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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.

00:00:44

Rob Simmelkjaer: Hey, everybody, and welcome to another episode of Set the Pace presented by Peloton. We are the official podcast of New York Road Runners. I'm your host and CEO of New York Road Runners, Rob Simmelkjaer, back with the amazing Becs Gentry back for another week as my co-host.

And Becs, great to see you and happy belated Mother's Day. It was your second year as mom of Tallulah. What was Mother's Day like for you and the fam?

00:01:12

Becs Gentry: Mother's Day was wonderful and thank you so much. Well, I started the day with a wonderful run at Peloton. I actually did a Mother's Day run with lovely members in the room, which was very touching, emotional, and euphoric at the same time. And then we chilled. We honestly, we had a really... It was pretty miserable weather, so it was a good excuse to stay home, snuggle up, do some painting, and quality time.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, here in New York, it was not the best Mother's Day weather. The afternoon got okay, but yes, a little bit chilly.

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Becs Gentry: It did.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Hope folks out there had a great Mother's Day. If they got some runs in maybe with some mother-daughter runs or whatever it was, that it was a great, great weekend and always a great day to celebrate.

And we've got ourselves a big, big weekend coming up here, Becs, but I actually had a little personal news, at least from the running point of view, myself. I can't run Brooklyn this weekend because it's hard for me as CEO to run our biggest races, but I did sign up for a half-marathon. I'm going to run the Fairfield Half Marathon up here in Fairfield, Connecticut on Sunday, June 2nd, which I'm excited about.

I tried, Becs, to run this race last year and this was right around the time I started to get knee injuries last year. I had a big ramp-up of my running in the first six months in

this job and my knees just went south and I wasn't able to make it, but I deferred. I'm feeling great and I'm going to give it a go on June 2nd, so that should be fun. It's a hilly but nice course. It runs along the Long Island Sound for parts of it, you get some water views, and I'm excited to give it a go at the Athletic Brewing Company Fairfield Half on June 2nd.

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Becs Gentry: Oh my gosh. I'm so excited for you! We've been talking about Rob stepping his game up here and you've been getting PR after PR on your four-miler, so this is your endurance time to shine.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, it's time to stretch out the legs a little, see if I can get to some bigger distances. I ran last Friday morning in the park, put out about nine or 10 miles and it felt good. So it was right after that I said, "Okay, this is it. I'm feeling good enough to sign up and commit and talk about it." This is when you talk about it. When you talk about it is when you're actually doing it right, Becs?

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Becs Gentry: Correct.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: So I am now talking about running a half and I'm looking forward to that on June 2nd, but-

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Becs Gentry: That is it, the commitment.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Absolutely. And by the way, I should mention one of the things that has really gotten me ready to run a half this spring is NYRR Group Training, which I have been a lover of since I started here at New York Road Runners. It's an incredible program where our New York Road Runners coaches meet up with you. You can sign up for Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Wednesdays in the morning or the evenings, and they just have a great program where you run with a group. They divide you up based on your speed, groups one through six, and every single day, there's a different plan. Some days are focused on speed work, some days are focused on endurance, pacing, tempo runs, and it has made me such a better runner, Becs.

So it's actually open right now-

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Becs Gentry: Brilliant.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: ... for folks who are interested in signing up for the next session, which is the session after the Brooklyn Half. You can go to [nyrr.org](http://nyrr.org). We're going to put the link in the show notes, and you can do it all around the city. We've got Central Park, we've got Uptown Manhattan, we've got the East River Park track downtown. We've got Astoria Park and Prospect Park out in Brooklyn.

So I'm a huge fan of that, and if you've never tried it, if you want to get better and you're in the New York area, you can give it a try. We also have it up in Connecticut as well with the YMCA in Westport, Connecticut.

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Becs Gentry: Oh my gosh. No excuses.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Group training, Becs, it's a beautiful thing.

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Becs Gentry: They're everywhere. I love it. I love running with a community. But you pointed it out, Rob. This weekend, this weekend people have been training with the group training ahead of the RBC Brooklyn Half, and I don't know how many other people, because I think it's zillions, are as excited as I am for the fact that we have all three members of the 2024 U. S. Olympic Women's Marathon Team running in the MasterCard Mini 10K, which is the next race after the RBC Brooklyn Half.

So I just feel like we have moment after moment coming through, and I say that because the team training, between all of our women right now in the U. S. Team... I say, "Our." I know I'm British, but I feel like I can say, "Our," on the U. S. Olympic Team here has been amazing. Their community is... I can feel them. I feel like they'd be going to the group training side of things together even if they're sponsored by different people. The love is so real and I'm really excited to see them shine at the Mini 10K.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: This was a huge deal for us and an incredibly exciting announcement last week to announce that all three women on the U. S. Marathon Olympic Team will be running in the MasterCard Mini 10K. Fiona O'Keefe, Emily Sisson, and Dakota Lindwurm will all be at the starting line of the MasterCard Mini. That's on June 8th.

So yeah, that's going to be a huge deal. Congrats to them. We're so excited to host them. Our pro-athletes team did such a great job recruiting that amazing field, one of my favorite races of the year.

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Becs Gentry: Me too.

00:06:39

Rob Simmelkjaer: Can't wait for it. But before we get to it, we got a lot of work and a lot of fun coming up in Brooklyn this coming weekend. The RBC Brooklyn Half, everybody out there, if you're listening to this on the Thursday, the Friday before the race, and these are your final preparations, we wish you all the best.

If you haven't yet, go back and listen to last week's episode with Ted Metellus, Ted giving you the 411 on all the things you need to know from baggage to when to show up to what you can expect at the finish line, a course review or preview as well. So check that out, and obviously we want to make sure you enjoy the RBC Brooklyn Half Pre- Party Presented by New Balance. That's at the Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 2.

