



## FITNESS FANATICS

# Goucher organizes plan to be mom and medalist

By [Don Norcross](#), UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

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Kara Goucher hits the grocery store running, with a list. An edited list. First she jots down the items she wants. Then to avoid backtracking, she writes the items in the order they're to be picked up.

"I can get in and out of the store in eight minutes," said Goucher, currently America's best women's marathoner.

Her closet, you can imagine, is not cluttered. Skirts and dresses are aligned on the top shelf. Then come long-sleeve tops. Items are arranged by colors. Blues and grays to the left. Whites and yellows to the right.

The middle of the closet, because it's most accessible, is reserved for sleeveless tops and jeans.

"That's what I wear the most," said Goucher.

Stating the obvious, she added, "I like to plan."

Tomorrow night, Goucher, 31, will be honored as the Female Runner of the Year at the Competitor Magazine Endurance Sports Awards at the Mission Bay Hilton Resort & Spa.

Her acceptance speech no doubt will be rehearsed. Yet Goucher admits sometimes you just have to roll with the plans.

Take her future.

Goucher might run the New York City Marathon in November. Then again, she might not. In fact, she hopes she doesn't.

Married for nearly nine years to fellow distance runner Adam Goucher, Kara hopes to be pregnant soon. But as you guessed, there's a plan there, too.

If she's not pregnant by the end of April, Goucher will put off having a baby. That decision came with much forethought, also. She must leave enough time to recover and train for the 2012 Olympics. The end of April, she figures, is the deadline.

“If I didn’t feel I could medal,” said Goucher, “I wouldn’t worry about it.”

That Goucher thinks she might return from London in 2012 packing bronze, silver or gold is not a reach. At the 2008 Olympics, Goucher doubled in the 5,000 and 10,000 meters, placing ninth in the 5K, 10th in the 10K.

Three months later she tackled the marathon for the first time. The result: third at New York in the fastest debut ever by an American woman (2 hours, 25 minutes, 53 seconds).

Last April, she sampled the Boston Marathon. With a half-mile to go, Goucher was running side by side with two Africans. Goucher would fade to third, but again, the signs were encouraging.

“I love the marathon,” she said. “I feel it’s the right place for me.”

Interestingly, some forks taken in Goucher’s life happened by happenstance. Take how she got involved in running. Raised in Duluth, Minn., Goucher was in the seventh grade when she decided she wanted to receive a school award.

To earn the award, students had to excel in three areas: arts, academics and athletics. Goucher played the French horn. Her grades were fine. But she didn’t carry the athletic component, so she tried out for volleyball, even though she had never played.

“I go to the practice and it’s like chaos,” she said. “They’re doing these drills and I’m like, ‘Yeah, I’m totally out of my element,’ so I left.”

And tried out for cross country.

Then there’s the story of how she stepped up to the longer distances. While her coach, three-time New York City Marathon champion Alberto Salazar, told her she’d make a great marathoner, Goucher wasn’t biting.

She had a not-so-subtle reply when Salazar mentioned 26.2 miles: “Uuuugh.”

But after finishing third in the 10,000 meters at the 2007 World Championships, Goucher was offered a hefty appearance fee to run a half-marathon in England.

“They want to give you that kind of money,” Salazar said, “just go.”

Goucher showed up, beat marathon world-record holder Paula Radcliffe by more than a minute, then said to herself, “Maybe I can do this.”

Now she wants to follow the footsteps of Radcliffe and other talented marathoners who have run fast after starting a family.

“I’ve seen so many great role models around me do it,” Goucher said.

She thinks she can do it, too. You can plan on it.

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## Kara Goucher on the cover of the March 2010 Runner's World

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**Duluth native Kara Goucher** will be featured on the cover of the **March 2010 Runner's World** magazine.

Goucher was born in New York, but her family moved to Duluth when she was 4. In October of 2008, **Goucher won the Twin Cities 10 Mile and broke the course record in the process.** That local race is still Goucher's 10 mile personal best (**53:16**).

Kara has a half marathon PR of **1:06:57**, and a marathon PR of **2:25:53**. Her marathon PR was set 4 weeks after her record-breaking 10 mile performance here in the Twin Cities.

Check out the new Runner's World cover featuring Goucher on the right, and make sure to pick up your copy on Tuesday (Feb 2) when it hits news stands.

Follow Steve on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/steveinaspeedo>) or on his [blog](#).

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Kara Goucher on the cover of Runner's World. Image: RW.

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