

## A Perfect Pair: Shalane Flanagan and Kara Goucher

The two top American women—and best friends—will both be running Boston on Monday.

By Molly Mirhashem | Hub Health | April 12, 2013 3:44 pm



KARA GOUCHER IMAGE VIA [MICHAEL K. SHUTTERSTOCK.COM](#). SHALANE FLANAGAN IMAGE VIA FLICKR/[SAROV](#).

The Boston Marathon is just three days away, and Shalane Flanagan and Kara Goucher—the top two American women—both have their eyes on the prize.

It's Flanagan's first time racing Boston, but she's the hometown girl (hailing from Marblehead) and has three other marathons, including the Olympics, under her belt. Goucher, who was also a member of the Olympic team, will be toeing the Boston start line for her third time, and seeks to draw on her experience on the infamously tough course.

Flanagan and Goucher are training partners under coach Jerry Schumacher, but the two marathoners are much closer than just that. "Shalane is like a sister to me. Going in, I expected us to have more of a business relationship," Goucher says. "Shalane got me back into shape. I never would have made the Olympic team [last year] without her." Flanagan agrees, and says that even outside of running, the two women connect on everything.

But come Monday, it's every woman for herself. "We both have very different strengths and weaknesses, so we'll be running our own races," Flanagan says.

Goucher, who is known to close out a race strong, says that Flanagan is a leader, and likes to start hard and fast. And while Flanagan's got a lot of attention for her goals to win the race on Monday, it would be a mistake to think Goucher isn't shooting for the same thing. It's been 28 years since an American's won Boston, and when it comes down to it, that's what this pair wants to change—regardless of who crosses the line first.

Goucher says that Flanagan used to joke, "If you win a medal, I get half of it." Even though each woman will be running her own race, with her own strategy in mind, it's clear there won't be any animosity from one if the other breaks the finish line tape. The two are a definitive team. "We just want an American to win. Period," Goucher says.

Flanagan says that having a close friend there will make the race better. “It’s a great comfort [to run with Kara]. It’s like going to do something kind of scary and having your best friend there.”

**Source URL:** <http://www.bostonmagazine.com/health/blog/2013/04/12/boston-marathon-shalane-flanagan-and-kara-goucher/>

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Printed from: *Boston Herald* (<http://bostonherald.com>)

## Back to the Goucher 3

Wednesday, April 10, 2013 -- Anonymous (not verified)

Hopes this time is BAA charm

Marathon

Saturday, April 13, 2013

**Author(s):**

Rich Thompson

Kara Goucher answered a siren song from Boston on the first day of the New Year.

A disappointing 11th-place finish in the women's marathon at last summer's Olympic Games in London left Goucher injured and partially dispirited.

But the allure of a third crack at the Boston Marathon had a rejuvenating effect on Goucher's career as one of America's most recognized distance runners.

Goucher will join the elite women's field that embarks on the arduous 26.2-mile trek from Hopkinton to Boston on Monday morning.

"On Jan. 1 I had to make a do-or-die decision," said Goucher during a phone interview from her home in Portland, Ore.

"I had to either dedicate myself back into the sport now at that moment or I'm not going to be ready for Boston. I gave myself a lot of time away because I needed it physically and mentally. That kind of generated my intention to come back hard for this."

Goucher did not run the BAA race in 2012 and invested all her athletic capital for a shot at Olympic gold. She performed well in the U.S. Olympic trials along with Nike teammate Shalane Flanagan of Marblehead.

Goucher (2:26.07) crossed the line one place behind Flanagan (2:25.51) in the London Marathon, but the effort took a toll on her body and soul. Goucher found solace reconnecting with her family while accounting for the personal moments she missed during her Olympic endeavor.

"I had a hard time recovering from London, both physically and emotionally," said Goucher. "Physically it was just the toughest race, I've ever tried to come back from and

emotionally I was drained to.

“It was tough because I had an injury coming off the London Games and I really wanted to be around my family and be a mom.”

Goucher has been a fan favorite since making her Boston debut in 2009. She entered that race determined to be the first American winner since 1985, but she finished third in 2:32.25.

“For me it will be just about using that positive experience from ’09 and being patient early on,” said Goucher. “If I feel like someone is making moves that are too big too soon, I’ll back off a bit and really save enough for that last eight miles, where it can really make a difference.

Goucher returned to Boston in 2011, when she placed fifth on a personal-best time of 2:24.52. Since making her New Year’s resolution to run Boston, Goucher has been logging between 110 and 115 miles per week and has been injury free.

The Boston course has been dubbed a career killer by participants over its long history, but Goucher feels the course is easy to navigate, the hills manageable and the crowd inspiring.