Get there nice and early. Give yourself time to soak that in. Enjoy that. It's such a great event. Hopefully we get good weather for it, but take your time, and then make sure it's not... Just don't go in rushed, grab your bib, turn around and leave. No, spend a few hours. Make it an event for yourself to hang out because it's not just a pickup; it's a party, Becs, and I look forward to seeing everybody out there.

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Becs Gentry: Oh, yeah. I can't wait. It is one of my favorite weekends of the year. I've run this race. I love this race. I love how it starts. It's a really early start, which is one thing to note if you are finding out about it for the first time. It's a really early start. We're looking at 7:00 AM first wave, 8:00 AM, I believe, second wave. And we are also having to mention it's on Saturday, everyone. It's on Saturday. It's unusual. It is. For the amount of-

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Don't be the one.

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Becs Gentry: No!

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Don't be the one that shows up Sunday. We don't want people showing up Sunday. Absolutely.

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Becs Gentry: I mean, you'll always have people to run with in Prospect Park in that area, but it won't be New York Road Runners. So definitely make sure you show up nice and early on Saturday morning. And as Rob said, the Pre- Party Presented by New Balance is phenomenal. It is so much fun. I'm a Brooklynite. I love that it's over this side. I love that we get to show off our vibe a little bit over here.

When you pick up your bib, you are going to get no preview of the course, which I quite like. It's just the area. So Prospect Park, you're going to run Grand Army Plaza. If you've never run around that, it is really, really stunning to look up. Make sure you look up to the top of that monument. I know as runners, we keep our eyes down a lot of the time, so get your eyes up to the sky and see the magnificence of the monument

there. But then running out to Coney Island, I mean, it's a beach. Even if it's raining, you see the ocean and there's something very calming and relaxing, I think, about an ocean, especially on a rainy day.

So get yourselves counting down in the alphabet to Coney Island. That's my cryptic clue.

00:09:37

Rob Simmelkjaer: That's exactly what it is. You go down Ocean Parkway, see those letters going down, and you know you're getting closer to the finish line. So for everybody getting ready, we wish you all the best. We'll talk about it a bit more later in the podcast, but it should be a great day. We hope for good weather, of course, and a great day for everybody showing up at the RBC Brooklyn Half.

We've got a great show for you on Set the Pace today. Our guests today are two of the hosts of the hugely popular The Drop Podcast, Thomas Neuberger and Meaghan Murray. They've managed to turn their love of running into their careers. I love it, Becs, when people are able to do that. I've been able to do that. You've been able to do that. Their website, Believe in the Run, is the top running review site online. They review shoes and apparel and all kinds of things that are so important to runners. And they've also, along the way, built a great community of runners who tune in digitally every week to their podcast.

They'll both be running the RBC Brooklyn Half for the second year in a row, so we can't wait to talk to them about how they are feeling about the race. They'll be up in a minute.

Later on in the show, our man Meb Keflezighi will be here to interview New York Road Runners' member Michael Albeck. As Michael prepares for this weekend's RBC Brooklyn Half, he's going to share with us how New York Road Runners has become an integral part of his whole family's life. And for our weekly Meb Minute, Meb's going to give us his best advice on training to run a new course for those of you who are running Brooklyn for the first time.

So all that coming up on Set the Pace.

Becs, before we get to our guest, it is so beautiful outside today, and spring is my favorite time of year to start a new workout routine.

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

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Rob Simmelkjaer: One of the things that works so well for me, Becs, 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.

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Becs 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](https://onepeloton.com).

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Rob Simmelkjaer: And now, let's welcome in our guests, Thomas Neuberger and Meaghan Murray, from Believe in the Run and the two hosts of The Drop Podcast. If you're not familiar with The Drop, it's a pretty popular podcast that focuses on in-depth discussion and interviews relating to running shoes and gear and training. Thomas and Meaghan, as well as the rest of the team, are big runners and they say running has changed their lives. It is great to have them on the show.

Thomas, Meaghan, welcome.

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Thomas Neuberger: This is a trip.

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Meaghan Murray: Yes, thanks for having us.

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Thomas Neuberger: I never thought I'd be on with New York Road Runners and Becs. Obviously, this is a real honor to be on the show.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: We're thrilled to have you guys. So all right, first question, for those who don't know, what is Believe in the Run? What is that all about?

00:12:33

Meaghan Murray: Take it away.

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Thomas Neuberger: It's always a weird question because I think we straddle a couple different areas. So traditional media, we have our website where we are, I would say, more on the traditional side of doing reviews and long-read articles and that kind of stuff. And then we started doing YouTube videos to drive traffic to the website and that coincided with the trend of people becoming influencers in the running space.

And so we never intended to be one, but because our faces were out there and people see what we were doing, that's where we started blending, I'd say, the new media with the old media, and it just worked well together that we have both going for us and cover a lot of area. Did that... I didn't even answer the question, did I?

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Becs Gentry: You did.

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Meaghan Murray: We're primarily a running shoe site that dabbles in the social world and we have a podcast as well.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, there we go.

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Meaghan Murray: A little more succinct.

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Becs Gentry: I love that. I love the balance here between the two of you. It's fantastic.

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Thomas Neuberger: That's it, yeah.

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Becs Gentry: Great pairing. Okay, so let's talk about what has changed because I think just from hearing that, the both of you have two slightly different descriptions of Believe in the Run. So how it started to where it is today, could you talk us through where it's come from and where it is?

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. It started when I was raising money for a charity and I was going to run the TransRockies Run, which is a multi-day, over-100-mile race across the Rocky Mountains. And so it was one of the bigger things I was doing towards the beginning of my running, so I thought it would be a great way to raise awareness for the Baltimore Child Abuse Center.

And so I raised funds for that, and so I started a website to chronicle my training because back then, there wasn't much in the way of... Now there's so many different platforms for you to talk about your running. Back then, there wasn't, so I created a website. And as I was doing the training for TransRockies, people were curious what gear I was using and what shoes I liked or what poles I was going to use on the mountain or jackets. So I started talking about that and the brands started noticing and they're like, "Hey, if we send you, would you talk about our brand?" I'm like, "Are you kidding? This is great."

