

**ATHLETICS** NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

# Paula overcomes Beijing heartache

**BY JOHN STEVENS**

PAULA RADCLIFFE once again found the New York City marathon the ideal place to bounce back from Olympic disappointment as she won the event for the third time yesterday.

The 34-year-old world record holder led from start to finish, wearing down the strongest field in the race's 40-year history to cruise home over the final four miles in two hours, 23 minutes and 56 seconds.

Radcliffe was 1min 47sec ahead of 40-year-old Ludmila Petrova, of Russia, who held off a strong finish from American Kara Goucher – third on her marathon debut in 2:25.53.

'To win three is really special to me,' Radcliffe said. 'To even be one-third of the way towards the mark Grete Waitz achieved is amazing.'

'New York is just a place I love to come but it was different this year. The last two times it was really close at the end but it was nice to make it a little bit easier on my husband [her coach Gary Lough] and help him stay more relaxed.'

'It was tougher out there because of the wind but I was determined to come and run a negative split because last year I started fast and wasn't really as strong in the closing half.'

With victory, Radcliffe becomes only the second woman to win the race three or more times, trailing only nine-times winner Waitz, putting Beijing disappointment behind her.

Suffering from cramp she finished just 23rd at the Games in August after a hip injury interrupted her training in the build-up to Beijing. Four years earlier she triumphed in New York after failing to finish the Olympic marathon in Athens.

Marilson Gomes dos Santos of Brazil won the men's race, reclaiming the title he first won in 2006.



Picture: PA

The mother of all victories: Radcliffe with daughter Isla at the finish