

048 _ Mastercard New York Mini 10K Champions

Speaker 1: Thank you, New York. Today, we're reminded of the power of community and the power of coming together. Athletes, on your mark.

Speaker 2: The first woman to finish for the second straight year here in the New York City Marathon is Mickey Gorman, a smiling Mickey Gorman. And why not? 2: 29:30, the time for (inaudible). Look at the emotion of Shalane Flanagan as she comes to the line, pointing to his chest, pointed to the USA he so proudly wears across his chest. A great day for (inaudible).

Rob Simmelkjaer: Hey everybody, and welcome to a special edition of Set the Pace. I'm Rob Simmelkjaer, New York Road Runners CEO, and we are here just moments after the conclusion of the 2024 MasterCard New York Mini 10K. And it was a great, great day, beautiful weather in New York and a record-setting mini 10K. Over 9,000 finishers. That was an event record and that's incredible considering this is a 52-year-old event. More women crossed the finish line today than ever before in this first in the nation, first in the world, women's only road race. So the tradition and the history continued here in New York and we're so thrilled to see so many women out there having a great day. They were mothers and daughters running together. They were sisters. It's just a beautiful thing to see, of course, the women running in the mini skirts, which is the tradition going back to the early '70s when Fred Lebow first created this race and named it after the mini skirt.

It continues to be an incredible symbol of women in sports, women's empowerment, and in this day and age where we're seeing so much attention finally being paid to women's sports, it is beautiful to see this race doing better than ever on a beautiful Saturday here in New York City. We have a great show for you today as we're going to be joined by the two top finishers, both for the full field and then the American Field. Senbere Teferi wins the event for the third straight year, the Ethiopian finishing in 30 minutes and 47 seconds. Not quite up to her standards of last year when she's set the course record of 30:12, but still a tremendous day for Senbere Teferi. She will join us to talk about her three-peat in the mini 10K. And then a little bit after that, we will have the top American finisher, Amanda Vestri.

Amanda finishing fourth in this and she had a terrific performance, was right there on the heels of the three African women who finished one, two, three, and she has to feel great about a tremendous performance there, 31: 17. So Amanda Vestri, who's actually a native New Yorker from upstate New York back in her home state, coming up with a fourth place finish. She will join us as well. A bit more in terms of the finishers of the elite runners here with Sharon Locati finishing at 31:04 in second place, and Sheila (inaudible) at 31: 09 finished third. And among the Americans, we mentioned Vestri finishing fourth. It was such a tremendous field. Jessica McLean finishing fifth, Emily Durgan sixth, and the Olympians in the race as well. Dakotah Lindwurm finished a strong eighth, 31: 58. Right behind her was Emily Sisson at 32: 08. Had a chance to speak to both of them after the race.

They both felt really good about a tremendous race as they get ready for Paris and the marathon where they'll represent the United States along with Fiona O'Keeffe, who was here in New York but decided not to run. Wanted to make sure she didn't aggravate anything in a calf that was a little bit creaky, but she was there at the finish line giving out lots of high-fives as well. So a great day here in New York, a great day for New York Road Runners and for our partners at MasterCard. Let's now join my conversation with Senbere Teferi. We are thrilled to be joined by three time MasterCard Mini 10K Champion Senbere Teferi with an incredible win. 30 minutes, 47 seconds. A three-peat for Senbere Teferi. Welcome to Set the Pace. Congratulations on yet another victory in this race. We're here with your interpreter, Sabrina Johannes as well. So we'll let Sabrina send the message. So Senbere, you have won this race three times in a row. What was different and special about today?

Sabrina Johannes: What makes today different is the fact that I'm winning for the third time here. That's really a big deal for me and I'm very, very happy. Praise God. It's a day in which I praised God.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Did you feel from the beginning of the race that you would win? It looked to me watching the race that you were so confident the entire time. Did you feel all the time that it was your race to win?

Sabrina Johannes: Yes, from the beginning I was expecting that God would help me. I did come here expecting to win. I did not come here expecting to lose.

Rob Simmelkjaer: We could tell, absolutely. You look very confident the entire time. What is it about this race and about New York that is special for you? Not only have you won this race three times, but you have won the United Airlines NYC half. You've had so much success in New York. Why does New York fit you so well?

Sabrina Johannes: Yes, this race is one that's very nice, especially for me. I like not only that I've won it three times, but that it's a women's race and it's a women's race I've won three times. That's something that's really special for me. I like the fact that this would inspire other women to run, including some of those who may have been discouraged in their running. I think seeing me win again might help give them a morale boost and I love the idea that it's going to be inspiring young girls.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Senbere, what is your favorite thing to do here in New York when you are not running?

Sabrina Johannes: Apart from running, one of the things I really love here is the people. The people who have invited me, the organizers and the staff are always so nice. They greet me with a smile. When they see me, they're so welcoming. It really feels like family. So whenever I think of possibly not coming here, it actually makes me feel bad. I know I would miss that. I love that.

