

Ted Metellus: This is Becs' and Ted's excellent adventure. We're going to go through and run this race together. Shall we talk about race day, and specifically one small modification that we've made to the start?

Becs Gentry: Welcome to Set the Pace, the official podcast of New York Road Runners presented by Peloton. I'm your host, Becs Gentry, and my New York co-host, Rob Simmelkjaer, is off this week. Filling in for him, I am honored to be joined by New York Road Runners' chief event production officer and race director, Mr. Ted Metellus. Hello, Ted.

Ted Metellus: Becs, how are you? Listeners, how are you?

Becs Gentry: Good. It's so good to see you.

Ted Metellus: I know. It's been awhile.

Becs Gentry: I feel like we go through seasons of seeing each other all the time, and then it gets cold and I disappear.

Ted Metellus: I think everyone is hibernating. And if they're not hibernating, they are bundled up a lot as they're out there on a run.

Becs Gentry: Oh, my gosh, that's me. With my glasses on, hat on, gloves on, snooed up to my nose. I'm in disguise in the runs. But mostly on my tread, let's be quite honest about that. Ted, it has been one heck of a season for New York Road Runners. There has been a lot of interruptions, which we'll talk about shortly. But first and foremost, I want to hear about your most recent trip to the running, I call it paradise. Some people might call it the mecca. I don't know. What would you call it? You're the one who's just gotten back from the most incredible trip.

Ted Metellus: Yes. Yeah. Becs, you're talking about the team's trip to Kenya, where we spent a little bit of time in Nairobi, Eldoret, and Iten. And it was an incredible trip. The team's done a phenomenal job of storytelling through our various channels. I highly recommend folks to go on and take a look at our various platforms. For those who I have a personal and professional relationship with, I posted something on LinkedIn as well to talk about the experience. But it was amazing. That's one short word to describe being able to go to the place that has produced the most champions of the TCS New York City Marathon.

I said this while we were there, these runners are not just leading our races, but they're leading their communities, they're leading their country. And they're front facing and

some of the warmest, kindest people in the world. We only interact with our runners on the elite side very quickly. They're in, they're out. They're there on business. And we went and spent quality time with them in their homes, and they were beyond excited about it. But it wasn't just about meeting and connecting with some of our champions, we also spent some quality time with our charity partners, Shoes for Africa, and saw their facility there. They have a beautiful Children's Hospital that we spent some time with some of the patients, the young people there, family, friends, and the staff, as well as the team that's working so hard in the Tirop's Angels program where they're working to raise awareness and end gender-based violence for women, children, and the like.

It was a powerful, powerful trip to be there. I think my only regret is that I did not get a chance to lace up the kicks and go for a run.

Becs Gentry: You didn't. I would've been so intimidated to even try and step out at my fastest pace is probably their most easy pace. But I know you guys... I was messaging with Sam on your team. Well, he posted a video of some of the men just running together. And I just said to him, "What a privilege to be able to witness that for real." To see that motion, that camaraderie, that unity. And they just look so in sync and perfect. And it's a training run. How?

Ted Metellus: Yeah. Yeah. And it's poetry and emotion is basically what it was to watch that. We had the opportunity to see Viola Lagat and Sharon Lokedi run together, and it was beautiful. It was conversational pace, like you and I are chatting right now. They're moving at a sub six, sub five minute mile.

Becs Gentry: Oh, my gosh.

Ted Metellus: But it was truly an incredible experience. It reminded me a lot of my family's home and family's country in Haiti. Was a simpler space, but people take such pride in their home, vibrant colors, vibrant sounds, so much welcoming, so much arm opening. And it opened up our eyes to see how much our impact as an organization is globally.

Becs Gentry: Amazing. And we want more of that and we want more people to know about it, and more people to partake in it. As Ted said, if you are interested in finding out really what happened, check out on the socials, on Ted's and on New York Road Runners. And from there, you'll probably go down a rabbit hole of everybody who works a New York Road Runners and then be on their Instagrams, which I was all the

trip.

Well, thank you for sharing that. And honestly, it is super cool to see how the elite runners live their lives. They live, eat, breathe, running. And they do it together in such a beautiful way in each of the communities that you mentioned you went to. And it's just to see what work the charities do to support other up and coming runners as well as protection for, as you say, the gender violence, is just such a brilliant give back to a world that really needs a lot of love right now.

Ted Metellus: Yes.

Becs Gentry: Thank you to everybody who supports through New York Road Runners. You're doing a great job, that's for sure.

Ted Metellus: Absolutely. Well, thank you so much. We're representing the community near and far.

Becs Gentry: All right. Listen, now let's take you out of that sunshine and dry, warm weather, and bring you back down to home here in New York City. As I mentioned, Road Runners has had quite a winter over the past few weeks. I think everybody listening knows that the East Coast has been inundated with pretty rough winter weather. We've had blizzards, we've had bomb cyclones. We've had, I don't know what other snow. Was it snow thunder we had? I don't know.

Ted Metellus: I don't know. Lions, tigers, bears. Oh my. It all came from the sky. It was something else.

Becs Gentry: It all came from the sky. And it came and it rained down on us and it snowed us in, snowed us out, however you want to call it. It's been a complete 360 change though this past weekend. Because previously race cancellations had, for the safety of not just the runners, but the volunteers and the race setup people who have to be there in freezing cold temperatures that is just not right for anyone to be out in. This weekend, it's been a turnaround. And there were not one, but two races that went off here in New York City. Tell us about this amazing feat.

Ted Metellus: Yeah. Let's take two steps backwards. Yes, three canceled events back to back to back. The last time we had this many cancellations was 2020 during COVID. In my 27 plus years of event production, to have experienced something like this was unprecedented, to say the least. And again, we were following in line with what was going on citywide. We worked in partnership with the mayor's office, special events, parks

departments, and the various agencies. And when they put notifications out about it being unsafe for people to be outside, we have to adhere to that. Yes, the safety of our participants, our volunteers, our staff, our partners, the people at large was front of mind with the decisions that were made to cancel those events.

