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Rob Simmelkjaer: New York Road Runners is a non-profit organization with a vision to build healthier lives and stronger communities through the transformative power of running. The support of members and donors like you, helps us achieve our mission to transform the health and well-being of our communities through inclusive and accessible running experiences, empowering all to achieve their potential. Learn more and contribute at nyrr.org/donate.

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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 Grete Waitz.

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.

00:01:10

Rob Simmelkjaer: Hey everybody, and welcome to Set the Pace, the official podcast of New York Road Runners, presented by Peloton. I'm your host, Rob Simmelkjaer, the CEO of New York Road Runners. And with me, as she is every week, Peloton instructor extraordinaire, Becs Gentry. Hello, Becs, how are you today?

00:01:27

Becs Gentry: Good, thank you, just surviving this cold weather here in New York City. But weirdly, people keep telling me to start running. I am really enjoying running outside in this cold. Now, I know what you're all thinking, "Just because you went to Antarctica, shut up. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." It's misleading because you think, "Oh, I'm just going to get out there and have a little bit of vitamin D on my face." And then you realize your face is totally covered. So I'm actually forcing myself to run inside a little bit more because I know me, I'll end up getting sick. And I don't need to be running outside, I'm not in a training block. So I'm teaching myself that the gym is the better place for me right now.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: You know it's funny with running in the cold, and I experienced all of this on Saturday at the Joe Kleinerman 10K that we had in Central Park, you have this

mental barrier to the run, at least I do. Because you look out there and you're like, "This is not a day I'm supposed to be going outside." I woke up before dawn on Saturday morning, snow was falling and it just was like, "I'm going to run a race right now?" And I drove down that morning actually from Connecticut and get to the park, the sun starts to come up and all the runners are there.

By the way, we had a great turnout on Saturday, just about 5, 000 runners came. And I stood at the starting line and I spoke to the crowd and I said, "You know what? It is an absolutely beautiful day to run." Because the snow had stopped and, Beccs, the park looked like a postcard on Saturday morning.

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Beccs Gentry: I'm sure, yeah.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: It was so beautiful. The snow kind of arranged itself perfectly for us. It was on the grass and on the trees, but the road was totally fine. So people had great footing to run on and it was a gorgeous day to run. And it took me a while to get my head around running, but as you say, once I got going, it just felt amazing. And I ended up running the 10K and then a lot, lot more that day because I am, and we'll talk about this in a later episode, maybe training for something right now.

But it went great. I felt amazing. And sometimes when it's cold like that, you just feel like you could run forever and maybe that's what it was like for you in Antarctica. I don't know. I certainly felt that way on Saturday. I felt great after a long, long run.

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Beccs Gentry: Yeah, it's true, you just settle in. You settle in and you get it done, as long as you don't get too hot. I mean, I imagine to some of the incredible athletes who raced the 10K on Saturday, we're going to go through the winners very shortly, but then your body's gotten to a heat level and a sweat level that isn't necessarily conducive to continuing a steady-state run in that weather. But yeah, if you keep it chill, excuse the pun, you'll be good.

00:04:23

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, it's all about those layering decisions and you want to be comfortable enough at the start that you're not just getting frostbite. But as your body heats up, to have the ability to take a bit off here, take a bit off there, lower a zipper, open a vent, and give yourself what you need to get through that run. And I was,

I was discarding things as I passed the finish line because I kept running after the race and I handed off a jacket and a hat and some gloves and felt great as I kept going.

So it was awesome and it was a great day. Thanks to everybody who came out for the Joe K 10K celebrating Joe Kleinerman, a legend at New York Road Runners, a man who volunteered 45 years of his life to this organization and making running a better sport.

00:05:09

Becs Gentry: A legend.

00:05:09

Rob Simmelkjaer: An incredible individual and that we're thrilled to honor every year. And the winners on Saturday, it was Brooke Starn of Central Park Track Club Tracksmith with a winning time of 35:56 in the brisk conditions. The non-binary winner was Elijah Taylor, 35:32. And for the men it was Jaouad El Jazouli with a time of 30:25 from the Garden State Track Club. That is a blistering 10K.

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Becs Gentry: He was running for his hot chocolate.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: That's right, everybody was. We had bagels, we had all the things you wanted at the end. So it was a great, great day. Congratulations to everybody who came out on a really, really beautiful morning on Saturday. And Becs, by the way, we've got some exciting new stuff coming out on Peloton right now with New York Road Runners.

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Becs Gentry: We do.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Talk about that. I'll let you give that news-

00:06:01

Becs Gentry: We do.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: ... because it's really cool-looking stuff.

00:06:04

Becs Gentry: Oh, it really is. So basically for all of our Peloton Tread and Tread+ users looking to stay inside or just wanting to check them out, we have released two new classes this week that we filmed at last year's New Balance 5th Avenue Mile. Okay? So you've got to head to the scenic

library and you can run the iconic race alongside myself and some other very awesome New York Road Runners' Set the Pace guests that we've had the pleasure of talking to, and my fellow instructors, Mariana, Alex K, and Matt Wilpers. I can't tell you the fun we had filming that day.

Did we all run the ... I definitely ran the Mile. I think Matt Wilpers also did run the Mile. So we actually ran it ourselves and then we waited for everybody else to finish, all the various waves because as you know, the New York Road Runners New Balance 5th Avenue Mile has a lot of different waves and then the kids do their waves. And then we went to the course and we ran it bit by bit together. And I'm not going to give it all away, but go check it out. And then also, I believe there was a Mariana special as well on there. So I'm really excited. Let us know what you think of the classes and if it inspires you to sign up for any races perhaps.

