

Why The Indianapolis Colts, Sarah Palin, And Usain Bolt Are Setting A Bad Example

Don't you remember the saying "When the going gets tough the tough get going?" Or, how about, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." I think this one is my favorite, "Risk more than others think is safe. Care more than others think is wise. Dream more than others think is practical. Expect more than others think is possible."

These are all fairly famous quotes on desire and determination to win. The spirit of America is the spirit of winning. Maybe Patton said it best to his troops in the movie that bears his name. "Americans love a winner. Americans will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise cowards. Americans play to win all the time. That's why Americans have never lost nor will ever lose a war; for the very idea of losing is hateful to an American."

In American society, the cherished American value of winning has been under attack for years. People on the left think winning is somehow unfair. When you win that means someone else is going to lose. Committed leftists want to transform the world into a place where everyone wins and no one ever loses. They would change "When the going gets tough the tough get going" into "When the going gets tough the tough take a break." They would transform "winning isn't everything...it's the only thing" into "winning isn't anything...It's a bad thing."

I have no doubt the Indianapolis Colts were not intentionally trying to send a bad message about winning when they decided to take out their starters and forfeit the possibility of an undefeated season to the New York Jets. They were trying to rest their starters so they will be ready for the playoffs. The Colts wrapped up a playoff spot and home field advantage through the playoffs early in the season. The only goal left to them was the prize of an undefeated season...something that hasn't happened since the 1972 Miami Dolphins concluded a perfect season with a Super Bowl win. But with that goal in sight, Head Coach Jim Caldwell made the decision in the third quarter to pull Payton Manning and the other starters with the Colts leading 15-10. The Jets came roaring back against the subs and won the game 29-15. Right or wrong, the decision was made that it was more important to rest the starters than to win the game. If that idea catches on in football I would suggest that in the future, all teams that have secured a place in the playoffs simply forfeit the rest of their games. If you are going to play the game you need to play to win. If you are in the game, you should give your all until the final gun.

That leads me to Usain Bolt and Sarah Palin. I like Bolt and I am frankly just as blown away as the next person as his speed as a sprinter. There is no doubt that he is the fastest man on the planet. He has proved that at every national, international, and Olympic event he has participated in over the last two years. But here is the rub...we may never know how fast Bolt really is. Why? Because just before he crosses the finish line he backs off. It's only a split second and it has never cost him a race but if you watch closely, you will see what I am talking about. He runs all out until the final second and then, right before he crosses the finish line, he backs off. For me, the fact he doesn't finish the race with the same effort he uses throughout taints an otherwise very impressive accomplishment.

The same is true for Sarah Palin. I like Palin's political stands on just about every issue. I read her

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book over. Christmas break and the more I read the more I like her...until I got to the part where she resigned as Governor of Alaska because the cost of staying, both financially and emotionally, got too high. I understand her enemies were coming after her family and costing her and her state millions of dollars with their frivolous, baseless, ethics complaints and lawsuits. But I like what her son Trek (who was serving his country with honor in Afghanistan) told her when she asked him what she should do about her job. From 6,000 miles away Trek said, "Don't let the jerks get you down!" His advice was don't quit, don't violate your contract, where there is pain you push through and you stick it out. Hoo-rah, Trek!

But Governor Palin ultimately decided it was just too hard and too expensive to stay in office her last year. She walked away even though every lawsuit and every ethics complaint were found to be without merit.

Again, I admire Governor Palin and her values but I question ever allowing your enemies to win because you just got tired of the fight.

The greatness of America lies in the fighting spirit of the people. Whether it's Colonel Chamberlin fixing his bayonet and leading the charge down Little Round Top at the battle of Gettysburg or the soldiers of Point Du Hoc braving withering fire to scale the cliff and help secure victory on D-Day, Americans are known for their never say die commitment to finishing a task. When we fight, we win. When we commit ourselves to a task we finish the job. When we run the race we cross the finish line with the same effort we had when the gun sounded to start the race.

When the Apostle Paul surveyed his life he was able to leave an inspirational example to young Timothy. "I have fought the good fight," Paul said. "I have finished the course and I have kept the faith." I pray that we as Americans will always do the same.

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