Rob Simmelkjaer: I hear that you like to do a little shopping in New York as well. Is this true? What stores are your favorite to shop in?

Sabrina Johannes: Well, it is true. As has been said, I do like shopping here. There are a lot of things, clothes and other things that I can get here that I can't get in Ethiopia, so I like buying those things and also some makeup and a few other things. So I do enjoy that.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, with your win today, you'll have a little extra spending money to go out and do some shopping around New York City, so hope you enjoy it. Maybe we'll see you back defending your mini-championship again in one year.

Sabrina Johannes: God willing, I will come. Thank you.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Thank you very much, Senbere Teferi. Congratulations on the threepeat at the MasterCard New York Mini 10K.

Sabrina Johannes: And I thank you too.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Hey runners, be sure to sign up for the Peloton app. You can actually try it 30 days for free. No equipment is needed and you can use the app to track all of your movement in one place from your outdoor running and walking to your strength training, even your meditation, and you can enhance your daily workout routine or training schedule with workouts that feel right for you. You can find the Peloton app in the Apple App store as well as the Google Play Store. New paid memberships only, terms apply. Peloton, the official digital fitness partner of New York Road Runners.

As I mentioned earlier, the top American finisher was Amanda Vestri. She is a native of Webster, New York. That's a town just north of Rochester, a graduate of Syracuse University where she just got out of school a year ago. And she was a first time All-American twice in the indoor 5,000 meters and outdoors at 10,000. So this is a distance she knows very well. She's also not a stranger to New York. She ran the Abbott Dash to the finish here in New York. That's the race that's the day before the New York City Marathon in 2023, finish seventh overall. But this was her debut in the Mini and quite a debut it was. Thrilled to be joined by Amanda Vestri, who finished an incredibly impressive fourth in her debut at the MasterCard New York Mini 10K. Congratulations.

Amanda Vestri: Thank you. I'm excited to be here.

Rob Simmelkjaer: So this is your first time running this event. You show up at the starting line against some of these legendary runners and you put on an incredible performance. Did you think you had a performance like this in you when you stepped to the starting line today?

Amanda Vestri: I'm not going to say no because I had just come off of a very fast 10K in London where I ran 31: 10, which is a pretty big PR for me. I didn't think I was going to run as well as I did today, but I certainly thought I could be contending for a top American finish and yeah, that's how it turned out today, so I was super happy about that.

Rob Simmelkjaer: A time of 31: 17, only eight seconds off the podium. Can you just walk through the race and how it played out? There was a breakaway of the top three, but what I thought was most impressive watching it is that you were right there. You were in the picture, you did not give anything to that lead path. What was the thinking as it all played out?

Amanda Vestri: Yeah, so we had a pretty good group going for the first couple of miles I remember. And there was a distinct moment in time in the race where I thought, "Okay, you need to go with these three women ahead of you who are pulling away or else you're going to stay in this pack right here. We're going to drop significantly farther off the leaders," the three top ladies. And I knew it would be a decision where if I didn't hang on, it was going to really hurt at the end and I might not be able to hold on for top American. But fortunately, I went with the top three and I maintained pretty good contact with them for a while, which kind of helped me to slowly ratchet down that pace at the end, I was able to come up with a three-second negative split in the last 5K. So I definitely was pulled along by those women. I have to give them a lot of credit for that performance. So yeah, it was great to be running with them.

Rob Simmelkjaer: It really was great to see that. And I can tell you at the finish line, as we all watched the stream, there was so much talk about, "Wow, look at Amanda. She's right there. You can see her." People were excited to see how well you were hanging with them, so amazing job. What was it like for you on this course? It's a special course, so you've got success as a cross country runner, success on the track as well, but how was it for you running down Central Park West into Central Park?

Amanda Vestri: It was pretty spectacular. Yeah, I have been here for the Abbott Dash 5K, and that was my first taste of what it's like to run through New York and I always really enjoy it. This course in particular, I wasn't super familiar with coming in. I knew there was a few standout hills that people were talking about, but I just took the hills as just a checking in with myself, like make sure the form's on point and just crest the hill and just keep going. Take 10 steps after the hill and maintain contact. And I find for myself anyways, I train a lot on hills and do a lot of strength-based workouts in Blowing Rock. So when I came to the hills, I just kind of... I don't know, I ran with them instead of fighting against them and it wasn't too bad, actually. The course itself was really fast and I really enjoyed it.

Rob Simmelkjaer: You mentioned Blowing Rock, that's North Carolina where you currently live and train, but you are actually a native New Yorker, an upstate New Yorker.

Amanda Vestri: Yes, sir.

Rob Simmelkjaer: So back in your home state running with us again, what's it mean for you to be back in New York? Do you feel sort of a comfort level, just seeing the New York stuff, hearing the New York accent, all of that? Do you feel at home when you're down here in the city?

