

Back in the Dark Ages when I was “growing up” there were approximately 160 million people in this country and 3.2 billion on the planet. Currently the U.S. population is nearly 320 million (give or take a few million) and over 6 billion now on the planet. The figures have doubled in my lifetime. No wonder you can't find a parking space.

There wasn't any Super Bowl. In fact, there were only four college bowls: The Rose, Sugar, Cotton, and Orange Bowls. Now we have 34 post-season college bowls. This allows 68 teams to play a meaningless football game. But it's okay ... because football is king in this culture.

Football officially ends the football season with the playing of the Super Bowl. Then the other “major” sports kick in during spring. They all have their season ~ a beginning and an end. I don't know if there is an official start and stop to the running season. I've never heard anyone say, “Well, I'll see you in the spring. I'm not running in the winter ... it's off season.”

Running through all seasons is what defines a person as a runner. I can't think of a better way to be defined, although I'm not really into definitions. It is what it is. Running is a true expression of unpretentious behavior. In fact, it may be the best word and definition to describe running. It is nothing other than what it is ... the quality of being natural and unpretentious.

Too many sports have evolved into being something far beyond what they started out to be. They lose their true identity. Today there are too many frills and frivolous behavior that go along with the game itself. The sport of sideshows becomes the major attraction, and the game is forced into the “end zone” ~ (No pun intended). But if you examine the major sports today, the pattern and behavior are very consistent and very pretentious.

Those of us who run the roads and trails ~ the back roads and side roads, the ridges and the flats, and go through all the seasons ~ understand the simplicity of this act. No special equipment ... no gadgets, toys, wings, or whistles ... just one leg before the other at whatever pace distinguishes you ... as a runner for all seasons and for all reasons.

Unpretentious indeed ... I can't think of a better word. Nothing more than what it is ... simplicity and beauty well defined.

And may the wind be always at your back!

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