



Native Minnesotan Kara Goucher takes on the world in Berlin

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Kara is the future of American marathoning

The best marathoners on the planet will compete in Berlin Sunday, August 23rd. Among them is a young lady who got her start running the streets of Duluth. We knew her then as Kara Wheeler. Today she is known as Kara Goucher, and she is the future of American marathoning.

Duluth by way of Queens, NY

Kara came to Duluth from Queens, NY at the age of 4 with her mom and sisters after the death of her father. She joined the cross country team in middle school because it was required for an academic-sports-arts award she wanted to win. She chose cross country because they didn't make cuts from the team. She's a lot more confident these days!



Photo/USATF

Gotta love those hills in Duluth!

After a terrific high school career with Duluth East she continued running at the University of Colorado. She met future husband Adam Goucher, a very talented runner in his own right, while running with the Buffaloes. She has since been taken on by coach Alberto Salazar, a brilliant runner known to push himself beyond all reasonable human limits. One of his most famous races came against Minnesotan Dick Beardsley at "the duel in the sun" at Boston. This ability to push himself has been passed on to his young protégé.

The "perfect storm" - the coach, the training partner hubby, natural talent, and a great work ethic

Kara has had tremendous success in the middle distances, having won spots on the Olympic team both in the 5,000 and 10,000. Not satisfied with this, and with a coach who suspected she could be something more than special in long distance, she decided to give the marathon a try. It's unusual for a runner her age (she's 31) to take on the marathon so soon; most believe it's a distance better suited to a more mature runner. She threw a wrench in that theory by finishing 3rd in 2:25:53 in her first try in her native New York City in 2008. She was the first American woman to make the podium in New York in 14 years. She followed that with a 3rd place in Boston this past spring, again the first American woman to take the podium in Boston in 16 years.

Will it be first place on the podium?

Sunday she toes the line with the Ethiopians, the Kenyans, and all the best in the world. Kara is the hope of the American running community and the pride of Minnesota runners. The future looks bright, indeed.

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Insider: LB Brad Jones shines despite late arrival

7th-round pick missed 2 weeks practice, but comes out strong

Thumbs up

When a seventh-round draft pick misses the first two weeks of training camp and the first preseason game, he better make an impression quickly upon his return.

♦ [http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Site=U0&Date=20090817&Category=PKR0205&ArtNo=908170810&Ref=PH&Params=Itemnr=1"](http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Site=U0&Date=20090817&Category=PKR0205&ArtNo=908170810&Ref=PH&Params=Itemnr=1)
target="new" style="color: #72A440;">>**Photos from Monday's training camp practice**

Linebacker Brad Jones did just that on Monday.

In his first practice after dropping out of the pre-camp conditioning test because of a strained back, Jones made several eye-catching plays. Perhaps it was his fresh legs going against the tired legs of guys who have been grinding for a couple of weeks, but the 6-foot-3 and 239-pound rookie stood out, especially during the all-important competitive team periods.

Playing left outside linebacker with the No. 2 defense, Jones created havoc on consecutive plays during a team run period. First, he beat right tackle Breno Giacomini and flushed quarterback Matt Flynn out of the pocket. On the next play, he beat tight end Evan Moore inside and tripped up running back Tyrell Sutton on a run play.

In the next period, Jones got pressure during a blitz drill and deflected a Brian Brohm pass, but it went right back to Brohm, who ran with it.

Coach Mike McCarthy said Jones will be on a one-practice-per-day schedule this week and if all goes well, he could play in Saturday's preseason game against the Buffalo Bills. Considering how thin the Packers are at outside linebacker with Clay Matthews and Jeremy Thompson both injured, this is Jones' time to shine.

Thumbs down

During the first few training camp practices, Evan Dietrich-Smith looked like an undrafted free agent worth watching.

The rookie from Idaho State held his own during the one-on-one pass rushing drills and was doing good work as a guard on the No. 2 offensive line. But he has fallen back to the No. 3 offensive line and hasn't been as productive of late.

During Monday's practice, he gave up the pressure to Jones that allowed him to deflect Brohm's pass. In the one-on-one drill, he could do no better than a split of four reps and fighting to a draw in another. He gave up significant push to B.J. Raji on the first rep, but it wasn't a win or a loss because he did keep Raji in front of him. However, it would have forced the quarterback to move. He then stopped Anthony Toribio twice, but lost his second time against Raji, who shoved him back, and got smoked by Alfred Malone.

A 2-2-1 showing in that drill isn't good enough for a guy who's a long shot to stick.

Did you notice?

♦ Backup cornerback Joe Porter blocked a Durant Brooks punt when he got around Brandon Jackson, who was playing the right-side wing. Porter also got around A.J. Hawk earlier in the drill and nearly blocked another one.

♦ Brooks had the best and worst punts of the period, while Jeremy Kapinos was more consistent. Their final numbers were similar. Brooks averaged 41.4 yards and 3.95 seconds of hang time on the seven kicks he got off, while Kapinos averaged 42.0 yards and 3.99 seconds of hang time on six punts. All were from the 30-yard line and into a strong breeze. Brooks' best punt was a 55-yarder with 4.22 seconds of hang time, but he also punts of 34 yards (3.28 seconds) and 39 yards (2.97 seconds). Kapinos had two punts shorter than 40 yards but five of his six punts had at least 4.0 seconds of hang time.

♦ The defense won both two-minute drills with interceptions. The starters won when safety Atari Bigby picked off an Aaron Rodgers' pass in the end zone. With nine seconds left, Rodgers was looking for tight end Donald Lee on second-and-10 from the 22-yard line. The second-stringers ended it on the first play, when cornerback Brandon Underwood tipped a Flynn pass intended for Brett Swain, and defensive end Jarius Wynn picked it off.

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Panthers defender Brayton satisfies his need for speed

By *BOBBY BENNETT*
For the *Herald-Journal*

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How do you make a 6-foot-6, 280-pound defensive end shake?

Just strap him in an 800-horsepower dragster and send him hurtling down a quarter-mile dragstrip.

Before the start of training camp, Carolina Panthers defensive end Tyler Brayton completed a course in the nuances of driving a 180-plus mph drag racing vehicle at Frank Hawley's Drag Racing School in Gainesville, Fla.

Brayton is now a licensed drag racer in two of the NHRA's sportsman categories.

"That first pass was just a blur," Brayton said. "When I was done, I was physically shaking from all the adrenaline. You know I was like trying to play it all cool. The speed of that car and the power was just shocking."

Brayton was first exposed to the high-speed sport while attending the University of Colorado.

The former first-round pick of the Oakland Raiders competed in the street division at Bandimere Speedway, an NHRA-sanctioned race track located outside of Denver.

His first time out, Brayton made it through five rounds of competition.

The racing was merely an extension of a passion for high performance cars that had taken root years earlier.

"Back in high school, my dad and I had a little project car that ended up just being a daily driver," Brayton said. "But in college, I had a buddy and I would go up to his house and he would help me work on my car and stuff like that. He had a race car and I asked him 'Can anyone do this?' He said, 'yeah' and told me all about bracket racing."

Brayton joins a score of professional stick-and-ball athletes who have taken up drag racing in their spare time.

Former NBA players Larry Nance (Clemson) and Tom Hammonds have competed in the NHRA's Pro Stock division.

Former NFL quarterback Dan Pastorini once competed in the NHRA's Top Fuel division, winning one event and running faster than 270 mph.

"I don't ever plan on being a professional drag racer," Brayton said. "I just love that there are so many ways to participate in (drag racing) and I can't explain how happy I am that I finally made it to one of Frank Hawley's classes. It was so much more than I ever hoped it would be."

