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colorado classics

## Colorado Classics: Alfred Williams former CU football great

By Irv Moss  
*The Denver Post*

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Just when Alfred Williams might have wondered whether his accomplishments on the football field had been forgotten, he was notified about his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame.

He's still wearing the pride on his sleeve as a member of the class of 2011, and it's not likely to disappear anytime soon.

"Going to Colorado was the best decision I've made in my life," Williams said.

It was a good decision all the way around. CU's football program gained a defensive end/linebacker who won consensus All-America status in 1990 when he was the Butkus Award winner as the nation's top linebacker.

And of course, the Buffs won a national championship with a thrilling 10-9 victory over Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 1, 1991.

But more than just football made CU the right place at the right time for Williams. It was a step into a new world for a young teenager from Houston.

"I think there were only four white students in my high school in Houston," Williams recalled. "It was a little bit of a culture shock when I got to CU. The majority of the student body was white."

Williams discovered there were other things to get used to as well. There wasn't a specific dormitory for athletes.

"I think Colorado was kind of unique when it came to housing the athletes," Williams said. "I found that the mix of people in the dorm put me right in the heart of the university. I was integrated into the student body. I don't know if it helped that I played football, but I had a lot of friends who didn't play any sport."

Williams can talk only so long about his CU experience before he weighs in on the national championship and the victory over Notre Dame.

"That was an unbelievable football moment," he said. "But I still can't believe we punted to him."

"Him" was Notre Dame All-America return man Raghib "Rocket" Ismail, who returned a punt 91 yards for an apparent touchdown late in the game. Ismail's run, however, was called back because of a clipping penalty.

"Coach (Bill McCartney) was like that; he wanted

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to challenge everybody," Williams said. "Ismail ran right in front of me. I wanted to come off the sideline and tackle him."

After his playing days at CU, Cincinnati chose Williams in the first round of the NFL draft. He played nine seasons of pro ball, the last four with the Broncos, which included two Super Bowl championship teams.

Since leaving football, Williams has carved out a career as a sports talk-show host in Denver. He believes the pro athletes of today should be more willing to reach out as role models for young people.

"When I left football, I was very bitter," Williams said. "I didn't think anyone appreciated what I had done and the effort I gave. I tell young people to carefully choose where they go to college. It's the last time they'll have a choice. The next level is a business."

Williams has reached a time in his life where rewards from his playing days seem to be circling back his way.

"We had a 20-year reunion of the (CU) championship team, and I cried when I saw all the guys," he said. "I'm going back to CU to get my degree. I'm going to be going to school with my son."

And tonight, Williams is being inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame at a banquet at the Marriott City Center. Also being inducted are kicker Jason Elam, Broncos; outfielder Larry Walker, Rockies; Keli McGregor,

Rockies; racecar driver Bobby Unser; and Art Berglund, USA Hockey.



(John Leyba, Denver Post file )

Williams and his effort on the football field haven't been forgotten.

## Williams bio

**Born:** Nov. 6, 1968, in Houston

**High school:** Jones, Houston

**College:** University of Colorado

**Family:** Wife Kristina; sons Dominique, J.T., Chris and Eric; daughter Kori

**Hobbies:** Snowboarding, golf

**Future:** One more semester at CU

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The enshrinement festival is scheduled for July 15-16 in South Bend, Ind. The 2011 class features Alfred Williams, along with fellow players Dennis Byrd (North Carolina State), Ronnie Caveness (Arkansas), Ray Childress (Texas A&M), Randy Cross (UCLA), Sam Cunningham (Southern California), Mark Herrmann (Purdue), Clarkston Hines (Duke), Desmond Howard (Michigan), Chet Moeller (Navy), Jerry Stovall (LSU) and Pat Tillman (Arizona State); and coaches Barry Alvarez (Wisconsin) and Gene Stallings (Alabama and Texas A&M).

