

00:00:04

Audio: Thank you New York. Today we're reminded of the power of community and the power of coming together. Athletes, on your mark.

The first woman to finish for the second straight year here in the New York City Marathon is Miki Gorman, a smiling Miki Gorman. And why not? 2:29:30, the time for motorbikes. Look at the emotion of Shalane Flanagan as she comes to the line.

Pointing to his chest, pointing to the USA he so proudly wears across his chest. A great day for Meb Keflezighi.

00:00:44

Rob Simmelkjaer: Hey, everybody. Welcome to another episode of Set the Pace Presented by Peloton. I'm your host and CEO of New York Road Runners, Rob Simmelkjaer, and with me as always, my co-host and Peloton instructor, Becs Gentry. Becs, great to see you. And what a weekend we had in Brooklyn. More than 28,000 runners, including you, taking on the Brooklyn Half the RBC Brooklyn Half Saturday morning. It was a record-setting field, the largest half-marathon in the country, and just an incredible day. Beautiful weather, amazing vibes, loved every minute of it, Becs. How was the day for you? It certainly seemed like a great one for everybody out there.

00:01:27

Becs Gentry: It was a beautiful day, it was unexpected. I very much decided to run this race last minute in order to secure my travel to Coney Island to do the live podcast recording of Set the Pace with Ali Feller and Zac Clark. Rob, honestly, the vibes out there were beautiful, beautiful. From seeing you as soon as I got there to then seeing the rest of the New York Road Runners crew all the way through. So many friends, so many running friends. I mean, we'd started the race and I was running with my back turned, running backwards, sideways, talking to people. It was awesome. The party afterwards, the weather, it got hot. It got hot, I will say that much, but otherwise I think people had a great day.

00:02:18

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, it was a day that we never knew what the weather was going to be like. It was going to rain, it was going to be warm. It was a nice day. I know there was a bit of a period where the sun came out, it got warm, but for you, so interesting, Becs, you really, when we had the podcast the week before you weren't sure if you were going to run. And then you made that, I think pretty last minute decision to give it a go. And it's only someone like Becs

Gentry who can roll out of bed, decide, " Ah, okay, I guess I'll give this half-marathon thing a try." And then end up running a very respectable time, Becs. Talk about your day, your race. Were you happy? Was it a struggle? How did it feel out there for you?

00:02:58

Becs Gentry: Honestly, it was a struggle, and I will caveat that with everyone, it's all relative to every different runner. And I know I'm very, very proud of the time I did, and very, very happy. But for me personally, it was a tough race. I had had not a great week of stomach, and that's all I'll say on that. A little under-fueled I would say, and a little tired from a very busy week. So, I did, I struggled. It was hot. I haven't run much in the hot this year. It's been a pretty miserable weather year so far here on the East Coast, so that took me by surprise. And the best thing about it though, Rob was being humble and being able to go, " Hey, it's not working at the pace you think you can do, so pull it back and really soak in the vibes of running to Coney Island." And that's what I did. And as soon as I did that, it was high-fives and smiles all the way down. I think it was around Avenue J. I remember seeing it and going, " I've got a long way, let's pull it back."

00:04:04

Rob Simmelkjaer: And it's funny how freeing that can be, right? And you think you're going to go hard and then when you finally just say, " Ah, this is a fun run." And that's when the fun starts a lot of the time. And so-

00:04:14

Becs Gentry: Precisely.

00:04:14

Rob Simmelkjaer: ... good for you for doing that, for enjoying yourself. And I could hear how much fun you were having on that Set the Pace broadcast with Ali Feller. You guys did such a great job with that show. For folks who haven't listened to it yet, go back and listen. It was a great conversation between you and Ali. I love listening to it. It was so weird for me. I was doing a long run the next morning myself and I'm like, " Hey, I think I'll listen to Set the Pace. I haven't heard the show yet." And I was listening to it and it was just great. So, you guys are great. And it just seemed like a really fun time at that after party.

00:04:48

Becs Gentry: It really was. And it was great to celebrate the

runs Ali's done in the past and to celebrate with her being there. And then Zac Clark, who was our special guest, I remember moment for the day he run the race as well. So, it was all a lot of fun. And all in all, Rob, we had some fantastic performances. The top performers from this weekend, their times were through the roof good.

00:05:16

Rob Simmelkjaer: They really were. Ryan Cutter from the Brooklyn Track Club one on the men's side with a time of 1:04:09. On the women's side. It was Olympian Kim Conley finishing in 1:12:43. And the top non-binary athlete was Sophia Camacho Farrell of the Brooklyn Track Club in one hour, 14 minutes and six seconds. So, really impressive, and congrats to the winners and congrats to everybody who finished and became part of the largest half-marathon in the United States. Just an incredible day from New York Road Runners and for all the runners. Beccs, before we get to our guest, it is so beautiful today, and spring is my favorite time of year to start a new workout routine.

00:06:02

Beccs Gentry: Totally agree, Rob. With the weather warming up, it just feels so much easier to get into the rhythm of things.

00:06:08

Rob Simmelkjaer: One of the things that works so well for me, Beccs, about Peloton is whether I've got 20 minutes to kill or a full hour for a Pilates class or maybe an outdoor guided walk, Peloton has everything I need to help get me going.

00:06:21

Beccs Gentry: It certainly does. It is such a great way to get a head start on summer with Peloton. You can find it at onepeloton.com.

00:06:29

Rob Simmelkjaer: Beccs, we've been trying to coordinate schedules with our guest today for a really long time, so we're so excited to finally have them on the show. Amy Robach and T. J. Holmes, they're great runners, tremendous parts of the New York Runners community, and so I'm really looking forward to our conversation coming up in just a second with them. And of course, a little bit later on the show, the always great Meb Keflezighi will be here along with me for our member moment. Today's member, Michelle Moore is here to help us close out our mental health awareness month. She's the author of a great book, Sustainable Wellness: A Memoir of Loss,

Perseverance and Resilience. And then Meb is going to give us his Meb minute tips for Best Summer Running Recovery tips as well.