00:07:34

Rob Simmelkjaer: Absolutely. The 5th Avenue Mile is such an iconic stretch of road. It's such an amazing experience to run down 5th Avenue and it's just an amazing vibe. So I think that's a really cool thing to have on the treadmill for those who want to go experience that run fast on that treadmill and tear down 5th Avenue. I love that. So I'm looking forward to checking that out and giving people a chance to experience that wherever they are with all of these amazing Peloton instructors.

00:08:03

Becs Gentry: Ready to level up your running? With the Peloton Tread and Tread+, you can challenge yourself anytime, anywhere. Whether you're building strength or working on speed, Peloton has a class for every goal from 5 to 120-minute workouts. With muscle building classes and flexible training options, you'll have everything you need to crush your next race and then recover from it. All-Access Membership separate. Find your push, find your power at onepeloton.com/race-training. Peloton, the official digital fitness partner for New York Road Runners.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Becs, we are going to your side of the pond today for our special guest, a fellow member of yours of Team GB joining us, Calli Hauger- Thackery. I'm sure this is someone you know, Becs, from that British running community. Excited to talk to her?

00:08:58

Becs Gentry: So excited to talk to Calli. She is such a

beautiful light in the women's running community. Calli has recently absolutely crushed the 2024 California International Marathon record. She ran a 2:24. The previous was a 2:26 and some change. So unreal, but I think what's super special is the day that her and her husband had an ... You got to listen to find out a little bit more about that. She's setting her sights on 2025 Boston Marathon. And I think, Rob, I don't know about you, but the lineup for the women's elite field at Boston, day by day is becoming so very riveting.

00:09:43

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, it's going to be an amazing day in Boston. It's also going to be an amazing day in New York in March. And so when Calli joins us, we'll have a little something to say about the United Airlines NYC Half field as well. So teasing that in just a moment.

And speaking of moment, the Member Moment today, of course, Meb Keflezighi will join us. And he's going to catch up with New York Road Runners' member, Danielle Grimley, a first-time marathoner who started the 24 TCS New York City Marathon out in Staten Island on foot, as most runners did, but finished the race in Central Park on crutches. But she did finish.

00:10:20

Becs Gentry: She did.

00:10:20

Rob Simmelkjaer: And she did an amazing job and has an amazing story to tell about getting there and ending up being a part of that incredible final finisher celebration we have after dark in Central Park. So Danielle is here to tell us that story and how that moment changed her forever. So I can't wait to hear Meb's conversation with Danielle Grimley and her experience with the final finisher.

And then Meb will be back with some words of advice for all you runners out there who are training for a spring marathon during these cold, dark winter months. I'm going to be tuning in to listen to that one myself. I want to hear what Meb has to say because, let's just say, I have never trained for a spring marathon and I just want to hear what Meb has to say about that. So we'll talk more about that later.

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Becs Gentry: I want to hear what Rob's going to say about that too.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Oh, the winter months. All I can say is make

friends with a treadmill, whether it's a Peloton Tread or whatever you can get your hands on because the daylight hours are just limited.

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Becs Gentry: Oh, gosh.

00:11:25

Rob Simmelkjaer: And you got to do what you got to do.

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Becs Gentry: You do.

00:11:28

Rob Simmelkjaer: It is what it is. Can't wait to hear what Meb has to say about that.

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Becs Gentry: Growing a business means a lot of audience attracting, a lot of lead scoring, and a lot of long days. But with HubSpot, it's easier than ever for marketers to boost leads and score customers fast, which means pretty soon, your company will have a lot to celebrate. Visit hubspot.com/marketers to learn more.

00:11:52

Rob Simmelkjaer: Our guest today is an incredibly talented British runner who is on the rise in the world of professional distance running. Calli Hauger-Thackery is a Yorkshire, England native turned international marathon star. She's been steadily making her mark on the global running scene this past summer as a member of Team GB at the Paris Olympics, and most recently, a thrilling win at the California International Marathon. Calli's now preparing to tackle one of the world's most prestigious races, the 2025 Boston Marathon. And as part of her training, she's going to be joining us in New York, we're happy to announce, for the 2025 United Airlines NYC Half. Calli, it is great to have you here on Set the Pace. Welcome, and we're so thrilled to welcome you to New York.

00:12:41

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Thank you so much. New York, I love it. I'm excited to be here, guys. It's just a great race. I'm lucky I've done it before so I kind of know what I'm getting myself in for this time.

00:12:54

Becs Gentry: Love it. Oh my gosh, Calli. Well, it's an honor to meet you from the GB side of things. It's been

incredible to watch you flourish in your career because you have really come into it with such a great attitude, a really lovely personality. You're so friendly and bubbly. And I think it's a change within the world of women's sports to have that camaraderie and friendship amongst the females on the start line. So thank you for doing that for our sport. And massive congratulations on CIM. Wow.

00:13:32

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Well, thank you for the compliment, first. That's a big compliment. Thank you. And secondly, CIM, super happy with it considering the training beforehand wasn't the best prep. I'm going through some sleep apnea things. As an athlete, that was pretty daunting, so just getting on top of that now. So yeah, several days before, I had no sleep trying to figure this stuff out. So to pull off a win, I was very thrilled with in the end.

I mean, Jackie made it very hard for me. I remember looking back at one point being like, "Wow, I've got a race on my hands today." But it makes it fun and that's why I love racing. It's, you never know. I mean, she smashed it. She got a 3- minute PB, so she nearly got me at the final stages. And I just remember thinking, "I've got to turn the wheels now or else I'm not winning this race."

00:14:22

Becs Gentry: Absolutely.

