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## Kara Goucher regroups After near miss in 2009, American hopes to win

By Rich Thompson | Thursday, April 14, 2011 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | General

Kara Goucher has come to terms with the victory that eluded her at the end of the 2009 Boston Marathon.

Goucher arrived that year as America's best hope of ending foreign Boston domination, which dates to 1986. She turned in an outstanding performance but placed third (2:32.25) behind Salina Kosgei (2:32.16) of Kenya and Dire Tune (2:32.17) of Ethiopia in the most competitive women's race in Boston history.

"I have run that race again about 1,000 times in my head," Goucher said. "If I could go back in time, sure I would have done some things differently, like when I took the lead, I should have gone much harder. Or I could have waited, which is what my coach originally wanted, until the last mile."

Goucher was overwhelmed with disappointment, but the passage of time has salved those burnt feelings. The birth of her son Colt last September naturally has altered Goucher's perspectives, but it has not diminished her zeal for running.

The 32-year-old hopes to recapture a winning feeling with a laurel wreath after lining up in an elite field Monday morning in Hopkinton for the 115th running of the Boston Marathon.

"When I was finished with the (2009) race, I was so disappointed I couldn't forgive myself for losing that opportunity," Goucher said. "But time gives you perspective, and now looking back at it I know I did the best I could in that moment and it's all about having more opportunities. That's why I really wanted to come back there. I didn't feel the pressure was a burden at the time, but maybe afterward."

"I couldn't see anything positive in the performance I gave because I didn't win. I felt I couldn't satisfy everybody unless I won. Given time and perspective, I can see that's not true. But at the time, I felt if I didn't win, I was going to disappoint everybody."

Goucher finished 10th (2:27.48) at the IAAF world championships in Berlin on Aug. 23, 2009, then dropped out of the running scene to start a family. She currently manages the delicate balance of motherhood and training.

In January, she finished second to Madai Perez of Mexico in the Arizona Half Marathon. Despite the obvious rust and career realignment, Goucher ran a 1:14.02.

Goucher significantly improved on that effort with a third-place finish of 1:09.03 in the New York City Half Marathon on March 20. The half-marathon measures combined to give Goucher renewed confidence for her second shot at Boston.

"That was the first race (New York) where I really felt like myself since I've had Colt, so it was good," Goucher said. "The race in January was really just to get that first race out of the way without all the hoopla that surrounds that and just get it done early. The race in New York was all about getting in a race and running hard and competing and running against some of the best people in the world. That was a much better dress rehearsal for Boston."

Goucher trains in Oregon under former Boston winner Alberto Salazar of Wayland, a relationship that has grown through the years. The Boston Marathon is an ambitious step in Goucher's long-range goal of representing the United States at the 2012 Olympics in London. Salazar has emphasized longer road sessions to give Goucher the endurance she will need to be alone on Monday on Boylston Street.

"Training has gone really great, and I've just started backing off a bit in terms of mileage," Goucher said. "I've put in a lot more miles than I have ever put in before. I was looking through my log book over the past 13 weeks and I averaged over 110 miles a week. That's a lot of mileage, but it's been good."

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