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Rob Simmelkjaer: Hello everybody and welcome to another episode of Set the Pace, the official podcast of New York Road Runners presented by Peloton. I'm your host and the CEO of New York Road Runners, Rob Simmelkjaer, and it's another episode another week without Becks. We're missing Becks. She is still over in Europe after a year filled with marathons for Becks, for her partner Austin. They're taking a few weeks off, so I hope she's having a great time over there.

And Happy Mother's Day to Becks and to all the moms out there who are listening, all the moms in our New York Road Runners community. Hope you all have a great, great Mother's Day Weekend. You deserve it. And it's an off weekend for us here at New York Road Runners, of course, for the moms and also so that we can get ready for the RBC Brooklyn Half, which is coming right at us next week.

This past weekend was our second annual Mindful 5K, a race that we created to kick off Mental Health Awareness Month. We had an absolutely gorgeous day at Flushing Meadows Park in Queens. Thousands of runners came out to celebrate the benefits of running for mental health.

I was there and it was so beautiful. I actually had not planned on running the race. I came in my khaki shorts and like a golf shirt, but I was wearing my running shoes and I got there and it was just one of those mornings. You ever have a morning where you don't think you're going to run, but you step outside and the air is so perfect, you're like, "Oh no, I have to run." And it was absolutely spectacular. We really loved it. We not only had the race. We had a Zen zone before the race for some pre-race meditation. Our partners had an organization called NAMI were there as well, National Alliance for Mental Illness. They were there with information for people.

It's just great to talk to runners about why they run. And so many people run because of the way it makes them feel. The answer I get most often when I ask someone why they run is that it's free therapy, right? That's how so many people see it. I know that's how I see it. And we love having this race to kick off Mental Health Awareness Month.

And what I ask the runners at the starting line of that race, I'll ask all of you as well, which is, if running is a big part of your mental health, tell a friend. Tell someone you know who is stressed out or is dealing with

whatever mental health challenges we all deal with day to day and tell them what running has done for you in helping clear your mind. Because when you do that, you're giving them a gift and you're helping them potentially discover running as something that can help them live a better life as well.

So anyway, thanks to everybody who ran. It was a great day. Our winners on Saturday. On the men's side it was Jeremy Arthur of Dashing Whippets with a time of 15:44. The non-binary winner was Pierce Lydon with a time of 17:57. And on the female side, Becca, it's either Ades or Ades with a time of 18:36. Congratulations to our winners.

And it wasn't just adults running on Saturday. We had more than 450 of our stage one, two and three kids come out for a Rising New York Road Runners at the Mindful 5K on Saturday. We had a great turnout. The kids had a great day as well, and I spent a lot of time over there giving high-fives to the kids.

Perhaps the highlight of the day for me actually was meeting two sets of kids, two schools actually who were there as part of our new middle school running initiatives. This is a program that you might remember we launched about a year ago. We announced it about a year ago. We've had a pilot program and now we're in our full first year with this middle school running program. And I met two coaches and their whole teams who were there because of this program. And I had a chance to talk to some of the kids about what it's meant for them to be in this program. They loved it. They talked about how running calms them down, how it gets their energy out, how it actually helps them in school as well. So it was kind of the perfect combination of what we do on the youth side at New York Road Runners and Mental Health Awareness Month. Really, really a great day out in Queens. So thanks to everybody who came out.

Well, as I mentioned, it's Mother's Day Weekend coming up. So to honor all of our runners who are also mothers out there, we've got two special mom guests today. The first is my good friend Carey Socol, who just a few years ago completed her quest to run 50 marathons in 50 states before her 50th birthday, running a lot of them in support of Every Mother Counts. Running is Carey's way of processing life, work, love, parenting, and also grief as she had a tragic story that she'll talk about during the interview. She's still going. She's got her 75th marathon coming up later this month, and as Carey talks about, she may try to get to a hundred. So that's coming up in just a minute.

And then Meb will be here with today's member moment featuring New York Road Runners member Dalma Garcia, a mother of two who is also the caretaker of her own mother who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Finally, in today's Meb

Minute, Meb will give us his best advice on how to prepare for mixed terrain races, something that we're hearing more and more about as the ultra running boom continues to grow.

And speaking of Meb, this week Meb celebrated his 50th birthday. I had a chance to send him a note, wishing him an incredibly happy birthday. I saw him on Instagram with his family and looked like he had a great, great celebration. The big five— oh for Meb. Happy birthday Meb from all of us here at New York Road Runners and Set The Pace.

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Our guest today, Carey Socol has run 74 marathons, 64 half-marathons, and she's been a member of New York Road Runners since 1999. But running wasn't always part of her life. She grew up swimming and playing water polo, living in South Florida and didn't discover running until graduate school at NYU where she began training with the Jeff Galloway run-walk method. Since her first New York City Marathon in 2000, she's completed marathons in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, many in support of causes that she cares about, including maternal health. Along the way she's used her long runs to manage stress, parent her kids, and even compose college recommendation letters in her head as a college counselor.

In today's Mother's Day special, she joins us to talk about running, loss, joy and how mothering shows up in more ways than one. Carey Socol, marathon machine, welcome to Set The Pace. It's nice to have you here.

00:07:54

Carey Socol: Thank you for having me, Rob. It's great to be here.

00:07:57

Rob Simmelkjaer: Absolutely. And great to spend time with you. We first met in London where you had just run the London Marathon, and since then ... How many have you run since then? I met you at the London Marathon in 2023. How many have you run since then?

00:08:12

Carey Socol: Probably six maybe since then.