Whether it's headline news, pop culture, or meaningful and personal conversations, today's guests, Amy Robach and T. J. Holmes, they cover it all. You probably know them as the renowned media personalities they are, but to us here at New York Road Runners, they're two of our most dedicated runners. I had a chance to be a guest on their podcast, Amy and T. J. a few months ago, and I'm so grateful that they have come to our podcast here on Set the Pace to join me and Becs. Amy, T. J., great to have you guys on.

00:07:45

Amy Robach: Thanks for having us. We're excited.

00:07:48

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, we're thrilled to see both of you. And I know you both ran the United Airlines NYC Half, you took Brooklyn off, which is fine, you're allowed to do that, but you had pretty good days that day, both under two hours at the UA NYC Half. How'd you feel about that race?

00:08:06

Amy Robach: How'd you feel about that T.J.?

00:08:07

T. J. Holmes: Oh my goodness. No, it's always fun. It's always fun to run down an empty FDR. We're so used to, whether you're in a car or whether there is congestion, and to have the FDR to yourself is kind of fun, so I always like that. And then running through Times Square at the end of that race, we actually talk about, we like that stretch better than most stretches of the actual New York City Marathon. Just running through Times Square, coming around that corner and everybody is there is a really cool sight.

00:08:42

Amy Robach: Oh, I mean, I can't think of anything that beats running through Times Square in the New York City Half Marathon. It is by far my favorite stretch. And this year the weather was so much nicer than the year before. So, we always appreciate that when you get the good weather, because you don't always, as we all know.

00:09:01

Becs Gentry: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, it can. Rain or shine though, we're all out there. And you have both been running for a while. We know you've been with New York Road Runner since around 2017. Can you talk to us a bit about what

inspired you both to actually start running?

00:09:18

Amy Robach: Sure. I have always been a runner, but I was a 10K girl at the most. So, the most I had ever run was six miles until I was 45. And my dad was a marathoner. He's run three marathons and a big half marathoner. But I used to always look to him and think, "How could he ever do that?" And then it was after my cancer battle with breast cancer, I started, I just didn't believe in my body anymore. I was crippled in every way, emotionally, physically. I just was scared to even think about tomorrow, let alone what I could do or what I was capable of. I felt defeated in every way, and it took me a couple of years to get out of that funk.

I mean, I ran a little bit, but not much. And I started to get involved in my first race. It was actually the SHAPE Half-Marathon in Central Park. And I pushed myself past what I thought I was capable of and realized that I suddenly felt my own strength again. And I got hooked from that point on. And I signed up for the Brooklyn Half with the New York Road Runners. I signed up for New York Road Runners, I became a member, and now I've run, I've almost lost count, I think. Am I at six marathons now? I think six full marathons, and I don't even know how many half-marathons. And I caught the buck and I never felt more communal. I never felt more, I just never felt my own strength. And I just felt so inspired by all the people around me running in all shapes and sizes, all ages, all physical capabilities. And I just thought, "My God, this is so cool that we're all doing this together, doing something really hard that most people think they're incapable of." Including me just a few years prior.

00:11:01

T. J. Holmes: And for me, I was just always been an athlete and running was always a matter of conditioning, was another ... I was never a runner, so I just always kept up running throughout my adult life just as a matter of some conditioning. But it's not until I started co-anchoring a show with her, Beccs, with a robot here, that knowing that she was running and she finally talked me into joining my first half-marathon. And then after that it was a wrap, I'm hooked. And it's just a part of life now and can't function without running.

00:11:34

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, T. J., when I was on with you guys on your awesome podcast, by the way, Amy and T. J., you talked a lot about running and how it helped you get through some

really difficult times. You struggled at times with mental health and depression and this is Mental Health Awareness Month. We're talking a lot about this here at New York Road Runners. Can you talk about how running did help you through those times, whether it was earlier, T. J., or even more recently with stuff that you and Amy have gone through together? What role has running played in all that?

00:12:10

T. J. Holmes: Rob, commend you, when you were on our podcast. We did it at the time, you should do it here as well. We commend you for wanting to make running a part of a treatment for mental health essentially. And I didn't realize it, Rob, to your point when I first started running that I didn't start doing it to help me because I was going through something. But it ended up being such a lifeline, and my friendship with robot, first of all, part of that just us being able to bond and talk and to have those runs together. Any runner knows that that's a very big deal. And those partnerships and friendships you have are a big deal. But aside from that, there is no greater ... There is no pill you can give me or sleep I can get or meal I can eat. There is nothing when I am not in a good way that settles me, calms me, steadies me the way just going out for a run can do.

And oftentimes some of the best runs are when I take the AirPods out and not listening to music that's pushing and driving me and just enjoying the surroundings. And that's a big part of mental health is sometimes, anybody who meditates knows this, you got to stay in the moment and where you are. And that has been a huge part of, it's health now. I mean, we talk about it all the time. Sometimes you can tell which one of us hasn't gone for a run in the morning, because one of the two of us ain't quite right.

00:13:39

Rob Simmelkjaer: The other one should be like, "Hey, you might want to go take your run and let's finish this conversation after you've run, because I don't really want to do this right now."

00:13:46

T. J. Holmes: He knows. He knows, Robs, he knows.

00:13:48

Becs Gentry: Yeah, that is our house as well. Most mornings it is our house of whoever's feet touch the ground first at 5:30 before our baby wakes up, gets to have the run and gets to start the day a little bit earlier.

00:14:02

T. J. Holmes: Hey, can we ask you all, what's your ideal, and Becs, I think we talked to Rob about it, but when do you like to run? What part of the day do you like to get your personal workout, your running?

00:14:14

Becs Gentry: I am a morning person. Because of very similar to what you have said, T. J. is it sets me up. I can go and empty my mind or fill my mind, depending on where my brain is at. And I feel so much more at peace when I've got my miles in, by myself quite a lot of the time. I do like to run by myself. I love to run with other people, but that morning run is just me time, organization time, and come back. But I'm a true runner. I'll run anytime. But if I had to pick.