00:14:22

Calli Hauger-Thackery: So no, it was a really cool, fun experience.

00:14:26

Becs Gentry: Yeah, and I mean, you didn't just win it. You're being very humble here. You won it with a 2: 24 and you broke the previous course record by 90 seconds or so, right? You are now the CIM record holder. It's just so cool.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Thank you so much. It was my partner, Nick. He loves it. It's a big race for him and he was like, "Well, you can either watch me or you can race." And I was like, "Well, you know what? I might as well get involved myself." It was a really fun event.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Calli, I want to take you back to Paris where Becs and I both were doing different things and I know you were there representing Team GB in the marathon, obviously a really difficult course. It was a challenging day

for you. You ended up not finishing the race. But what did you take away from that experience that allowed you such a short time later to have this record-breaking performance in California?

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, that's the thing. It's obviously heartbreaking having to pull out of that race. The training honestly couldn't have been better leading up to it. So it was definitely one of the hardest decisions I had to make to pull out of that race. But ultimately I know it was the right decision because if I'd have gone a step further, I just know I wouldn't have had a season. I was not in a good way.

And that's the thing with running and what we do, especially the marathon, you need to get everything right. So the sleep, the eating, nutrition, everything. And unfortunately, I found out some sad news with my mum with her cancer diagnosis just a few weeks before and it hit me harder than I thought it would. I was working with my team to try and get my head right, but with that, I did lose sleep, I lost my appetite, and unfortunately, I wasn't a hundred percent on race day and my body was fighting.

So yeah, it was really tough, but ultimately when I dropped out, I was like, "Okay." It was the worst moment of my life, but at the same time, what an experience to actually be there and do the Olympics. And you know what? It made me so hungry now for future races and for the next four years, for LA. So I've learned a lot. Even though it was a really hard time, I've learned so much from that experience and I will take it with me and let it make me hungry for the next few years, for sure.

00:17:06

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, and you already have. I know your mum obviously had that cancer diagnosis right before Paris. How is she doing, Calli? What was it like for you? I can only imagine how challenging it must've been to try to compete after getting news like that, but would love to know how she's doing and how the family's doing.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, thank you so much for asking. She's doing really good. I think chemo has come a long way. Her treatment has been a lot better. She had cancer seven years ago and this time has been a lot more positive. The treatment plan just makes more sense. And it's not easy, chemo knocks you down hard, but she's fighting. She's a fighter, so she'll get through it. And we can't wait to see that all-clear hopefully in the next few months and then we go

from there. But no, she's doing great. She's really positive at the minute, so it's good to see.

00:18:01

Becs Gentry: Fantastic. Such a testament to our bodies, how when we go through these massive training blocks and then it's our body and our mind coming together telling us what's really the most important. And I think that was probably your body's way of saying, "Hey, you know what? It's okay to not push through this and to keep that mental strength there for your family." Because it's probably what you all needed, was just to come together and for you to not be exhausted for it. But having said that, I mean just seven weeks later, there you were in Berlin and absolutely tearing up that course.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Thank you.

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Becs Gentry: I mean, well, your time there was a 2:21: 24. So what did you do after, body- wise? I don't want to dwell on your mom's diagnosis, but body- wise, share with our listeners how you recovered from Paris in just seven weeks to get that incredible time in Berlin.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: I think with me, that's how I deal with things. If I have a bad situation happen, the only way I know how to deal with it is just get back up and just keep trying and I just try to put everything behind me. We went back to the UK for a little bit and I just put my head down and, well, obviously took some time with family and things. And then I just really reset with family and honestly just did enough to tick over enough to get me through a good race because I knew I wanted to do one soon.

The thing was I could have done Valencia and waited until December, but I was like, "Can I get through another training block this big?" Honestly, what I put in for Paris, the training I put in for that, I was like, "Do you know what? That's not going to go anywhere." It's like, "I don't want to waste that. I want to take advantage of the training I've done, I've put in, and just maintain this fitness somehow and just rip the band- aid off." And Berlin just seemed like the perfect race for that.

I think a lot of people thought I was crazy for going in so soon, but for me, it was just like, I just wanted to somehow soften the blow from what happened in Paris. And I knew how fit I was, that was a thing, so that wasn't a

question. It was more just I knew it was a mental thing and I just had to overcome that. So I did a lot of work with close ones, getting myself in a good spot, and before you know it, I was ready. I felt like I was ready enough to line up and still do have a good day.

So yeah, it excites me because I know there's a lot more to come with things going on my side. It was still a very, very chaotic few weeks and definitely not good preparation either, but I'm just glad I was able to do myself proud, at least. I genuinely at the finish, I was like, "Do you know what? I'm proud of that performance today and it's not been easy." It was courageous getting on that line, but I did it. I PB'd and that's all I could ask for right now in that moment.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: So Calli, we were chatting before the show. You and I actually met briefly on the pro athletes bus on the way to the starting line in Berlin. You were there because you're a pro athlete. I was there because I was a stowaway on the bus, had been let on by some people who somehow seemed to think I should take that bus to the start. And I set a PB too. So I guess it rubbed off on me, all the positive energy you guys had getting to that starting line. But it was a great day in Berlin.

And what you say is interesting about just needing to get right back to running. It makes a lot of sense to me. From other sports, if you're a baseball player or a tennis player and you have a bad match, you want to play again the next day. You want to get right back out there and just absolutely turn the page. And that can be really hard to do, obviously, when you run marathons for a living. You can't play the very next day as you can in a lot of sports. And so I can see the mentality would make you want to get back out there quickly.

