

Sunday, 02 August 2009

## **In final Berlin tune-up, Goucher cruises to 1:08:05 Half Marathon victory in Chicago**

**Kara Goucher wins her final pre-Berlin test in Chicago** (organisers)

Chicago, USA - To the clamoring of thunder sticks and roar of thousands of spectators, Kara Goucher cruised to victory at the inaugural Rock 'n' Roll Chicago Half Marathon.

Executing her training plan for the Marathon at the upcoming IAAF World Championships in Athletics and exceeding the expectations of her coach Alberto Salazar, Goucher finished in 1:08:05, almost twenty seconds ahead of the first male finisher.

"I felt I could run in the 67-68 minute range," said Goucher, who remains undefeated over the half marathon distance. "The race was great, better than my preparations for Boston. It was awesome to be the first finisher and I wanted to enjoy the crowd. I really liked how the course changed up, there was never a stretch where it was dull, and you are going through the city, going over bridges and along the water. I really liked the course."

Chicago's Rock 'n' Roll debut race was broadcast on a live webcast at competitor.com, which included live commentary from start to finish. The webcast, dubbed the 'Kara Cam' focused exclusively on Goucher running her first half marathon on U.S. soil.

"I think its fun; it gives a little something different to road racing. I was a little more self conscious than usual," Goucher said of the live webcast. "The Rock 'n' Roll format creates a great atmosphere, it was fun because I really like music and it helped me work my stride."

"By just focusing on Kara, initially I wasn't sure how it was going to work," said race commentator Todd Williams, a former U.S. Olympian and current American record holder in the 15k. "I think it was a great thing and gives other American distance runners something they can aspire to be. By her winning here, for the first time it instantly elevates the status of American road racing."

Race morning greeted runners with ideal conditions, including low humidity and no wind. The scenic course showcased many of Chicago's historic landmarks such as Soldier Field, Shedd Aquarium, The Field Museum and the beautiful Chicago Waterfront.

“Today went well. Featuring an athlete like Kara was awesome, it’s good for the sport,” said Juli Henner, renowned coach and former U.S. Olympian who provided color commentary for the competitor.com webcast. “The course really showcased Chicago. When you take the turn just past the 8 mile mark and you see the skyline, running along the water, hopefully they get the Olympic bid, what a beautiful city to showcase.”

The second running of the Rock ‘n’ Roll Chicago Half Marathon is set for August 1, 2010.

**Dan Cruz (organisers) for the IAAF**

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## Kara Goucher Runs 68:05 Half Marathon At Rock 'N' Roll Chicago As Final Berlin Tuneup

Goucher Beat Every Male And Female In The Race En Route To The 21st-Fastest Half-Marathon Of All-Time

[Online Race Replay](#) \*[Pre-Race Message Board Thread On Kara Goucher's Run](#)  
\*[Post-Race Thread On Race Commentary/Production](#)

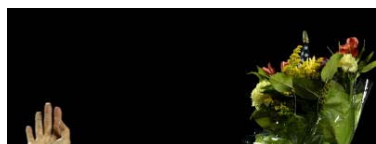
By LetsRun.com  
August 2, 2009

Running on a beautiful day in Chicago, **Kara Goucher** made the most of her final major IAAF World Championships Marathon preparation with a 68:05 half marathon performance.

The inaugural edition of the Chicago Rock 'N' Roll Half Marathon (previously the Chicago Distance Classic) was certainly made memorable by an extremely fit Goucher, who ran the [21st-fastest half marathon in women's history](#), the 5th fastest half of 2009, the 2nd-fastest American half marathon to **Deena Kastor's** 1:07:34, and won the entire race. That's right, Goucher beat all of the males in the race (although the race didn't offer any prize money, so not a total shock).

Faced with decent distance running weather but great summer distance weather of temps in the mid 60s and with the humidity well over 50% (a little humid for a runner but the day itself in Chicago today is going to be gorgeous with sun and a high near 80), Goucher and her pacemaker set out to run negative splits on the mostly flat course. Goucher's mentor, Coach **Alberto Salazar**, said he hoped for something in the 69-minute range, and she reiterated that in her pre-race interview when she said, "I'm not going to go out at a (1:06-07) hard pace but I would love to chase some people trying to run that down."