00:08:15

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, yeah, that's four more than me, so well done. Congratulations. And running marathons is kind of what you do. I mean, that's an incredible number, 74 and 64 half. So we'll get into your backstory in a second, but I think the first question I would wonder is how do people react when you tell them that you've run that many marathons, especially non-runners, what's the reaction you typically get when you tell people that?

00:08:42

Carey Socol: It's funny. I kind of have a game with it. Sometimes I try not to say anything and then I'll have one of my kids will say something for me or a friend will say something for me. I try to be quite humble about it, which I'll say all the time is I meet people who have done so many more, so I'm always like, "Yeah, I know it sounds like a lot, but people have done way more than me." But people do. They're like, "What?" They'll like, "Say that again. What number did you just say?" And I'll be like, "Yeah, 74 marathons." So it's fun. It's a fun little party trick. I definitely think it is.

00:09:11

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. As much as I love running and obviously love marathons, work in marathons, I never was able to hit that. It's almost like an escape velocity I feel like where you just start doing so many marathons that the thought of another one doesn't seem like that big of a barrier. To me even having run two since last September, as I think about, "Okay, should I run a fall marathon or not?" It feels like a big decision because there's so much training that that involves. So it's not about the day, it's about the weeks and the months leading up to that. But I guess if I'd run 74, I probably would see it as like, "Oh, it's just I'm always in marathon shape, so it's just another day to run a marathon." Is that kind of accurate in terms of the way it is for you?

00:09:58

Carey Socol: Totally. I'd rather run a marathon than a training run any day of the week. It's just more fun. There's more energy. There's water for you, all that stuff. I think it became so my routine, and so I'm not necessarily always ramping up or ramping down. I'm kind of always staying in a steady state, so I'm never having that fear of it. And I love it.

Also, I think I've said this to you before, I'm not

racing. I don't go in anymore, at least with this kind of, I've got to finish in a certain time, I'm going to really kill it on all of my training runs. I'm really just going to complete them. I still get that joy. I still feel that satisfaction. I still feel the pain, which is great. If it wasn't hard, it wouldn't be so rewarding. But no, I don't.

I mean as I get older, it does become more of a, " Oh gosh, I better put in those training runs." I can't fake it. I definitely have to put it in and I'm like, " I have a marathon in a couple of weeks and I kind of didn't do my longest run this past weekend, so I'll have to do one this weekend before I go." But I still just enjoy it. I still do so much processing in my head. It's so much more than just the run for me. It's so many other things.

00:11:01

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, no, I think that makes sense. And taking that time pressure away I think is everything because if you're going for PRs, like the amount of work you have to put in, speed work and all that stuff, it makes it hard to just keep doing that over and over again. I mean unless you're a professional and that's what you do, there's only so much time we have.

Carey, you grew up in South Florida. We talked about this. And so the first time you ever saw a marathon as a child of the '80s like me was with your dad back at something that used to have called the Orange Bowl Marathon. What was that experience like and what can you remember about the first time you saw a marathon? Did you know that you just had to do one the first time you saw it?

00:11:45

Carey Socol: What I remember, I remember seeing, so the Orange Bowl Marathon doesn't exist anymore. I think they had too many very hot marathons and it fell away. But there is the Miami Marathon now, which I have done. But I just remember, I must've been like 11 or 12. I'm sure my dad has no memory of it, but we went, we had a friend running it, and so I remember being out on the street and people were falling off. It must've been a very hot year. And I just remember him being so impressed with people doing it and taking it on. And I think, I'm a very proud daughter and I always wanted to make my dad proud. So it's just this thing that stuck in my head and would play around there for years.

And it wasn't until my 20s, I moved to New York and I started to see it and I'm like, " Oh gosh," I just always had that memory of something that would impress my dad would be running a marathon. Now I didn't think I'd keep running them, but I definitely thought I would run a marathon and make him proud. And now he's begging me to stop. I mean

your knees, your hips, everything. But I think I did make him proud, but now he wishes I would-

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, he was impressed the first couple of times. Now-

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Carey Socol: Exactly-

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Rob Simmelkjaer: ... no longer as impressed. Makes sense. Sounds like a dad.

00:12:51

Carey Socol: Yeah.

00:12:51

Rob Simmelkjaer: And you started out with the Galloway method, which we've talked about on the podcast before, a run-walk method. Why did that work for you?

00:13:00

Carey Socol: Well, I was wanting to run a marathon in 1999, and I started training kind of on my own. With Road Runners I think I did some classes, and it was hard. I mean it was very hard. The park runs and all the different things, and I was getting a little bit of injury. I had an IT thing happen, and so I couldn't do 1999, that was actually supposed to be Marine Corps, that was supposed to be DC. And I had a friend who was running with Galloway and she's like, "I think you'll like this. Why don't you try it?" And the Jeff Galloway, just the run-walk was such a way, it's such a mental fix. I mean, so you're like, "Oh, I can run for three minutes. I can run for four minutes and then I can walk." So just that mental ease, it kind of just making it in bite-size pieces really worked for my psychology. And I still do it. People are like, "Do you run a 5K or a 10K with that?" Not a 5K, but a 10K sometimes. I can do it. I can do a 10K without doing it. But I just like it. It just makes me happy. It calms my nerves and I'll do it in different ways now. So if I feel like I'm in really good shape, I do a longer run. If I feel like I just need to get out there and it's hard, then I'll just do a two-in-one and just get out there and keep running. And you guys say this and I've been saying this forever, that forward is a pace, and I believe that. I mean that's always been my motto, just keep moving forward.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Now your first New York City Marathon was in the year 2000. And was that supposed to be kind of a bucket list, check that box one and done? Was that the one dad saw for the first time?