“The one thing I love about Boston is it only has about six turns on the entire course,” said Goucher. “You can really get into a rhythm in Boston, which you can’t do in, say, New York or the Olympic Marathon, which has a lot of turns.

“As a runner it is glorious because you can be in a zone in Boston more so than in some other marathons. You have a few turns at the end and that’s really it.

“I think the fans in Boston are incredibly intense and that can be difficult at times because you can’t let that rev you up. The fans are like none other.”

**Source URL:** [http://bostonherald.com/sports/other/marathon/2013/04/back\\_to\\_the\\_goucher\\_3](http://bostonherald.com/sports/other/marathon/2013/04/back_to_the_goucher_3)

117TH BOSTON MARATHON

## Kara Goucher takes on Boston Marathon and training partner Shalane Flanagan

By Shira Springer

**Globe Staff / April 13, 2013**

It was love at first run. Training on the Boston Marathon course for the first time, Kara Goucher fell hard and fast for the hills, the intimate neighborhood feel, and the narrow roads that reminded her of high school runs in her hometown of Duluth, Minn. Now, more than four years after that first encounter, Goucher loves Boston so much that she momentarily considered withdrawing from this year's race back in January.

Coming off a left heel injury and a slow recovery from the physical and emotional grind of the London Olympics, Goucher struggled with her Boston buildup. She asked her coach, Jerry Schumacher, "Should I be racing this?" Schumacher is brutally honest with his athletes and said, "You absolutely should. If you were going to go out there and make a fool of yourself, I would tell you." From that point, Goucher fought through less than perfect preparation.

"I love the race so much that I would never want to disrespect the Boston Marathon by going in when I'm not really, truly ready to run a good marathon," said Goucher. "I'm OK with things not going necessarily perfect. But I'm still going to go for it. I know I'm ready for a solid race. Everything is headed in the right direction now. It just hasn't been a storybook training block."

Goucher arrived in Boston last week feeling confident in recent results — 1:11:49 at the Rock 'n' Roll New Orleans Half Marathon on Feb. 24, and 31:46.64 in the Stanford Invitational 10K on March 29. In both competitions, her training partner, Shalane Flanagan, was well ahead, showcasing the road speed that puts the runner from Marblehead in the mix for the women's championship.

"Part of the problem is I compare myself to Shalane, who's had absolutely perfect preparation," said Goucher, who finished 11th at the London Olympics last August. "I run with her every day and I can't always do what she's doing on some of the speed sessions. Really, the part that's lacking is my speed component. My coach and my husband keep reminding me that if I wanted to run track right now that would be a problem. But I'm not training for the track. So, I can handle not having a little bit of speed because it's the strength that's going to carry me those last 6 miles."

Goucher, whose training really picked up speed after she recovered from a right hamstring twinge suffered about a month ago, added that she feels "capable of running faster than my PR." She set her personal best (2:24:52) in 2011 at Boston.

"Kara came together a little bit later in the game," said Schumacher. "I don't quite have as much information to make a really accurate assessment. I think she's going to run very well. I don't know exactly what that means because we haven't had enough time to play at that really high level."

But it's clear that even with a less than perfect buildup, Goucher and Flanagan benefit from their unique training partnership. Having the top American female marathoners workout together daily is unheard of in today's competitive distance running world with training groups and high-altitude camps scattered throughout the country. In fact, neither Flanagan nor Goucher can think of a situation similar to theirs under Schumacher.

It works not only because Flanagan and Goucher are among the world's best, but also because they have different strengths and similar personalities and goals. Flanagan prefers to be aggressive early in workouts and push hard through the middle, often surging on the third lap of a track mile. Goucher likes to finish strong, kicking in the fourth and final lap.

On long runs, they talk for hours about family, future vacations, recipes, and TV shows "Downton Abbey" and "The Bachelor." They prefer quiet evenings at home and have taken wine tasting trips together with their husbands. Flanagan mentions that they even share a similar fashion sense. Given boxes full of clothing as Nike-sponsored athletes, it's not uncommon for Flanagan and Goucher to show up at practice dressed almost identically.

"It's like a marriage when you train with someone," said Goucher. "You can't just pair any two women together. You're with each other all the time. You see each other at your most vulnerable place. I feel like I've had some of my deepest conversations on runs because you're too tired to put up any walls or barriers. You become really open. You have to take that into consideration. But I think we could be doing more in this country with more women training together."

Added Flanagan: "We're both hugely competitive, so that's not really a good enough reason to say you can't train with someone. We've learned how to really bring that out when we race. There's no point in using that competitiveness in training because it defeats the purpose of what we're doing. I always look at it as the fitter I am and the best athlete I can be, that makes Kara better, and vice versa."

Both Goucher and Flanagan will put that to the test Monday.

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