We were very, very fortunate to work with Prospect Park Alliance and the team there to be able to squeeze in a little 5K two weeks ago. We had a race at Prospect Park. We had about 1,600 athletes that showed up and ran, which was really cool. And, well, unfortunately I wasn't there because I was in Kenya. I told the team, "Please be prepared for a unique level of energy at this event, because people are going to be so happy to be with one another again and see one another again, and engage with one another again."

Becs Gentry: Of course.

Ted Metellus: Not that it's been months and months and months like it was for COVID, but it had been long enough that many athletes hadn't seen each other since the Joe K 10K.

Becs Gentry: Wow. Yeah.

Ted Metellus: Yes, we ended up having the cancellations. We were able to get a race off the ground last week, and then this weekend we had double event weekends. We had three back-to-back 5K events.

Becs Gentry: Oh, my gosh.

Ted Metellus: This weekend was awesome, where we had the Al Gordon 5K. First time it was a 5K distance. In the past, it was a four mile. In the past, even longer than that, it was a five miler. Honoring the great Al Gordon, who's a longtime runner and supporter of Road Runners. Passed away at the age 107 years old. Took onto running late in his life. He was a strider before striders was striding. He was out there doing the good work. We were there to be able to host that event, which was great energy. And the park was beautiful. The drives were clear. The park lands themselves were completely covered in snow. And watching that sunrise was magnificent.

Becs Gentry: I'm sure.

Ted Metellus: And again, great energy. And then it followed the next day with the Washington Heights Salsa, Blues, and Shamrocks 5K. That's a race that we've been producing for over 25 years in this community. And it's a very, very

technical course. There's some ups and downs. I don't know if you've ever run this race.

Becs Gentry: I haven't. No.

Ted Metellus: Oh, you got to get it on your calendar.

Becs Gentry: I know.

Ted Metellus: I live in the Heights. It's my neighborhood. I run through many of those streets there. It's a beautiful, beautiful event when you think about some of the sights and sounds in that community. Overlooks to the George Washington Bridge. You run past the highest natural point in Manhattan. You run into beautiful Fort Tryon Park, the Cloisters, and then you make your way back down to finish on Fort Washington next to J. Hood Park. But that race was amazing. We had some special guest runners that I think we were chatting about earlier that participated. And back-to-back winners as well, which was pretty amazing. Steph Bruce made her way out and ran the Al Gordon race on Saturday. She won our women's field. We gave her a great little shout out at the start of the race. She posted some great photos there. She finished in 16:45.

Becs Gentry: Amazing.

Ted Metellus: Our non-binary winner for the Al Gordon Race was Nicholas Dill with 18:31.

Becs Gentry: Brilliant.

Ted Metellus: And then our men's winner was Issame El Jazouli who finished in 14:57, a member of the United Mexican Runners of New York. And then you might hear Issame's name again because he came back. He's like, "Not only am I going to conquer Brooklyn, I'm going to take it uptown."

Becs Gentry: Right.

Ted Metellus: He won the Washington Highest Race at 14:46 with a faster pace on a more challenging course. We also want to give a shout-out to Zachary Harris from Front Runners, who won our non-binary at 19:17. And Roberta Groner crushed it out there at 16:46 with Central Park Track Club.

Becs Gentry: Wow. Those are some astonishing times. It really does show that people were ready to get back on the roads and run.

Ted Metellus: Yes.

Becs Gentry: And, yeah, huge congratulations to Issame for getting both of those wins with a 10- second time difference on... The Al Gordon route wasn't flat necessarily.

Ted Metellus: No. Prospect Park is not flat. We'll be talking about that in a moment.

Becs Gentry: Exactly. There is a pretty gnarly hill. And then, as you said, Washington Heights was not at all easy and cruisey. That is pretty impressive. I'd say he's got a darn good 5K time there. All right.

Ted Metellus: Yeah, it's impressive. And listen, they don't call it the Heights for nothing, so you're definitely going to do some climbing. But that's super fast. I'd be remiss if I didn't say that both races, we took the time out. I got the time out to actually start both of the events. And I took the time out to honor Jeff Galloway. Jeff Galloway, a true pioneer in running. I think I would call him the very, very first running influencer.

Becs Gentry: I would. Yeah, absolutely agree with that.

Ted Metellus: He was a Olympian who transformed running and really opened it up to the general public. If that sounds somewhat familiar, as far as transforming runners, similar to what we do at New York Road Runners with the transformative power of running. He opened it up with this Galloway Method, which is a run/walk method.

Becs Gentry: Exactly.

Ted Metellus: And many people who were not introduced to this said, "I can never run because I cannot run consistently for," name that distance. And then the Galloway Method came into play and people were able to run/walk. Where a lot of folks do that method even still to this day.

Becs Gentry: Exactly.

Ted Metellus: They walk at an aid station, they have their set times, and they are able to continue moving at a solid pace and finish strong. Shouts out to you, Jeff Galloway, thank you so much for your tremendous work and contributions to the sport of running and the community you're running, and growing the sport for the general public.

Becs Gentry: Absolutely. Concur. And big love to all the

Galloway family who are working to continue his amazing legacy. And I'm sure there'll be a lot of Magic Mile celebrations in his life. His Magic Mile was his way of getting people to mark how to find your training paces when you feel comfortable to do it. Which I always love, because it makes it not sound so scary when it's a Magic Mile, another time trial or whatever it was. Thank you for saying that, Ted. Yeah, we lost one of the greats in the running world, but his legacy and his method will for sure live on forever.

