



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

Coughler and Black Confirm Entries in TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon

By Paul Gains

Two more Canadian distance running stalwarts will make their marathon debuts at the 2026 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon October 18 and both make their home in the London area of southwestern Ontario.

The event doubles as a World Athletics Elite Label Race and also the official Athletics Canada Canadian Marathon Championships.

Connor Black and Jeremy Coughler are former training partners as well as Canadian Championship medalists over 10,000m and cross country but have taken divergent paths the last couple of years since the 'retirement of their coach, Dave Mills. They do occasionally meet up for long runs in preparation for the marathon.

While Coughler still follows a program designed by the coach - a special exception made by Mills - Black has chosen to work with two-time Canadian Olympic marathoner, Reid Coolsaet, the past two years. Coolsaet has an established coaching business. Their approach to the Toronto event could not be more different.

Black, who lives right in London or 'The Forest City' as it is known, sees this as an important stepping stone towards a possible challenge for Canada's 2028 Olympic team.

"I am thirty years old and I am not making money in the sport but I still have goals," Black declares, "My final goal would be to try and make an Olympic team and I actually don't think it's feasible as an unsponsored track runner targeting the 5k or 10k.

"The marathon is a more even playing field. Like, I can get into any marathon I want within reason. There's 80 spots (in the Olympics). So I think if I am going to give it one last goal it has to be in the marathon."

At the 2025 Project 13.1 Half Marathon in Congers, New York he ran a personal best in the half marathon (1:03:34) which was his first race at that distance. Until then he had been primarily a 5,000m/10,000m performer. In 2022, for instance, he won the Canadian Cross Country Championships.

Black is a secondary school teacher but remains 'Long Term Occasional' meaning he 'floats' from school to school wherever there's an opening.

"Last year I was at Strathroy District Collegiate Institute which, funnily enough, was where Dave (Mills) taught for ten or fifteen years," Black says. "I taught 'phys ed' and math. I can



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

teach English as a Second Language and biology. I am kind of a Swiss Army knife.”

As he increases his workload in preparation for Toronto Waterfront, most of it by himself, he admits he has reservations about going back to work.

“I am quite nervous to resume teaching,” he reveals. “Recently my mileage has gone up. When you are just starting your build you are tired. It has been nice having the summer off and being able to focus on training.

“I used to believe you can train like a professional and have a full-time job. I think it’s possible but if you look at the marathon, if you want to run 200k a week, I definitely think it’s easier and a little bit better for your performance if you didn’t have to.”

Meanwhile, Coughler and his wife Emma, both chiropractors, are partners in Re-Charge Health and Wellness in London’s east end. They are also the parents of young boy they named Otto which means they must manage their time carefully.

“My wife and I split the work schedule,” Coughler, 30, explains during a day off. “I am at work Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays so I typically try to do workouts on my off days when I am at home - Mondays and Wednesdays. And, then if I am doing some stuff, first thing at 7:00 a.m. or 8:00 a.m, I do a run and then do a shakeout during the day between patients or after work. It’s not too bad.”

Running while important is one of several important priorities in Coughler’s life now. He reckons he is still running up to 110 kilometres a week - a similar amount to what he used to tally when finishing 3rd in both the 2023 and 2024 Canadian 10k championships in Ottawa. He also won the Canada Running Series’ Beneva Spring Run Off 8k four consecutive years between 2022 and 2025.

While that workload might not come near to what other marathoners are hitting it should be noted that earlier this year he set a new half-marathon personal best of 1:04:33 in the Project 13.1 Half Marathon held in New York State. That earned him 8th place in a strong field. He admits his attitude to running has changed.

“It’s a shift mentally because I have so much other stuff going on that I am trying to just view running as something I am doing because I love to do it rather than I am doing because it’s my whole life,” he explains.

“Previously, when I was at (Indiana) university, running was everything. When you run well it’s great but when you are not running so well it starts eating you alive.”



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

With the support and encouragement of coach Mills they have plotted a path which they hope will see Coughler finish in the 2:14 to 2:16 range for his first one. The plan is to run more marathons in the future.

"It's nice that I know there will be a bunch of other Canadian guys who can run around the same time and that will make it deeper," he concedes. "I know the far end of it there are always some good Kenyans and Ethiopians running fast. Even if there are a bunch of guys running 2:12 to 2:20 it would be great."

The proximity to his home in Thamesford, which is a fifteen minute drive from his practice and two hour drive from Toronto, means Emma and Otto as well as his parents will accompany him on race weekend. It is one of the reasons he chose TCS Toronto Waterfront for his debut. And he is familiar with the front half of the Toronto Waterfront course having finished third in the half marathon there a year ago. Runners in both races follow the same course until the 20 kilometre mark.

Between now and race day there are many miles to be covered and subject to schedules and pesky traffic conditions these London area runners will reunite for some workouts. And, if all goes well they will line up ready to join the long list of Canadians who have successfully made the step up to the 'classic distance.'

-30-

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/>.



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