I still remember my first thing I ever got was a stick of Glide and I thought I just won the lottery. I was like, "Oh, this is amazing."

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Becs Gentry: Oh. Hey, don't knock free Glide.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. But then it started to evolve. Meaghan and I met at a company that did software for social media and we were doing a lot of campaign stuff together and she was like a casual runner. You want to talk about that a little bit, Meg?

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Meaghan Murray: Yeah. I mean, I grew up playing sports my whole life, but I always hated running. And then when I went to college, I gave up all sports, so I was like, "Well, I should do something active," so I just started running a little bit. And then when Thomas I met at the marketing company, he was out doing 50-milers and I was like, "This guy is nuts," but convinced me to sign up for a race and then I signed up for a marathon and it just snowballed from there.

But we ended up focusing a lot more on Believe in the Run at that time because it was getting a lot more attention and brands were noticing and sending more product and it just escalated from there.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. And then Robbie came on board and he's a phenomenal writer. I don't know if you've read some of his stuff on the site, but he's a tremendous asset, and we were working, splitting the time. We started our own business, Big Run Media, where we did a lot of marketing for races and different running events and stuff like that.

And during the pandemic when everything went to sideways, we ended up focusing more on Believe in the Run, doing some more stuff, and it's actually one of those, it seemed like a tragedy at the time that all the races were getting canceled and we were losing clients, but we focused on Believe in the Run. As a matter of fact, that's when I feel like it just lit fire and a lot of people see us and they go, "Oh, you guys, last couple of years, you just came out of nowhere." I'm like, "We've been doing this since 2009. It's been a while."

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Rob Simmelkjaer: And do you guys see, I mean, what's going on in the running space right now with the explosion of popularity, how many people are running, and not just running, but to your point, talking about running, creating content about running, making running the basis of businesses just like yours? What do you think is driving it? Because I get this question all the time at New York Road Runners. Why? What's happening? Why are all of our races sold out? Why do we have 150,000 people trying to get into the TCS New York City Marathon with so few of them actually getting in? What do you think is driving this cultural phenomenon of running being so hot right now?

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Thomas Neuberger: I mean, I have my ideas. What is yours?

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Meaghan Murray: Yeah, it's such a good question. I think partially, the pandemic was responsible for a lot of new runners and we're seeing that snowball effect. I think especially during the pandemic, that was the one thing where we could all just walk out the door and go for a run still. And I think that was so empowering at the time and a lot of people have just continued that, and I think you saw a friend who started running and then it was like, "Well, if they can do it, maybe I can do it." And I just think it was this snowball effect of more people getting involved, and because we do have social media where you can share it, even if you don't have a best friend who runs, you can see someone online who's running and be inspired by them.

So I think it's just been like... I think that's probably where we got this big growth spurt, and I'm hoping it continues, but I do think the pandemic was probably a big part of it.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. And to add on to what Meg's saying because I agree, but you go online now and you see somebody that looks like you or is starting the journey that is like you, so there's more... It's cooler now to run. Before, it might've been your dad going, he's wearing generic running clothes and the generic blue running shoe and it didn't look that exciting. He's going to go for his run, mow his lawn, have a beer that afternoon. That was the idea of recreational running, where now you look and there's people out there like Matt Choi who are pushing that hybrid athlete, working out, being a full-rounded athlete that happens to love running.

You look at somebody like Herms Runs, who's Alex Hermanson, who he's saying to people, "Hey, it's cool. You don't have to be in three-inch shorts and 120 and restricting your diet and taking it so seriously that every race has to be a PR. It can be an event that we're all part of."

And Heller, there's a whole bunch of people out there that are making this content that now you can identify with, Tommie Runz, these people that are bringing people into the sport that maybe didn't see a spot for them before.

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Becs Gentry: I love that. It's so much about the community and I think there's been a lot of chat recently about run crew culture, running culture, how they were parallel, they were intertwined, and now they're going off separately, and I think that does have a lot to do with brand recognition. And I love what you both are saying of the you can go on social media or wherever you digest your culture, let's say, and you can see somebody who looks like you, whoever you are, wherever you are. And from what you guys are delivering, you are individual. You're not heavily... You do reviews of everything and I love going on to online and reading your reviews and seeing them because you're honest. And I think real runners are.

We go through... I mean, the real runner fear is what happens if the shoe isn't good enough? And it's not the brand, it's not how it looks. You're just like, "Oh, what happens if it's not comfortable? What happens if it gives me blisters?" That is what reading reviews and listening to you guys, that's genuine because you've got the person who

hated running, played soccer, to the person who will run millions of miles over very bad terrain and you're going to deliver honest, honest reviews of, "This Glide stick sucks," or, "this one is fantastic."

And I just think, does it ever... When you're doing the reviews, have you ever been too swayed by brands or do you find it really refreshing to be as free and open as you are?

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Meaghan Murray: I will say it's easier naturally to talk about something that you feel strongly towards, whether that's negative or positive. The words just flow. So we do have an editor because sometimes we'll just go off on whether it's good or bad, we're just very honest, and so we do have an editor to make sure it's all correct and everything like that.

But we found that working with these brands, they appreciate the honesty because a lot of times, you're just hearing what you want to hear online and everything's great and wonderful, but when we are really honest, and we've tried so many shoes that we can be really nitpicky and say, "Hey, this little minor thing here stood out to us and this isn't great," and the brands-

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Thomas Neuberger: Easily fixed.

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Meaghan Murray: ... the brands love it because they can take it back to their team and actually use that as feedback to make the next model even better.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. When I first started meeting brands, and to get to the part about being swayed by them, when I first started meeting brands, I was actually a little nervous because I felt like, "Hey, I just trashed one of their shoes," and I was surprised because we'd go to this thing called the Running Event where we get to interact with the brands. And I was timid the first time I went, and then I started talking to them. They're like, "No, thank you for saying that because we took it back to the team because we've been arguing for a softer midsole and you guys keep saying that. So we say it, they don't listen, but when we bring one of your reviews or something, it's an outsider saying, 'Hey, this needs to be fixed.'" So a lot of times, the teams are really happy with us.