Ted Metellus: Absolutely. Every mile, every step.

Becs Gentry: Yeah.

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All right. Let's work it up to the big one. We've got a pretty... All races are huge. All races are important. But there are a certain few on the New York Road Runners' calendar that really are standout big production events. And we have one coming up on the horizon, Ted. Go for it. What are we talking about?

Ted Metellus: We are talking about the United Airlines NYC Half Marathon, one of the largest half marathons in North America. Back again on March 15th, we're excited to have over close to 30,000 athletes. As I've mentioned before, and we'll continue to say, this is the springtime equivalent of the marathon.

Becs Gentry: Oh, yes.

Ted Metellus: We have pro athletes, we have broadcasts, we have international athletes, we have a huge charity team, and the masses that'll be out there running as well. It's going to be a great day.

Becs Gentry: Exactly.

Ted Metellus: And the cherry on top, and just the cutest cherry on top, is our youth that will be running out there as part of the Times Square Kids Run. You'll be running past our little people, inspiring them as they inspire you to the finish line.

Becs Gentry: Oh, my gosh. The United Airlines NYC half is happening here in New York next Sunday, March 15th, 2026. And we are going to have thousands of runners from all over the world journeying from Prospect Park to Central Park, crossing over the Brooklyn Bridge, running down the FDR. As Ted said, through Times Square, as they travel 13.1 miles towards the finish line. The famous finish line at Tavern on the Green. This is the country's largest half marathon, right?

Ted Metellus: Correct.

Becs Gentry: And it is second to the TCS New York City Marathon. The New York Road Runners team spends months planning every inch of every single runner's journey, from the expo to the start line, to the family reunion. What Ted is here today to talk about mainly is basically every single thing. You need to know, you may want to know, that your best friends may want to know. Your parents who might be trying to watch from somewhere else may want to know. It is going to tick every box of the need to, want to know list for the 2026 United Airlines NYC half.

Ted Metellus: Yes.

Becs Gentry: Okay? Are you ready to dive in?

Ted Metellus: I am. It's ready, steady, go here. It's really cool to be able to be a part of the podcast and share these stories about what the runners, what the spectators, what the volunteers, what the community at large is going to be expecting on March 15th. Bright and early on Sunday morning as we have participants from literally all over the world and all over our communities come out to venture into Brooklyn to take on this beautiful and iconic event. It's one of the two larger half marathons in North America that New York Road Runners is blessed to be able to produce. This and the RBC Brooklyn Half Marathon in May. Where do we begin, Becs? Should we start from the start and work our way down?

Becs Gentry: Yes. Let's do that.

Ted Metellus: The participant journey, as we like to say here.

Becs Gentry: Yeah. Let's start at the start. Let's talk about how the race has grown and evolved over the years, and how it has become one of the most premier half marathons in the whole of the United States.

Ted Metellus: Well, I had the pleasure of chatting with Tom Kelly. Tom has been with the organization for close to 35 years. He's our head of timing and competition management. And I was asking Tom, I was like, "Tom, give me the scoop on this event. Many of us have run it, worked it, volunteered at it, participated and engaged in it in some capacity. Give us a quick bit of fun facts about the event." This would be the 21st running of this event in this capacity. 2006 was the first time that we had this in the park, out the park, downtown finish event with the United Airlines New York City Half Marathon. The event has had so many different iterations over the years between just races inside the park, to a race that exited the park, to a race that finished downtown in Lower Manhattan to help revitalize that community there. And now, in 2026, we'll be back again to run this incredible event. And we made a couple of changes for folks to be prepared for.

Becs Gentry: Oh, I love it when Ted says that. There's a couple of changes. You just know that if people haven't heard about this, immediately they have just stopped what they're doing. If they're running.

Ted Metellus: That's it. Exactly.

Becs Gentry: I hear you runners. I hear you. You have just slowed your pace down because you're like, "Yeah, you what now? What are we talking about?"

Ted Metellus: Yeah.

Becs Gentry: Before we get there, let's just talk about the change that you mentioned before. I think it was historically so celebrated around the time of running down the West Side Highway.

Ted Metellus: Correct.

Becs Gentry: It was one of the only races that had that iconic New York City route into it. And then from then it got switched over almost, not to the other side of the island, but halfway across. And now people don't love change,

but the icon status of it running through Times Square just was amplified so (inaudible) much more. People are like, "Oh, no, we've lost the West Side Highway." But you get to run through Times Square. Super, super cool. That's the change that were before. Are we looking at something as dramatic or just are we doing minor changes here?

Ted Metellus: Minor changes. Minor changes. I think the big surprise that came out of last year's event was when we did not run over the Manhattan Bridge and we ran over the Brooklyn Bridge, and it was a welcomed surprise. I know you said folks don't like change, but change is like Thanos, it's inevitable.

Becs Gentry: Exactly.

Ted Metellus: Change is going to happen, so you have to-

Becs Gentry: It's how we grow.

Ted Metellus: ... be able to learn. Exactly. You have to learn and adapt and adjust to change. And at times you have to welcome change. And we had a very welcomed change with us running over the Brooklyn Bridge.

Becs Gentry: Which was kind of not shocking in a bad way. I don't mean that rudely, but it was shocking because the weather was terrible last year. It was foggy. And so, you couldn't really even see the incredible views. It didn't matter what bridge you were on in many ways, because the weather was just a detriment to the beauty. I love that the feedback was so positive, even though people... It might have been their first time running over a New York bridge and they're like, ooh.

Ted Metellus: Yeah. And we're the only event that has been permitted to run over the Brooklyn Bridge, which add that component to it.

Becs Gentry: So huge.

Ted Metellus: And on race day last year, I didn't think it was terrible, it was eerily beautiful.

Becs Gentry: Yeah.