00:14:49

Rob Simmelkjaer: I have this phrase Becs has heard me use a few times, "Win the morning, win the day." If I have a good morning, it's rare that I get a really good run in before seven or eight a. m. or whatever and then go back and say, "God, I really regret that run. That just got my day off to a really bad start and it just never came back from that run." It's almost, unless maybe I get injured during the run or something, but generally it's the morning that makes it happen for me. And I think I remember you guys joking around in your podcast about, I think one of you is more a morning person than the other. And being a couple that runs together, one of you maybe is motivating the other a little bit to get up and get those shoes on, Amy?

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Amy Robach: Well, here's the deal.

00:15:32

Rob Simmelkjaer: He knew who to ask.

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Amy Robach: I'm a morning person. He is a uber early morning person. So, if you call getting up at four a. m. a morning person, that's T. J. If you call getting up at 6:30 in the morning, a morning person, that's me, so we're not that far off. But even today you apologize for waking me up at 5:45, but that's all right. Yes, he motivates me to run earlier than I would have. But I think we're pretty much on a solid, we've got a pretty good rhythm going where now we're not training for anything. We know training begins in June for our next marathons, so we do a two mile a day

every day. We can skip one day a week if we like, which I think we did on Sunday, but we both know we're getting the two miles in. And whether we do it alone or together, we get it done usually before eight a.m.

00:16:23

T. J. Holmes: Yeah, but I don't even like eight a.m. That's a late start to the day for me, because if you run, it's a whole process. You have to get the clothes on, you get outside, you walk a couple of blocks, then you start running, you come back, you got to get out of that stuff. You need to cool down. So, it takes up so much time in the morning, I don't feel like my day can officially start until the run is done. If the run keeps getting pushed back, that means my whole day of work is getting pushed back. It drives me crazy. Be in bed at, " Oh, it's 5:00, 5:30, we're still not running yet."

00:17:01

Amy Robach: He wakes up-

00:17:01

T. J. Holmes: We still-

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Amy Robach: The first time you usually are nice and don't nudge me until like 5:30, 5:45, but the first thing out of his mouth almost every morning we wake up together is ...

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T. J. Holmes: You ready to run?

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Amy Robach: No joke-

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T. J. Holmes: There's no, good morning.

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Becs Gentry: No good morning.

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Amy Robach: First thing he says to me, and then I usually say, " Not quite yet. But yes, but not quite yet." So no, I agree, I do like ... It is great to get it in before eight a.m. The weather has an impact on me, now that it's warming up I'll be much more willing to run earlier. I have been waiting for it to warm up a little bit sometimes in the morning during the winter months. That's the reason why I run a little bit later in the winter. But in the summer

I'm all about getting it in before it gets hot.

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Becs Gentry: Exactly. And I think as a female as well, you're a little bit more intimidated in those winter early mornings when it's still dark at 6:00 a. m. and you're thinking, "I want to get out, I want to get it done." But if you are going solo, I think twice, I mean I live in the middle of Brooklyn and I'm like, "Is this a good idea?"

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Amy Robach: I do not run by myself in the dark at all. I won't run. I have run as early as 3:30 a.m. with this crazy man, but with him. Is the only, there's a reason why we ran at 3:30 in the morning and we ran nine miles at 3:30 in the morning, which was kind of crazy. I think we were training for the marathon, weren't we? For the New York City Marathon, or was it the half-marathon? But there was a soccer game on. Do you remember the details?

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T. J. Holmes: Yeah, it was the women's world, wasn't it?

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Amy Robach: Okay. I think it was. And so it was being played overseas.

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T. J. Holmes: Yes, but it was like a six or seven a. m. local time soccer match. We had to see. And when the soccer match is over at nine a. m. I don't want to go run nine miles.

00:18:52

Amy Robach: You also wanted to have a beer watching the soccer match, let's be honest.

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T. J. Holmes: That's what it, there it is.

00:18:56

Amy Robach: We got up, because you wanted to have a beer while you were watching the soccer game.

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Becs Gentry: Which is totally fine.

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Amy Robach: So, in order to do that we have to run at 3:30 in the morning.

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T. J. Holmes: There it is. There it is.

00:19:02

Becs Gentry: I'm down for that. You've got what you wanted to get done, done in order to do more of what you want to get done, done.

00:19:12

Rob Simmelkjaer: I want to be clear, if anyone's listening, I am not down with that, 3:30 a.m. No, not happening. That's not even early, that's late. That's so early, it's late. You're running for the day before.

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Amy Robach: It was a fun experience. He's done this a couple of times, especially when he was on GMA, like on assignment. And he would have to be in place 5:00 a.m., I would see his Strava or he would send it to me at 2:30 in the morning he's running. And I used to think he was absolutely insane, because I don't mind running after work. A lot of times we did run at 11 or noon, as long as it's not too hot. But he absolutely abhors it. So yes, I've adopted more of the early runs when moments like that happen. But it is crazy, it's insane. There's no question.

00:19:59

Becs Gentry: I'm in awe. I think it's fantastic. I have a question though on the early morning, do you eat before you run at that time in the morning?

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Amy Robach: No. No. And that is always my struggle. He is like a machine where I feel like he doesn't even need to drink water or eat food and he goes forever. And only actually running a few half-marathons with him I've not fueled. And I used to always fuel. In fact, this last marathon I ran, I did not fuel at all during the marathon, which I've never done before. I haven't figured it out yet. Even after all these races, peanut butter and banana is the one thing I can eat, I think beforehand. And I struggle with the fueling, and somehow you just, I don't know, you run on empty and you're fine.

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T. J. Holmes: No, I just don't like anything on my stomach. I try to eat a little something before a marathon just for fuel, but-

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Amy Robach: Not much.

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T. J. Holmes: Even the half-marathons. Yeah, I just don't.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Same here. Same here. If it's not a marathon, I'm not eating before, because I don't want anything in there. I completely agree. Listening to you guys, I love listening to you, because I mean, you're a running couple. And how has running changed for you, T. J., I'll ask it to you first, being part of a running unit of two people versus just being a runner on your own?