00:14:28

Carey Socol: Yes. Definitely dad was there, parents were there. I had gotten, I started a new job. That's actually when I became a college counselor at a very prestigious high school and I was working and I was overwhelmed and I tried to throw it all in, start a new job, run a marathon, just put it all in the mix. But yeah, that was my first one. And my memories are, it's 25 years. This year will be my 25th anniversary of a marathon.

00:14:51

Rob Simmelkjaer: Wow.

00:14:51

Carey Socol: And it was super special. I mean, there's nothing like New York. I have a lot of others that I love, but New York is just that. There's nothing like it. And I keep going back. I have such FOMO. I can't be in the city if it's going on. I can't be in any city if I know there's a marathon going on. Then I have to run it. But I really, I'm either here running the marathon at this point, Rob, or I leave. I've done some marathons on the same weekend because I have to do a marathon that weekend. It's just too much FOMO for me.

00:15:17

Rob Simmelkjaer: I've heard people say that, if they're not running it, they can't even be in town.

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Carey Socol: You can't.

00:15:21

Rob Simmelkjaer: You could go downtown. If you're down in The Village, you could probably not realize the marathon's going on.

00:15:28

Carey Socol: New York is like Boston. I could go and cheer for people. Like that, I wouldn't feel so much FOMO, but here I just can't, I can't do it.

00:15:34

Rob Simmelkjaer: I get it. I totally get it. That's awesome. So what happened? So it was supposed to be one. I mean,

listen, I've heard the story from a lot of different people, but when did you realize it wasn't going to be just one marathon? I'm sure you didn't realize at the time it was going to be 74, but when did you realize there had to be another marathon?

00:15:51

Carey Socol: So that was November of 2000, and I had started with Galloway and I made friends and I made this community and I realized we liked meeting on the weekends. It was a great way, I mean, I'm still, some of my closest friends are from this Galloway program from the early 2000s. And so I had run and I wanted to keep up the training. I liked it. And so a girlfriend of mine said, "Let's go do Jersey." It's in May. It's six months later or it's April or something like that. And I was like, "Okay, let's do that."

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Rob Simmelkjaer: This was the Jersey Shore Marathon, which also no longer exists sadly.

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Carey Socol: Right. And that remains to be my PR, which I'm again, I always qualify, I'm not fast, which I need to stop doing because I feel like I'm always putting it down. If people say, "Oh my God." And I always say, "But I'm so slow." And it frustrates me that I still qualify the fact that I've still done all these marathons. But that was my PR.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: What was your PR? I actually don't even know this. What was your time?

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Carey Socol: It was 4:26.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: 4:26.

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Carey Socol: It's nothing impressive but ...

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Solid. It's a solid time. Absolutely.

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Carey Socol: It's solid. And I did a bunch in that kind of range for a long time. And now I'm really happy to break five hours at this point and that makes me happy, but

doesn't always happen.

00:17:00

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right, so there you are. Two races in, two states in. That's a good start. Where did the idea of running a marathon in each and every state come into play? How did this happen?

00:17:14

Carey Socol: Well, it came about slowly. I did New York and then New Jersey, then New York again and New Jersey in two years. Just I was staying with my friends and running. And then I think someone said, "Let's go do ... We're doing New York next year. Let's do a training run in Rhode Island." So you get your long training run or you do a marathon, come back and do New York. I'm like, "Oh, okay." That was fun. And then I think the states kind of nearby. We went to ... Someone's, "Oh, let's go to Baltimore," or, "Let's go to Nashville." It became fun friend trips. I've traveled for the majority of my states with friends, with other running friends, and it just became a weekend away.

Later on when I had kids, it became a real escape, which I was ... You know that break of parenting? And it kind of started to add up and then I'm like, when you're on these marathons or you're at these places, you see everyone coming back or running the 50 states, you get that bug in your ear. That's such a cool way to see the country. And I've seen the country. And I really recommend it. It was such a great ... And it's a community. You see different people or the same people at different marathons and what are you doing next? Where are you going? So I love that I've been to all 50 states and seen so much of the country. It's really fun.

00:18:25

Rob Simmelkjaer: I love it. I mean, the idea of marathons as a form of tourism has taken off so much. I mean that's what's driving so much of the energy around the six star medal and people. The trip is half the fun, I mean, if not more. Going and running the Tokyo Marathon. For me, people ask me how I like the Tokyo Marathon. I like the race. It was a good time. I enjoyed running the race. But going to Japan, that's really what was most exciting about that. And so it's pretty cool to have experienced that. I know a lot of people who've done the halves in all states, but to do a marathon in all 50 states, that's a lot of running. It's impressive.

00:19:05

Carey Socol: Well, the Tokyo Marathon is a sore subject for me 'cause I keep trying to get in, my friend, but I am

doing Sydney, so once that became another star, I'm like, "Well, I'll do Sydney before Tokyo."

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Rob Simmelkjaer: You're going to still be missing that six star. You will have six races, but the way that works, you won't get the medal yet. So we'll have to see if we can somehow get you into Tokyo.

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Carey Socol: Please. I'm trying. I'm trying.

00:19:24

Rob Simmelkjaer: Now you ran Boston, Carey, the year after the bombing?

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Carey Socol: No, both years. So the year of the bombing-

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Rob Simmelkjaer: The year of the bombing and the year. Okay. So what was your experience there? Where were you when the bombing took place and then what was it like to go back the next year?

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Carey Socol: So I ran it in 20 I think that was what, 2012? 2012. I had my family with me. My aunt and uncle live in Boston. My cousins were there. I was running for a charity. Again, as you can hear by my PR, I did not qualify with my time, but I raised a lot of money. I'm very proud of that.

