

Rwandan Marathoner Nyirarukundo to Race TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

By Paul Gains

Salome Nyirarukundo has made an extraordinary impact on the Canadian road race scene since her arrival from Rwanda seven years ago most recently with a victory at the 2025 Under Armour Toronto 10km.

Now, this Ottawa resident turns her attention to the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, October 19. This will be her first marathon since 2019 when she finished 4th in the Ottawa Marathon with a time of 2:30:44. The only other marathon she has run was the 2018 Montreal Marathon - a race she won in 2:28:05.

"It's been three or four years that I have been hoping to do the Toronto Waterfront Marathon," she admits, "because it is a big race, of course. But the timing was difficult, and I got injured and couldn't participate. This year is a good moment for me to see what I can do.

"I am, to be honest, always really excited to come to Toronto because I think I have a good connection with Toronto fans. In past years when I have been running I have had such a good time. I have run the Toronto 10k three years. I think it will help a little bit."

In addition to her 2025 victory in the Under Armour Toronto 10km she finished 2nd in both the 2024 and 2023 editions of the event which, like the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, is part of the Canada Running Series. The 10k race traverses the shores of Lake Ontario and makes up a large chunk of the marathon course. This, she expects, will be helpful come October 19.

Nyirarukundo is still just 27-years-old, a quite astonishing fact considering she competed in the 10,000m at the 2016 Olympic Games for her native Rwanda. In fact, she remains the Rwandan national record holder in the 5,000m (15:34.91), 10,000m (31:45.82) and the half marathon (1:08:48). The latter is faster than Andrea Seccafien's Canadian record of 1:09:38.

As a teenager living in Rwanda's capital of Kigali she showed great promise. The Dutch based sports management company, Global Sports Communications, took her on and from 2017 to 2018 she trained in Kaptagat, Kenya at the same camp as the legendary Eliud Kipchoge. The Kenyan superstar is a GSC client.

At the time Salome spoke only a little English and so her interaction with him was limited. She remembers him as being quiet and humble even taking his turn in handling camp cleaning and cooking duties despite his status.

Since coming to Canada she has been working as a personal care worker for two hospitals. Although she is grateful for employment it is clear she would like to devote more time to training.

“Unfortunately, I am not in the same situation as before,” she explains. “When I did 1:08:48 I was training full-time morning and evening. Now I am doing two jobs and then training. I can’t say I will do the same thing as I did in the past. There is a possibility.

“I am really confident in myself that I can do better and better. Now I have started to participate in the national 10km road race championships and performed well. That shows me I can still do what I did in the past.”

She crossed the finish line 4th at the 2025 Canadian 10km championships one place ahead of former Canadian marathon record holder Lanni Marchant. It is the exploits of the leading Canadian marathoners like Natasha Wodak and Malindi Elmore, who are competing well into their forties, who have inspired her.

“This year because I started to train for the marathon I am doing between 100km to 130km,” she reveals. “And actually, Natasha Wodak is the one who really inspired me. Because last year Wodak was number one (in Canada) and I was going to quit.

“And when I see Rachel Hannah also, they are such good runners, and I thought ‘if they can do it I can do it’. They are very strong. They inspired me to get strong and keep going.”

Hannah, the 2015 Pan American Games marathon bronze medalist, closely followed Nyirarukundo in each of the past three Toronto 10km and they have struck up a friendship. Hannah drove out to Eastern Ontario for the weekend in mid-August and the two met up for a 38km training session in Plantagenet, Ontario.

While she claims her training is going well shift work, perhaps, is not the best preparation for a marathon buildup but Nyirarukundo has learned to adapt with the help of her Ottawa Lions coach Ray Dupuis.

“Some times I wake up at 4:00 a.m. and go and run 15km or 10km then go to work at 6:00 am,” she says. “Then after work, if I don’t have second shift, I run again. It is not really easy but I have to do it in order to support myself and my siblings back home.

“I am the oldest and my dad passed way when we were younger. I am mother and father for them and I love them so much. Without them I could not be able do what am doing now.”

Life in Rwanda can be much more complicated. Amongst the expenses she handles for her two brothers and two sisters are their school fees. They still live in the Rutsiro district of Rwanda which borders the Democratic Republic of Congo. Recently the two countries signed an agreement to end armed conflict.

“It’s really hard. I am always exhausted but running is my passion but at the same time I have to work afterwards,” Nyirarukundo declares. “I know it’s not the same as the person who is just

training. I am hoping one day I will maybe working part-time and training full-time. I know myself I am always confident. When you have done it before you maybe can do it a second time.”

As she completes the training for her TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon debut she admits she would like to run somewhere under 2:30. That goal remains firm. Yet, she has figured out a way to enjoy another passion.

“I don’t know how to swim but I like to go outdoor camping,” she says with a laugh. “I never did this before in my own country. When I did it here it’s very nice - nature. This year I am going to Prince Edward Island. I will camp there one week at the end of August.”

One day she hopes to represent Canada. No one can doubt she has that potential with the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon providing an important stepping stone.

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ABOUT THE TCS TORONTO WATERFRONT MARATHON

The TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon is Canada’s premier running event, Toronto’s largest marathon 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 an Olympic qualifier. 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 CANADA RUNNING SERIES (CRS)

Canada Running Series (CRS) organizes the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. CRS is the nation’s premier running circuit with 6 events, 4 in Toronto & 2 in Vancouver. It annually attracts over 60,000 participants and raises more than \$6 million for some 320 mostly-local charities. The Series includes the World Athletics Elite Label TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, and the Athletics Canada National Marathon Championships. Since 1999, CRS has gained international recognition for innovation and organization. To learn more about CRS, visit <https://canadarunningseries.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 65 years. Its consulting-led, cognitive powered, portfolio of business, technology and engineering services and solutions is delivered through its unique Location Independent Agile™ delivery model, recognized as a benchmark of excellence in software development.

As part of the Tata group, India’s largest multinational business group, TCS has over 601,000 of the world’s best-trained consultants in 55 countries. The company generated consolidated revenues of US



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\$29 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, and is listed on the BSE and NSE 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. For more information, visit www.tcs.com.

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