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**TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon**  
2 Berkeley St, Unit 305 | Toronto, ON M5A 4J5  
416-944-2765 | [torontowaterfrontmarathon.com](http://torontowaterfrontmarathon.com)

## **Ethiopia's Waganesh Mekasha To Run TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon** by Paul Gains

TORONTO, ON (*August 15, 2023*) - Ethiopian women have featured prominently at the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon winning eight of the past fifteen editions of this World Athletics Elite Label race. If Waganesh Mekasha has her way this dominance will continue.

The 31-year-old mother of two brings extraordinary credentials to this year's event on October 15th as well as some useful 'intel'.

"I watched the Toronto [Waterfront] marathon many times on television and Yihunilign Adane, who won the 2022 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, told me more about it," she reveals. The two not only share a manager - Britain's Malcolm Anderson of Mayo Sports - but each won their respective divisions in the 2023 Ottawa Marathon.

On that day Waganesh ran alone for most of the second half save for the assistance of celebrity pacemaker, Canadian marathon record holder Cam Levins, who graciously led her to a winning time of 2:24:48 under hot and muggy conditions.

"I didn't know (Levins) but my sub agent had told me after the race that he even ran the 10k race on Saturday," she explains. "What a nice guy he is!"

Asked if Levins, who used the pacesetting task as a long training run following his second place finish in the Canadian 10km championship, did a good job she responds with grace.

"He did an amazing job until he dropped out. He was not only pacing me but motivating us all the way to 35km," she remembers.

Ironically, Waganesh nearly didn't make it to the start line in the nation's capital. Despite getting her visa well in advance of the race she was prevented from boarding her flight to Canada by airline officials.

"Oh, yes that was frustrating," she recalls. "I was shocked when the boarding person told me that I cannot fly to Canada. But many thanks to the race organizers and to my management I made it at last. But I stayed eight hours in Frankfurt airport. I hope that will not happen again."

Fifteen hours in the air followed by eight stuck in an airport terminal would unsettle most athletes but Waganesh has proven resilient time and time again. Although she ran extremely well at Ottawa, also a World Athletics Elite Label race, she can point to a credible 5th place finish at the 2022 Chicago Marathon in 2:23:41 as another career highlight.

Chicago is one of only six World Athletics Major marathons and a place in the elite section is highly coveted. A top five finish is, therefore, an extraordinary achievement.

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Waganesh has run faster than both of her aforementioned appearances in Ottawa and Chicago. Her personal best is 2:22:45 which she recorded at the 2019 Dubai Marathon. She would like to go faster on Toronto's course where the course record is 2:22:16 held by Kenya's Magdalyne Masai from 2019.

"My training is going very well. I am so excited to be back to Canada," she says knowing she has a couple of months of intense work to complete before her journey to Canada. "If the conditions are good, and we have a good pacemaker, I will break the course record and win the race."

That's a bold prediction. The record is a very good one. But her confidence comes from training under the guidance of famed coach Getamesay Molla alongside other great Ethiopian marathoners such as Yeshe Kalayu who has a personal best of 2:21:17, Azmera Gebru (2:20:48 PB) and Tigist Ambaychew (2:18:03 in Berlin 2022). Their training is done outside Addis in the dusty hills of Sendafa and Sululta at 2750m altitude.

Although she is a devoted mother and her children are still quite young at 7 and 4 years of age she has ambitions left to fulfill in the sport over the next few years.

Several times she wore the Ethiopian vest as a junior winning a bronze medal in the 2011 African Under-20 Championships over 3,000m and finishing 4th at the World Cross Country Championships in Punta Arena, Spain the same year.

The Ethiopian junior team earned the team gold medal that day. Notably, she finished just six seconds behind the champion Faith Kipyegon of Kenya who has since gone on to become a twice crowned Olympic 1,500m champion.

"Of course, I want to represent my country in the Olympics in the marathon," Waganesh reveals. "But it is very, very competitive in Ethiopia."

Confident, ambitious and extremely talented, Waganesh might well contend for a place on Ethiopia's Olympic team. A victory in Toronto would impress selectors. And the \$20,000 first place prize money it must be said would be welcome in her household.

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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 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](http://www.torontowaterfrontmarathon.com)

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### **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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