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T. J. Holmes: Well, it slows me down, Rob, to be honest with you. It slows me down.

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Amy Robach: He's not lying. That's absolutely true. Oh, my God.

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T. J. Holmes: It's always good to have a partner. It doesn't matter. There's very little we can think of in life that we prefer to do on our own. I know Becks is talking about going for some of the morning runs on the ... Some of that's great, but it's wonderful, especially when you're running a marathon or training for it. Not even running it, training for it, to have somebody every single day that is your partner who's on the same running schedule, who gets it. You can struggle together but also have fun together. It's an event every single training line, where are we starting? Where are we ending? Where are we going to have a beer afterwards? Where are we doing lunch? All these things, so it just becomes an activity. Look, couples are always looking for things to do together and to have similar interests. He might like Marvel movies. She wants to watch a Nicholas Sparks movie. Did I say Nicholas?

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Amy Robach: Yeah, you got it right.

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T. J. Holmes: I got the author right. Yeah, the author of the Notebook, if y'all didn't know.

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Amy Robach: Yes, yeah, I think every woman knows who Nicholas Sparks is.

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T. J. Holmes: Okay. What I'm saying, we have so much we can be different about. But this is one thing that for us, it's a great habit and hobby for a couple to have that keeps you together. This would be things we would be doing separately. I would be spending so much time running if she wasn't a runner as well. And so instead, we get to be together for this thing that takes up so much of our lives, so it's good.

00:22:58

Amy Robach: Yeah, I mean, I think I have lots of friends whose partners do not run, and so they call themselves like marathon widows or widowers and they complain that, even my mom would complain about my dad always running. My cousins, one of them is a runner, the other one isn't. And they complain about all the time that they don't get to spend with their partner. And so, we actually have that advantage that ... Especially in the long runs, we do solo runs or smaller runs on our own all the time. But the long ones, we pretty much run them all together. And I feel like not only is it motivational to have someone to keep you honest on the schedule, but also it just feels like you're in it together. And it's hard. We all know how hard those long runs are. And even intimidating. And it's weird, no matter how many marathons I've run, I still get intimidated by the long training runs, the 18 milers. I get nervous. To know he's with me, somehow it makes me feel just, I don't know, better about it. And the fact that we're doing it together, it's a mutual suffering, so somehow it makes it feel less awful.

00:23:57

Becs Gentry: Yeah, that rings very true, very true. Amy, I want to ask you specifically about your breast cancer journey. You've talked about it obviously very, very openly. And when you were going through chemotherapy, you actually spoke about how running was a way that helped you overcome nausea and fatigue that you were feeling at the time. And you're talking about how scary those 18 to 20 miles training runs are. And then when you put that into context of you building the courage to get out there and run during chemotherapy, cancer diagnosis. And I'm sure there's a lot of our listeners out there who are going through exactly what you went through at that time. Have you got advice for them of how to ... That fear that you speak about so powerfully?

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Amy Robach: Yeah, no, Becs, it's true. I can tell you that I

was not running the way I was before and the way I did after, I had to obviously take it down. I was running, I'd go out and run one mile, and that was it. And that was a huge, huge feat for me in those full year I was struggling. And my dad actually, my dad and my mom moved in with me when I went through that just to help with the kids and to help with all the things that I wasn't really physically up to. But my dad would go out there and run a mile with me a couple of times a week, because my oncologist said to me, "When you want to take a nap, take a walk. When you think about taking a walk, try to push yourself to run. And don't believe that you're not capable, that you're too weak."

I think you get into this mindset. Because fear is so unfortunately debilitating, it can either cripple you or it can motivate you. And so she was like, "Take that fear of thinking your body is failing you, of the weakness you're feeling, of the fatigue you're feeling, and just push yourself a little bit further than you think you can. And you're going to be okay and you're going to feel the better for it." And so I remember, I can still, I'll get emotional thinking about it, but there is a part that we actually run all the time now, because I was living in the financial district when I was going through chemo. And my dad and I would go on these runs around the Hudson right around Battery Park City where you could see the Statue of Liberty. And I remember feeling like I couldn't believe how weak I felt and how tired I was just running one mile, and how it was discouraging.

But I remember just going on that run and having my dad next to me and I would be sobbing sometimes during that one mile feeling sorry for myself or being upset about where I was physically in the process, but knowing that I was still out there doing it. And so sometimes I'll run by that same path and get emotional just thinking about where I was then and where I am now. And just knowing, I think for anyone who's fighting any sort of illness, if you can push yourself just a little bit past, you're already uncomfortable, let's face it, with whatever you're dealing with, especially if you're going through chemo. But if you can just push yourself a little bit past what you think you can handle, you'll be amazed at that feeling of accomplishing something even in the middle of one of your biggest nightmares.

And so anyway, looking back and reflecting on it, I'm proud that I was able to do it, but I don't think I could have done it if my dad wasn't by my side. So, having someone do it with you makes a huge difference. And just knowing that, I mean, even if it's like 10 minutes or five minutes, it's better than just being in fetal position. I think that was my choice. Like fetal position, or keep moving, keep putting one foot in front of the other.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Amazing. Absolutely-

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Becs Gentry: So strong.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: We talk about it all the time. Just keep going, right? That's what the sport's all about. That's what life is so often all about is just keep going. And T. J., you've kept going through a couple of marathons. You've run the last two TCS New York City Marathons, and not only do you run these marathons, but you permanently commemorate these marathons on your body. Can you talk a bit about what it is you do to celebrate your marathon runs?

00:27:57

T. J. Holmes: Look, somebody used to tell me about my college education. They said, "Make sure you get your college degree. That is one thing that nobody is ever going to be able to take away from you." The other thing nobody can take away from me, Rob, the fact that I crossed the finish line at two marathons. So, hell yeah, I got a tattoo in my arm, but it is. And Becs, maybe you haven't seen. I think Rob, you have, you can't really see it here that well, but it's the map of the New York City.

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Becs Gentry: Is it really?