But I was about a mile from the finish and I remember starting to see people along or the policemen along the course, looking at their phones, looking at their stuff, and I'm like, "Something's going on." It's just like you could start to sense all the phones and all the stuff. And I'm like, "Well, they're going to stop us if something is wrong." Kept running and then all of a sudden it backed up. Obviously there's a stop and it backed up about a mile from the finish line and we waited for 10, 15 minutes until the word got back. "It's over. It's done."

I remember walking back to my aunt and uncle being like, "What happened?" Didn't know what happened. And then you see people who have finished and you haven't finished, but you just run 25 miles. And it was just a really eerie, scary day. Luckily, I run with my phone and I always will now because of that experience, just for safety. And I had been able to just, there's no connection, but I was able to text my family. I was okay. I would meet them back at my aunt

and uncle. Luckily I had told them not to be close to the finish line 'cause I just knew it would be, in general, it would be very crowded. So it was crazy. It was really crazy.

And then I had tons of people say, "That counts now. You've done Massachusetts. It counts." I'm like, "No, no, I didn't finish. I didn't cross the finish line." So I was adamant about going back the next year for so many reasons. And also being a proud marathon community member, I'm going to go back and Boston strong and really proud to go back and do it and finish it.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: I don't think I've spoken to anyone before who was behind where it happened. And so that's a perspective that is interesting to hear and obviously a terrible day, but good for you getting back out there and officially completing it the very next year. It's a great story.

It's Mother's Day Carey. You're our Mother's Day special guest and you're a mom. And I'm always curious when I talk to marathon moms how you do it. I mean, how have you been able to balance running and running this much in this many places with being a mom? Do your kids come along? Are they into it as well? Is it like a family event when mom goes to run one of her 74 marathons?

00:22:06

Carey Socol: No. In fact, they're so over it. They don't even. Like I can barely get them to come to New York these days. They're just ... I mean, they're so proud and they find ways to tell their friends in really funny ways. I have a funny text. My daughter last year I think, or two years ago after New York, she was out to dinner with someone and I had just finished the marathon and she texted me, some couple next to us are really excited that their friend ran two marathons. And I'm like, "Girl, my mom's around 68," or something really funny.

But they were not like, the stroller, I was not running with them in the stroller. It was really my break. It was really my time that I would negotiate to go for a run. It's how I've mothered. It's how I've done my job. It's how I've managed stress, anxiety. Anything is a run for me. And that's why it's not about the speed. It's really about the ... I do run with music now, but for many years I didn't. I process a lot of stuff I'm going to do at work in my head. Running just, it literally calms me. And I know I don't really take that, but they are super proud. But I think that they're a little like my dad, over it.

00:23:12

Rob Simmelkjaer: Parenting takes something to calm you a lot of the time. I mean, I experience it. Your kids can get you pretty worked up. Let's face it. Things go wrong, issues happen, disputes, disagreements, whatever it is, especially when they're teenagers like I've got going on right now. That run to clear everything, I can tell you, it certainly makes me a better parent. I'm able to deal with my girls much more calmly than I am otherwise. And after a couple of days of maybe not being able to run, I can see myself slipping when it comes to my parenting skills.

00:23:48

Carey Socol: Absolutely. They'll know. It is a time that if I go run, they leave me alone, for the most part. If they call me during a run, I get so annoyed.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Oh, me too. Me too.

00:23:55

Carey Socol: And it messes up with my clock, everything. And I'm like, "What? You know I'm for a run." But for the most part, they know it's my time. They know when I come back I will deal with things better. They'll know if I'm anxious, go up for your run. And it just really, it really, they get it in that sense.

00:24:11

Rob Simmelkjaer: Your Peloton handle, Marathon Mom. I think that fits it pretty well. What's your relationship with Peloton? Are you on the treadmill, on the bike? What are you doing when you're doing Peloton classes?

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Carey Socol: So I have been riding a Peloton since 2015. My late boyfriend, Howie was an early adapter of it, not ... We always say there's like a very first, there's an OG OG and then there's the OG part B and we're the OG part B. And so we got bikes and we started riding and he had gotten me a bike as a gift and gave me the handle Marathon Mom. And this is back when I could have been Carey. I mean there was only 200 of us and he just went by his last name. Our friends are their first name. It was very early days. And so he had just got it and set it up for me, Marathon Mom 'cause it's actually, I guess, and I can't believe that's the name I gave myself when I met him on a dating app 12 years ago. So he put it there. I thought it was cute. And now, I mean I do have my issues. There's a million marathon moms Rob with every number letter mixed, but I'm the original. I was the first one in 2015.

So I was riding with the bike and I'm still riding on the bike. I did one this morning. And the tread, I'm in a New York City apartment. I couldn't fit it. But I do run with the app all the time, and I've been for 10 years now an avid Peloton user and love it, use the app, use everything.

00:25:33

Rob Simmelkjaer: And I know Howie, he was a big part of this story. He introduced you to Peloton, also was there with you for so many of your marathons. And my understanding is you were pretty close to completing your 50th state marathon when Howie passed away very suddenly and tragically. Can you talk about that time and that experience and what that meant to you?

00:26:04

Carey Socol: Absolutely. I mean it's out of a movie. I mean it was so surreal. We were longtime partners. He had gotten me into the Peloton. He had supported me. He was so excited about my marathons. I think of my 50 states, I think 25. He came with me. He was just really proud, just such a proud partner about what I was doing. We talked about it all the time and we had set up a longtime goal or I had set up a longtime goal that Hawaii would be my last of the 50 states. It's the 50th state. My best friends live there and we were going to go and I think my parents were coming, not that many people and my friends who live there and they're just a couple people. I wasn't making the biggest deal out of it.