As far as being swayed by the brands, we try to keep somewhat of a curtain between our reviews and that. So we don't ever charge for reviews. We get the shoes obviously for free, they'll send them to us, but we don't take a fee for doing a review, and we express to the brands when we work with them on the other side, which is the side like what we're doing with the RBC Brooklyn Half where we're working with New Balance, we talk to them beforehand when we work with these brands and we say, "Hey, look, the reason why you're talking to us is because we've been honest about

product and we're a reliable source for people who want to get the best experience out of their running shoes or running gear. If we become commercials, then you're not going to want to work with us anyway because we're going to lose our credibility and our audience." So most of the brands have an understanding with us that things aren't going to change.

Now, it is crazy when we go out to a headquarters of a company or something like that. For that day or so, you do get a little bit of a glow because it's like, I'm sure you guys have visited some of these places, they're pretty fantastic and these guys know their marketing. They're beautiful, the sport, you can feel the sport in the air, and you are, for a little while, you're a little drunk on love. So I usually wait a little while before, if I've got a shoe review for them, I'll wait a week or so before I do that.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Sober up, sober up a little bit.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, exactly. You can walk away from those places being like, "Damn. If I ever lost my job, that's where I want to be."

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Becs Gentry: Yep.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I love it. I mean, the honesty is what makes it good, right? I mean, the bad reviews are what make the good reviews matter.

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Meaghan Murray: Right.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: So congrats to you guys for being able to carve out that space, and it's obviously really valuable to your listeners, so it's really awesome.

Let's talk about shoes a little bit and what you guys are seeing in terms of the evolution. I've been running since high school and I've run in running shoes, and some I've liked and some I haven't liked. I never really thought that they would have a huge impact on my performance until very recently, and even now, I'm still catching up to, "Well, should I get one of these plates? Should I get this?" And still, I work in the industry and I still don't really know what I should be doing for my own shoes to get the maximum performance.

For someone like me, and I'm a decent runner, but I'm not winning any races anywhere anytime soon, how much does it matter? Should I really be making the

hundreds and hundreds of dollars or sometimes more that people are spending on some of these shoes to get five minutes off my half-marathon time?

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Thomas Neuberger: If time's your only concern, then it would depend on your level of running. I don't feel like the cost to minutes is actually the best indicator of whether the shoe is worth the money. I look at it psychologically. If you get up in the morning, and Rob, you know every day you don't feel like running, but you go down and you just got a new pair, and you're opening the box, it's fresh, you slide your foot in, "Oh, that cushioning. It's brand new. It feels so good," you're going to be pumped up to go for your run.

Now, you get out the door and the foam doesn't feel that great. You start running, not having the best running experience. That's where the reviews come in. We're trying to help you have the best experience.

So when you talk about what you're trying to get out of the shoe, I want you to be motivated to run, be excited to get out there. Once you're out there, I want you to feel like you're gliding and feel like the shoes aren't part... The best shoes are the ones that disappear on your feet and you don't feel them.

Now, once you get to that feeling and you're out there and you're doing your weekly mileage and getting things on the baseline done, then you get to race day and you get to throw on a super shoe that's plated, bouncy, and feels amazing, the whole experience is like going to a four-course meal. It's like that's your starter, you go there, and then next thing you know, the dessert is the finish line and you're kicking it through and it's great.

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Meaghan Murray: I mean, we're obviously big shoe nerds, so we could talk to you about shoes all day long, but I do feel like they're extremely important and worth the money because like Thomas was saying, the experience psychologically, you want to feel good when you're out there running. I do feel like these new foams and plated shoes can assist you with running faster.

And then also, the last piece of it for me is the recovery. You feel so much better afterwards when you have a shoe that fits well and has a good foam and a plate in it, or not a plate depending on what you prefer, but those aspects just make running not only feel better during, but also after, and then you're more likely to go back out the door the next day.

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Thomas Neuberger: That's a great point.

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Becs Gentry: Yeah, I totally agree with you, Meaghan. I'm there for the speed element is a wonderful bonus to the fact that you can recover and get back on the run. Because again, going back to that true runner wants to get out almost every day or as often as

they can, and you don't want to be impeded by lower- leg soreness, upper- leg soreness, wherever you've run. So that's my big sell on these, the foams and the plates as we call them.

Do you know how many running shoes you've reviewed?

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Thomas Neuberger: We were trying to figure that out the other day because we probably get over 100 pairs a year.

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Becs Gentry: Whoa.

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Thomas Neuberger: And you can do the math back to...

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Meaghan Murray: 2009.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. So that is the one thing that I feel we have an advantage over. There's only a couple people that I would say are anywhere close to us with the amount of shoes and the variance of shoes that we've tried and run in and reviewed. I would think you're probably talking about Jeff Dengate, you might be talking about, I think that Sam has been doing it for a while, Metzler, who's from Outside. Those are the people that I know that I feel somewhat peers towards where I can talk about a shoe that was... We went through all the trends. We went through minimal to max cushion, swung back and forth. So those are the people that I can... When they say something about a shoe, I listen.

00:29:57

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, I could talk about shoes for the rest of this podcast, but we have a race coming up this weekend, the RBC Brooklyn Half. You are both participating and running and let's talk about that. You ran last year, I believe, both of you.

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Thomas Neuberger: I shouldn't have.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: What happened?

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Thomas Neuberger: Well, I ran London, New York, Tokyo, and Boston, and then the half, and my foot was hurting and I think I was-

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Gee, I can't imagine why.

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Becs Gentry: Shocking.

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Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, I think I had a little bit of a stress fracture or the beginnings of one, so it wasn't a good race for me.