Ted Metellus: Now I'm an optimist by nature-

Becs Gentry: Yes, you are.

Ted Metellus: ... so forgive me for that, but it was so cool. I'm in the lead vehicle, I take off at the start and I'm rolling. And I knew it was foggy, so the teams were all taking heightened care to ensure that we had a safe and secure course. And once we got everything off, I hop in the car, I take off on the route and we're driving it. The first half of the course, I know it like the back of my hand. We'll talk about that for a moment. But that one change on Flatbush Avenue when we made the left on Tillary and the right onto the Brooklyn Bridge, that was new and different.

And that's where you saw the fog. And it was so like, whoa. It was eerie. It was something out of a movie. And what you will see, whether you've driven on the Brooklyn Bridge making your way over to the FDR drive. Or in the case have run, or will be running, the course then goes up underneath the Brooklyn Bridge to loop around onto the FDR Drive. And that adds another level of eeriness and beauty to it as you're making way over.

When you're going and you look over to your right and you see the Manhattan Bridge, or in the case of last year you didn't see the Manhattan Bridge, it was really, really something special there. But I don't want to spoil the course description in a second, but yes, those were some of the things that I think folks walked away from saying, "Wow, that was one of the most iconic half marathons I've ever run, and I can't wait to run again."

Becs Gentry: And we have to remember that everybody got a PR last year.

Ted Metellus: Yes, yes. Brand new course.

Becs Gentry: Brand new course means you have a PR.

Ted Metellus: Exactly.

Becs Gentry: This year might be where you brush it up, or not. But let's take it to the start. Biggest change for 2026 is the new start line. Talk us through that.

Ted Metellus: Yeah. Well, Becs, before I even go there about a big change, again, in the magical world of Ted Metellus and the way I process things in the event space, it is the participant journey. You've run your fair share of races. I've run my fair share races. Where does the journey begin? After registration, after you've trained and gotten yourself ready, you have to go and pick up your (inaudible) .

Becs Gentry: Expo, baby.

Ted Metellus: Yes. Yes, yes. We have a brand new expo and a brand new expo site. Yes, yes, the expo has moved. We are now at the Jacob Javits Center at the River Pavilion, which is the same location that we have the TCS New York City Marathon Expo big pickup. The expo is Thursday, March 12th, Friday, March 13th, and Saturday, March 14th. It is going to be at the Jacob Javits Center on those days. Thursday and Friday, the hours are 10:00 to 8:00. Saturday, the hours are 8:00 to 6:00. You should have received material and information about the new location, time slots, and info on that. Anything and everything you need will be there at the expo. Our staff will be there to answer any questions, material that you can have as far as what you could share with your family and friends for spectating opportunities at home, as well as where you can watch, stream, and experience the race on this day.

Becs Gentry: Amazing. And you might hear a familiar voice on the (inaudible) .

Ted Metellus: Yeah.

Becs Gentry: If you're not sick of me on the podcast. Okay.

Ted Metellus: When you're good at something, you got to be careful, you get put in that box.

Becs Gentry: Everyone just wants to see me with these Minnie Mouse shrunken ears on at all times. It's fine. It's great. Okay. We're heading to the Javits Center. I love this. This is almost giving people a precursor to the potential full marathon that they may sign up for in their future if they are thinking of progressing from half to full marathon distance. I love that we are bringing our half marathon runners into a marathon expo center. This is just great excitement and motivation if you need it. I love that. Okay. More space, more atmosphere, more hours, I'm guessing too.

Ted Metellus: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just more material, more engagement. We outgrew the space that we were in before and we wanted to really elevate the overall event experience. And there's very few spaces in the New York tri-city area that can accommodate a volume as large as the NYC half, the United Airlines, NYC half. Making that change to the Javits Center was the next best logical decision. We're really excited about having new space. It's beautiful. The River Pavilion is magnificent because it's tons of natural light overlooking the Hudson River there, so it's going to add some really great flare to the experience. To the runners, always,

always, always apply the P rule, prior planning prevents poor performance. Plan accordingly as far as what time you're going to get there, what's going on. There's some great restaurants in the area as well over at Hudson Yards and what. Hang out, enjoy, and really experience the glory of this new expo.

Becs Gentry: And stop by Peloton Studios and come and say hi to us all.

Ted Metellus: Yes. Yes.

Becs Gentry: Buy some Peloton apparel maybe for race day. And I'm just going to (inaudible) there.

Ted Metellus: Just a stone's (inaudible) throw away from your office. You can come over and give everybody a wave.

Becs Gentry: Exactly. Right? We'll come and sign shirts and stuff. Throwing all my colleagues here extra work. All right. I'm going to let your brain lead us through, because I'm looking at the list of things and I'm like, I don't know which way Ted's brain's going to go onto the next.

Ted Metellus: We're going to continue on the participant journey. Let's do (inaudible) this dance together. This is Becs' and Ted's excellent adventure. We're going to go through and run this race together. After you've picked up your bib and gotten yourself set and you've seen the material and information that you need to know, you're building yourself up for race day. Shall we talk about race day, and specifically one small modification that we've made to the start?

This race, and I'm praying in the seat that I'm in as a chief event production officer, no more changes with this event, please and thank you. For a number of years, the race has started on the southern end of Washington Avenue in Brooklyn. Just south of the Brooklyn Museum, south of the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens is where the start line was. It made for a long narrow corral where we had restrooms and all the facilities that all the participants needed to have.