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T. J. Holmes: It's the route map. And then I have the laurel there, it says 26.2, and then I left space to keep adding the dates for the marathon. So, I got two dates on there now. I'll have a third one on after this November for New York City Marathon, yes. I've got so many comments. I hope it doesn't get out and everybody starts doing it. But yeah, so many comments at the marathon.

00:28:50

Becs Gentry: Copyright to T.J. Well, no one's going to, well, maybe there might be a few people have the same dates, but hey.

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T. J. Holmes: We love it.

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Becs Gentry: Get your times on there.

00:28:59

T. J. Holmes: We love it.

00:29:00

Rob Simmelkjaer: I've seen them before, by the way. There are others out there with the map on their arms, or the logo. And yeah, we have a logo, but if you want to tattoo it on your arm, I think we can get the lawyers to overlook that. That's dedication. That's really dedication if you're going to go that far.

00:29:18

T. J. Holmes: No, and only runners recognize it, right? So most people wouldn't know what the line is. They don't know that's the route. But any runner knows exactly what that route is.

00:29:27

Becs Gentry: They see that route. That is beautiful. Wow. Inspirational there. Hold on. Next time you see me. Oh, my goodness. Okay, so you have marathons coming up, you have races that you love to do. Amy, I know that you do a lot of running with charity. You actually have lots of runs with our New York Road Runners Team for Kids, a charity that raises money for youth and community programs here. So, why is that so important to you guys for helping the generations that are coming ahead of us?

00:30:04

Amy Robach: Well, I think for me, if we can inspire or at least contribute to what you all do, your incredible work with inspiring younger, would-be athletes out there. I think there are so many of our kids and we parents obviously with children on devices and you see everyone just being so insular and isolated and running really is, and running races is such a beautiful communal, inspirational activity. And it does so many amazing things for your mental health and for your physical health.

So yes, if we can get more kids out running, and one of my favorite parts about running and always has been through all the different stages of my life is that it's absolutely free. I mean, you can run anywhere you are. You don't need a gym membership, you don't need equipment, you do need shoes. That is the one thing that I know some people don't have access to. And I know you all do a lot of work and so many people do in making sure that kids do have the running shoes they need. But short of that, you get yourself a pair of shoes. You can run anywhere and you can take it wherever you go with you. And I just have always loved the

freedom of that.

And then just, yes, teaching kids that they're stronger than they think. I mean, I've pushed my kids through running and hiking and the whole point was to know what it's like when you can push through pain, when you can push past pain, get to the other side of it and really feel a sense of accomplishment. That is part of building confidence, that is part of building just the ability to get through tough times. I've always said that running is a parallel to life. It really is in so many ways. And I've used my runs to push past my own emotional pain to think, "If I can get through this, I can do that." And I'll use life to remember my runs and when I'm on my runs, I'll remember life. I got through this, I can do that. And just all of those types of lessons are in a run in a race. And if we can give that to kids, that is an incredible tool that they can use for the rest of their lives.

00:31:56

Rob Simmelkjaer: Guys, I want to talk about your awesome podcast a little bit. I love being on it. It's done really well. I mean, you guys have a tremendous following. People love the conversations that you have. They're so open, they're so honest. You talk about running a lot, which we love. But you talk about a lot of other things too. What's that chapter been like for you? You're both accomplished broadcasters and now here you are doing this podcast with the person you love. What's that been like, T. J.?

00:32:29

T. J. Holmes: Oh, you assume I love her. Okay, Becs doesn't know us well enough, we're just kidding, Becs, we do that a lot of time. Look, we talked about how great it is to have a partner and somebody to run with. So now, this is my favorite person to work with. We're getting an opportunity to work together and to work together in a way that we weren't necessarily able to do so before in which we can now craft the message, craft the stories, we can craft, we can do exactly what we want to do and talk about those things in ways that we were never really afforded an opportunity from, I guess the show we were doing before.

So, this has been great. The feedback has been great. Just the things that touch people and move people that you never really imagined would, just sometimes one little throwaway sentence we had in a podcast that we didn't think anything of becomes the thing that really resonated with folks. So, in that spirit, look, being able to have a conversation like this freely, we never could have done this if we were on television. Just different rules and their time restraints and all kinds of stuff. But just being able to speak freely

like this and like you all are able to do in your podcast is just, we love it.

00:33:49

Becs Gentry: It's a fantastic podcast, I must say, I'm a fan. I listen to a lot of them. One of my favorite, I get on a rant about social media in my classes quite a lot and I personally get a little bit freaked out that we live our life in these squares and that we're so obsessed with how these squares perform. But then on a day-to-day basis we're not that bothered about how we perform in life. Anyway, we could go on. I think that episode was fantastic. I was like, "They see me, they hear, we're on the same page." And then I think you were also talking about one of my favorite new runners in the country music world, Jelly Roll as well. It was just one of my favorite episodes where I was like, "I swear we need to (inaudible)." And here we are.

00:34:35

T. J. Holmes: That's what we mean, exactly. You're making the point. For us, we never realized something like Jelly Roll, like a small thing that we didn't think much. It may not have been the big subject of that podcast or topic of the day, but just things we are able to express now are things that people are going, "Oh," and we're hearing back from them. So, it really has been wonderful for us.

00:34:56

Amy Robach: Yeah, I think we've been able to flex muscles that we weren't allowed to before, because as journalists you don't have opinions. You're not supposed, well, you do, but you're not supposed to ever express them, and you work very hard to keep that filter in place. And so, to take that filter off and slowly be able to talk about things in human ways, not just as a journalist or a broadcaster, but as a human being who has a reaction to things and has lived through enough life to have some context to be able to place on certain world events has been really freeing, I think is maybe the best way to put it. It's a little scary at first, and then you feel the freedom of being able to use your voice hopefully for good or to at least create a different perspective than maybe that's out there. And we never were able to do that before.

00:35:44

Rob Simmelkjaer: Totally get it. Yeah, just a different format where it's more about you and what's on your mind versus the story. And so, it's just a very different way of broadcasting, and you guys are great at it, so I hope you keep doing it for a long time. All right, so I have to ask

just the Road Runner's angle for both of you. And Amy, you mentioned earlier becoming a member of Road Runners and the impact it had. For those out there listening, maybe they're thinking about joining Road Runners or getting involved or starting a running habit. How has New York Road Runners really helped and inspired you?