00:30:37

Meaghan Murray: I, on the other hand, loved it. It was tons of fun. I ran with a couple friends and we actually ran it as more of a progression run. So it was very, very fun. And yeah, the crowds there are great. The course was really fun. I remember the end is almost downhill all the way to the finish line, which is always lovely.

00:30:59

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, it didn't feel downhill.

00:31:02

Rob Simmelkjaer: One of you thought it was downhill.

00:31:09

Becs Gentry: Yeah. Thomas was going uphill somewhere.

00:31:11

Thomas Neuberger: I mean, the New York Marathon feels uphill the whole way for me. Yeah.

00:31:11

Meaghan Murray: Yeah, yeah.

00:31:11

Rob Simmelkjaer: And what are you guys going to be doing? You've got not just the race but some other things going on race weekend. Talk about where we're going to see you.

00:31:19

Meaghan Murray: Yeah. So we are going to come up on Thursday and we're going to host a panel. Thomas will be chatting with-

00:31:26

Thomas Neuberger: You know one of the guys.

00:31:26

Meaghan Murray: Yeah. Who are you chatting with?

00:31:28

Thomas Neuberger: Ted from New York Road Runners.

00:31:31

Becs Gentry: Aw, lovely.

00:31:31

Rob Simmelkjaer: Ted Metellus, our race director, absolutely.

00:31:34

Thomas Neuberger: Yes, yes. And the New York City Marathon. So I'm excited. I already talked to him. We did a little pre-interview thing, so it was a lot of fun. So I'm expecting him to be great. And then we've got Tyler from Endorphins Running, and Andrea from Mill City.

So we're basically... All of us in our own way work with the running community and we all work a little bit differently, and I think it'll just be an interesting conversation about the trends in the running community. You were touching on it with run crews and that kind of stuff, and we were talking about enrollments and races, and so we're going to cover some of that stuff. It should be a fun conversation.

00:32:14

Meaghan Murray: Yeah. And then after that, we're hosting a party with a New Balance. This is all going to be at Smack Mellon is the venue in Brooklyn. And then the following morning, we're hosting a shakeout run for the RBC Half, and anyone who wants to join us for about three miles on Friday morning.

00:32:32

Thomas Neuberger: And our shakeout runs have been insane. I've actually-

00:32:33

Meaghan Murray: Yeah, they're super fun.

00:32:34

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah.

00:32:36

Becs Gentry: Always full to the brim.

00:32:37

Thomas Neuberger: Yes.

00:32:37

Meaghan Murray: Yes, yes.

00:32:39

Becs Gentry: Okay. So talk to us, as you are the kit king and queen here of advising everybody what to wear on race day, how would you best advise our listeners to get themselves prepared kit-wise for the RBC Brooklyn Half?

00:32:57

Thomas Neuberger: Do we know the weather?

00:32:58

Meaghan Murray: I think it's going to be high 50s, low 60s.

00:33:01

Thomas Neuberger: That's pretty good. Any-

00:33:02

Becs Gentry: Yeah, with a possible sprinkle.

00:33:03

Rob Simmelkjaer: Good temps. Yeah, maybe a little rain, maybe not. We'll see.

00:33:08

Thomas Neuberger: Rain never hurts.

00:33:09

Becs Gentry: No.

00:33:09

Thomas Neuberger: Unless you're chafing. But I mean, that's (inaudible) -

00:33:14

Becs Gentry: Eh, yeah. Back to that Glide.

00:33:14

Meaghan Murray: Yep, yep. There we go. Full circle.

00:33:14

Thomas Neuberger: Yes, exactly. I mean, for me it would be probably singlet, shorts, easy, 13.1 miles.

00:33:24

Meaghan Murray: Yeah, I think it's always best to dress knowing you're going to get warm because I feel like especially when you first go out the door, you always want to



be comfortable, but you always want to be a little cold when you first get out there so that once you're out there racing-

00:33:39

Thomas Neuberger: You'll heat up pretty quick.

00:33:40

Meaghan Murray: ... and you're heated up, then you're actually comfortable in your singlet and shorts. And yeah, if it's raining, obviously we'd recommend maybe some tighter clothing to avoid that chafing, and then yeah, nothing, don't do anything new on race day.

00:33:53

Thomas Neuberger: And a hat. I always like a hat.

00:33:56

Becs Gentry: Yeah, we like a hat.

00:33:56

Rob Simmelkjaer: I like a hat too when it rains because it just keeps the drops out of your eyes. Just a little protection.

00:34:04

Thomas Neuberger: The sun. Yeah, everything.

00:34:04

Meaghan Murray: Yeah.

00:34:04

Becs Gentry: I know some people love sunglasses, but I'm like, "Do you have little windscreen wipers on them?" Because every time I wear sunglasses in the rain, I'm just like, "No, this is terrible."

00:34:14

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, it doesn't work in the rain so much.

00:34:14

Becs Gentry: It doesn't. You look cool. You look very cool.

00:34:16

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, I'm hoping there's not that much rain so when we get to Coney Island, we can enjoy the sunshine and the dogs and stuff.

00:34:23

Becs Gentry: Oh, absolutely. Well, I think I love that you said dress to get warm because it's race day and most people are going to be going out and maybe challenging themselves an ounce more than they do on their normal run, and nothing pains me more than when I see people on race day totally overdressed in puffer jackets. I'm like, " Oh my goodness me. You probably could have got a few seconds off your time if you'd have just taken that little puffer off, please."

00:34:50

Thomas Neuberger: So you're not tempted to go help them out? You're not tempted to be like, " Hey, just hide that behind a tree or something?"

00:34:56

Becs Gentry: Oh, no. Dude, seriously, the amount of times I have conversations in my head with people whilst I'm running next to them, I'm like, " Is it rude of me to just be like, 'Can we have a chat?'" And then I'm just like, " No, keep going."

That sounds like such an incredible weekend. I'm sure all of your followers are going to have the best time with you, listening to you, running with you, and cheering for you, which is epic. I know I'll be at the finish line cheering away, for sure, this weekend.