We were looking very closely at this and saying, "Okay, how can we make a slight change to this to allow there to be more runner space for folks? Warmer, more space folks to warm up? And really get engaged and get ready to go?" And we didn't have to think too hard, because all we did was look at what we did successfully with the RBC Brooklyn Half Marathon. The start line is going to mirror the start line of the RBC Brooklyn Half Marathon on Eastern Parkway, adjacent to the Brooklyn Museum. That's your landmark there

is where your corrals will be for you to make your way over. You drop your bags on either side. And again, all the material will be given to you as far as which wave you're going. There's four waves for the event. Each wave has a particular side on Eastern Parkway that they'll be entering from. They'll drop their bags. And then once you're inside of the secure start area, restrooms, pre-race water, and all types of amazing amenities will be there, including therapy dogs. I knew that was going to get you.

Becs Gentry: Can they come to the finish line?

Ted Metellus: I don't know. We have medals and all kinds of good stuff at the finish line.

Becs Gentry: I'd prefer a dog.

Ted Metellus: Well, we'll work on that. Let's see if we can get puppies for everybody. Puppies for everyone.

Becs Gentry: Yeah, I think we need one in the booth for... Can we have a therapy dog whilst we're doing the broadcast? That would be great.

Ted Metellus: It will make you super mellow, really chill, very zen-like in that moment-

Becs Gentry: Very zen, very happy.

Ted Metellus: ... of a puppy your lap. Yeah. But yes, we have a number of elements there. And that's cool having those things. And credit to the team, particularly our community programming team, our DES team that works really hard to really think about things like sensory location for our runners, lactation location for our runners, pre-raised fluids and resources that are there for our runners, and of course therapy dogs and the like.

Becs Gentry: Oh, my gosh. Oh, it all sounds amazing. Just the dogs, I'll just come start there. Does the new start affect transportation planning for our runners on the morning?

Ted Metellus: No.

Becs Gentry: Nope. Same thing.

Ted Metellus: Transportation is the same. You're still taking the trains to the same locations that you've had. Again, shout out to the MTA on the services that will be running well on race day. But you should always, always, always take a

look and see the train lines that are making your way over to either Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn Museum, as those landmarks there for your train transportation to that location. No changes to that at all.

Becs Gentry: Yeah. And we've seen on Reddit, from previous years, that runners have asked a lot about, "How early do I need to arrive? What is a realistic time window, especially with the subway variability?" What would you say is the safest arrival window? Obviously, a duration, because everyone's in different corrals.

Ted Metellus: Yeah. The safest bet is you want to be there... I always tell folks anywhere between a half hour to 45 minutes prior to the start of your race to allow yourself enough time to get yourself situated. It's the United Airlines New York City Half Marathon. Ring a bell. Ted's going to talk about flying. You would never go to an airport five minutes before your flight leaves, because you're going to have to navigate crowds and people showing up, and baggage drop and things like that you need. But if you need to use the restroom, those things come into play.

Becs Gentry: Security as well.

Ted Metellus: Exactly. Security and screening. All of those things tack on time to your start of your event. Half hour to 45 minutes, 45 minutes being a very comfortable amount of time, will allow you from going from rushing and hustling to a nice easy pace that will keep your day mellow. Yes, restrooms, pre-race fluids, a stretching warmup location, announcements and video screens to be there to line the athletes up accordingly, and then you can get yourself off and running on race day.

Becs Gentry: Amazing. Talk us very quickly through, and this is probably just more for our first timers here, the difference between corral closing time and start time for the corral.

Ted Metellus: Correct, correct. Again, I'm going to use the airline analogy again. When your flight is departing, there's a window of time to get everybody loaded in to close and prep for the next group that's there. What I'll tell you quickly here, for folks who knows, is what time this race is starting on race day. Our programs and our events will be starting at 7:00 AM with our professional wheelchair athletes men's. Women will be following up at 7:02. We'll have our professional women's division at 7:08. We'll have our push run and hand cyclists at 7:15. At 7:20,

professional men's open division, and wave one at 7: 20. Wave two at 7: 45, wave three at 8: 05, and wave four at 8: 30. You want to give yourself ample time to get to those locations there. Because, once again, security, bag drop, facilities, warm up, queue up in your corrals based on your appropriate time. And then they're going to close that up to then start moving the athletes to the start line itself.

Becs Gentry: Wow. Okay, perfect. And last quick question on that is, what happens if somebody does arrive to their corral late and it's closed?

Ted Metellus: Well, unlike an airline where you're stuck now, not able to fly, what will happen is our team on the ground will be able to get you prepped to line up at the next available wave start there. You'll be able to start with them at that point. Please pay close attention to the staff and the teams that are there to be able to line athletes up accordingly to their start time. If you arrive a little later, they'll be able to instruct you on when you can line up to start with the next available wave.

Becs Gentry: Perfect. We love all of that. And obviously, if that happens it is no stress, just breathe it out.

Ted Metellus: Everyone is going to run.

Becs Gentry: Everyone's going to run.

Ted Metellus: Here's the thing, Becs, that's really important. While the race may start at 7:00 AM, your race starts when you cross that start line. That clock starts at that time.

Becs Gentry: Exactly.

Ted Metellus: Just be mindful of that when you're out there. Just because the race has started at 7:00 AM doesn't mean that you're now X many minutes behind. When your wave is called and your start begins, when you cross that mat, your race has started.

Becs Gentry: That's all they need to know. That is what that bib is for.

Ted Metellus: Absolutely. Absolutely.

Becs Gentry: Okay. Let's talk about course cutoffs and time limits. I know this is a big question that a lot of people have. The nerves and the worry comes over us all when we are towing the line to these races that we've put weeks of

preparation into. We have seen a lot of runners asking, "Is there a sweep bus? And if so, does it pick people up? How does it work, et cetera?"

Ted Metellus: Yes, yes, yes. We will have a sweep bus on site for folks, and they'll be following behind the last athlete. One of the critical pieces that is really important for folks to know is where this route runs in relation to our other road races and events. Many of it is where there are sidewalks and open roadways, pedestrian path points. This event has one very unique component, there is no pedestrian path point on the FDR Drive. All participants have to cross the bridge and get onto the bridge at a very specific time to ensure that they can continue along on their race date. If you give me a second, I'll tell you exactly where that time is.

