

Give Life a Sporting Chance

My partner and I were sitting in our car recently, about to drive off and do some shopping, when tottering along the pavement towards us, was an elderly couple from up the street. 'Poor things' said my partner, and then 'It's sad when people get so old.' Her comments set me thinking, and as this occurred during the Olympic Games, I made a few connections people do not generally make when looking at our tribal elders.

I pointed out to my nicer half (in the nicest possible way) that she was way out of line in what she had said. In the first place, to use a sporting analogy, life is a marathon and not a sprint. You may get excited watching Usain Bolt running the 100 metres but it is over in the blink of an eye. The really important event in the Olympic Games is the final one contested - the marathon. It is run for 42 kilometres, which is 420 times the distance Mr Bolt bolted! Dash with flash looks good, but endurance is what the marathon celebrates. I think that those old people coming down the street are like marathon runners, and in the game of life that really counts, they are our champion athletes. The elderly must be sick and tired of being pitied just for being old. I suggested to my partner that we ought to give this couple a round of applause when they pass us by. And as they do so, we should pray that the fates will be kind to us as well, so we too can become very old in time. If we have a reasonable quality of life when we are elderly then that will be our gold medal performance.

I had more thoughts about this 'getting old' matter. The Who, with lead singer Roger Daltrey, performed their hits during the closing ceremony at the Olympics. Remember their famous song-line 'Hope I die before I get old'? I suppose Mr Daltrey must be absolutely miserable at the dirty trick which fate played upon him. There he is, a sprightly 68 years old and in reasonable shape, strutting his stuff in front of one of the greatest British rock bands, on arguably the greatest stage he and that band have ever played on, certainly with the biggest audience ever.

What a buzz. Poor sod. He must feel disappointed to be getting so old. I wonder whether he would be interested in a repeat gig at Rio 2016? Pass the maracas.