

We should put a crocodile in there

Jass Richards

jassrichards@gmail.com

Most athletes are driven by the desire to win.

Not to win anything in particular, anything of significance, just – to win.

Olympic athletes are especially driven. Imagine spending *years* trying to throw a really heavy ball a few centimetres further than the next guy.

Now there's a candidate for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

I heard one athlete the other day emphasize the need to stay focussed and keep his objective in mind.

How hard can that be for a sprinter?

Speaking of which, one of the most lauded athletic feats is to run a hundred metres in under 10 seconds. The current record holder can do it in 9.58.

My *dog* can do better than that. And she's only six.

'Course, *she's* black too.

Have you noticed that more and more athletes are saying a quick prayer at the starting line?

A clear admission that you can't possibly win without divine intervention – yeah, that'll really psych out your opponents.

Another thing I've noticed is that the distance running events are always won by someone from Kenya, Ethiopia, or some other starving country.

See what you can do when all you've got to carry around is skin-and-bones?

Know why it took a while for there to be a women's triple jump?

Because hopscotch isn't really a challenge for us anymore.

Know what event I'd like to see?

Men's double-dutch.

Apparently from now on athletes who test positive for marijuana, a performance-diminishing drug, are actually prohibited from competing in their sport.

Provided they can remember what it is.

On a similar note, a certain archery competitor suspected of using LSD will be disqualified if he ever gets the arrow, string, and bow thing figured out.

You know how there are different weight classes in wrestling? I think other sports should do that too. For example, in the high jump, there should be a separate competitive class for short guys.

In gymnastics, one of the women's events is the balance beam. They do these aerial cartwheel somersault things – on a four-inch wide beam – set three feet off the floor.

The *men's* big balance move is – on the floor. It's a front scale. Basically, they stand on one leg.

It's hard to say which of the two is more – thought-provoking.

And the men don't even do their floor stuff to music. I guess that would be too difficult, too distracting. Or maybe the gymnastics federation is afraid that adding music to the men's floor would attract athletes who are either – Ru Paul.

Every now and then – usually when women approach or surpass men's performance – men will proclaim "Sports are too dangerous for women – they might get hurt!"

This from the sex that routinely gets black eyes, split lips, sprained muscles, torn ligaments, dislocated joints, broken bones, and nerve damage. From sports.

The sex that has its reproductive vitals hanging by a thread at the body's bull's-eye with nary a centimetre of fat for protection. And voluntarily competes on the aptly named pommel horse.

Do I need to point out that women's musculature is generally more elastic, rendering it less prone to injury?

And that women seem to have a better developed survival instinct? We duck. We run the fuck the other way. And we don't make insupportable claims about the sexual preferences of our opponents' parents.

How many swimmers does it take to change a light bulb?

Don't know yet. They keep getting electrocuted.

Did you know we once tried a men's synchronized swimming team? But one guy got pissed off at another guy, and then another guy got involved, and next thing you know, half the team's dead in the water.

Guess they just couldn't handle that hold-hands-and-coordinate thing.

Why did the cyclist cross the road?

To get to the finish line.

I've noticed that in men's figure skating, the warrior theme is very common. Even artsy skaters like the American Todd Eldredge has done it.

Is it wise to act out killing someone, with pride, and celebration, at a meet where all of your fellow competitors from oh, I don't know – Russia, Japan, Iraq – have easy access to a pair of sharp blades?

Figure skating commentators completely miscall the pairs event, by the way.

He doesn't *lift* her – she *balances*.

He doesn't *throw* her – she *soars*.

And what's noteworthy is not that he catches her, but that she doesn't slice anything off in the process.

Basketball. Now *there's* a great sport. The Harlem Globetrotters are living proof that the human hand was *made* to handle a ball.

Which is why *soccer* is such a stupid sport.

Then again, basketball *used to be* a great sport. Have you seen that new NBA player – can dunk the ball just by reaching over from centre court.

There are a few sports we just haven't named very well.

Squash is not played with a squash.

There are no fences in fencing and no rugs in rugby.

And 'the butterfly'—have you ever seen what happens to a butterfly in water?

And there are a few I don't understand. In weight lifting, people lift heavy stuff. They don't take it anywhere. They don't do anything with it. They just pick it up and then put it back down.

The shooting part of the biathlon involves targets that stand still.

Strategy in football amounts to 'fake left, go right'.

'Course when your opponents have such short attention spans, that's probably sufficient.

On a regular basis, men will enter a ring and punch each other repeatedly in the head. This causes brain damage.

Well, *more* brain damage.

Critics are reminded that the participants are consenting adults.

That's the part I don't get.

And there are several sports in which we haven't yet reached our full potential.

For example, in bowling – okay, let's just say for now it's a sport – in bowling, you should get extra points for knocking down pins in the other lanes.

After skiers race down the hill, they should have to turn around and race back up.

In water polo, as in regular polo, there should be horses involved.

In the sculls, they should narrow the lanes and let the competitors whack their opponents out of their boats.

And the flimsy crossbar of the pole vault should be replaced with a sturdy two-by-four. That's nailed in place.

And in the relay, instead of a baton, they should have to pass off a chicken.

In the steeplechase, in that pool of water after that last hurdle? We should put a crocodile in there.
