

TCS NYC Marathon

Sunday, November 2, 2025

New York, New York, USA

Hellen Obiri

Sharon Lokedi

Sheila Chepkirui

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We're going to keep things moving along. Next up is our Professional Women's Open Division podium. Delighted to welcome to the stage all athletes from Kenya. The second year it's a Kenya podium sweep.

Sheila Chepkirui, 2:20:24. Sheila was our 2024 champion. Followed by Sharon Lokedi, 2:20:07. Sharon was our 2022 champion. And this year's TCS New York City Marathon champion, Hellen Obiri, who won in a time of 2:19:51. Hellen was our 2023 champion also. Congratulations and welcome, ladies.

Hellen, a new course record, 2:19:51, breaking the record that stood since 2003, 22 years. How does that feel?

HELLEN OBIRI: I feel so great. Actually, I didn't know it was a course record until the finish line and they say that. I'm so happy to break the course record.

THE MODERATOR: Sharon, you and Hellen worked really well together. We've seen that happen a few times. What was the plan going into today's race? We saw you chatting as you were going along through some of those miles.

SHARON LOKEDI: The plan was to just keep fighting as we go and just let us fight as much as we can, and hopefully Hellen can give it to me, but I don't know. It's fate, I guess, at this point.

Congratulations, Hellen, for the course record and the win.

THE MODERATOR: We're getting used to seeing you both in these head-to-heads in the finishing straights.

Sheila, you're back on the podium after your victory last year. Like Hellen and Sharon, you also ran under the course record. You've got to be happy with that.

SHEILA CHEPKIRUI: Yes, I'm so grateful with the position. Congratulations to Hellen and Sharon. I'm so



happy.

Q. Hellen Obiri, congratulations on your win. Did you plan to make a move like that before the race, or did you just say, okay, I see where Sharon's at, it's time for me to make my move?

HELLEN OBIRI: I knew Sharon and Sheila, they are so strong ladies, but we say we want award, we want to stay focused, and we want to be patient because my preparation was so well because the 40K runs went so well. So my coach told me be patient and just try to make the move at the two miles.

So I stayed patient, and I see like Sharon was there with me. She's an amazing lady to run with. I say like this is my time, Sharon. Let me just try to make a move, yeah.

Q. I have a question for all of you. What does it take when you're running as fast as you could run to get into another gear beyond that fifth gear, beyond the gear that you're in, where Hellen, you came out in front of Sharon and took the finish? Or Sharon, like when you're neck and neck, what does it take? Is it mental? Is it physical?

HELLEN OBIRI: I'd say when we were about three miles, it was getting so fast. It was getting like these ladies seem to be so strong, all of them. Sharon was there. Sheila was there. So say like we're all Kenyans. Anybody can win this race. If anybody can win, it's okay.

When you try to go, Sharon was there with me. I say like, if Sharon can win, it's okay. If we can win, it's okay. But I say to myself, let me just try to push a little bit because Sharon want to post a new course record. They say, if she can win here, it's going to be amazing for her.

But I told myself, can I try to push? Can I try to be patient? When we went about 1K to go, I felt like I was so strong. I say, can I make a move because I feel like I had something left in my tank.

THE MODERATOR: You certainly look like you did.



Just a sidenote, only eight women have been repeat champions here in New York City, so that gives you an idea how incredibly tough that is.

Q. Sharon, maybe you can give us some idea of how difficult it is to run 2:20 in New York compared to other races when we see people running 2:18, 2:17, 2:19. How much harder is New York than some of these other flat courses? Thank you.

SHARON LOKEDI: I think around like 20 miles, I was like -- I think if I remember, I was like, I don't know what number of hill we were going, and I just kept thinking, oh, my God, we still have so much to go.

To be honest, it never gets easy in New York. You think you're almost done, but then you have another one coming and you have another one coming. It's even hard when there's maybe four or five of you still in the pack. It's not easy.

Honestly, I think just having each other, supporting each other and pushing and just knowing that, if we could do it together all the way towards maybe last two miles, and you can just make a move, and hopefully you have another gear.

Yeah, New York is not easy. With the support that we have out there and the cheers and everyone, I think it helps you run that fast.

Q. Sheila, during the race you were motioning a little bit with your hands. You were moving them up-and-down. I wasn't sure. Were you trying to communicate anything to the other runners? What were you doing there? Was there a plan between the three of you to try to push the pace and maybe drop Hassan?