Amanda Vestri: I actually really do. And people will tell you that I am truly a Northeastern girl because there's something to be said about a little bit of a Northeastern attitude, which I do have and I'm not shy about it. That's just how we are. I spent a couple of years in the Midwest and they did not appreciate that, but I feel at home here. I feel like we all have that same New York grit. So yeah, it's good to be back here.

Rob Simmelkjaer: We get each other. We totally get each other. And you stayed upstate, went to Syracuse University, so you clearly are an upstate person. Just graduated a year ago. What was the experience like running at Syracuse and how much do you miss college at this point?

Amanda Vestri: I don't miss college. I definitely miss some of the friendships I built there, but I stay in contact with a lot of people from there and especially my coaches, like Coach Bell and Coach Rainey and all those people. Honestly, it just gives me a lot of... It just fills my cup to be able to represent them in a certain way on this bigger stage. And Syracuse will always have my heart, the people there who just helped me become who I am today, yeah, love them. A lot of love for them and yeah, a lot of love for Syracuse.

Rob Simmelkjaer: You'll have a lot of fans here in New York City. There are so many Syracuse alums in the city. It is crazy. So now out of school, doing this full time, how has it been for you? What's the life of a professional runner compared to what you thought it would be?

Amanda Vestri: It's pretty similar. It's not super glamorous. Really, the day to day is quite simple, just a lot of training, a lot of mileage, a lot of lifting in the gym. And beyond that, just spending time with teammates and enjoying how beautiful it gets in Blowing Rock, which is one of the main reasons that I love it there so much. But yeah, we just have a really tight community there with the team and my coaches. And other than that, I think trips like these, the races really help inspire you in the middle of a big training block and keep that fire going.

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right, so coming up next for you, I know Eugene's in your sights, the Olympic trials, what are you thinking about there? Is the 10,000 where your focus is going to be? That's where you qualified, right?

Amanda Vestri: Yes. I technically think I got into both the five and the 10, but the 10 will be the only event I'm focused on.

Rob Simmelkjaer: And how much confidence does a day like today give you? I know it's a different race, road versus track, all that, but what do you think you can bring from today into those trials?

Amanda Vestri: Yeah, this race is a huge confidence booster. I don't know anything really about the conversions and things like that. I've been told by a few people that a race like this converts to a pretty fast track 10K. And honestly, I'm not even thinking about the time going into the race. I'm just going to go there and compete, and obviously I want to make the team. And I've trained hard for it, but it's going to have to be... I'm going to have to give it exactly the effort I gave it today. So if the day is my day, then it will be a dream come true. So yeah, I'm just taking it day by day right now.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Okay. Other than the race, what's your favorite part about the weekend here in New York around the mini 10K?

Amanda Vestri: If I'm being 100% honest, just seeing all my friends who are also my competitors. So I actually went to Iowa State for a couple of years before transferring to Syracuse. So Annie Frisbee, who's here, we actually lived together in my second year there. So just seeing her and seeing Dakota and Emma Grace Hurley, just all these girls who I race against, but who are also... We're really friendly with each other. I would say a lot of us are friends. It's just exciting to see what's happening in their lives. Some of them are getting engaged, some of them are... They just have big milestones that they're hitting and it's fun to catch up with everyone and see all my favorite people.

Rob Simmelkjaer: And what's it like to have 9,000 women lined up behind you? That just must be incredible. It's not something that happens very often in this sport.

Amanda Vestri: Yeah. Honestly, I think my favorite part of the race was just not only the women running behind us, but also all the women on the course and the men too. But yeah, a lot of, "You go, girl," all these signs out there supporting us as female athletes was just really special to witness. And I think I started grimacing a little bit towards the end and I was like, "Oof, I'm hurting." And yeah, there are so many supportive people out there just saying, "You got it. You're almost done." It hypes you up and yeah, it was really special today.

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, you had it all the way. Amazing performance. Congratulations.

Amanda Vestri: Thank you.

Rob Simmelkjaer,: We're thrilled to have you. Hope to see you back in New York again soon.

Amanda Vestri: Absolutely.

Rob Simmelkjaer,: Maybe another Dash in your future, who know? Maybe more.

Amanda Vestri: Oh yeah, maybe.

Rob Simmelkjaer,: I know there are pro teams looking at you after this finish. So they'll be calling, I think it's safe to say.

Amanda Vestri: Yes, you can call me, Sam.

Rob Simmelkjaer,: Awesome. Amanda Vestri, great to have you.

Amanda Vestri: Thank you.

Rob Simmelkjaer,: That does it for this special MasterCard Mini 10K Champions episode of Set the Pace. Thanks again to today's three-peat champions, Senbere Teferi, and to our top American Amanda Vestri for joining us here on the show. If you like this episode, please make sure to subscribe, rate it, leave a comment on whatever platform you're listening on. This not only helps us, but helps others find the show as well. We'll see you all with a regular episode coming up on Thursday. Until then, enjoy the miles.