



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Well, now that the Super Bowl is over, you can shampoo the family room carpet (did you ever figure out who dropped the Velveeta cheese sauce when Tracy Porter snagged the interception and scored?) and slow things down. The only big issues on the calendar for the rest of the month are: *Valentines Day* (the 14th), *President's Day* (the 15th)... and the *Winter Olympics* (the 12th – 28th). Go ahead and put the pizza guy on speed-dial...

Thousands of competitors are on their way to Vancouver; hundreds of thousands of fans are close behind them. Hidden in those multitudes are hundreds of people who – by definition – are not expecting to be “liked” as they do their part in the two week extravaganza. Who are they? *The Judges...*

Outback Steakhouse captures the ethos of our culture with their, “No rules; just right” ad campaign. “Says who?” is a standard comeback in lots of sectors these days.



Judgment? That presumes that there are some ideological absolutes out there. It requires a premise of right and wrong, good and evil, black and white... and someone empowered to blow the whistle and throw the flag when they deem someone to be out-of-bounds, or in violation. *Aren't we past all that?*

Memories will return to the pairs competition in figure skating in the 2002 Games, in Utah. Do you remember the controversy?

The multi-national panel of judges for the pairs deemed the perfect performance of the Canadians, Jamie Salé and David Pelletier to be flawed... and granted the Russian pair the gold, despite their mis-skates. We may be non-judgmental when we're around our buddies, but that

operating system goes out the window when the five circles entwine at the Games. People become *judgmental* of the *judges*, live!

We've changed places here. We in the gallery have become judgmental regarding the judges! Popular opinion - worldwide (*except in the Russian delegation!*) - joined into a multi-lingual "boo" and the International Olympic Committee heard, and responded. The ruling of the panel was challenged, and scrapped. The French judge broke down and admitted her extraneous influences – a "deal" between the French and the Russians. The alternate judge's opinion was inserted in her place, and a dual-winner status was declared. A second set of gold-plated (*they aren't solid gold anymore*) medals were given to the Canadians, while the Russian pair still clutch their prizes as if nothing had ever happened.

I think we've settled it: we love to *compete*, and we love to *win*. Can't do that if there isn't *judgment*. It isn't that we don't like *judgment*; what we don't like is *flawed judgment*. We want legitimate judges, with credible judgments; we want to trust the outcomes when the ruling is delivered.

When Paul was in Athens - home of the Olympic traditions - he

described the most reliable judgment that would ever occur: "... *since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is ... an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.*" (Acts 17:29-31)

No confusion in that casting: God has appointed Jesus to judge us. He'll do it using his own standards, and the outcomes will be righteous. He's offered a pardon - paid by Jesus - to those who plan ahead ...

Bob Shank

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