

# TCS NYC Marathon

Sunday, November 3, 2024

New York, New York, USA

**Sara Vaughn**

**Conner Mantz**

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Sara, plan B kind of for you after Chicago. You were sick in Chicago, had to drop out. How soon after that race did you say, I'm coming to New York in three weeks?

SARA VAUGHN: I spent a few hours in the med tent and then as soon as I started feeling better called my agent or talked to my agent and said, let's call New York and just try to see if I can get in.

I did have a little bit of delay deciding to come here because I was just telling Conner I had to miss my daughter's state meet yesterday. So when I was deciding I thought, I can't miss that; what kind of mom would I be to miss my daughter's race. She looked at me and said, Mom, you've got to go to New York. So here I am.

**Q. How did she do in the state meet?**

SARA VAUGHN: She did great.

**Q. Conner, it's been a wild 12 weeks, a great performance on a very hilly course in Paris. What have these last 12 weeks looked like for you as you prepared for this race?**

CONNER MANTZ: Ooh, these last couple weeks have been a lot of fun. I think Paris was -- there was a lot of hype and enjoyment I guess with the Olympics, but really, I didn't keep looking back at it. I think after that race finished, I was just excited to jump into something new, so I was really excited to be a part of the New York City Marathon and just train for it.

I really enjoy training. Not as much as racing, but I enjoy it probably more than most people. I think that was really nice for me.

**Q. Sara, wondering can you tell me what happened to you at the Olympic Trials in February and what have the next few months been like getting from there to here?**

SARA VAUGHN: Yeah, the Trials was obviously very disappointing for me. I think what it came down to was just not being adapted to the weather and the conditions. I had originally planned on heading down there for a few weeks prior, and it just didn't work out with my life and my family. I just wasn't adapted. The humidity and the heat got to me pretty early on, and it went downhill pretty quickly.

**Q. Conner, you have a reputation as an aggressive racer. The race went out pretty conservatively. Was it difficult to restrain yourself, and are you happy with restraining yourself versus pushing earlier?**

CONNER MANTZ: Yeah, the race was kind of interesting how conservative it went out. I was a little frustrated with that because I was hoping I could run -- I was kind of hoping I could run a personal best today with the weather being so ideal.

We started out really slow. I think our first 1000m was probably in the 3:40s. First mile was 5:35. But I had a race plan, and I wanted to make sure I followed that race plan. It was deploy the first about 16 miles, so be in the pack and don't do anything. Enjoy 1st avenue from 16 to 19. Then destroy, try and catch as many people as I could or beat as many people as I could for the last 10K.

I think I kind of got destroyed when Evans made his move, and I knew that that was too fast for me.

But yeah, the first bit was pretty frustrating because I thought I could have -- I wanted to run a lot faster, and I really enjoyed being at the front, but I think I'm still trying to figure out the marathon, and I didn't really want to go out and lead the whole thing.

There was also a point in the race, though, that I heard people talking. I think it was Rory Linkletter and CJ Albertson who were talking about, what if we go right now, will people go with us. I was just like, oh, that sounds so fun. It would be so fun to just bolt off and see if anybody tries to catch you. It's hard to do in a field like this.

**Q. When Evans made his move coming off the bridge,**



**were you not part of the pack of six because you thought I shouldn't cover this, or you simply couldn't cover?**

CONNER MANTZ: It was more of like I shouldn't cover this. I think I could have covered it. I think I could have made it to mile 20 pretty well with that pack, but it would have been a very risky situation for my overall finish, and I didn't want to risk -- now looking back there's a little part of me that wishes I would have, but it's hard when you only get to do a couple marathons a year or three marathons max to really make very risky decisions. I just kind of held back and ran a pace I thought was conservative enough.

**Q. Sara, I think it's fair to say as someone who's covered you for decades that you've been underestimated a lot during your career, right from when you were a 1500m runner and now up to being a marathoner. What's it like today to be the first American at the New York City Marathon, someone who's really struggled and punched their way up to this point? What kind of a sense of gratitude or accomplishment do you have today?**

SARA VAUGHN: Well, first I just want to say thank you to New York Road Runners. Throughout my whole career, they have bet on me. They've invited me to the big races. They've let me have a spot on the start line. Sometimes that's all it takes is just a chance to line up.

Like you said, I've had to punch my way to the top. I have a very full life, and I've designed it that way, but occasionally sickness, illness, busyness gets in the way of having those big breakthroughs. So when the timing all comes together and you get an opportunity, which I think today was, I just really wanted to take advantage of it and enjoy this moment, especially in the marathon. It doesn't owe you anything. It doesn't always give you the day that you deserve or that you train for. This is pretty special. I hope it solidifies the work that I've done.

I don't know, I just feel like I belong here.

**Q. When you got dropped from the lead pack which you were in for a really long time, you were flying solo for a while. Talk about your mindset and what decisions you made at that point.**

SARA VAUGHN: Yeah, those last two bridges, I think at mile 20 and 22 or whatever it is, those really got to my legs. At that point, I think I was just focusing on rhythm and kind of repeating a mantra to myself. I had a song stuck in my head that I was just repeating, and those last few miles I really just thought about all the people that helped me get to that point, my family, my coaches, my

agent, and just all the people that were sacrificing to get me to where I was, being present in the moment, and just taking it one step at a time. Truly I was flat out the last few miles, so just kind of doing everything I could to get to the finish line.

**Q. What song was stuck in your head?**

SARA VAUGHN: It was Forrest Frank, have a good day. Something about a good day.

**Q. Conner, did you have any songs stuck in your head?**

CONNER MANTZ: I didn't, actually, but I enjoyed every one I heard along the course.

**Q. I wanted to know your opinions on Sodalicious, coming from Utah, too?**

CONNER MANTZ: For those that don't know - Sara doesn't know - Sodalicious is like a soda shop where you can get all different flavors. I actually have never been. I think it's kind of a funny niche thing that Utah has. But yeah, I've never been. Not a big soda drinker.

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