Becs Gentry: But that is such a cool thing to know, because there is not that many places in New York City that you can't run because it's a very pedestrian friendly city. People come here to travel around and walk it and see it. The FDR is one of the most prominent parts of the city. It has one of the most fantastic views that you'll ever see over to Brooklyn, and you cannot walk it. It is only for cars. Me, most of the time, it's bumper to bumper traffic, so you do get to take in the nice view. But it is this one time a year that you get to run on it and be on it on your own two feet. And it is very important, as Ted said, that this partnership with the city of New York is a collaborative one, and that is why we need runners to be over the bridge at a certain time so the city can reopen. The FDR is a huge artery of traffic for this city. What's the time, Ted?

Ted Metellus: That is the agreement. You hit it on the head there, Becs. And if you keep talking this talk, we're going to pull you into the events department and you start working alongside us. We have an agreement with the city to ensure that certain sections of the route are open at a particular time. They're based on our first athlete and our last athlete. And, yes, our races are walker friendly for folks moving at anywhere between a 16 minute per mile to 18 minute per mile pace to get them crossed over to the finish line there. That's a key thing.

The other thing too that you noted, which was really key, is sections of the course that are not closed to the public all the time. You mentioned earlier, Times Square is not closed to the public all the time. There's vehicle traffic, there's movement and all type of things. There's two times a year that Times Square is closed. Once is for New Year's

Eve, and the second time is for the NYC Half, United Airlines NYC Half. Those are really, really cool components. Same thing applies for the Brooklyn Bridge and the FDR Drive as it relates to there being a time that bridge is closed to the public and the roadway is closed to the public. All runners need to be to the bridge by 10:20 AM. All runners need to be to the bridge by 10:20 AM. Once they've made that point, they'll be able to continue on to the FDR Drive to make their way on the rest of the route. Any athletes that are behind that point along the route will be asked to get on a sweep vehicle to the finish line.

Becs Gentry: Okay. Amazing. They get popped onto the vehicle and you do get taken to the finish line. You can have reunion spots and everything will be as you had planned. But yeah, it is that keeping the city of New York running and happy as well.

Ted Metellus: Yes. Yes. All information about cutoffs are on our event website, so you can see where the course cutoffs are and the course diversions are there, but 10:20 is the time that you want to focus on there. The start of the last wave, as I mentioned before, will allow everyone to be able to get there safely on the pace that they have. Last wave again, as I mentioned, wave four starts at 8:30 AM.

Becs Gentry: Amazing. Great. Okay. Hopefully that has instilled some confidence into some of our listeners out there for that. And last, I would say real housekeeping, is baggage and all of that. I personally am somebody who would advise all runners to bring as minimal stuff as physically possible. Now, I know we've had really topsy-turvy weather. We literally do not know what is happening. One day it is below freezing and then the weather people are saying that next week it's going to feel like 80 degrees. It's absurd. We don't understand.

One thing I will say though, as a very experienced runner, is I have a section of my closet which is my race day donations. And even if I don't have a race planned, I know I'm always going to end up jumping into one at some point. And I have this folded up section of sweatpants and sweatshirts and beanies and gloves that I just know were going to go to the donations bin. And I just pulled them out, put them aside and were like, they are my race day donations. If I could give you all any advice, it would be to bring those layers, stay as warm as possible before the race starts, knowing full well that you are donating to people who have less and need more. And you're doing a good thing by leaving that there.

Ted has already explained that there is fluids and chill

out areas. And there are amenities for you at the start, so you don't need to bring the kitchen sink with you. And hopefully, fueling-wise, you're not going to be there too, too long before that you need to have too much extra fuel to sustain you for that race. If you can manage to condense your race day morning kit to have what you need and remove a run, I say that is key. Obviously, there are exceptions. People have medical needs, they have extra things that they do need to have right at the finish. Let's talk through that baggage check-in, no bag check-in process.

Ted Metellus: Yes. Yes. Unlike the TCS New York City Marathon, there is no pre-event baggage requirement here. If you are planning to have a bag, you'll be dropping your bag based on your assigned wave location on either side of Eastern Parkway. That's there and set and ready to go. You were mentioning bringing things, throwaway clothes, things of that nature. We will have teams that will be there to help collect all the clothing that then gets recycled and reused and provided for other people in the community. My recommendation, fly light, fly right. You want to take as little as you can and what you need based on how you physically feel. For our first time runners, you've been training in weather that's been up and down over these last couple of months. It's been more down than up. This weekend, as you mentioned here in the Northeast, we're expecting warmer temps for the weekend here.

You know if you are a warm runner, or if you run warm or you run cool. Base that on what you're going to bring with you. Yes, during the start of the event will be a little cooler because you're standing still and stagnant, but once you start getting moving, you want to shed accordingly based on that. But yes, baggage will be there and available for participants to drop their bags off prior to them starting their waves, and we will transport their baggage and it'll be waiting for them on Central Park West adjacent to the finish line area just outside of Central Park on Central Park West there is where the athletes would be able to get their gear.

Becs Gentry: Perfect. We love that. I love that. Fly light, fly right. I'm taking that with me. That's going to be in a class soon, quoted by Ted.

Ted Metellus: Yes.

Becs Gentry: Okay. We've talked a little bit about the course, but let's just go through the big points. The big sellers, let's say, about we've heard a few people speculating that, "Oh, my gosh, is the Brooklyn Bridge going to be crowded? Is it going to be windy?" All of the what ifs and maybes.