And tragically, literally two weeks to the day of the marathon, he passed away unexpectedly. And beyond being devastated and it was just a really awful time. The marathon was in two weeks. He was so excited by it. It was my goal to finish all 50 before my 50th and I just knew he'd want me to go and I knew he'd want me to go finish that marathon. And I also just thought to myself, it would be so much worse sitting at home, not running that marathon in my grief. That would be the last thing he wanted. And so it became a little bit bigger. His sons said, "We're coming with you." And his daughter-in-law and my daughter came, and one of my running husband I call him, Gary came. And we just had a big group and some other friends in Hawaii. And it was so special and so incredible.

And then his boys jumped in and ran the last a hundred yards with me. And if you ever can find that online, and I'm like sobbing and Max is in his crocs 'cause he wasn't planning on it. It was just one of the most memorable, emotional, honestly right out of a movie script. You see me crossing after my 50th state with his boys by my side who just lost their dad. So it's wild. It was a wild time.

00:28:06

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah, that sounds incredibly intense. And we have so many stories. I always say that there are 50,000 stories at the starting line of a marathon, and part of what we try to do at Road Runners is learn some of those stories and tell some of them so that other people can be inspired by them. But yeah, that's a story that I think more people should hear. It's sad but incredibly inspiring as well.

00:28:35

Carey Socol: Absolutely. And he was such a proud partner with it and was so impressed. Yeah, I mean it was just one of those things that it was so tragic and yet during that race, he was very much with me. When I do races all the time, I really think about that, and yeah, it's just a way to still feel connected to him.

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Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah.

00:28:53

Carey Socol: And we're doing Peloton.

00:28:55

Rob Simmelkjaer: Yeah. We've had so many people on the podcast talking about running and dealing with grief and how it's helped them as well. So it's incredible the connection that we can have between those things.

You are obviously someone who thrives in the back of the pack. Any advice for us, Carey, in terms of how as a race organizer at New York Road Runners, we can make that experience a good experience for people who are running more toward the back of the pack. We focus on it a lot. We try to make sure that there's water there and Gatorade and fuel, and obviously we keep our finish line open later than anybody when it comes to the majors.

What do you think is special about that back of the pack experience and how we as a race organizer can make sure it is a great experience for people?

00:29:44

Carey Socol: It's such a good question 'cause I know I struggle with starting in the back because I feel like it's going to take the day longer and New York is going to get dark and you do lose a lot of the excitement when you're up closer into the front. So I don't know how other than starting New York earlier, which I still think you can do because of the time difference. But it's just I think, I think you do a

good job and I think back at the packers, there's so much camaraderie because we are who we are back there and there are other Galloway people running and we know how to put our hand up to signal that we're going to stop. So we're really, we're very, I think courteous.

I do think it's a struggle. We want to have the water, we want to have the cheers, we want to have the support, but it's a long day for people at certain races and so there's only so much I think you can do.

00:30:33

Rob Simmelkjaer: We did tweak it a little bit last year to try to get to a somewhat earlier final finisher. And that did have a pretty good effect. I think our final finisher was at around 9:45 last year, which was early because we'd had people coming in at 10, 11 o'clock at night. So that was a step in the right direction. We have to be careful obviously how much of that we do because we don't want too many fast runners behind, too many slower runners for the obvious logistical challenges that can create. But yeah, we have tweaked that a little bit.

00:31:03

Carey Socol: Well, you won't like my answer, but I didn't mind that the year after Covid when it was less runners, that was actually really nice. I can't help but think that was nice.

00:31:12

Rob Simmelkjaer: A lot of people wouldn't like that answer. All those folks were hoping to get in. That was the year where we only had about 50% capacity, but yeah, that would definitely make it a more open running experience for everybody. No question about it.

I'm curious, your job, we've talked about what you do. You're a college counselor. You help kids get into the college of their choice and you've been doing that for a while. And I'm curious how you see running as part of that for kids. A lot of kids, maybe they run track or cross-country, I'm sure they're putting that on their resume to get into college. Do you have more kids that are actually making running kind of part of what they do and how they present themselves in terms of getting into a college?

00:31:59

Carey Socol: My school isn't such a big sports feeder for many sports. We definitely have a great track team, great track coach. She's a marathoner also. We love to talk about that. I do see running and I think you and I have talked about it as such a good inspiration for just mental health

and for staying focused on school. And if you can succeed in even one-mile runs, two-mile runs, it's going to really help your academics. It keeps you focused. I mean I think it just permeates your whole energy and your whole focus in general. And I think you asked also about my kids. I think I lead by example. They see how much running I'm doing, so whether they don't like running, but they see that I have goals and that I accomplish them and I'm not just all talk.

So I think also explaining that to my students, whatever their goals are and too, that everything is doable. And so I think, you and I have talked about working with those students that really that would help to feel mentored by someone A) who knows how to help them get into college. And with the college process, I'm all about fit, right? I'm not about a name brand for the sake of it. I'm really about where will your kids be successful and kill it, go somewhere and kill it. And whether that's if they get hobbies in running or athletics, and obviously I think sports and just good health and activities it's just key to how you feel about yourself every day.

00:33:19

Rob Simmelkjaer: There are more and more young people who are making the marathon like a rite of passage. 20 years ago, most marathoners were in their 30s, 40s, 50s and beyond. It was an older person kind of a crowd. But now we're seeing this huge surge of college kids who are applying to the marathon and it's like the thing they do after their senior year or even during their senior year to kickstart their adult life, which I think is so interesting. And it's great for the sport, it's making it younger, it's creating a whole new kind of set of consumers, if you will, for what we do. But what are your thoughts on that? I mean, you work with young people. What do you think is driving this sudden popularity of running and running marathons among a pretty young cohort of kids like 21, 22 years old?

