



TEN TO WATCH 2026

WOMEN

AYINADIS TESHOME | 23 | Ethiopia | PB:2:20:51

A year ago Ayinadis watched the 2025 TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon on YouTube. One of her training partners, Yihunelign Adane (winner of 2022 Toronto Waterfront Marathon) had told her about the race. She finished 6th in the 2026 Seoul Marathon in a new personal best of 2:20:51. In 2023 she ran a half marathon personal best of 1:08:10 leading to her marathon debut the same year in Cape Town (6th place in 2:29:14). Capable of going faster than her current PB.

BEATRICE CHESEREK | 27 | Kenya | PB:2:21:56

Made her marathon debut in the 2025 Toronto Waterfront Marathon finishing 5th (2:30:25). Then in Seville, Spain on February 15 she took more than 8 minutes off that time running a personal best of 2:21:56. She skipped 2024 as she gave birth to a son called Fabian. In 2022 she won the Cardiff Half Marathon in 1:06:48 an early indicator of her tremendous marathon potential. She has raised her training volume for Toronto. Experienced a 7.1 (Richter scale) earthquake in Colombia this spring after finishing 4th in the 2026 Cali 10km.

MARITU KETEMA | 26 | Ethiopia | PB: 2:21:52

Trains in a group alongside three-time Toronto Waterfront Marathon winner, Shure Demise, and world record holder Tigst Assefa under coach Gemedu Dedefo. At the 2026 Dubai Marathon she finished 5th in 2:21:52. Maritu started out as a 3,000m steeplechaser winning a silver medal at the 2017 African Under 20 championships at age 17. Having gained marathon experience over the past three years she now believes she is capable of dipping under 2:20 if conditions are ideal.

FLORENCE CARON | 25 | Canada | Debut

A 2025 graduate of Penn State University Caron is a native of La Malbaie, Quebec a town on the St Lawrence River. At PSU she finished 14th at the 2025 NCAA Cross Country Championships. After signing with Hoka and joining the Northern Arizona Elite in Flagstaff, Arizona, she has already won two Canadian championships this year - 10km (roads) and 10,000m (track). Can she make it three with success in Toronto?

ELFINESH DEMISE | 21 | Ethiopia | PB: 2:23:30

Elfinesh made her marathon debut with a 6th place finish (2:27:55) at the Lanzhou Marathon (China). Her second attempt at the distance resulted in victory at the Buenos Aires Marathon (2:28:12). Although neither time is extremely noteworthy in February of this year she ran 2:23:30 at the Dubai Marathon. A DNF in Ottawa followed. Since then her training has gone well. Trains with Ayinadis Teshome under coach Nigatu Worku. Given her young age we might be looking at a future champion.



MEN

LEONARD LANGAT | 30 | Kenya | PB: 2:05:26

Defending Toronto Waterfront Marathon champion (2:08:04) he went on to finish 4th in the 2026 Cape Town Marathon in May. There he ran a personal best of 2:05:26. The Toronto Waterfront Marathon record is 2:05:00 by his compatriot, Philemon Rono. Langat says he wants to run a new personal best. Does that mean a course record? Langat has started a dairy farm with income from running. Unlike many Kenyan runners he also lives at home to be with his wife and two children and drives to the team's training camp each day.

GIZEALEW AYANA | 23 | Ethiopia | PB:2:06:48

Another young and very promising Ethiopian runner Gizealew finished 6th in the 2024 Toronto Waterfront Marathon (2:10:49). Since then he improved his personal best to 2:06:48 at the 2026 Dubai Marathon. In May he finished second in Ottawa. Growing up watching his elder brother have running success (Tsedat has run 2:05:47) inspired him to become a runner.

NOAH KIPKEMBOI | 33 | Kenya | PB: 2:07:31

This is Kipkemboi's third time contesting the TCS Toronto Waterfront Marathon. He has been on the podium on both previous occasions finishing 3rd in 2024 when he set his PB of 2:07:31 and 2nd a year ago. Started out as a pacer for two-time Olympic marathon champion Eliud Kipchoge including for the latter's 2022 world record in Berlin. Kipkemboi remains friends with Philemon Rono, who set the Toronto Waterfront Marathon course record of 2:05:00. He is another runner who has beaten athletes with much faster personal bests. Will it be third time lucky in Toronto?

FANNY KIPROTICH | 24 | Kenya | PB: 2:06:53

Kiprotich has won both marathons he's contested - his debut in 2025 Tallinn (2:11:21) then in Vienna April 2026 he substantially lowered his best time to 2:06:53 winning by seventy-seven seconds. He expressed his joy by blowing kisses to the supportive crowd. Living near Mount Elgon he was inspired by seeing elite Kenyans running through his village. With his earnings so far he has bought some land and built a home for his parents. Toronto Waterfront Marathon will represent his first time in North America. He has watched past editions of the race on YouTube.

DINKALEM AYELE | 25 | Ethiopia | PB: 2:06:43

Dinkalem's marathon potential was noted when, in 2024, he ran 59:30 in the Barcelona Half Marathon. Toronto Waterfront will be his third marathon of this year after 4th place in the 2026 Doha marathon then 5th in Milan. Last year he finished 6th in the Paris Marathon (2:07:54). As a junior he represented Ethiopia at the 2019 World Cross Country Championships finishing 11th and helping his country to the team gold medal.