Which is fine, we do that. We think about things we can't control because that's the easiest thing to stress about. Let's just talk about the, A, that element, the Brooklyn Bridge side of things, being that it's only the second year that it's happening. And then also, after that, go straight into that amazing ramp off the bridge and onto what seasoned runners of this race who have run along the FDR a couple of times say is the toughest part, is that slog along the FDR.

Ted Metellus: Yeah. The course, you want to break it up into pieces here, and then we'll run through this quickly for both our advanced runners and our novice runners that are coming out to experience this for the first time. First part of the course is you start off on Washington just south of Eastern Parkway and making your way south, making a turn onto Empire. Up Flatbush Avenue for an out and back and then into Prospect Park. Remember, earlier we were talking about the climbs in Prospect Park. You are going to be doing a climb going into Prospect Park, exiting out of the park and through Grand Army Plaza. Flatbush Avenue is a climb. It's a slight climb heading up towards Tillary, then Tillary to the Brooklyn Bridge. Again, a slight climb.

What's interesting, and not surprising that we had a course record last year, is it is not as high a climb as the Manhattan Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge is fairly flat. There's a chance of wind and weather. Fun fact, can't control the weather, you just have to be prepared for-

Becs Gentry: It's going to happen.

Ted Metellus: ... it as best you can. Exactly. Wind is minimal there, but you are out in the elements. You don't have wind coming from your left and right more than likely, because one side is blocked off because that's where the vehicle traffic is flowing through. Okay? On that lower section of Brooklyn Bridge. The FDR Drive is your second section of the course there, that's when you have to toughen up. It's a downhill swoop onto the FDR drive and now you're counting the miles, you're counting the kilometers as you're making your way through. It is a beautiful section of town to look over again to your right side and you see the water at the East River, and see the sights and sounds of that neck of the woods there. We do have tons of entertainment on the route, and of course our incredible volunteers and staff that'll be out there as well for you.

The next section of the course is when you get off the FDR drive and make the turn on 42nd Street to cruise off. That is incredible. 42nd Street is just for you. You're running down there, and which is usually very busy thoroughfare with cars and people and everything, and now

it's just the pitter patter of feet as they make their way past our little ones that are there on the course for the Kids Times Square Run. You'll be running past them.

Make that turn onto Seventh Avenue. And again, this will be a climb. You'll be climbing up Seventh Avenue to enter into the park at Grand Army Plaza there, making the turnaround on the east side of the park to then loop around and finish at the finish line on 67th Street in Central Park. Breaking the course down into chunks is very helpful. Know that there are going to be eight water stations on the course, including a gel station on the route as well.

Becs Gentry: Great.

Ted Metellus: We'll have seven medical stations on the course as well to provide support for athletes, and entertainment posts throughout the route in 10 different locations. That's not counting-

Becs Gentry: Wow. That's (inaudible) .

Ted Metellus: Yeah, exactly. And not to mention the six cheer zones that we have out there as well. There's sights, there's sounds, but there's services as well.

Becs Gentry: Oh, my gosh, we love that. Carry your fuel that you have run with and trained with. And if you do need more, there is that one spot for gels, but hydration throughout. My advice, take hydration at every station, whether you need it or not. It's better to try it than need it later on. That's for sure.

Ted Metellus: Absolutely. Absolutely. And Becs, definitely, you mentioned it about the weather. Pay attention to the weather. The team here at New York Road Runners will be able to push information out to the athletes to let them know what to expect. If the weather is any extreme and either way, if it's looking to be warmer, how to be prepared for a warmer race. If it's going to be cooler, how to be prepared for a cooler race. Definitely pay attention to that. Because then it's on you to know, well, I need those gloves. Am I running with shorts? Am I wearing tights? What do I need to do? And then lastly, one of the things that I highly recommend many runners to do, and more and more runners are being ecologically responsible by bringing their own hydration with them. Because your pace of hydration may vary from the locations of the aid station.

Each aid station will have the ability to fill bottles for you if need be, but definitely bringing those components with you. And thank you to our incredible partners at Morton,

where we have a Morton Gel Zone there along the route for folks as well. And there'll be product at the expo that you can pick up prior to race day.

Becs Gentry: Great. But don't try anything new the day before.

Ted Metellus: Nothing new. Correct.

Becs Gentry: All right. Our runners have completed their 13.1 miles through the incredible city and on this awesome route. Talk us through the post-race family reunion finish line joy.

Ted Metellus: Yeah. This is it. You have now completed one of the most iconic events in New York, the United Airlines New York City Half Marathon. Made your way up Seventh Avenue, Central Park South, entered in on the park on the east side, made your way loop across 72nd Street and then finished down by the iconic Tavern on the Green on 67th Street. And then your post-race walk off begins where you'll receive your beautiful metal, post race fluids and amenities, food, drink that you'll need, and you make your way into the southern end of the park where you'll exit out.

All the participants, upon exiting out on the southern end of the park, will be directed again to make an immediate right turn and then head up where they can exit out of the park on either 62nd Street, 63rd Street. They can exit out or they'll be receiving their baggage. Baggage will start on Central Park West at 61st Street, and they can exit out there. Family reunion will be along that section as well. You can meet your loved ones, family or friends on Central Park West there on the Southern End. Or what I highly recommend, this is a cheat code, ring a bell. This is what you need to do is right now... I thought about this this morning when I was on my run. Make your brunch plans now.

Becs Gentry: Yeah. Look it up.

Ted Metellus: Your post-event celebration with family, friends, teammates, club mates and the like. Plan that out now. Find a venue or a site that you can have a large people, make the arrangements, lock that in and then have folks meet you there to celebrate this iconic moment.

Becs Gentry: Yes.

Ted Metellus: It's also St. Patty's Day weekend, so luck of the Irish to you. Wear some green (inaudible) and celebrate.