00:35:24

Thomas Neuberger: Awesome.

00:35:24

Meaghan Murray: Oh, nice.

00:35:25

Becs Gentry: Well, we say that. I'm tempted. I'm a little tempted to run it now.

00:35:29

Thomas Neuberger: Why not?

00:35:29

Meaghan Murray: Oh, yeah. Come run it.

00:35:31

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah!

00:35:31

Becs Gentry: Yeah, yeah. I'm tempted.

00:35:33

Thomas Neuberger: We'll get you a pair of these New Balance SC Elite v4s.

00:35:37

Becs Gentry: You know what?

00:35:37

Rob Simmelkjaer: Is that what you guys are running in?

00:35:39

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah.

00:35:39

Meaghan Murray: Yeah.

00:35:40

Becs Gentry: I love them!

00:35:40

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right. You've tested them out?

00:35:43

Meaghan Murray: Yes, yeah.

00:35:44

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah.

00:35:44

Rob Simmelkjaer: And?

00:35:46

Meaghan Murray: We love them. So we wore these for the New York City Marathon this past year. Loved them. We had some all-white prototypes, which were very cool.

00:35:53

Becs Gentry: So cool.

00:35:54

Meaghan Murray: But yeah, now we're going to wear the inline colorway, which is also pretty good-looking, so pretty excited about it.

00:35:59

Becs Gentry: It's gorgeous.

00:36:00

Meaghan Murray: Yeah.

00:36:00

Becs Gentry: You know what? As somebody who has a wider foot, and I spread my toes wide when I run because that's how I've been coached from my whole career. This width at the front of the v4 Elites is my perfect shoe width. I'm in love with them. New Balance, I can't take them off. I put the Rebels on for my slower, steadier runs and then whew, little bit of energy into the v4. Oh, they're divine.

00:36:26

Thomas Neuberger: I like the Rebel.

00:36:27

Meaghan Murray: That's a good combo right there, yeah.

00:36:29

Thomas Neuberger: Chris Chavez from Citius Mag, you guys probably know him, he did his first sub- three- hour marathon and he was wearing these shoes.

00:36:36

Meaghan Murray: These shoes, yeah.

00:36:36

Thomas Neuberger: He did it in these shoes.

00:36:38

Becs Gentry: I've spoken to a lot of people who are making PRs in them.

00:36:41

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. It's not the lightest one on the market, but it has a really nice feel and I think it's the most accessible one with the sizing and the fit.

00:36:48

Meaghan Murray: And like you were talking about, Becs, the wide forefoot is key.

00:36:53

Becs Gentry: Yeah.

00:36:54

Rob Simmelkjaer: I'm still stuck on the fact that Becs was coached to spread her toes apart while running. No one ever told me what to do with my toes when I ran. Clearly this is what I've been missing my entire life was I just ran. I didn't think about my toes at all, all this time.

00:37:13

Thomas Neuberger: You don't remember the-

00:37:13

Becs Gentry: I (inaudible) your feet. It's my thing in class.

00:37:14

Thomas Neuberger: You don't remember the Vibram FiveFingers, Rob?

00:37:14

Rob Simmelkjaer: No!

00:37:14

Becs Gentry: No!

00:37:14

Meaghan Murray: Oh, yeah. The toe shoes?

00:37:21

Becs Gentry: I saw someone running in those yesterday.

00:37:23

Rob Simmelkjaer: Oh, the shoes that look like gloves where your toe has a little spot?

00:37:27

Becs Gentry: Yes!

00:37:27

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah.

00:37:27

Rob Simmelkjaer: You know, I have seen those and it blows my mind. And actually, the one guy I know who runs in those is a guy who also runs a lot barefoot and that's a thing, right? Are you guys seeing a lot of that? That's not good for the shoe business, but are you seeing a lot of that?

00:37:42

Thomas Neuberger: We saw after Born to Run came out back in... I guess that was 2010 or '11.

00:37:46

Becs Gentry: Yes, everybody.

00:37:49

Thomas Neuberger: That's what kicked off the barefoot rage and Vibram FiveFingers. You had the Merrell Trail Gloves, you had Vivobarefoot, all those shoes came out.

And look, there's an argument to be made for strengthening your feet by being more natural, but we also didn't used to run a 100-mile weeks on pavement or 60-mile weeks getting ready for a marathon on pavement. So I think the people that like it, that's fun for them and great, but for the rest of us...

00:38:21

Meaghan Murray: We'll stick to our max-cushion shoes.

00:38:22

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, I like the benefit of cushion shoes.

00:38:29

Becs Gentry: Yeah, polar opposite. I agree.

00:38:29

Rob Simmelkjaer: 100%.

00:38:29

Thomas Neuberger: They're also hideous. I'm sorry, I'm going to chime in here just on the visual look. Nobody looks good in those. I've never seen someone who's been like, "Damn, that's a fly outfit he's got on. Look at those." Yeah.

00:38:43

Becs Gentry: I got to agree. I've got to. The guy I saw yesterday was running with his double stroller in them. I'm like, "Buddy, honestly"-

00:38:57

Thomas Neuberger: Like imagine you're on-

00:38:57

Becs Gentry: "... the foams and the plates are going to really help you with those two kids," because these shoes, he looked like he was sinking into the concrete with every step. I'm like, "Oh, the pain!"

00:39:02

Rob Simmelkjaer: So I have to ask you guys, for those who don't know who are maybe hearing your voices for the first time, you are married to each other. You did not just meet and become colleagues, you became husband and wife. How is that for you working together this way as a married couple doing a podcast? You're still doing it and I believe you're still married, so I guess it's working out okay.

00:39:29

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. It's great for me. Maybe not for Meaghan so much.

00:39:29

Meaghan Murray: No, it's kind of how we've always been. We've always worked together and that's always worked really well and it almost feels like it'd be weird now not to be working together all the time just because that's our norm.