And a lot of amateur athletes, Calli, can also relate to the fitness that you had from a previous race and not having to let it all go and then start a whole new training block, but being able to feed off of a fitness that you developed from a previous race.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Exactly. Yeah, I know. It was one of those, it was like, "Do I wait or do I just do it now?" But I think the more I waited, the worse it was going to get mentally. So for me, I just had to do it. I know people deal with things differently, but that's just how I had to deal with it at the time. And yeah, I'm glad I did and I can move forward now.

I hate that the Olympics, they put such a big thing on

the Olympics and it's so much pressure. I've never felt pressure like it. But at least I've done that now and I can take that and be like, "I can be ready and deal with it in a way that's going to help me achieve on the day." And yeah, I don't know, it's tough. I know it's all pressurized, all of the world championships, all these world majors and stuff, but I think that was just a different kind of thing on the Olympics. They just put so much on that event. But like I said, I can definitely take learnings from this.

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Becs Gentry: Great. Well, that's what we want to hear because your lineup for 2025 is pretty spectacular already. So it's been announced that you are toeing the line for Boston this year, 2025, Boston, April coming up. You also announced that you will be joining us in New York for a very special race to us at New York Road Runners, the United Airlines NYC Half. So what's going through your head for those two races?

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Those ones, I'm really excited about them right now. It's definitely motivating me in the cold and the snow and all of this. Actually, no snow right now. It looks like it's about to snow, but it's really cold here. But no, I'm really excited about both New York half and Boston full. I think they'll prepare me well. New York's going to prepare me greatly for the Boston Marathon, I believe. I just think, yeah, both of them just excite me because it's a race for me. I love a race in terms of it's not super- fast, where you're just going all out to get this crazy, fast time. It's tactics and there's so much to it. And that's what I really love about New York and I think the same will go for Boston as well.

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Becs Gentry: Absolutely. So the field for Boston, let's say, the field is slowly coming through to the public here. And I mean, day by day on Instagram, I've been glued to it, seeing all of the names of the elite field, all of the women you're going to be running alongside. I want to know because I know what I'm like when I toe the line with my inspirations, is there anyone who you're really excited to be running with? I mean in a competitive way or non- competitive way, is there anyone who you're like, "Yay"?

00:25:45

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Oh, definitely. So for Boston, Hellen's doing it, right?

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Becs Gentry: Yeah.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Is Hellen? Yeah, Hellen Obiri. I think if I'm near her, I'm doing okay. And Emma Bates, obviously on the American side, she is just so tough. I just think if I'm next to her, I'm doing fine, and then Sharon as well. I just think, wow, they are just incredible athletes and honestly if I can run alongside them for a long time, then I'm going to have a good day. So yeah, definitely. But honestly, so many girls on that start line, I'm like, "Wow, okay. I'm in some good company."

00:26:25

Becs Gentry: Yes, absolutely. I'm really excited to see that whole race take its place. So what's your training schedule looking like with a half and a full so close together?

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, funny enough, I do a lot of high intensity stuff, so I don't do loads. I don't do high mileage per se. I think compared to a lot of marathon runners, I don't. I do more, honestly a lot of 10K, slash, half-marathon zone in my training. So when I do come to do the marathon, it feels really easy for a long time because I actually do way more half-marathon zone work and 10K zone work than I would marathon pace. I don't know how to run marathon pace in training. I just like the high intense stuff.

And I like track running as well, so I'm actually going to dabble in some track stuff over the summer and things like that. I think it's all important, especially for me and the athlete I am. On my VO2 max and stuff, I do really well at even the 5K and the 10K. So I think the half-marathon will definitely get that fast twitch going a little bit more and then I'll be ready to, okay, come marathon date, I hope, for a long time that pace will feel really nice.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: That makes sense. I know it is nice when you feel like your marathon pace is very comfortable. And I guess the question is, how long can you keep it up, right? You're comfortable for a while and then of course the race does start in the 20-something mile range. So what's there? What's left to pick it up, I guess, is always the question, Calli? You come from an athletic background. Both your parents, athletes. Your father, Carl, professional long distance runner. Your mom was a sprinter, so I guess that's where some of that fast twitch comes from.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, I know. I'm very lucky with my genes, I won't lie. My mom was a sprinter and then my dad was more marathon focused and I'm in the middle. So when I know my dad was doing his best in the '90s, in 1993 when I was born, and there were people coming in wanting to interview him and there was this newspaper article and just read, "Baby, you were born to run," because of my genes.

And it's ironic that I do run still, I might not have. I might not have chosen that route, but yeah, no, it's working out so far. I definitely think I'm more on my dad's side. I try and fake the fast twitch stuff. I try my best to keep that going and keep that alive, but I think the marathon was always going to be the one what chose me, I guess. I always say that I think the marathon definitely chose me, for sure.

00:29:04

Rob Simmelkjaer: I was going to ask you about that. When did you know, Calli? When did you know marathon was your thing?

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: On my debut. My debut, I did not know I was going to run 2: 22, I won't lie. I was thinking, on a good day, I probably will run 2: 24, 2:25. So when I saw 2: 22, I was like, "Oh, (beep), okay, I'm now a marathon runner and this is going to be my event moving forward. So goodbye to the 5K and we're going to go all in on the marathon." So yeah, no, it was funny. It's bittersweet because I do love the track stuff, but everyone around me has been like, "You're a marathon runner. Your biomechanics, your family history, everything points to the marathon." And I just think I tried to not listen to it. I knew I always was going to do one, I knew it, I just didn't know it was going to be now.