Becs Gentry: Yes. I love that. That's such a good idea. And

I just will add for our first timers, you will not be finishing in the same direction as the TCS New York City Marathon. As Ted said, you're coming in on 72nd and you are coming from north to south, whereas the TCS New York City Marathon goes from south to north. If anyone, I know people have superstitions about running through a finish line, et cetera. Don't worry, there's nothing. There's no bad juju here for you if you're thinking about running the TCS and New York City Marathon in your future.

Ted Metellus: Yes.

Becs Gentry: All right. And then just quickly, the final bow here on this gift is the spectators. How can people watch in the city and at home?

Ted Metellus: Yeah. We will be on ESPN2, so folks can watch the... Yes, and see Becs there. You might see me do a quick wave as I keep going there.

Becs Gentry: Yeah, I'm sure we will.

Ted Metellus: We'll be streaming there as well so you can go online and watch the race and be part of this race experience. I don't get to watch the race, I get to be part of the race on race day, but I love watching the event afterwards. And then, one, I'm paying attention to things and taking note and critique and making plans for the following year's event, but also really soaking in on what the beauty of this race is all about. And hopefully inspiring future runners to come out and participate in this event. But, yes, check out the app, download it. If you don't have it, it's our New York Road Runners running app. It's a year round app that tells you all kinds of great information about the programs and events that New York Road Runners has, as well as the ability to track loved ones, family, or friends, and check out the event.

Becs Gentry: Oh, we love that. And of course, if you're in New York City and you are not up to much on that Sunday, step out onto the streets and get that loud voice going. Our runners will appreciate every bit of motivation.

Ted Metellus: The rule is this, if you're not running, you're cheering.

Becs Gentry: Exactly.

Ted Metellus: If you're not running, you are cheering.

Becs Gentry: Yep. And just also if you are not running, not cheering, but living in the city and listening to this, there will be road closures. Don't get grumpy about it, the city will reopen after everyone's had a great morning. Join us for the fun.

Ted Metellus: Yes, yes. Plan accordingly if you're listening to this in the New York tri-city area. Again, working very closely with our partners in the mayor's office of special events. They push out notification information. We put information out on Waze and TomTom, that way your driving ability is get around to let you know how you can get around the city around the route there. But yes, we're very conscious of the fact that we are in one of the most populous cities in the world with one of the largest half marathons in the world happening.

Becs Gentry: Exactly. And then, after the race, Ted, how are our runners encouraged to celebrate when they've had their brunch, reunited with their family and friends? Is there an official after party or party or activation, or anything to know about?

Ted Metellus: Yeah. We have programs that'll be going on around the city, particularly for those that are traveling in from overseas or outside of the New York tri-city area. It's beyond the finish line programs where you can see some of the cultural programs and events. Definitely check out the different programs and events that will be going on in partnership with New York Road Runners and the United Airlines NYC Half.

Becs Gentry: Amazing. Anything else you want to add to this year's race?

Ted Metellus: Yeah. Just in closing, first, a huge thank you to our partners from the city of New York and all the agencies that work very closely with us, the amazing staff and team that do that. The hat says it all, be the light, be the brightest thing in your community, be the brightest thing in your neighborhood. You are really going to be inspiring folks that's out there. Please, please, please, as we stated earlier, the P rule. Prior planning prevents poor performance. Please be prepared for what you're going to see. Look at where those aid stations are. Look at the map, study and understand it. It may be foreign if you're not from that area, but we broke down that course for you so you know when the time's to climb, when to pace yourself, when to lay that hammer.

Go and see our coaches at the coaches area at the expo.

They'll have great information for you. Pacer, wristbands. They'll do a course preview and they'll walk you through where the resources are and services as far as Morton gel, Gatorade product, water and the like that's out there. And again, biggest, biggest, biggest thing. Bees, biggest thing. See a volunteer. Thank a volunteer.

Bees Gentry: Please, and thank you. Thank you, Ted. That was so thorough as always, and so wonderful. I don't think any of our runners will be leaving this episode with a question about the race other than... Can't wait to do it again. Where can I sign up for my next new Road Runners race?

Ted Metellus: Yes, yes, yes. Yeah. Just the season. The springtime running season is here. Like we said, we had two races go off this past weekend. The Tokyo Marathon was on Sunday. Now folks are getting out there and running. The weather's slowly going to be breaking here, so welcome to spring.

Bees Gentry: Yay. Amazing. Well, thank you, Ted, and we can't wait to see you out there on Sunday the 15th.

Ted Metellus: Yes. Can't wait. Happy St. Patrick's to everybody. Be safe out there. Have a great, great time. Bees, thank you so much. Can't wait to see you and give you a big hug. We have to talk about what your running season's going to be. What are you running this year? What goals you may have. I can share with you, I'm getting ready to run my 50th half marathon this month.

Bees Gentry: Oh, my gosh.

Ted Metellus: Yeah, I'll be going to Berlin. I'm going to international to run my first international race, which would be my 50th half marathon. Send me some good vibes to everybody that's running on the 15th.

Bees Gentry: Oh, I will. Oh, my gosh. We have so much to talk about (inaudible) .

Ted Metellus: Yes, yes, yes. For sure, for sure. But thank you so very much for having me on and sharing what we do and planning and preparation for the United Airlines NYC Half Marathon. Can't wait to see everyone out there.

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mission to transform the health and wellbeing of our communities through inclusive and accessible running experiences, empowering all to achieve their potential. Learn more and contribute at nyrr.org/donate.

Becs Gentry: Well, that does it for another episode of Set the Pace. Thank you so much to my guest host today, Ted Metellus, and his incredibly thorough breakdown of the United Airlines NYC Half. As Ted said, there are plenty of ways to keep finding out the information if you need more, but go on the weekend of the race to the expo, talk to the people, take it all in, go and meet the coaches. And most of all, have the most incredible race when you get there.

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