



TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
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Florence Caron To Make Marathon Debut at TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

By Paul Gains

Some athletes are never satisfied even when they have tabled an enviable competitive record that includes multiple national championship titles. Florence Caron is such a person.

On October 18 the 25 year-old from La Malbaie, Québec will make her debut in the marathon when she lines up for the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. The race, besides being a World Athletics Elite Label race, serves as the Athletics Canada National Marathon Championships.

Already this year she has won the Canadian 10k road championship and successfully defended her Canadian 10,000m title on the track. Then at the Canadian Half Marathon Championship in Edmonton on August 16 she claimed the silver medal.

Caron also represented Canada on the Commonwealth Games team in Glasgow though she admits she was not prepared for a slow tactical 10,000m race. Having already begun her marathon training she had hoped for a fast even pace. She finished 13th. The focus, however, remains TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon.

“On paper when you look at it, it looks like a really successful year,” she said during a video call from her training base in Flagstaff, Arizona. “You see medals at Canadian championships and I did small PRs (32:32 for the 10km and 1:11:49 in the half marathon). But it’s nothing quite successful, to me, compared to what I had done in the NCAA.”

After competing for Laval University in Québec she transferred to Penn State University to be with her husband Olivier Desmeules, an 800m runner from Québec City.

As a member of the ‘Nittany Lions’ team she won the 2024 Big Ten Conference in both the 5,000m and 10,000m before finishing 14th in the NCAA championships 10,000m. A year later she was 11th in the NCAA 10,000m with a new personal best of 32:23.71.

Success at Penn State, where in 2025 she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics, helped earn a contract with Hoka Northern Arizona Elite a small group of athletes sponsored by Hoka and coached by Jack Mullaney. That contract was signed in January of this year.

“The NCAA finals are pretty hard to do well in,” she says of her collegiate career. “I feel like 2026 been a year of adjustment obviously starting later (in running) I have PR’d every year and I have had massive improvement and have adjusted to getting better every year. So I was not disappointed but I wish it had gone better in my first year as a pro.”



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Flagstaff has become one of the most preferred high altitude training centres in the US. It sits at 2,134m (7,000 feet) above sea level and like most runners there was a period of adjustment to living and training there.

"The altitude was a switch," Caron admits laughing. "It feels like you can really push hard at sea level and you will be fine. Here, when you pass the red line in the workout, there's no coming back. You have to stop.

"So I went out too hard at first and learned from my mistakes. You can't take the easy run hard you really have to go easy. It's a learning experience everybody has. You definitely have to respect the altitude."

Choosing Toronto Waterfront for her marathon debut was an easy choice. Several in her training group are scheduled to run fall marathons - Chicago and New York - also so their training programs are similar. There are other contributing factors.

"First it's in Canada," she declares. "It's my first one and it is not far from Québec. My husband is going to come and pace me. My parents are coming. My step-parents are coming so it's really special.

"It's also the Canadian Championship so other good Canadians should be there so I get to see where I rank amongst them."

Caron is a late comer to the sport. Through high school and Québec's CEGEP, a three year program to bridge the transition from high school to university, she competed in cheerleading. Running was not in the cards.

"Yes, I did cheerleading for six years and I stopped during covid because, obviously, cheerleading is pretty hard when you have to do social interaction," she recalls with a smile. "That's when I started to run.

"I was living by myself in a studio (apartment), I was 19 at that time and you cannot see friends or family so I just started to walk, then run, just to get out of my apartment. Then I started track in March 2021."

At the moment Oli is in his first year working as a financial analyst in Québec City. Although he ran 1:46.52 for the 800 metres and won the 2023 Big 10 indoor championships for Penn State, he decided to focus on earning a living.

"As an 800m runner it's pretty hard to keep going without a professional contract," Caron explains before adding, "He just ran 51km this morning! He wants to do an ultra marathon at



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some points which is crazy since it so different from the 800m.”

Naturally she misses Oli - he has visited her in Flagstaff twice this year and they see each other between races. And she also misses her five-year-old pet rabbit, a Netherland Dwarf, named Gustave or ‘Gus’ for short. He has lived with her in Québec and when she was at Penn State but is at home in Quebec City with her husband.

To fill in time between training sessions she reads, takes pilates classes and explores the hills around Flagstaff. She has also made plans to get her master’s degree in audiology. To that end she is set to begin two courses remotely in September one in statistics and another in communications. Both are prerequisites for the audiology program at Laval University.

“I am starting a Masters’ degree in 2028 at Laval University. My current professional contract ends at the end of 2028 after the Olympic cycle,” she reveals. “You never know with running if you are going to get another contract so that is my backup option, I guess.”

Caron’s final race prior to the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon will be the half marathon at the World Athletics Road Running Championships in Copenhagen, September 20. And then it’s on to the year’s major focus.

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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/>.