00:36:20

Amy Robach: Because I have ... Well, first of all, I love your organization. I love everyone who works there. They're amazing. So kind, so helpful, and really in it for the right reasons. I love runners and I love this organization, because it's about supporting runners and there really is, and I've said this a couple of times, but a communal feeling to running a race, but also just knowing that we all get the benefits. We all want to spread that love and that joy of running to other people, because it's intimidating and it's hard, and a lot of runs aren't fun. But if you can explain the passion and the reason why we love it, you all do such a good job of getting that messaging out. And the races, just the sheer amount of races that you have available to people from all different types of abilities. So, you have the five Ks, you have the one milers, you have the 15 milers, you have the marathon. I mean, there is a race for everybody, and I think that's really cool.

And the first thing when people ask me, "What should I do if I want to start running?" I always say, "Join, if it's in New York, New York Road Runners, but join your local running group. They will give you tips, they will help you train, they will motivate you. They have group runs to practice." I mean, there's no excuse to not be able to pick up the pace or at least get out there and try when you've got a group like the New York Road Runners supporting you every step of the way.

00:37:49

Rob Simmelkjaer: We love it.

00:37:52

Becs Gentry: We need you to coach.

00:37:52

Amy Robach: I really do tell people, I'm like, "Go onto New York Road Runners, go look at their races, sign up for a race." And the rest is, that's the first step and the biggest step, and the rest of it is just now committing. And that's what it takes. You get on record, "I'm doing this." And you've got the support to do it.

00:38:09

T. J. Holmes: Okay, Rob, we'll send you an invoice for that ringing endorsement.

00:38:13

Rob Simmelkjaer: I can't say it any better than that, and I'm the CEO, so we should just end the show right now, because that was beautiful. I just want to thank both of you for coming on the podcast, for everything you've done for New York Road Runners, for running, and we just love to see you guys out there. So, we got a date then November, 2024. Starting line, Staten Island, TCS New York City Marathon. See you there.

00:38:40

T. J. Holmes: You'll see us there.

00:38:43

Amy Robach: I'll tell you. So, here's the deal. I did this a couple of years ago. T. J. 's doing it this year. We're both running the Chicago Marathon, and then a few weeks later T. J. 's running the New York City Marathon. I did that back in 2022, I think, and it was an amazing experience to run two marathons in a row. But I also know, as T. J. mentioned, running with me slows him down, which is absolutely true. So, I really, really, really-

00:39:12

T. J. Holmes: That sounds bad.

00:39:13

Amy Robach: No, but it's true.

00:39:15

T. J. Holmes: You should find another way to say it.

00:39:15

Amy Robach: I have asked you if you would be willing to go and just get your PR, because you've never seen what it is in a marathon yet. And so for me to take a step back from New York this year, because if we do Chicago together, I really was strategic about this. We then are on the exact same training playbook, so we'll do all the runs together. And then the Chicago Marathon is basically like your 20 miler and then you taper. So, I'm going to be cheering him on, and I'm very excited, for the first time New York City Marathon cheering on someone else, cheering on T. J. I'm going to have FOMO 100%, but I'm going to sit New York City out this year, mainly because I really want him to get a PR.

00:39:57

T. J. Holmes: Oh, please, (inaudible) back.

00:39:58

Amy Robach: He won't get a PR without me.

00:39:59

T. J. Holmes: It's like you're doing me favors.

00:40:04

Amy Robach: I've already done the two in a row, so I don't need to do it again.

00:40:07

Becs Gentry: I need a favor.

00:40:07

Amy Robach: And I really love you to get your PR. I'm very excited about what your PR is going to be going to be.

00:40:11

T. J. Holmes: You really do me a favor. That's why be, Becs, she's not running it. Not because it'd be hard.

00:40:12

Becs Gentry: I hear the favor. I hear the love, the love, the favor here.

00:40:21

Amy Robach: It's called sacrifice.

00:40:23

Becs Gentry: It is.

00:40:23

Amy Robach: Sacrifice is the love.

00:40:26

Becs Gentry: That's what I'm hearing. And she's going to be cheering so loud.

00:40:29

Rob Simmelkjaer: She's going to milk that for a long time, T. J., I can see it. Get ready. (inaudible) .

00:40:32

Becs Gentry: You better get a really big PR here, buddy.

00:40:36

Amy Robach: The things they do for you. Yep.

00:40:39

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, I think it's a great plan, T. J. You're going to have a really great long run in Chicago, the full distance, and then you're going to be primed and ready to go. I think four hours is about to fall in your marathon record book, because you've been just over four hours. I feel like something starting with a three is coming out of you.

00:41:00

T. J. Holmes: It's coming, for sure. And again, we were ready. We would have done that together in New York on this last one, but sometimes you got to stop and vomit for a little while.

00:41:08

Amy Robach: That's what happened to me. We were on track to do the four and at mile 22 I literally threw up on myself. And kept running for a little while and then I was like, "It's nope." So, then I had to go off to the side and we lost 10 minutes. It was tough. And then I slowed down too, and so the whole rhythm got shot. So, it was really hot.

00:41:30

T. J. Holmes: Yeah, Beccs, this wasn't a pit stop. This was a full-

00:41:35

Amy Robach: My stomach was seizing, it was seizing. It was like you had a Charley horse cramp in your stomach. I was like, "Oh my God." I was so mad too. And then I laughed, because my dad is always tracking us and I had my AirPods in, one AirPod in, and he was saying when he saw our half-marathon pace, he was like, "You're going to get sub four, way to go." Which then of course stressed me out even more. I was like, "Oh my God, I'm going to get a sub four." Pressure. You must be, (inaudible).

00:42:05

Beccs Gentry: Oh, my goodness. That's like the inauguration into a deep runner. When you've thrown up on yourself, you keep going, you're like, "I've got this. I'm going to get through this." And then you have to go back again.