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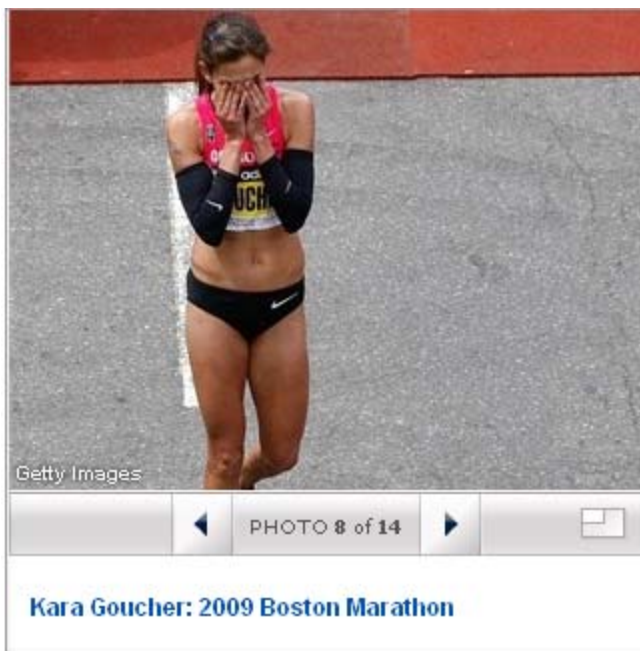
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## Goucher hoping for sweet end to Boston Marathon 'obsession'

A victory that could have been fuels competitive fires  
By Joe Battaglia, Universal Sports

In the hours immediately after the 2009 Boston Marathon, [Kara Goucher](#) was so emotional she almost didn't know what to do with herself.



She was struggling to cope with finishing third in a race she had led until its latter stages. The empty feeling had her foolishly thinking she could fly to London and run the marathon there six days later.

Goucher may have felt fine physically, but her heart was clearly broken.

"Emotionally, I was a mess," Goucher said in a recent phone conversation. "I remember Adam and I were checking out of the hotel, and I saw one of the laurel wreaths that the winners get lying in the garbage, and I started crying. Adam was like, 'I'll get it out of the garbage for you.' And I was like, 'No. I want my own laurel wreath.'"

Since then, Goucher's desire to stand at the top of the podium in Copley Square on Patriot's Day has evolved from a career goal to something much greater. It is a big reason why she chose Monday's 115th Boston Marathon to be her first marathon back from maternity leave.

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"I'm obsessed with winning Boston," Goucher said. "I read the book on the Boston Marathon. My coach (Alberto Salazar) won there. It has so much history and I want so desperately to be a part of that legacy. In 2009, I had such a great experience with people supporting me and encouraging me to strive for my goals that I fell in love with it. All of a sudden it became one of those things so important in my career. I have to win here."

To hear Goucher talk like this is a distinct change from how she felt two years ago, when she said that as an American, winning any of the three World Marathon Majors held in the U.S. - Boston, Chicago, and New York City - would be the ultimate achievement.

But that was before she was beaten by Salina Kosgei of Kenya and Dire Tune of Ethiopia in Boston.

"I want to win in New York, and I want to win in London, and I want to win in all sorts of places, but there is just something about Boston that I just want so bad," Goucher said. "The obsession definitely grew after '09. I think the fact the race played out the way it did and I felt like I let this opportunity of a lifetime slip through my fingers had something to do with it. I'd be lying if I said it didn't."

In fact, Goucher believes that one of the reasons she didn't win Boston in her debut was because her fervent desire to win caused her to race sporadically.

"I wanted it so badly that I lost train of who I was," she said. "I put all the pressure on myself in '09 to where nothing but a win was going to be good enough. I was so twitchy and had such a hard time relaxing. I sat back in the back but then would move up to the front just to let people know that I was still there. Then I totally abandoned my race plan with 10-K to go."

Athletes often use setbacks as motivation, but when those experiences spawn a preoccupation that persistently forces its way into their consciousness, it leaves the athlete walking a tightrope between healthy incentive and harmful anxiety.

Goucher is well aware of that fine line.

"Sometimes I have to remind myself that it is just a race and that the ultimate goal is an Olympic medal and a World Marathon Majors win, period," Goucher said. "I have to be careful not to let Boston become something that it's not. I really have to reign in this time so it doesn't cost me a great race."

"I don't want this obsession and desperation to be a part of that legacy to ruin all of the hard work I have put in to this point. The best possible chance I have to cross the finish line first is to run Kara's race."

"It's crazy that Boston's had this effect on me," she added. "Until I get it right, I will keep coming back."