00:39:41

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah. If you imagine that I couldn't do half the stuff without Meaghan, so it really is a yin and yang situation where my brain doesn't work the way hers does. I can't even say it. It's not working.

00:39:58

Meaghan Murray: I'm very analytical, he's very creative. It's very... Yeah, we're opposites.

00:40:03

Thomas Neuberger: And so it really is. I think part of the reason I fell in love with Meaghan from the start was that I just felt like, "Oh, this is how easy life can be when you have somebody who has that other side of what you're lacking."

00:40:17

Becs Gentry: Aw, I love that.

00:40:17

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, it's been good.

00:40:23

Becs Gentry: Okay, so I really would love to talk more about you two running together, you two reviewing together, but we'll save that for another podcast.

As you are professional running reviewers and have been doing this for a really long time, and this is not your first race with us this weekend, can you give our listeners a full-on review of the RBC Brooklyn Half?

00:40:46

Meaghan Murray: A full review?

00:40:46

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah.

00:40:47

Becs Gentry: Yeah. Just a little, not too in-depth, but let's see it from your perspective. This weekend's coming up, what are we going to go do?

00:40:57

Meaghan Murray: Well, first of all, the main goal is always fun. So that's key. We're going to have a great time. I do remember last year, it starts out pretty compact in the

beginning, so you definitely have to have some patience like you should in every race and not go out too fast.

00:41:10

Thomas Neuberger: But it also kind of goes downhill. I think, yeah, it's easy to go out a little too fast at this one.

00:41:14

Meaghan Murray: Yeah, so I think patience is super important in the beginning, whether you're stuck in a crowd or you're just holding back a little bit to leave some for the end, and then having fun the whole 13 miles.

00:41:26

Thomas Neuberger: Except not the whole 13 because we go into Prospect Park and there's a nice little hill you're going to want to save some energy for. What mile is that?

00:41:35

Becs Gentry: Literally within the first-

00:41:36

Rob Simmelkjaer: That's in the first few miles.

00:41:37

Becs Gentry: Yeah, before the first 5K mark.

00:41:38

Thomas Neuberger: Okay. So you go into Prospect Park and you get a nice... It is a-

00:41:43

Meaghan Murray: It's pretty steep, yeah.

00:41:44

Thomas Neuberger: It's a grinder and it's steep and it's long. Yeah, I'm sure all the people who live in Brooklyn are very familiar with that hill.

So once you get past that, I think it's interesting. And then you get into that long stretch and it counts down by street so you can get an idea of where you are. Can you explain to me, Rob or Becs, how that works?

00:42:08

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, they're alphabetical. So the farther you are from the ocean, the higher the letter, yeah. So as you're seeing those letters go down, you're getting closer and closer to the Coney Island Boardwalk and the finish line.



00:42:20

Thomas Neuberger: Do you do the whole alphabet? I feel like last year, I was a little dazed.

00:42:24

Rob Simmelkjaer: It's like a Brooklyn thing. In Manhattan, we do numbers, except in the Lower East Side, we've got letters over there. But yeah, they do letters in Brooklyn.

00:42:34

Thomas Neuberger: And that's where I started feeling the chafe. So make sure you do put on... But you know what, the whatchamacallit? The medical tents were great. They had Vaseline waiting there with the little sticks in it and you could find some relief there.

Overall, the support of the race was great. You had plenty of water, there's plenty of stops you, felt well taken care of, and there were plenty of medical tents for those people who are not wearing enough Glide like I was.

00:43:06

Meaghan Murray: And then I'll always remember that you make that turn onto the boardwalk at the finish there and there's just people screaming and cheering and it's hard not to sprint to that finish line at the end there, which I think everyone should be doing anyway.

00:43:20

Thomas Neuberger: And we didn't do something right last year. We didn't figure out the public transportation back to Brooklyn.

00:43:27

Meaghan Murray: Oh, yeah.

00:43:30

Thomas Neuberger: What are the options there when you finish the race? Because we stayed, we had a couple beverages.

00:43:35

Becs Gentry: You can take the subway all the way back.

00:43:37

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, mass transit. The subway gets it done every time.

00:43:40

Becs Gentry: Or just stay in Coney Island, have a hot dog and a margarita and see where the day takes you.

00:43:46

Meaghan Murray: That sounds better, yeah.

00:43:46

Thomas Neuberger: All right, you heard that from Becs, margaritas and hot dogs.

00:43:48

Meaghan Murray: Yeah, yeah.

00:43:50

Becs Gentry: Oh, I love that. Thank you.

00:43:51

Rob Simmelkjaer: Not until you've hung out at our party a little bit and enjoyed that great party-

00:43:56

Becs Gentry: Yeah, and been to our live show.

00:43:58

Rob Simmelkjaer: ... at Maimonides Park and listened to the live show, the Set the Pace Show with Becs and Ali on the Run.

00:44:02

Meaghan Murray: Oh, yeah!

00:44:02

Thomas Neuberger: Oh, Ali!

00:44:02

Rob Simmelkjaer: So you're going to hang out, you're going to do all the things, and then you'll find your way back to wherever you are staying.

00:44:09

Becs Gentry: You will.

00:44:09

Rob Simmelkjaer: And hey, so nice to have both of you on Set the Pace. Again, your podcast is called The Drop. It's the place to check out all the reviews and the great conversations you guys have. I'm all about Believe in the Run, your organization, and we're just psyched to have you guys coming back up to Brooklyn, psyched to see you out there this weekend. So have a great race and thanks for joining us.

00:44:34

Thomas Neuberger: Yeah, it was awesome. We love the New York Road Runners and what you guys are doing for the community and excited to be part of it, so thank you so much.

00:44:41

Meaghan Murray: Yeah, thank you.

00:44:42

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right. Thank you, Thomas Neuberger and Meaghan Murray from Believe in the Run and The Drop.

For this week's Member Moment, we're excited to have Michael Albeck joining us. Michael's going to be running this year's RBC Brooklyn Half, and running is a family affair for the Albeck family. His wife is a rising New York Road Runners program lead and their son has run at the Millrose Games with the program, and they were both honored at the New York Road Runners Youth Night, which took place this past week. Here's Meb.

