



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

Leonard Langat to Defend his TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon Title

By Paul Gains

Leonard Langat arrived in Toronto for last year's TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon largely unheralded. But after winning this World Athletics Elite Label race he left with both the respect of his competitors and the \$25,000 CDN first place prize money to his credit.

The 30-year-old Kenyan will defend his title on October 18.

A year ago his winning time of 2:08:04 had been hampered by uncharacteristically strong winds coming off Lake Ontario but the fact he beat athletes with much faster personal best times was an indication of his potential. Indeed, at the 2026 Cape Town Marathon this May he finished 4th in a new personal best of 2:05:26.

"About last year, I was happy because I ran well. I am happy to come back to Toronto," he says while sitting alongside his coach, Josphat Bett, following a training session. "I loved the city of Toronto. I loved the beauty and the people I met there.

"I want to improve my time and try to win the race again. I will try to defend my title because the training (this year), we have improved, and increased the mileage."

The Toronto Waterfront Marathon course record of 2:05:00 was set in 2019 by his countryman Philemon Rono. It seems natural to draw a line between his personal best and that record. Could he beat Rono's time on the streets of Canada's biggest city?

"If the weather is good that day I will try to improve my personal best," is all he will allow - apparently not wanting to get ahead of himself.

Langat is represented by Volare Sports Management, a Dutch based firm specializing in distance running. He trains with a group of about twenty athletes under coach Josphat Bett's program in the town of Keringet. Another large Volare group which includes athletes such as Fanny Kiprotich (who will also run this year's Toronto Waterfront), the 2026 Vienna Marathon winner, is based in Iten the 'Home of Champions' three and a half hours away.

Bett was himself a world class runner with a personal best of 26:48.99 for the 10,000m and also took home the 2014 Commonwealth Games silver medal in that event. He remembers being approached by Langat when the latter keenly observed Bett and his training partners running past his village.

"I am a runner and he was interested in running," Bett remembers with a smile. "He loved the way we were training and he asked 'How can I start to run?'. So I gave him a training program



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

to start. Now it has been about ten years.”

With money earned from running Langat has begun preparing for life after his running career comes to an end. He and his wife, Sharon Chesang, have two children, 4-year-old Emmanuel Kipkoech and

a 2-year-old daughter Dorcas Chebet. Although Volare has a camp where many of the athletes live during the week he prefers to go home after training sessions.

“I want to be a farmer for cattle, a dairy farmer,” he explains. “I bought five acres of land and I have five cows.”

A successful title defence would mean increased financial stability for his family’s future. There is also a bonus of \$10,000 CDN for breaking the course record. Although he seems hesitant to talk about the record he’d be a good bet to dip below 2:05:00 under the right conditions.

“In Cape Town after 40km, after taking water, I lost the steps of the leading group,” he admits.

Clearly the race video supports his contention as he slowed to grab a bottle while the other three contenders opened up a gap. Ethiopia’s Mohamed Esa won that race in 2:04:55 with the 2022 TCS Toronto Waterfront champion, Yihunilign Adane, second in 2:04:59. What might have been is not something he dwells upon.

Defending a title is never easy. Langat can no longer slip under the radar as his performances have been watched around the world. His TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon victory, alone, had 140,000+ views last year in 75 countries. And he will face a strong field including his compatriot Noah Kipkemboi who finished in second place just 24 seconds behind him last year.

But Langat’s confidence will be high making for compelling battle along the streets of Toronto.

-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.



tcs TORONTO
WATERFRONT MARATHON



TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon
2 Berkely St, Unit 305 | Toronto, ON | M5A 4J5
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/>.