00:34:11

Carey Socol: I love it. I have a friend, one of my former students, she went to Wash U and then she ran the St. Louis Marathon and she just I think got in for New York this year and she's really excited. I think students at this age, in their early 20s, I think they want to have some goal that they start, like you said, kicks them off with their career. Here's a bucket list thing. If I can do this. I mean, what's coincidental is I kind of did it as I was starting my career, and I think it's like a balance. If you're nervous and you have anxiety about what your career going to be, but you can kind of balance it with this other goal and something to distract a little bit.

And I think as students or kids are coming back, young adults are coming back to the city or it's just something you can control. It's scary, it's big, but you can control it and then it helps with all the other things. It just puts things in order for interviewing, for presenting yourself, for having a job. And I think also a big thing, which is what stuck me with it is community. People are joining these clubs and you have friends. I mean, again, my closest friends are 25 years old from running with them and talking because you talk about everything. They know everything about me.

00:35:15

Rob Simmelkjaer: I just think, wow, what an awesome thing to have on your resume even as you're going out for that first job. Coming out of college that you've run a marathon. I mean, employers are going to look at that and be like, "Wow, this is a young person with some discipline, the ability to persevere, get through hard things." I've always believed that runners overindex for being successful because of the lessons you learn out there training for these big races. So I just think it's brilliant.

00:35:45

Carey Socol: Absolutely. You're showing, like you said, determination, discipline, all those things that an employer wants. We see that when students are working. If they work during high school, that's another thing that colleges can see, oh, they're responsible, they're diligent. Even if they don't have to per se work, they're giving back. Maybe they're saving for something. There's so many things about working and running and being on a schedule or determination and finishing what you start that is so great for life.

00:36:13

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right. So I want to do a little speed round with you, Carey, because for people who are hearing this run a marathon in 50 states, I'm sure there are a few out there who are thinking, "Oh wow, that'd be a cool thing to do." I'm actually, frankly thinking about it myself. I'm thinking more halves. I don't think I could do 50 marathons, but I could definitely do 50 halves. I'd have to go back and look how many states I've got already. Probably not that many. Maybe three or four. But okay, let's do a quiz on certain things and answers on the various marathons you've run. Okay, here we go. What was the most beautiful marathon?

00:36:50

Carey Socol: Probably Big Sur, California. I also loved Juneau, Alaska. That was beautiful too.

00:36:55

Rob Simmelkjaer: Oh my god, Big Sur is spectacular. Alaska, that's on my bucket list. Those both sound incredible.

The most surprising marathon?

00:37:06

Carey Socol: People often ask me kind of what was your favorite or surprising kind of in that way. And I oftentimes say Missoula, Montana. It was this beautiful little small city or town, great scenery, and it was like the marathon I remember where it felt like I went for a 10K. I just remember being like, "God, I just finished?" I felt so good. The crowds were, I mean, as much as I love New York, I love a small marathon. I love to just get in my zone and peaceful and it was just beautiful. I loved it.

00:37:33

Rob Simmelkjaer: What was the hardest?

00:37:36

Carey Socol: The hardest was probably a combination of REVEL Rockies, which is basically outside of Denver 'cause it's like downhill. And anyone who thinks they want a downhill course, you don't. Your quads are killing it. It was really much tougher than I thought. And then Morgantown, West Virginia. It was so hot. It's a really hilly course. It was brutal. It was really hard.

00:37:59

Rob Simmelkjaer: West Virginia is definitely hilly. I could see that being difficult.

What was the best medal of all the races?

00:38:06

Carey Socol: Well, I guess you can say it's the best, but it's certainly the biggest, is Little Rock, Arkansas. If you haven't seen it, google it. It is ginormous. It weighs, I don't know, 10 pounds. It's ridiculously fun. It's hilarious. But it's humongous and I'll call it the best because it's certainly the most unique.

00:38:26

Rob Simmelkjaer: I guess Little Rock. I've never heard of the Little Rock Arkansas Marathon, so you may as well have a big medal. People will learn about it that way. It's good marketing.

00:38:34

Carey Socol: It's a great marathon too. It's great.

00:38:35

Rob Simmelkjaer: Absolutely.

What was the best post-race meal that you had in any of these marathons?

00:38:42

Carey Socol: So I do this weird thing after a marathon. This is going to sound so weird. Once I kind of get back to my hotel room or wherever I am, I like a latte. I just like a hot coffee. I sit there, just zone out. And then my dinner, typically, I love a burger and fries. Just the best burger and fries you can find me. I want a burger.

00:39:04

Rob Simmelkjaer: I can't blame you there. That is a great one. I tend to go, well, I've done pizza a lot. I love pizza after a marathon. But let me tell you, Tokyo, Carey, I went to it. If you get into it one of these years, I'll tell you a place to go not far from the finish line where it's a standing sushi bar in Tokyo. And the standing part's great 'cause I'm worried about sitting usually at that point after a marathon, I'm worried I'm going to cramp up. And so I stood at this bar and it was like a revolving door of sushi and beer.

00:39:35

Carey Socol: Oh, I love that.

00:39:36

Rob Simmelkjaer: And everything. I mean, oh my god, that's a post-race meal I will never forget. It was incredible.

00:39:42

Carey Socol: I will do that.

00:39:43

Rob Simmelkjaer: What was the most underrated marathon?

00:39:47

Carey Socol: I'm a big fan. I've done it twice now in Detroit. I think Detroit is a great marathon. You run over the bridge into Canada, you come back around through an underground tunnel for a mile, which is wild. It's dark. It's just a weird experience. Again, it's like that size crowd I really like. It's mid-size. The city comes out, Detroit's really hopping these days. And I just think it's a great. It's easy. You can start right there. Finish right there. I love an easy marathon with logistics, so I highly recommend Detroit.