And funny enough, I really do enjoy it. I'm talking about it in a negative way, but I do. I can't believe how much I enjoy the distance. It's just so different from the track. But like we were talking about earlier, the only thing what I don't love about the marathon is the fact that if one goes bad, you can't just go and do one like two weeks after. Whereas the 5K, if I had a bad race, it's like, "Oh, it's not the end of the world. I can go and jump in one next week or the week after and I still could actually turn it around." So it's just different.

00:30:29

Becs Gentry: Yeah, it really is. It really is so, so different, but I love the excitement that you have for it and the passion. And I think it's really inspiring to our younger

athletes out there to hear you say that you're not a big fan of the high mileage. Because, I mean, Rob and I speak to so many different athletes over different distances, not just marathon runners of course, and we have a lot of different opinions on here. And it's really, really awesome to hear somebody with such incredible times say that you don't bust your gut on running 100, 150 miles per week to get those times. You really are focusing on those fast twitch fibers, those short, sharp speed workouts and enjoying it, like dabbling in the track workouts like you said.

And I think what we see are these communities coming together, but they're still quite different when you think about, let's say, let's call it New York, the Armory, the indoor workout, the track workouts versus our outdoor. So I love the way that you're combining it together and you are proving that those 10K, half-marathon, those tempo workouts are useful for both. And I think for, again, the younger athletes and the older athletes to see, "Okay, she can go and do these," like, "Hey, Rob, shush," which you could do it-

00:31:54

Rob Simmelkjaer: No, I'm excited too, Becs, because I feel like Calli's giving me a justification to not run 75, 100 miles in a week. I don't want to do that and I still want to be able to go run a marathon from time to time. And so I think it's a great approach if you can do it. I also feel like for me, Calli, I don't know about you, me as an amateur athlete, much, much older than you, it just also I think keeps me more injury-free, less likely to get hurt as I'm trying to get ready for a race. Is that part of your logic as well?

00:32:28

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Definitely, yeah. It's funny because if you looked at my marathon training before my debut, on paper, you will not say it's marathon training. It was very much like I say, I was doing more 5Ks, half-marathon. I did a few half-marathons within that, but it was very much a lot of fast twitch, high intensity stuff. And we were like, "Oh wow, your ceiling is very high." Everyone around me was like, "Yeah, your ceiling is very high because we've not even touched on marathon work yet." So obviously then afterwards, I did start doing more marathon-based sessions and tried to up my mileage a little bit, obviously within reason.

But it's funny, because I still find that before my debut that just works for me, I just realize more and more. I try not to get caught up on mileage at all. And I love the versatility of all the events. I think it really does complement the 5K, the 10K. And funny enough, people ask me,

" Oh, how different is the training?" And I'm like, " It's really not a whole lot different, marathon training versus 5K training to me." Because like I say, I just didn't do this massive jump where, okay, I've gone from 70, 80 miles to then 120, because that wasn't the case. I just think because I got my VO2 max up really high from the work I did, like the 5K work, that translated into a really good, strong marathon for me.

00:33:55

Becs Gentry: Do you think that you maintain some of that speed work with the memory of the 5K in order for you to keep that door open to return to competing in the 5K?

00:34:14

Calli Hauger-Thackery: I think a little bit, yeah. I think I'll always have a soft spot for the track until I can't do it anymore. I just think there's still a lot of untapped, unfinished business I still have to do. And it's more for me, honestly. I know what I can do in the 5K still. I think a lot of people, my sponsor probably, it's definitely me based on the marathon. But do you know what? They're great and Nike have even said, " Yeah." And so I still have bonuses within the 5K and the 10K. I'm like, " Well, okay."

So I think this is the year. It's not an Olympic year. I think I'm going to go all in. After the Boston Marathon, I can then be like, " Okay, I've done my marathon for the year and then summertime I can do some track races and see where it takes me." I don't find any pressure with it all. I just find it fun. I just think, like I say, it just mixes it up a bit. Because if I just fully go on the marathon all year, if I'm just fully thinking about marathons, it just kind of takes the fun away personally for me. I just like to mix it up.

And then maybe I finish with a marathon in December, who knows, all being well, if my body allows me to do that. But yeah, why not mix it up a little bit and try and be competitive still on the track if I'm still able to? I've still never done a 10, 000- meter race. I've only done 10K on the road. I've never done a track 10,000 meters before, so I really want to do my debut this year.

00:35:39

Becs Gentry: Ooh, heard it here first, everyone.

00:35:39

Rob Simmelkjaer: I like it. Very cool. Calli, you're coached by your partner, your husband, Nick. I'm always wondering how those relationships go.

00:35:52

Becs Gentry: Oh my gosh, we do.

00:35:52

Rob Simmelkjaer: It always amazes me when people are able to do that.

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Becs Gentry: It would not work in my house.

00:36:00

Rob Simmelkjaer: I just want to know, how's that going because it seems like it's going pretty well? So you're going to stick with that arrangement for a while?

00:36:08

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, I can't imagine being coached by anyone else now. No, he's amazing. He's just got such a coach mind and we work collaboratively. He understands my needs and vice versa. He just sees me day in, day out, so he knows my energy. He can just look at me and know when I'm going to have a good day or a bad day just for my biomechanics each day and stuff. So he's very good at reading me and knowing when to pull me back and when to push me. Obviously I always want to push, push, push, but he's like, "There's a right time for that."

And most of the time, he will allow me to push a bit, but sometimes it's like, "Okay, this workout isn't about that. We need to hit these times." No, he's brilliant. He really has got such a good coach head on him. And he also coaches many different athletes. I just trust him wholeheartedly. And I think if you have that trust in a coaching relationship, you're going to fly. And it makes it fun and it makes it exciting and yeah, we really work well together.

