

# Super bowl 50: getting there a nail biter

During my entire lifetime, I competed in multiple sports from baseball, basketball and football to racquetball, tennis, volleyball, mountain bike racing, golf, badminton, triathlon, swimming, ski racing, weight lifting and windsurfing. Each sport required a certain commitment to practice, drive, tenacity and endurance. Some sports mandate teamwork and others allow you to battle one on one.

During my college years at Michigan State University, I played on the freshman football team and lettered. During my sophomore year, I played on the practice squad against Bubba Smith, Charley Thornhill, Mickey Webster, the Saul brothers, Gene Washington, Clint Jones, Al Brenner and many others who stepped into pro careers in the NFL.

After getting a severe concussion in my junior year spring practice, I hung up the pads. At 6'2" and 200 pounds, I wasn't a small guy, but Bubba stood 6'9" and 280 pounds. He pounded all of us into the dirt. I'm glad I retired from football at 21 because so many players suffer dementia and motor-nerve problems from endless "sub-concussions" that occur every practice. And much worse and more violent in the games! Personally, I suggest that all parents talk to their kids and avoid playing football. It's pretty vicious from high school and worse in college. I don't possess a clue as to how any of those monsters make it through a pro game in one piece, let alone the entire season.

Once out of college, I stuck with racquetball, tennis, windsurfing, skiing and triathlons for tremendous competition and physical delight. I vouch for the Leadville 100 Mountain Bike in Leadville, Colorado race as one of the most brutal, exhaustive and fantastic competitions I've ever experienced.

It starts at 10,152 feet to push riders over four 12,000-foot passes and one 13,000-foot pass on single wilderness dirt tracks to finish after 12 hours and 100 miles. To cross the finish line may be one of my greatest triumphs.

Like many men and women in America, we love sports. We love to play them, watch them and cheer on the home team. We feel the churning in our guts, the sweat, the exhaustion and the great delight in sports.

One of my favorite U.S. leaders, President Teddy Roosevelt said, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

During my lifetime, I thrived in the sports arena. In my senior citizen years, I still race triathlons, bump ski, bicycle ride, mountain climb, hut-to-hut ski, backpack, canoe and more.

Something comes over an athlete on the starting line, on the court and on the test track of life. Men and women throw their "all" into their passions from curling to rugby to badminton to surfing. Sports create an incredible aspect of living. I truly wish every American enjoyed some kind of athletic passion until the day they pass into the great unknown.

Which brings me up to Super Bowl 50. Back in college, I

watched Super Bowl I with Bart Starr of the Packers. Quick forward a lifetime later, my hometown team, the Denver Broncos just beat the Patriots last Sunday night. The game turned me into a nail-biting wreck. The game came down to the last 12 seconds and two points. Screaming fans, high blood pressure and two of the finest teams in the NFL fought down to the very last second.

Out of all of it, Tom Brady showed himself a first class athlete and gentleman. Peyton Manning of the Broncos engineered yet another chance at a Super Bowl ring in the twilight of his years. With all the “bad boys” who give sports a shameless name with drunken driving, drugs, violence and jail time—it’s nice to see high class athletes act with dignity and poise.

On February 7, 2016, our entire nation and much of the world will watch two Goliaths battle for the supreme crown in Super Bowl 50.

It’s distinctly American. It’s the energy of a free country. It’s the dynamics of the violence of the human race harnessed in the 21st century via the gladiators who live to tell the tale—as well as enjoy enormous paychecks.

While I’ll watch the game, I hope every American pursues his or her own “Super Bowl” of sports in their daily lives. I hope we eat nutritionally, exercise daily and maintain trim, healthy bodies so we can enjoy our own lives in whatever sport excites us. More so, let’s pursue good health as a way of living until our last breath.

Win, lose or draw—life affords each of us our own quests, passions and athletic joy.

© 2016 Frosty Wooldridge – All Rights Reserved