00:40:17

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right. And last one, and I have an answer I'm expecting here, Carey, which one had the best fans?

00:40:25

Carey Socol: You got me. I mean there's no question. I mean, I think in my memory, Chicago is right behind it to me, but New York was. It is. It's why I keep coming back. It's why I can't miss it. It's the best and it's New York.

00:40:42

Rob Simmelkjaer: We had to. We had to leave that one for last, obviously, to get the answer that we had to have 100%.

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Carey Socol: Absolutely. Absolutely.

00:40:48

Rob Simmelkjaer: So you got number 75 coming up. What does that mean to you? And once you're at 75 of something, I mean there's kind of an obvious question. You're three quarters of the way. Is 100 on the map?

00:41:04

Carey Socol: It is. I mean, I can't help it. I did all 50 states before I was 50, but I'd done more than 50 marathons. So I was at 60-something when I did the 50th state and DC. And then I'm like, "I like this part of my life. I like that this is it. I can't imagine being done and stopping. It's just part of my identity. It's part of what makes me tick. I don't see why I would stop." So it's just setting another goal and deciding, okay, let's go to 100 before 60. And that means I have to do three and a half a year. So three some years, four some years.

So in a couple of weeks I'm doing Bayshore in Traverse City, Michigan. I will be up there vacationing. And well, the funny story is I didn't even know there was a marathon there that weekend and I was going. And someone said, "Oh, there's the marathon that weekend." I'm like, "There is? Oh, okay." So I started training two months ago and doing that. And then I have Sydney coming up and New York. So I have my three this year and maybe we'll sneak in a fourth.

00:41:58

Rob Simmelkjaer: Traverse City is gorgeous.

00:41:59

Carey Socol: That's what I hear.

00:41:59

Rob Simmelkjaer: I'm sure that's going to be a beautiful, beautiful marathon.

00:42:02

Carey Socol: Yeah.

00:42:03

Rob Simmelkjaer: I love it. It's amazing. And so for Mother's Day, do you go for a run on Mother's Day? Do you go out and run a long way or do you take a day off?

00:42:12

Carey Socol: Well, I missed my long run this past weekend, so I have to do something. I'll probably do it Saturday 'cause I actually scheduled a Mother's Day day with my two kids and my son's birthdays on the next day, so we're going to go see some theaters. So I'll do my long run Saturday and take Sunday off.

00:42:26

Rob Simmelkjaer: And what do you say to moms out there who, and there's so many who they run, but they're always trying to figure out how to run more and how to balance all these things. What's your advice on how to balance motherhood with running and running at the kind of scale that you have run at?

00:42:44

Carey Socol: It's tricky. I have always found ways. I run home from work, so I build it into my commute. That's a really great way to do it. When I would do these marathons when my kids were younger, I'd go to a college counseling conference every year and I would build it around that. So I remember one year going to a conference in Toronto and then going to from there, I built in a day and went to Omaha. So I would find ways to kind of build it into. The weekends I already had coverage for the kids.

And then you get people to help and the kids get a little older and you know you can go for a run and you build it in. And the weekends, if you start early on the weekends, I don't think you need to run seven days a week. Although in the summer I tend to do that. But I think if you just get a base of four to five to six during the week, twice a week, and then you build in a long run on the weekends, it's enough base. Especially like me, I'm not racing. I'm running for my head and my heart and my soul. So if you're not racing, you don't have that kind of angst about it. It's really for joy. I love it. I look forward to it.

00:43:46

Rob Simmelkjaer: Well, I am impressed. It's quite a feat that you have accomplished and you're still doing it. And you're doing it while you're working and you're momming and you're doing it all. So keep going. That's all I can say. It's incredible. We love having you as a Road Runners member, love having you as part of the community and can't wait to see when and where number 100 happens for you. But in the meantime, Happy Mother's Day, enjoy it and thanks for coming on with us today. Really great having you.

00:44:13

Carey Socol: Thank you. My pleasure.

00:44:14

Rob Simmelkjaer: All right. Carey Socol on her way to 100 marathons, but 75 is up next.

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

Today's member moment is with Dalma Garcia, a longtime member who's been running marathons since 2014. Her first race was especially meaningful. Her mom was in the stands at the finish line, a memory that's become even more powerful in the years since her mother's Alzheimer's diagnosis.

These days, Dalma balances marathon training with being a mother to her two daughters and also caring for her ailing mom. Dalma will be running the upcoming RBC Brooklyn Half accompanied by her youngest who will be running in the Boardwalk Kids Run at the RBC Brooklyn Half. Here's Meb with Dalma.

00:45:34

Meb Keflezighi: Thanks Rob. Dalma, welcome to the Set the Pace podcast. How are you doing today?

00:45:38

Dalma Garcia: Very good, thank you. Thank you for the invitation.

00:45:41

Meb Keflezighi: No problem. Great to have you. So your mom was there when you completed the first NYC marathon in 2014, which I was also in. So it was great to race with you-

00:45:51

Dalma Garcia: And I remember seeing you.

00:45:53

Meb Keflezighi: Great to race, share the New York roads with you. Can you describe that day and what it meant for you to share that significant moment with your mom?

00:46:04

Dalma Garcia: It was amazing. I had to ask my family not to let my mom or not let me see my mom at mile 22 because I felt like I was going to break down at that point if I saw her. So she was at the bleachers and that's how come I actually saw you in an event with Team For Kids that year. So my mom was at the bleachers, and at the very end I kept hearing, well, everybody was shouting and I heard my brothers shout my name finally. But I was about to cross the finish line and I looked to my left and I see my mom. And my mom, I just see her mouth moving. So I just see her features and she's just telling me like, "Go. Finish. You got this," something like that. I kept seeing her. But it was an amazing moment and it meant a lot for me at that moment, but it means a lot more for me now because she has Alzheimer's dementia and so now she's unable to even recognize me. So having her there, that was, it's been, it's a big deal for me.