00:37:11

Becs Gentry: I love that. You and Nick, what do you guys do, like what is a typical weekend in your house, let's say, leading up to CIM because you were both training for it? What does that look like for a couple who are smashing these times?

00:37:33

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, it's funny because obviously he responds better off ... I just try and roll with him as much as I can. Obviously I cut my workout shorter. So I don't know. I feel like if I'm anywhere near him in training, then I'm doing okay. And I mean, look at the world record now.

00:37:52

Becs Gentry: Unreal.

00:37:52

Calli Hauger-Thackery: If I want to be running a world record one day or anywhere close, I need to be running what Nick's basically got to run himself, bless him. So yeah, no, we work really well together actually in our workouts. Obviously I will just do a little bit less than him in each rep. So we team up well together there.

And then for CIM, it was just a crazy week. Honestly, it's gone over my head because I can't even tell you how crazy it was with the sleep apnea stuff going on. I just remember saying to Nick, I'm like, "I just need to get a full night's sleep. And if I can get a full night's sleep, then I can definitely win this race. But if not, it's going to be like Paris all over again. So I just need to."

And luckily, leading up to CIM, when we got there at sea level, I was like, "Okay, I can do this. I finally got some good night's sleep." We were just training together each day and tapering together, which is really fun. And just being on the start line with him, it's such a unique experience. It's just amazing being able to line up with my coach-husband knowing that it was his main race for the year as well. It was just exciting.

00:39:04

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right, Calli, so looking ahead to your trip to New York to join us here for the United Airlines NYC Half, have you spent much time here in New York? What are you most looking forward to doing here?

00:39:18

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, I've been a few times in New York. I do love it there. It's just such a cool place to be. And oh my gosh, what's not to love about Central Park and just that area in general? It's just so cool. Yeah, I don't know.

00:39:36

Rob Simmelkjaer: Is there a museum or a restaurant or maybe a show you want to check out?

00:39:42

Calli Hauger-Thackery: I need to do all that. I need to do it. I feel like I go and see all the big city stuff and then I never actually take myself to a museum. I mean Sam looks after us very well, obviously. Last year, what did we do? We kind of laid low, didn't we, I feel like, but then I ended

up getting really sick. It was one race. I've never had it before, but I got really, really sick to the point where I was blowing my nose honestly every minute the day before. So I'm like, "I just need to kick it." So I did all of the things you can think of like ginger shots, chicken noodle soup. I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to kick it, I'm going to kick it."

And then actually, miraculously, I woke up the morning of the race and I felt great. I could breathe again. I'm like, "Okay, I've got away with this. Wow." So then I'm warming up. I'm thinking, "Okay, I think I can do this." But do you know what I did not think about was how the ginger shots and the chicken noodle soup would affect my stomach.

00:40:41

Becs Gentry: Oh, no. Oh, no.

00:40:44

Calli Hauger-Thackery: So during the race, honestly, all I was thinking about was like, "Just don't vomit, don't vomit." There's a helicopter above me, there's people, the cameras were everywhere. And I'm thinking, "Oh no, this is going to be where I lose all dignity. I'm just going to end up vomiting on camera." So as long as I don't have that experience again.

00:41:03

Becs Gentry: Oh, no.

00:41:04

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Luckily I didn't vomit, but my stomach was not in a good way. I somehow got to the finish line and a semi-okay performance, but I just can't wait to get redemption from that and just hopefully not get sick-

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Becs Gentry: I can absolutely imagine.

00:41:18

Calli Hauger-Thackery: ... and go and have a good experience and get some redemption in New York, for sure.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Sometimes winning is winning. Sometimes winning is finishing without vomiting, right? So there you go.

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Becs Gentry: Oh my gosh. So regardless, this year's going to be probably a little more fun. We'll have to talk to Sam and see what's on to get you guys a true New York fun

experience as well.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, definitely.

00:41:50

Rob Simmelkjaer: I love it. Well, it's great having you on the show. One thing I want to know, what's something about you apart from running that when people come to watch you in New York, you think they should know about you as a person? Nothing about running, about Calli.

00:42:05

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Oh, I'm going to ask Nick. I'm looking at Nick. I don't know. I don't know. I'm just a dork. I don't know, I'm happy-go-lucky, very. People know me as the happy-go-lucky one. I very much just love what I do genuinely and I hope people can see that authentically. I do absolutely love what I do. I feel very lucky and I always get on the start line and I just think, "I get to do this." I'm just grateful to be doing what I do. And I love it when people come up to me and say hello and things like that. I just love the running community. I think it's the best thing ever. I don't know. Funnily enough, I don't know about any random facts other than running, sorry.

00:42:54

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, it is what you do. It is what you do. You spend a lot of time doing it. But hey, a takeaway for listeners, if you see Calli Hauger-Thackery out there in New York, she wants you to come say hello. So say hello. She loves the fans and loves to interact with people. So that's a beautiful thing right there because I tell you, our members, our fans, our running community in New York, they get so excited-

00:43:17

Becs Gentry: They do.

00:43:17

Rob Simmelkjaer: ... when they're able to meet someone who is your caliber of runner and actually have that person be excited to meet them. So I think that's a takeaway for everybody listening who's going to be in New York in March.

00:43:30

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Nick's just whispered something as well. He said, "Say about Australia." So I haven't had the typical route. I lived in Australia for quite a few years and I was stuck there during COVID in the end. So I literally

couldn't get away and I was doing farm work just to keep my visa and things like that. So I've been like a lumberjack in the open forest in Australia just to keep my visa and haven't had the normal trajectory a lot of professional athletes have had. I like to travel a lot and that gets me into situations sometimes, but it's fun and it makes life interesting. And I've seen a lot of the world, so I'm very lucky.

