managers as well as Ethiopian national and club coaches attend each year to spot the talent.

These days his family is his main priority.

"Every morning I do my exercise, and then I spend my time with my family and with my friends sometimes watching movies," he reveals. "I visit my family in Huruta. I go there very often to visit my family and to share all the happy and sad moments."

Addis is a modern city with its own light rail system to serve its more than 3 million residents. Although he has lived there for many years he knows that when he retires he will not stay in the capital.

"No, not at all. I want to live outside of Addis, I enjoy silence and an area full of nature," he states. Again, his uncle's success in business has proven inspiration. Worku Bikila has a hotel and water well-drilling business in Dukem, a town outside Addis.

"He is a hard-working person and a successful person in the business he is involved in. We hope to be like him in the future."

Victory at the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon would be helpful in his athletic development as well as financially beneficial. But when he lines up his focus will be on winning and recording a fast time. He knows he is due for another sublime performance.

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

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 50 years. TCS offers a consulting-led, cognitive powered, integrated portfolio of business, technology and engineering services and solutions. This is delivered through its unique Location Independent Agile™ delivery model, recognized as a benchmark of excellence in software development.

A part of the Tata group, India's largest multinational business group, TCS has over 614,000 of the world's best-trained consultants in 55 countries. The company generated consolidated revenues of US \$27.9 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023, and is listed on the BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) and the NSE (National Stock Exchange) 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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