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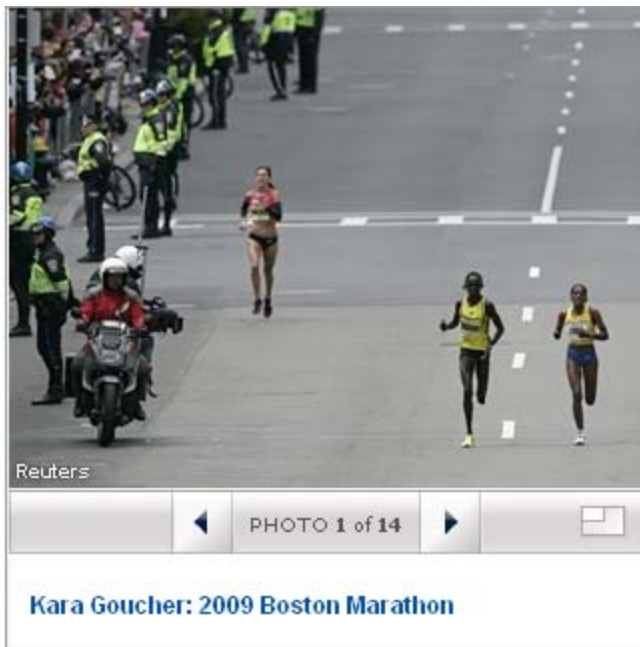
# Goucher 'feels calmer' about second Boston Marathon

By Joe Battaglia, Universal Sports

## How did you recover from New York?

It was really good. We took a few down days and then we just kind of got back after it because we felt like we had a couple good weeks that we could sneak in there and get some hard workouts in.

## Did you change anything in your training?



Not really. I just continued on the path that I was on of a lot of miles. My hard workouts were really hard, and we went for it.

## Physically, how do you feel at this point in comparison to this same point in '09?

It's hard to compare because I'm coming from such a different place. I definitely feel stronger than I felt then. I was very confident then but I feel calmer about it now. I feel like I've done more work this time around. I feel good.

**You feel calmer in your preparation, but how about in terms of getting back out there and racing this first marathon back?**

My goal is always to win, but I feel like I am coming from a place where I appreciate things more. Going there to win is still the goal, but I feel like I'm ready to run a really great marathon. If that is good enough to win, I don't know. But I am ready, and feel really good about it.

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**Did you feel like you needed that performance in New York in terms of your confidence?**

There was a part of me that was like, 'That stunk.' I doubted myself between 10 and 11 miles and let the race run away from me. After the race we went back to the hotel, had some brunch, and were packing up. Alberto came in and was all excited and I was like, 'I don't know why you're so excited. I let it go.' But he really helped me see that it was a big step forward. I can appreciate that it was a good step, and under the existing course record, but I want to be the best. So it's like, 'I can see the good points from it, but I'm glad there's another race.'

**When you think back to'09, what things do you single out wanting to get right this time?**



I wanted it so badly that I lost train of who I was. I put all the pressure on myself to where nothing but a win was going to be good enough. With 10-K to go in that race I couldn't take it anymore. There had been people cheering for me and supporting me the whole time and I was like, 'I've got to end this now. I've got to deliver right now.' That was silly. Time gives you perspective, and I've learned that people are going to support me no matter what.

### **Obviously your goal is to win in Boston but are you thinking about time at all?**

Time doesn't really matter. In the back of my head I feel like I'm ready to run a PR so I'm not afraid if the race goes out quick. But it really doesn't matter. It's about competing and running a race that is strategic and being able to respond to everyone around me.

### **From your experience, what are some of the most difficult parts of the course?**

When you climb up the Newton hills and then go down for a good mile or so before flattening out, I think that's a tricky section because your legs are tired at that point. I also think the turn on Hereford Street is so hard. That could just be in my head from how much I was suffering last time. The last straightaway is tough too. The hardest part is to not rush through the first half of the course and think you're invincible. That's when the race really gets going.

### **People talk about the first half of the race being downhill but I've heard it really isn't. How did it feel?**

When I picture it in my head, I know that there were some down hills, but I also remember going uphill. Adam and I looked at an elevation chart the other night and it's definitely a downhill part of the course. It just doesn't feel that way when you are running it.

### **Do you have a favorite part of the course?**

I think my favorite part is the hill section where you are running through the neighborhoods. It feels so intimate and so not-scary. When I ran New York, you're out there in the middle of that concrete jungle and you feel so insignificant. When you're running in Boston, you're running in family neighborhoods and there are trees, and there's homes and there are people. It's so intimate. It could be any Sunday long run and there is just something about that that makes it less intimidating. Then again, you are running up Heartbreak.

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