After some early miles in the 5:20 range, Goucher picked it up to pass 4 miles under 21:00. From there on out, every mile was between 5:05 and 5:20 as Goucher picked her way through the leading men. Her attempt at closing the race with huge negative splits never really materialized, perhaps due to a slight headwind noticed by commentators **Todd Williams** and **Juli Henner**, though Goucher's final miles were all around 5:10 or faster.



As we'll mention in more detail below, Goucher lost her final carrot when the leading man veered off the course with a little under 5km to go in the race. Running without a bib the entire race while

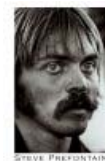
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Unbelievable interest

getting significant face-time on the "Kara Cam," it was determined definitively that the leader was a bandit as he could not give a name that matched any of the official race registrants. *Note: the "Kara Cam" was set up exclusively to follow every step of Goucher's race with commentary by Williams and Henner, who did a fantastic job.*

Now suddenly in the lead over the gently rolling terrain, Goucher was pumping for the finish before determination. Her splits revealed a sub-68:00 might be a time approaching Deena Kastor's American record of 67:34. But it was not to be.

Immediately after the race, Goucher mentioned to Henner that her previous two weeks of training were 120-mile weeks, and that she felt the volume in her legs in the closing miles, deciding to cruise it in rather than push really hard. We certainly look at this performance as a positive sign as she appeared much more controlled than when she ran the Lisbon Half before Boston in 68:30. In that race Kara and Coach Salazar announced publicly that she was ready for a [world record assault](#) (although both would claim they were either misquoted or misunderstood) and, though she won comfortably, she came up far short of the ambitious time goal.

This time she had a more conservative race plan. Salazar was downplaying her Chicago time goals, while Goucher clearly had it in her head to take it easy the first few miles and then gradually pour it on to simulate a tactical race like most World Championships marathons. From what we could see, it was "mission accomplished" for Goucher. She looked very comfortable running sub-5:20s, was able to negative split the final miles and was fatigued, yet not completely exhausted, at the end of the race.

When asked about the World Championships marathon in Berlin, Goucher said, "If I blow up at halfway, I blow up halfway. I didn't put my life on hold not to take a risk."

This quote reminds us of Kara's efforts at the Boston Marathon. With an incredibly slow pace almost the entire way, Goucher was content to sit back behind **Colleen de Reuck**, waiting until very late to assume the lead and set what was still a moderate pace at best. In the closing mile, she was blown away by Kenyan **Salina Kosgei** and Ethiopian **Dire Tune**. Goucher had been willing to throw caution to the wind in Lisbon, but seemed more reluctant to let loose in Boston.

Perhaps this time a more conservative tuneup effort will leave her more energy in reserve for a spectacular, bold performance in Berlin. She will likely need just that to medal for the second straight World Championships, considering the stiff competition she will face with the likes of world record holder **Paula Radcliffe**, 2009 Boston runner-up Tune and perhaps the best women's marathoner in the world over the past 2 years, Germany's **Irina Mikitenko** (right) to name a few.

When Goucher mentions, "putting her life on hold," she refers to her statements leading up to the Boston Marathon. One of her statements went like this, "[I absolutely want to have a baby in the next year or so. I haven't wavered on that at all.](#)" This quote went to print on April 25, 2009, meaning Kara had hoped to take a break from competitive running after Boston in order to start a family. But Boston left a bitter taste in her mouth, not to mention tears in her eyes, so growing a family had to wait for Mom to take another crack at being the world's best.

Now the question is, will Goucher have a medal from Berlin to match her bronze from Osaka when the baby arrives? So far, so good.

#### Top 5 unusual happenings during the race broadcast:

1. **Kara Goucher** won the race overall. No male beat her. Pretty unusual, but the

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race didn't offer prize money, so not a total shock.