00:44:06

Rob Simmelkjaer: Okay, I like that. So you were actually a lumberjack, you were cutting stuff down?

00:44:09

Calli Hauger-Thackery: I was literally chopping down trees to keep my visa in Australia, yeah, because you have to do three months of farm work to stay there. So I was like, "Wow, I've got to somehow get a farm work job." Me and my friend out there was like, "We need to cut down trees." And we were getting paid by the hectare. So I was chopping down trees, I'm like, "Come on, we've got this." Oh my God.

00:44:37

Rob Simmelkjaer: Did you get to know how to use a chainsaw, Calli, as part of that or were you just using a plain old ax?

00:44:44

Calli Hauger-Thackery: I watched people, but no, I didn't ever use the chainsaw. It was just like the scissors, the big scissors.

00:44:51

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, wow.

00:44:51

Becs Gentry: Wow.

00:44:51

Rob Simmelkjaer: Shears.

00:44:58

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, there you go.

00:44:58

Becs Gentry: That's amazing. There we go, that's endurance for you as well.

00:45:01

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Right.

00:45:02

Becs Gentry: And that's definitely something I think that us Brits, we really get. Rob, I don't know whether it's the same in the US but for Brits, we get a three-month working visa in Australia. So a lot of people of Calli and I's, probably, age have done that. I definitely. Calli, it was also a long time ago. I was 18 when I did that, but I was string bean picking, really wasn't cool. So I feel you.

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Calli Hauger-Thackery: Yeah, no. It's so worth it though to live in Australia for a little bit. It's such a different lifestyle over there, isn't it?

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Becs Gentry: Exactly.

00:45:36

Calli Hauger-Thackery: You definitely feel like down under.

00:45:40

Becs Gentry: Yeah, upside down.

00:45:44

Rob Simmelkjaer: The benefits of being a member of the Commonwealth all sounds lovely. You get to string bean pick or cut down trees in Australia. We just have to go be tourists there for Americans, but I love it. Calli, great, that's a fun fact, very funny stuff. And best of luck to you on the training, getting ready for New York and then obviously for Boston. But we can't wait to see you here at the starting line in Brooklyn in March.

00:46:10

Calli Hauger-Thackery: Thank you so much guys. I can't wait to be there.

00:46:26

Rob Simmelkjaer: Danielle Grimley, a 41-year-old from Colorado, redefined determination at the 2024 TCS New York City Marathon. Diagnosed with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, which affects connective tissues around joints, Danielle faced an unexpected injury mid-race that left her completing the final nine miles on crutches. But thanks to her months of training, her willpower, and the help of two New York Road Runners volunteers, she crossed the finish line after more than 10 hours on the course. Her story is a testament to the power of community and underlines why New York Road Runners is so committed to celebrating every last finisher of the TCS New

York City Marathon. Let's hear more about Danielle's incredible journey as she joins Meb.

00:47:14

Meb Keflezighi: Thanks, Rob. Danielle, welcome to the Set the Pace podcast. How you feeling today? And can you please take us back to the moment you realized your hip injury derailed your race? What went through your mind and how did you decide to continue?

00:47:30

Danielle Grimley: Awesome, thank you so much. It's great to be here. Well, this is my first marathon, so what an experience, right? So I trained for roughly a year. I had some health diagnosis in the beginning of 2024 that pushed me back about four months till I can get those figured out. But once I was cleared to go and start running, I was pretty excited. I'm a New York kid, I grew up on Long Island. I've cheered the marathon on for years, both in person and virtually. So it's been a dream of mine to participate.

So going into the marathon, unbeknownst to me, I actually came in with the injury. So I started the race with the injury. I had a great shakeout run the day before. I was under the care of a physical therapist, all the things. So I did everything in my power to prevent an injury. But joining the race, I did have a hip stress fracture unfortunately.

I had a pretty decent race in the beginning. I think when I started on the Verrazano, most people say, "You're going to be really excited and ready to go." I started on that bridge and I was like, "Oh, I don't love this." I knew things were a little off from the start of the race, but I kind of chalked that up to not every run is going to be a great run. On my long runs, I did great on some and others I struggled with and this was just the cards I was dealt. I was hoping that I would shake that off in the later portions of the race.

So things were progressing pretty well for the first half. It wasn't until I got onto the Queensboro Bridge around mile 15 that I noticed my pace was really slower than I anticipated. I wasn't going for a pace goal, but it was pretty slow. And the dull ache that I had experienced earlier in the race turned into a little bit more of a sharper pain. And so from miles 15 to roughly somewhere between 16 and 17, I couldn't really put weight on it anymore. And I was on the 1st Avenue where the crowds are crazy and it's really exciting. I actually was holding onto a stanchion and someone got me into the med tent, very thankful for that.

I can't remember the gentleman's name. He was wonderful. He

was a volunteer in the med tent and checked me out. He said, "Look, you can't put weight on it. You're not going to be able to walk or run this. I don't think you're going to finish today." And oddly enough, my immediate reaction was just like, "No, we're finishing. Do you have crutches?" And he looked at me and he was like, "Yeah. Yeah, we can get you crutches." And gave me crutches and then I started the trek from there. It just wasn't even a decision, it just was like, "I have to keep going."

00:51:03

Meb Keflezighi: And that's marathons, you have to keep going. You mentioned the incredible support you received from volunteers like Joshua Borzoooyeh and Thomas Kim. How did they encourage you, the impact, the ability to finish the marathon on crutches?