SHEILA CHEPKIRUI: I was trying to tell Hellen to try to come and help me to push the pace a little bit because I was in front. I had to tell her come and help me.

THE MODERATOR: Sheila, you came back as champion. How different did it feel running through the streets of New York City as a champion with that crowd support behind you this year?

SHEILA CHEPKIRUI: Running here in New York, it's so amazing. Throughout the course, there are many supporters cheering us all the way. It's really amazing to be here in New York. It's beautiful.

THE MODERATOR: Sharon, you looked so strong, and you said that Hellen had that kick. How did that final mile

play out for you mentally and physically?

SHARON LOKEDI: With Hellen, you never know, so you have to be ready no matter what. I was just trying to put it down and just hoping that she was not there, but she was there (laughter).

It's one of those you just have to put it down and hopefully you have it. I know with Hellen, I feel like it's just been back and forth. Maybe I have it this time, she has it the next time. All in all, I'm just happy that we were there fighting all the way through.

Even with Sheila, this could not have been possible if it wasn't for us working together.

Q. This is for Sharon, Hellen, and Sheila. All three of you have won big races, and all three of you have come close to winning big races, and today you all broke the course record. Especially when you do not win a race -- because a lot of kids watch this and want to know how you feel -- can you be happy with a race you haven't won even though you've run a PB? How do you approach that? What do you tell yourself after a race that's a close race?

SHARON LOKEDI: I don't know. I'll say races like this, there's only one winner, and you can't win every day. For us, we have different ways of -- I don't know, how a race means. Yes, I didn't win today, but I still feel in my heart that I won in so many other ways.

It's one of those that you just have to appreciate being at the start line and being able to finish and achieving more. I didn't know I was going to be in the podium, but I was in the podium, so I will celebrate that. That is a win in so many ways.

Q. Hellen, can you share with us what your mindset is before a race coming back to New York and how you're preparing mentally at the start line? Because obviously everyone wants to win, especially with having won New York before.

HELLEN OBIRI: When I was at the start line, you know Sifan was there. Actually, I was so afraid, like Sifan is coming. She's so strong. She broke us in the Olympics. So that was on my mind.

And Sheila was there, she won New York. Sharon, she won New York. So I was like we are four ladies here and the podium is three. My mind was there like for win or to be a podium, to be a podium, major marathon New York, it's incredible for me.

But when we started the race, it seems we started so fast. We were helping each other. Sheila was talking to me. She was saying like we just try to go. Sharon was here trying to talk with her. So we did like trying to help each other.

When we got to Central Park with about four miles to go, I say like, oh, my goodness, can we try to post the best? Because like it's all about winning, it's not about the time. In my mind, I was like, if I win, I don't care about the time. The time will come like upon us.

I remember the training I did, the long runs I did, because the coaches were telling me like you are the best shape in your life, of which I trusted like we did so well in my training and they believed in me. So my mind was like I have done this, I have done this, so can I try to be patient? Can I try to push? Because they were telling me like just push.

So I tried to see the last workout I did, it was amazing. I'd say like, if I just try -- because last time I did well up until like Central Park, like 200 meters to go, because I didn't have the kick. So I tried to push a little bit here because I say I need to go a little bit early because I knew Sharon, she had a very good kick. So I tried to stay away from her. That's it.

Q. Hellen, I noticed that after you picked up your bottle at the top of the bridge at 25K, you carried it for about a mile and were only drinking a little bit at a time. How come you did that?

HELLEN OBIRI: The first thing the coach told me like just hold the bottle as long as you need. Just try to finish the water. Be the last one to hold the bottle.

So it was on my mind when I was holding the bottle, every station it was on my mind, like let me to be the last person to hold the water. So I was just like drink everything in the bottle and be the last one.

That was what my mind was like. They told me, if you hold that one and take everything in your bottle, you will be close to winning. I try to put that in my mind like let me hold it. Let me try to hold it up to the last minute.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. That concludes our Pro Women's Open press conference. Please congratulate our three champions today from Kenya: Sheila Chepkirui, Sharon Lokedi, and our champion Hellen Obiri.

I'd now like to welcome on stage Isadora Bailly, VP of marketing for TAG Heuer, to present the TAG Heuer Connected Calibre E5.