2. At 15km, Goucher was in second place to a man wearing red. This man, who identified himself to those on the "Kara Cam" truck as "**John Jacobson**," was running without a race bib. When asked by one of the tech guys on the truck if he was a bandit, Jacobson explained that his number fell off at the start. He had pins on his jersey but no number to make this seem feasible. When asked where his red chip was, he said he didn't know. This was a problem because every registered runner needed a chip to get a time and show up in the results. Given he was the race leader and was pulling away from Goucher, this was a good time to ask, "Are you a bandit?" Of course, Jacobson said, "no," that he had registered and so forth.
3. With about 4km to go, in a winding portion of the race, Jacobson bolted off the course. Goucher, not knowing Jacobson was a bandit, was really confused and started gesticulating as if to say, "which way should I go?" She chose the right way and soon figured out she was the leader on the course, male or female.
4. With about 3km to go, the guys on the truck start screaming at a photography motorcycle that had been right in front of Goucher almost the entire race. Because of the position of the truck and the narrow bike path at the end of the course, the motorcycle driver had got himself positioned literally one or two feet in front of Goucher and appeared to slow her down. All of this was going on in the background of the broadcast, and finally the crew member convinced the motorcycle to speed up and get away from Goucher and also to simply pull over.
5. Several times throughout the race **Adam Goucher** could be seen running alongside his wife, just off the course to one side or another. He may have run basically the entire race, give or take an occasional shortcut.

#### Best Aspects Of The Race Coverage

1. [Excellent commentary from Todd Williams and Juli Henner](#). Todd, we hope you get behind a microphone more often.
2. No commercials, no taking a break to watch other stuff.
3. Having only Kara in the race was pretty fascinating.
4. Listening to the other guys on the truck talk to "John Jacobson," and vice versa, was pretty classic.



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## CHICAGO HALF MARATHON

### New marathoner Kara Goucher in for the long haul

#### Top U.S. woman running here in half-marathon

By Philip Hersh

Tribune reporter

August 2, 2009

No wonder Kara Goucher thought coach Alberto Salazar was dissing her when he first suggested she switch to running the marathon.

This was in Osaka, Japan, two years ago, when Goucher's third in the 10,000 meters made her the first U.S. woman to win a world championship medal in a distance race on the track.

There she was, thinking for the first time in her career that anything was attainable, even gold -- and Salazar was suggesting she hit the roads?

"It felt like Alberto was telling me, 'You're not good enough,' " Goucher said Friday, sitting along the Chicago River.

"My reaction was, 'I don't like this. You're my coach. You are supposed to believe in me.' "

Goucher believed enough in Salazar to get his point: she lacked the raw speed -- below 60 seconds for 400 meters -- to kick with the world's best women over the final lap of a track 5,000 or 10,000.

That became clear to Goucher after she finished ninth in the 5,000 and 10th in the 10,000 at the 2008 Olympics. After all, Goucher had said to herself, "Now what do I do?" when she realized a medal was out of reach with four laps left in the 10,000.

"Alberto told me I could be in the hunt to win a marathon, not just to nab a bronze in a tactical (translation: slow) track race," Goucher said. "It took some convincing because the marathon is an intimidating task."

And one the 31-year-old Goucher has proved more than up to.

In less than a year, she has replaced 2004 Olympic bronze medalist Deena Kastor as the leading U.S.

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women's marathoner.

In her first marathon, at New York last fall, Goucher finished third with the fastest time ever (2 hours 25 minutes 53 seconds) by a U.S. debutante. In her second, at Boston in April, she took third, the first podium finish by a U.S. woman in that race since 1993.

And she was disappointed by both performances, especially the one at Boston, where inexperience and impatience led her to pick up the pace with six miles to go instead of one, as planned.

Goucher led until the last mile, eventually finishing nine seconds behind, then burst into tears of frustration. She had to be talked out of trying to run another marathon in London six days later.

"One of my motivations is to win something big as a thank-you to Nike (her sponsor), my husband, my coach and my family for all their support over the years," Goucher said.

Goucher's next chance will be in the world championship women's marathon Aug. 23 in Berlin. Her final tune-up is Sunday's Rock 'N' Roll Chicago Half Marathon, in which she wants to test her Berlin race plan.

She also would like to get the American half marathon record (67:34 by Kastor in 2006), but that may be hard because Goucher has yet to ease back on her intense training of 120 miles per week.

How intense? When Goucher learned her Thursday flight from Portland to Chicago was delayed three hours, she went into the Nike store at the Portland airport, bought shoes, a shirt and shorts and took off for a 40-minute run.

The worlds could be Goucher's only marathon before 2011, as she and Adam, her husband of seven years, hope to start a family next year. It also may be her only championship meet marathon before the 2012 Olympics, which is why she chose worlds over a big payday invitational race in Chicago, Berlin or New York this fall.

"How can I expect to go to London 2012 and have everything go smoothly never having run a championship marathon?" she said.

That sounds like someone on track as a marathoner.

[phersh@tribune.com](mailto:phersh@tribune.com)

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