00:45:25

Meb Keflezighi: Thanks, Rob and Becs. Michael, welcome to Set the Pace. To start off, we want to ask what we ask all our members. What inspires you to start running and what keeps you doing it?

00:45:37

Michael Albeck: Well, hello. Thanks for having me.

What inspired? Running's newer to me. I started during the pandemic like a lot of people, and it was kind of a coincidence that it was around that time, but I've just really enjoyed setting goals and accomplishing those goals and sometimes not accomplishing those goals. And it's just, I think it's been good for my health. I've lost a bunch of weight and it's been great for our family. It's something that we do as a family together as well. So I don't know, it's been a wonderful experience.

00:46:14

Meb Keflezighi: As we mentioned, you are a family of runners. What benefit have you seen with having a household of runners? It's always good to talk or nutrition. What was that like for you?

00:46:25

Michael Albeck: Yeah. I mean, we talk about all that stuff. I mean, hydration, nutrition. My son, he's 13 now. He's in eighth grade. He started running in sixth grade. So it's been great taking him to races and cheering him on, cheering on his whole team, and he's had a wonderful coach that's gotten a lot of people into running that probably wouldn't normally get into running.

But yeah, it's a constant discussion of who's running with who this weekend or today, and who's getting out for a run, what distance you're doing. But yeah, so it seems like it's a constant topic of conversation in the house these days.

00:47:06

Meb Keflezighi: And your wife is a rising New Yorker Road Runners program leader. And how does that... I mean, that's pretty cool to have your son run and her being involved with the New York Road Runners, rising stars.

00:47:17

Michael Albeck: Yeah. So like I said, my son, he started running with his middle school when he started going in sixth grade. And as a coincidence, my wife also became a middle school teacher during that time, and at her school, the main running coach there asked if she wanted to help out as well. So now she has a team that is also going to the same event. So it's great if there's a during-school event that she can actually go to that event and see our son run as well as helping out with her team as well.

00:47:51

Meb Keflezighi: Well, I mean, your wife and you have been part of the sport. What is that like to see the next generation take up the support that you are involved in?

00:48:02

Michael Albeck: It's great. I mean, I think these Rising Runners events, it's great to see so many young kids getting excited to run and they start them with... There's no time or anything, it's just exciting to get out there. They get some sort of gift, like a hat or a running belt or something, and then they get a medal when they finish. So I think it's exciting to see people being excited about a sport that's very accessible to many people. So yeah, it's exciting to see.

00:48:34

Meb Keflezighi: How has that been interaction for you? They always want to sprint, no matter what the distance is, whether it's 200-meter or 400-meter or a mile. What is that like to be able to interact with them?

00:48:47

Michael Albeck: Yeah. I guess a lot of the younger kids, since I'm not a coach myself, I deal with my son or try to help with him, and sometimes it's almost the opposite. I feel like he still has gas in the tank when I feel like he should be pushing a little bit harder. I mean, yeah, I think there's times when he could be pushing a little bit harder, so trying to get him to manage that in some way has been interesting.

00:49:18

Meb Keflezighi: Well, looking ahead, you are taking on the RBC Brooklyn Half. Any big goals for that race?

00:49:25

Michael Albeck: I don't think so. The last six months, I was battling a little bit of injury, like a calf strain and one of my hips isn't great. I had a great year last year with some PRs that I was very excited about, and so I don't necessarily feel like I'm going to have a PR in this race. But I think especially this weekend, I had a couple races, I ran a couple times this weekend and one was a 5K race and I felt pretty darn good. So I feel excited that my body feels pretty good.

Like I said, I don't think I'll be setting a PR, but I look forward to doing this race because it's one that I haven't done before. I'm going to have a lot of friends that are out there as well. And finishing in Coney Island just sounds like such a cool place to finish and maybe have a drink if the weather's decent once we finish up.

00:50:17

Meb Keflezighi: You know Michael, it's not about PRs all the time, it's all about getting to that finish line and especially when you're coming from injury, you don't take things for granted. You're just going to be happy that you are running.

00:50:26

Michael Albeck: Yeah, yeah.

00:50:27

Meb Keflezighi: So look forward to seeing you on the starting line.

00:50:28

Michael Albeck: All right, appreciate it.

00:50:30

Meb Keflezighi: Well, Michael, thanks for being with us.

00:50:32

Michael Albeck: All right, thanks. Nice meeting you.

00:50:34

Meb Keflezighi: Likewise.

00:50:35

Rob Simmelkjaer: Thank you so much, Michael, for joining us and for being a member of New York Road Runners. Now, it's time for the Meb Minutes.

00:50:42

Meb Keflezighi: This week's Meb Minutes is to get familiarized on a new course, whether you run a half-marathon or full-marathon, it is very important to know where you are. For me, when I did the New York City Marathon, I could not run the whole course, so

I just did the last 10 miles of the course just to be aware what it looks like, where the hills are, where the downhills are, and obviously the most important thing, to finish.

So as you get ready for the Brooklyn Half-Marathon, it is a good idea to run it or drive it, or at least be familiar in the last two miles because you want to take advantage of what the course is like, especially with Prospect Park or the downhills and when to finish. So for me, it is a good idea to be able to... Even you can Google it or you can YouTube it from previous races. So as the more you know about the course, the more your preparation is going to be and you're going to have a good execution on race day.

00:51:34

Rob Simmelkjaer: And that does it for another episode of Set the Pace. Thank you so much to Thomas Neuberger and Meaghan Murray of Believe in the Run, and to New York Road Runners member Michael Albeck. Again, best of luck to everybody running this weekend at the RBC Brooklyn Half.

And remember, if you liked this episode, please go ahead subscribe, rate, leave a comment for the show wherever you're listening. Those reviews really help us and helps others find the show as well. We'll see you next week. Enjoy the miles.