00:51:16

Danielle Grimley: They were incredible. I mean, I think I had known about the final finishers program from listening to this podcast and seeing Kayleigh and some of the other final finishers in the past online. So I can't remember exactly what mile they joined me on, but they were with us for a couple of hours. They started and they were behind us, so my first initial thought was like, "I'm getting swept. They're pulling me off the course." And that was the furthest thing.

They waited back patiently and were reading the situation to see what we needed. They were incredible. It went from, they were hanging behind us a little bit to make sure I was safe and that I had everything I needed. Or if I needed any med support, they would've called for me too. They were walking next to me and Josh was pacing me on an app and making sure, "Hey, you're going to finish, you're going to make it, you're going to make it."

And even little things. I'd been on the course for over nine hours and really had only eaten gels and a couple of endurance chews. They found me pretzels and it was like, "Yeah." They just really were incredible and they were with me till the end, till the very end. And in fact, I haven't asked them this and we've kept in touch, but I wanted to be like, "Did your volunteer shift end and you just kind of ride this out with me?" Because they were with us for a really long time.

00:52:48

Meb Keflezighi: New York Road Runners bring the best volunteers. I always tell people, Danielle, 90% is mental on race day and you personified that. How did your training get you to that finish line, be able to just get it, because I

know, I've been at the time in 2013 New York City Marathon, my mind says go, but my body says no. So what was the mental aspect that pushed you to that finish line?

00:53:16

Danielle Grimley: I think with anything in marathon training, you're always going to be thrown curveballs, and I had been thrown a lot of curveballs on my runs, none quite like this. But I think it's just I wanted to finish so badly. And then the other piece too is I had a lot of support. I think it would've been really devastating to have an injury and not finish. Most races don't let you finish. There's a cutoff time, so you'd be injured and wouldn't have that opportunity. So knowing that there was still hope and that there is a final finishers program and that they're keeping that open until well into the dark, really motivated me to get through it. And anything I could do to keep my mind off of it towards this. Look, the last two miles were pretty rough, but there were so many wonderful people still out on the streets in the dark cheering me on. There were people on their stoops listening to music who would get up and start clapping, the NYPD. It was really incredible and motivating. So that helped from a mental perspective.

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Meb Keflezighi: Pretty awesome, pretty incredible story. They say pain is temporary, pride is forever. It definitely showed that resilience to get to that finish line. So do you look ahead and see if you can tackle another marathon? What lessons will you carry forward from this extraordinary accomplishment and are you going to do a marathon?

00:54:47

Danielle Grimley: I think this experience has completely changed my life. And so because of this, I feel like I can really do anything. When I have a tough day at work or something, or I'm weightlifting and I'm like, "Okay, do one more rep." And you're like, "I don't want to." But you're like, "You did a marathon. You finished a marathon on crutches, you could do it. Come on." So it's really made me believe I can do anything. And while I wouldn't be doing the 2025 New York City Marathon, I do have hopes to do it in the future. My family's going to kill me, but I really would love to do New York again and get the full experience of running it, even though the experience that I had was incredible, but it would be really fun to run it in its entirety, for sure. So that is a goal.

00:55:43

Meb Keflezighi: The marathon is all about resilience and

perseverance and get to the finish line, whether we are in the front of the pack, the middle of the pack, or the back of the pack. As you were the second finisher and your story was told at the New York Times, what would you like to tell the people about your story?

00:55:59

Danielle Grimley: Oh my gosh. I'm really overwhelmed with gratitude and the positive outreach that I've had. That was beyond anything I could have imagined. Even when I crossed the finish line, I was blown away by the crowds that stayed out. And what I would share is when you're injured and you've been out on the course for over 10 hours, you don't feel like an athlete. I didn't feel really like an athlete ever in my training. It's just something that I really wanted to do. But you cross that finish line and that crowd is giving you all that love and support, and they are genuinely stoked, they made me feel like an athlete probably at one of the lowest times. And so the outreach even afterwards has been incredible. So I'm just very thankful and I'm very thankful to Josh and Tom, the volunteers. I feel forever connected to them because we shared this experience together.

00:57:05

Meb Keflezighi: Well, we look forward to having you hopefully run the TCS New York City Marathon and for a positive experience, but New York does show the support wherever you are to get to that finish line. So Danielle, thanks for being on the podcast with us and look forward to seeing your next marathon.

00:57:20

Danielle Grimley: Thanks for having me.

00:57:21

Rob Simmelkjaer: Wow. Danielle, thank you so much for joining us, an unbelievable and inspiring story. And thank you so much for being a member of New York Road Runners. Now it's on to the final part of our show, today's Meb Minutes.

00:57:34

Meb Keflezighi: Cool downs. Training for a spring half-marathon or marathon presents extra challenges with the bulk of your training taking place in the winter month, which is why a proper cool down is even more important. After braving the cold, take the time to gradually slow your pace and walk for a few minutes to avoid muscle tightness. Stretching, especially in the calves, hamstring, and quads, helps prevent stiffness from the cold weather. Your muscles are more prone to tightness in the winter, so warming down properly ensures

you to stay injury-free and ready for your next run, even when the temperature drops. This is what you need to think about, pre-hab instead of rehab because you have to think ahead of the stretches that are necessary to keep your body moving.

00:58:21

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right, folks, that does it for another episode of Set the Pace. We want to thank our guests today, Calli Hauger-Thackery and Danielle Grimley. If you liked this episode, please make sure you subscribe, rate it, leave a comment wherever you listen so others can find us as well. Stay warm out there. Enjoy the miles. We'll see you next week.