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Meb Keflezighi: The finish line is always epic, but having your other significant or family, friends there is pretty big deal. And to have her there was, I'm pretty sure experience of a lifetime.

00:47:21

Dalma Garcia: Absolutely.

00:47:21

Meb Keflezighi: How has your experience of running changed since you began caregiving for your mother? Has there been a particular run that felt especially meaningful or challenging during this time?

00:47:33

Dalma Garcia: Well, it has been challenging since I had my little one in 2017 and then my mom got Covid in 2020. And after that is when it got really challenging because my mom's dementia progressed very quickly. And so at that point, every marathon, I continued to do marathons. I never skipped one. But it was like my pace went from, my PR in New York was 4:13 and I went to six hours. My training was not the same. Nevertheless, I was still running.

00:48:11

Meb Keflezighi: Amazing. Just incredible. I'm dealing personally the same thing. My dad has some dementia right now and he still recognizes us. His long-term memory is incredible, but short-term memory is not there and it's decelerating quickly. But our loved ones, our heroes, it's hard to see them in that predicament. My dad walked over 225 miles to save his life, navigate, and then now he doesn't know where the restroom is or where ... He's forgetful. So it's kind of tough. I can empathize with what's going on. But running kind of relieves us as a therapy.

00:48:45

Dalma Garcia: 100%.

00:48:45

Meb Keflezighi: You mentioned that your daughter loves traveling with you for destination races. Can you take us to one of the memorable trips together? What was it and why does it stand out for both of you?

00:48:58

Dalma Garcia: Chicago.

00:49:00

Meb Keflezighi: Chicago. Tell me, how was it, when was it?

00:49:01

Dalma Garcia: Because I always thought that nothing, no race was going to top New York City. Chicago was very close to it. And then my daughter, she went along with me. She was turning 16 that year. Her birthday is in October as well as the race. And so we did a lot that year. We went on a cruise, we did a bunch of things around that month, but one of them was the Chicago Marathon. And she absolutely enjoyed the energy. She enjoyed the entire trip, and most importantly, the after party where we went to engrave our medals. And then she met a bunch of runners and she was like, "Everybody here is crazy" 'cause we were all dancing after a race and everybody looked like they were just fresh. But she absolutely enjoyed it. It was very special.

00:49:57

Meb Keflezighi: Experience of a lifetime and what a wonderful it is to be able to celebrate with your fellow runners. You also, I guess have your 7-year-old daughter will be running her first race, Boardwalk Kids Run at the RBC Brooklyn Half. What advice have you given her?

00:50:13

Dalma Garcia: Well, I always thought she's a brave one, but my advice to her, because she's very competitive, I always tell her, "It's your pace, your race, your pace, just run. What we've been training is you run not too fast. Pace yourself." That's what I always tell her, "Just pace yourself. You don't want to get tired or overwhelmed. Just nicely just reach the finish line. Everybody that reaches there is a winner, so you are a winner already." So, yeah, that's all I tell her. And most of the times I just encourage her to continue running.

She's a really good supporter. She sees ... I'm driving and she sees runner. She's like, "Go runner. Go runner." So she already loves this. She's seen me all my life, all her life as a runner, so.

00:51:04

Meb Keflezighi: Well, balancing on a race is very important to be able to push her and pace yourself and finish strong.

Talk about balancing. Balancing running with your caregiving and motherhood must be incredibly demanding. Can you share a specific moment when running has given you that exact why you needed it most?

00:51:24

Dalma Garcia: It gives it to me every time. I have to say, every time I am overwhelmed with different, whether it's as working in my job and the demands of taking care of my mom and my kids and time. I always think like, "Oh, I'm too tired. I'm not going to do it." And then that's when I actually do need it. Like I can go and take care of my mom and take care of my daughter and go now cook and clean. But that's only if you give me at least 30 minutes to run beforehand. So if I run, I have the energy, I can do it all.

00:52:00

Meb Keflezighi: You are doing it all. It's incredible to do your work, taking care of your mom and be a mother. And like you said, cooking and cleaning and doing extra miles. Yeah, those miles are paying a big dividend in your energy. So Happy Mother's Day. We're so grateful that you're here to join us and keep up the great work.

00:52:16

Dalma Garcia: Thank you. I appreciate you.

00:52:18

Rob Simmelkjaer: Thank you so much for joining us, Dalma and for being a member of New York Road Runners, and we wish

you all the best luck in the RBC Brooklyn Half.

Now to the final part of our show. Today's Med Minutes.

00:52:29

Meb Keflezighi: Train on surfaces similar to the racecourse, including hills, trails and uneven ground. Strengthen legs, ankles, and core with exercises like lunges, squats, and balance drills. Drills are important. Single leg hops or both legs are important in addition to quick feet, high knees, butt kicks to strengthen the muscles, ligaments and tendons are very, very important.

Adjust pacing. Mixed terrain requires strategy, efforts, distribution, and adaptability. One and foremost is to wear appropriate footwear so that it can be grip and stability based on the terrain. I've seen someone run really well with very light shoes, like almost what you wear on the grass or on the house on a rocky trails, and I have to stop them and give them my advice because where you run is important, but what you wear is very, very important as well.

00:53:26

Rob Simmelkjaer: And that does it for another episode of Set The Pace. We want to thank our guest today, the great Carey Socol and our member Dalma Garcia. If you liked the episode, make sure you rate it, subscribe, leave a comment so others can find us as well. Hope to see you all out there in Brooklyn. Have a great week. Enjoy the miles. We'll see you next week.