

Canadian Women to Face-off at 2026 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

By Paul Gains

Marathon running exacts a physical toll that can result in friendship out of mutual respect and shared experience as exemplified by the relationship between Canadians Dayna Pidhoresky and Rachel Hannah.

The pair have much in common as they renew their friendly rivalry at the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon October 18. Once again the race, through the streets of Canada's biggest city, will serve as both a World Athletics Elite Label Race and the Athletics Canada Canadian Marathon Championships.

Hannah and her husband and coach, Joe Chappell, call Port Elgin home. It's a town on the shores of Lake Huron, about three hours west of Toronto. The former Georgia State athlete is the defending national champion having finished as top Canadian in this race a year ago.

Originally from Tecumseh, Ontario, Pidhoresky is also coached by her husband, Josh Seifarth, and together they have lived in Vancouver since 2013. She has her eyes on what would be her second national title.

Winning the 2019 Canadian Olympic trials at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon earned her a place in the Tokyo Olympics. Since then she has also won the Vancouver Marathon three times (2022, 2023, 2025) and earlier this year won the Congers Marathon in New York with a time of 2:31:24. Most impressive was that her margin of victory in Congers was roughly three and a half minutes. It might have been more had the male athlete she was keeping pace with through 25 kilometres hadn't stopped to use a 'Port-a-John'.

Their paths have intertwined numerous times over the decades. They have also trained together whenever they are both in Vancouver. And Pidhoresky admits seeking nutritional advice from Hannah, who is a registered dietician specializing in sports nutrition.

"The marathon is so long it's almost like you are in it together until the last 5 or 10k," Pidhoresky explains. "It's like you want a friend, a buddy, a compatriot out there. Maybe towards the end it's more 'how do I win this thing?' I don't know that I am really standing on the start line trying to win it from the gun."

Despite their longevity and the fact Hannah will be 40 by race day - Pidhoresky will celebrate that milestone on November 18 - they are both pursuing personal best performances. At the moment Pidhoresky's 'PB' remains 2:29:03 which she recorded at the 2019 Toronto Waterfront Marathon while Hannah's 2:32:09 stretches even further back to the 2015 Houston Marathon. That same year she claimed the Pan Am Games bronze medal at this distance.

Each has come within a minute or so in beating those marks in recent competitions. Neither has given up on their target.

“I’d love to PB!” Hannah declares. She has run TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon five times. “Knowing the course really helps. There’s a lot of spots where you can see your competitors and how they are doing. That is really helpful.”

As one would expect the two have learned what their bodies can handle when it comes to training. But in Pidhoresky’s case especially, it has been a bumpy learning curve riddled with injuries: stress fractures, patella tendonitis as well as a dodgy quadriceps muscle that left her feeling as though she was running on ‘half-power’. Active Release Technique therapy seems to have sorted that out for good. Her response is paying dividends.

“I have capped my mileage at 140 to 150 km/week max that has tended to keep me healthy,” she reveals. “I had a patella thing two years ago since then I haven’t had any forced time off for injuries. My body has felt good. It’s something I wish I had done earlier.”

And since husband Josh is a competitive triathlete the pair might hit the road with their bicycles a couple of times a week or, when he has intensified his training, she will mount her bike on an indoor trainer and ride for up to an hour. Occasionally she joins other runners such as Canadian marathon record holder Natasha Wodak for a long run.

Hannah has competed less this year which has allowed her to keep her weekly mileage fairly high. Through the summer she has regularly completed upwards of 160km a week and fully expects she will be up around 180-190km by September.

“If you told me at 40 I would be running this much I wouldn’t have thought that,” she admits with a laugh. “I am grateful that I have been competing for a decade or more at this level. Yeah, you never know as you start to get older how many more championships you have and that makes you grateful for the whole process.”

Having members of Chappell’s running group to run with occasionally has helped. During the summer Emily Bryce, who runs for the University of West Virginia and won Ontario high school titles for Saugeen District High School, has often joined her. Chappell is also a teacher and the track coach at the school. Like Pidhoresky she looks forward to lining up against her friend.

“We have known each other for a really long time,” Hannah recalls. “We’ve been racing each other for ten years. Any time I am out West I will reach out to her for runs. She’s run two really good marathons this year so I will have to make sure I am in really good shape to compete with her.”

Hannah laughs at her last statement but, friendship aside, there is only one Canadian Championship gold and they both want to earn it. The \$8,000 CDN awarded to the national champion is also an enticement. There will be time to enjoy their friendship before and after the 2026 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon.



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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/>.