00:42:20

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, as hesitant as I am to end the interview on the vomit story, I think we are just about there.

00:42:27

T. J. Holmes: Sorry, sorry.

00:42:31

Rob Simmelkjaer: But I know you're going to do great this year. Look forward to seeing how you do in Chicago. It's flat, it's fast. Amy, that's going to be your day too. I think under four could happen for you that day too. So, just keep everything inside the body and you got a shot, you got a shot.

00:42:47

Amy Robach: Going to do my best. Yes.

00:42:47

Rob Simmelkjaer: Amy and T. J., they're great. Great to have you both on the show. T. J. Holmes, Amy Robach, thanks for everything, and we will see you very soon back in New York.

00:43:04

T. J. Holmes: Thank you, guys.

00:43:04

Amy Robach: Bye. Thank you.

00:43:18

Rob Simmelkjaer: Now it's time for our member moment. And today we have a New York Road Runners member. Michelle Moore is an author and a psychologist, and I was very happy to receive her book, actually in the mail recently. The book is called Sustainable Wellness: A Memoir of Loss, Perseverance and Resilience. Michelle, it is great to have you on Set the Pace.

00:43:40

Michelle Moore: Thanks so much for having me. Excited to be here.

00:43:42

Rob Simmelkjaer: Michelle, I really was struck by receiving your book, because it just happened to be during the first couple of days of Mental Health Awareness month. We are making this a real focus at New York Road Runners, and just gleaning your story about the losses that you endured in your life. Losing a brother when you were young, losing your mother, your father, and how you were able to get through all of this and the role that running played. And you got a whole chapter in there about running the TCS New York City Marathon and the impact that had. Can you talk about how this all came together for you in a book?

00:44:21

Michelle Moore: Absolutely. So, I realized not until just this past year that writing and running have really played a pivotal role in being able to recover from loss. And I found that in my early 20s as I was trying to navigate this world after my brother died. And then it wasn't really until 20 years later, so in the past since 2017, that I really had this resurgence of where running played this really pivotal role. My mom was diagnosed with ALS in 2017, and at that time I realized I needed to do something to take care of myself. As a psychologist I had patients I was caring for, I was a mother of two children. I had all these aspects of my life that I knew I had to hold together, while also trying to support my mom and be a caretaker.

And running gave me this place that I could go that was just for me, where I was alone and I could be with my thoughts. Sometimes I could cry, I could run fast if I needed to, whatever I needed just to get the emotions flowing through. And it was such a relief to be able to have this space to be able to get all the emotion out during this really pivotal time of my life. And at that same time, I also realized that there was something about distance running. That having this time to run for long periods of time also was very cathartic and very therapeutic. And so I signed up for my first half-marathon in 2017 after my mom's diagnosis. And after that I just got hooked and wanted to see how far I could take it and how much further I could go. And I realized that a 5K then felt like a sprint and just wasn't enough time to really, really get into that pace and that comfort space.

And so, getting all the way up to, in 2023 I had an opportunity to run with ALS Association of Greater New York during the New York Marathon. And once I got that bib and knew I had secured that spot, not only was running giving me this physical wellness that I needed, but it also fulfilled the spiritual wellness. It was part of my purpose. It was part of the reason of why I was running. It wasn't just about the running, it was about taking care of all these many parts of me, and being able to really give back to the community in a very different way and raise awareness for ALS.

00:46:41

Meb Keflezighi: Michelle, you know, it's the hardest part about running is getting their shoes on, getting started. What advice would you give somebody who is struggling and says, "You know what, I'm in different mindset." What would be your clue to say, "Hey, do this?" What would be the one or two

things that you would mention to them?

00:46:58

Michelle Moore: I love that question, and I write about it in the book. There's something called a growth mindset. And the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset, growth mindset being that you believe that even despite a challenge you can overcome, you can continue forward. Any setback is just a minor setback. You're still able to see this focal point in the future. And I think especially in the beginning stages of long distance running, there are tons of setbacks. You have to learn how to do nutrition, you have to learn how to overcome tendonitis and all these physical things as your body is changing and transforming into the ability to run longer distances. And so, that was something I learned early on that I had to be able to have some grace and have some humility with the process of letting my body slowly be beaten up on a run, but then also be able to recover.

So, that growth mindset piece of really being able to see that you're capable of so much more if you really set your mind to it. And the mindset that you guys talk about all the time on this podcast of the mental effort that goes into running a race, that so much of it is about the mental side that physically you have to prepare your body, but mentally you have to be prepared too, and you have to believe in yourself. You have to know that you can do it. You have to trust yourself that you can do it.

00:48:22

Rob Simmelkjaer: Michelle, what I love about your book, Sustainable Wellness is, you create a roadmap for people to really have a plan for sustainable wellness. And there are six elements of it. And what I love is that so many of them touch running when you think about it. Emotional wellness, physical wellness, social wellness, occupational wellness, intellectual wellness and spiritual wellness. And in just looking at that, I can think three easily. I mean, emotional wellness, certainly physical, and the social side for folks who get together and run in groups. Even the intellectual side, planning out your race plan, your times, your splits, things like that. Spiritual as well for a lot of people. I mean really, so much of this can be aided by running.

00:49:10

Michelle Moore: I absolutely agree. I have also found that from occupational side, because sometimes I'm like, "Where does occupational fit in?" As a psychologist, I need to take care of my wellness. As a provider, as someone who's giving

back to a community, especially in the healthcare industry, I have to make sure that I am well in order to be able to give that to others. I think that occupational wellness really does tie in nicely. And for me, the intellectual side, being able to share the story and share what it is that running is able to do and what it's able to give us is a big part of the intellectual wellness side.

I completely agree with you on the social aspect. I know one of my favorite parts of running the New York Marathon just last year was connecting with the ALS community. And that part right before the race begins, and I'm at the Charity Village and getting to connect with other folks who have lost somebody to ALS. And we have this moment where you're like, "You understand, you understand what I've gone through and you understand what this journey has been like." And so, those social elements of the running community are priceless.

