

Kenya's Beatrice Cheserek Returns to TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

By Paul Gains

A year after choosing the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon to make her debut at the 42.2km distance Kenya's Beatrice Cheserek will return to the 2026 edition of the race October 18 with great ambition.

The now 27-year-old could manage just 5th place in 2:30:25 last year. Four months later she finished second in the Seville Marathon (February 15) with a time of 2:21:56. There is a simple explanation for such a dramatic improvement.

"This year my training is stronger than last year because then (2025) I was coming from maternity," she explains from her hotel room in Bogota, Colombia where she had finished 4th in the Bogota Half Marathon a few days earlier.

"So it's more training than last year. I have done a lot of mileage. This time around a lot of mileage, speed work and strength so now I can run better."

Cheserek's husband Cyrus Kiplagat is her main training partner and she is now running up to 150 kilometres a week in preparation for TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon, which is a World Athletics Elite Label race.

In 2024 the couple welcomed a son into the world. They named him Fabian and she proudly announces: "He is doing good. He is almost three years old now." While she is away training and competing her sister-in-law serves as a nanny.

"Toronto last year, it's a good place but it was my first time running a marathon," she recalls. "I was doubting myself because it was my debut. I was doubting whether I could finish or if I would drop out. Then afterwards I raced Seville and I was happy there. I am thinking I will do something there in Toronto."

'Something' refers to a new personal best and, if conditions are suitable there could be an assault on the Toronto Waterfront Marathon course record which was set in 2024 by Ethiopia's Waganesh Mekasha (2:20:44). And she will not be alone in her quest. While the team at Canada Running Series always hires pacemakers for the elite athletes this time Cyrus will accompany her to Toronto to be one of the two pacers for the lead women's group.

Cheserek has an excellent personal best of 1:06:48 for the half marathon which led to speculation among running experts that her step up to the full marathon distance would be noteworthy. And her talent led to her being selected as the designated pacemaker for fellow Kenyan Rosemary Wanjiru when she won the 2023 Tokyo Marathon. She performed similar duties for the 2025 London Marathon elite women's field. Having Cyrus in Toronto she expects will help tremendously.

"Even before I went to Seville I was with him training and he was the one pushing me,"

Cheserek adds. “It is good for me (that Cyrus will be in Toronto) to try to lower the course record. All the marathon races before I was pacing so he never came with me. It was just me and the other people. And, he was not in Seville.”

Beatrice and her family live in Iten, ‘The Home of Champions’ as it is known in Kenya at around 2,400m above sea level. Bogota sits at a slightly higher elevation. So the two weeks away from her home training ground has not interrupted her preparation for Toronto Waterfront Marathon in any way.

“I am spending two weeks in Colombia; this is my first time to be here,” she offers. “Colombia is a very good place for training. It is (also) a good place to race in hot conditions. I have my fellow colleagues from Kenya here.”

Cheserek finished 4th in the Bogota Half Marathon on July 26 in 1:12:42 just 13 seconds behind the winner. As expected, the field was dominated by athletes from high altitude countries including Ethiopia and Kenya who are best suited to Bogota’s 2,600m elevation.

Then, on August 9th, she finished 4th in the Cali 10k (32:57) the day before an earthquake measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale, struck. She and her compatriots were at the Cali airport checking in when panic ensued. They returned to their hotel as the airport was temporarily closed.

The TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon organizers (Canada Running Series) will be wishing for ideal conditions to allow athletes such as Beatrice Cheserek to challenge the course records. Clearly, all her preparation is focused on the race.

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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



TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
2 Berkely St, Unit 305 | Toronto, ON | M5A 4J5
416.944.2765
torontowaterfrontmarathon.com

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