00:50:16

Rob Simmelkjaer: So, for folks out there who are suffering from grief, and you certainly have been through a lot, your story is tragic, the sequencing of you went through, how would you advise them to think about even getting started on a road to recovery, whether it's through running and the role running can play, or otherwise?

00:50:40

Michelle Moore: If you really break down into these six dimensions of wellness and you really take each one, and you have to discover, there has to be a lot of self-reflection to figure out what is it that works for you. Running is one of the things that I discovered that really works for me. But running might not be for everybody, and long distance events might not be for everybody, and that's okay. But getting out and doing the movement, if you get out and you just start walking, and instead of being really worried about how far you're going or how fast you're going, just get out and move. Put your shoes on and find somebody to go with. Somebody that can hold you accountable. I have found, I have a running buddy. We meet up at six a. m. multiple mornings a week, and there are plenty of days where her and I meet up and I'm like, "I wanted to stay in bed today." She goes, "Me too."

But we didn't. We got up because we were meeting each other. And I think whenever we can connect with somebody else and we find that ability to keep going, because it means something to keep going, it means something to be able to know that, for me, knowing that my mom lost the ability to move. And so, I do have moments when I'm tired and I'm worn down, but I can move my legs, I can move my toes, I

can move my arms. And I'm very grateful for the ability to be able to do that. So, that gratitude plays a huge role. And if you can acknowledge the gratitude, take a growth mindset, see what you're capable of, and believe in yourself, put some shoes on, run a mile. Just start with a mile. You don't have to go any further than that. It doesn't matter how long it takes you at all. Just get out there and start moving.

00:52:18

Meb Keflezighi: Michelle, the mind is so powerful, but the body is so fragile. I remember in 2007 at the trials in New York City Marathon, I was just mentally, physically, and emotionally defeated. But somehow, somehow we have to move forward. But what is that mental, 90% we said on competition is mental. Would that be something that you can say, "Hey, you need to start running." But also for somebody that is struggling, it's like have doubts in their heads and somebody says, "I was ready to take my life if it wasn't for something like a 5K marathon." People look at sports, a metaphor, life, you get up, injuries, disappointment, have life, but at the same time, what is that initial goal? To come out and meet somebody. By meeting somebody that morning can save life, or meeting camaraderie and things like that. What would be your psychology advice on that? Besides meet somebody, what would you give as advice, because this is mental awareness month?

00:53:13

Michelle Moore: Part of what I hear you describing is the ability to be resilient, the ability to bounce back after a bad thing has happened. And I think sometimes we can do that alone and we can do that for ourselves. Other times really do need somebody else, and it doesn't always have to be a professional. It can just be somebody that you've come across. One of the most beautiful things I have found in life too is that sometimes you never know the people that you might need or the people that you might meet. I tell a story in my book about a few days after my mom died I went out for a run and it was very slow, but I got out there and just started moving.

And there was a guy standing on the lakefront and I ran past the first time, I came back and I stopped and I said, "Hi." And I don't know why, but I did. I stopped and said hi to this guy and he said, "The water is so calm today. Yesterday the waves were crashing and the waves were going." He goes, "But today it's so calm and peaceful." And I just sat with that moment and it brought tears to my eyes, because it was the story of grief. Yesterday was a terrible day. My mother had died and I was in a terrible place and

today I was able to find this moment of calm. And this was talking to a stranger. And I said, "Thanks so much. Have a great day." And I continued running.

And I think when we can also, that mindfulness component, you guys just talked about this last week, right? When we can be mindful and present in each moment that life gives us to be able to see, this was a stranger. He didn't know what I had gone through. I don't know where he came from, but there was something about that moment that I allowed that to sink in.

And so I think when we can be present throughout our lives, you're able to be more resilient when you're present and you're actually allowing yourself to be in your emotions. If we try to avoid our emotions and we try to distance ourselves and not feel, it actually makes things a lot harder, and that can lead to more mental health issues. But if you allow the emotions to come up and to flow through you, I had many runs where I just, tears just streaming out, and it was such a cathartic experience. But letting the emotion come out sometimes is so much more important than trying to feel like, that's where the perseverance comes in, right? You let these things go and you continue to move on, versus trying to hold in and keep it all held tight, which is just going to lead to more setbacks and holding you still in place so you can't thrive.

00:55:35

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, Michelle, I can't think of a better person to have on this month as we talk about mental health awareness than someone who has been through what you've been through. And then more importantly, really found a way to communicate beautifully to people what it takes to develop that resilience, that sustainable wellness. Again, the book is called Sustainable Wellness: A Memoir of Loss, Perseverance and Resilience by Michelle Moore. You can find it on Amazon, and it's really a terrific thing, I think, to help walk us all through that process of staying well in a sustainable way. Michelle, thank you so much for being on the podcast. Great to have you on. Thanks for sending me the book, by the way. I really love it.

00:56:18

Michelle Moore: Yes, thanks so much. I love this community, so thank you for offering this.

00:56:23

Rob Simmelkjaer: Now it's time for today's Med minutes.

00:56:25

Meb Keflezighi: Summer is a great time to train, but the

recovery are very important as you get ready for just training, build out for the fall, or just training through the summer, the recovery is very important. Don't stress out about, "I have to do this," mentality. The summer is supposed to be a relaxation. You're supposed to go to the beach or in areas or parks and build a great base, so that way you can have a great fall for training. But at the same time doing the drills and strength is important as you do it at home or outdoor in the nice weather. But the temperature can be brutal, depends where you are. So, it is very important to hydrate before, during, and after. You want to be able to take care of your body so you can do consistent training over the summer, which are going to lead you to a greater fall training and racing. So, have fun in the summer, but at the same time, take care of yourself.

00:57:22

Rob Simmelkjaer: And that does it for another episode of Set the Pace. Thank you to Amy and T. J., and also to Michelle Moore. If you like this episode, please go ahead and subscribe, rate or leave a comment for the show on whatever platform you're listening on. This helps us, helps the podcast, and helps others find the show as well. We'll see you next week. Enjoy the miles.