

On a metric crusade

By Charles Clines

Usually I'm not much of a crusader, but I'm ready to lead one to change the way road-race courses are marked. Shouldn't the U.S. join most of the rest of the world and start using the metric system? In other words, why not mark courses in kilometers rather than miles? Really, doesn't it make sense? If a course is a 5K or 10K, why not mark the courses in kilometers rather than miles? Doing this would make it much easier to calculate your time, for one thing. For example, if a runner reaches the 1K mark in a 5K in 4 minutes, then he/she knows if that pace is maintained, the finish time will be 20 minutes. Simple. But when calculating using miles, it's a little more difficult. And I don't know about you, but my math skills aren't real great when I'm more concerned with pace and pain. For example, if a runner reaches the first mile in a 5K in 8 minutes, then that's 24 minutes for 3 miles, but then the tenth of the 3.1-mile race has to be factored in before a finish time can be predicted. My math is a little fuzzy even when I'm not trying to run.

There are a couple of races in the D-FW area that mark the courses in kilometers. The next one on tap is the Vineyard Run on Oct. 4 at the Delaney Vineyards in Grapevine. If you see how much easier it is to figure your time while on the course, then try it.

Of course, you might not agree. I've had other mini-crusades that haven't been too successful, either. A few of them don't involve running, though one that does would be race officials to exert more control at big races to assure that runners line up according to pace. It often happens that a race will start and you're off and running (or in my case, jogging) and then have to almost stop to avoid colliding with either a much slower jogger or a walker. Now, that most races use a chip time, there is no reason for slower runners or walkers to line up in the front.

Non-running crusades include abolishing the need to purchase liability insurance for every car you might own. Isn't this a rip-off? If you purchase liability insurance, shouldn't it be good no matter which car you drive. I mean, how many can you drive at one time?

And while I'm on a soapbox, how about reforming the electoral college. This topic really bugs me. It doesn't make sense that if a presidential candidate wins 51 percent of a state's vote and his/her opponent receives 49 percent, that all the electoral votes go to the candidate that barely received more than half of the votes. Why not apportion the electoral votes by the percentage of votes each candidates earned? That would assure everyone's vote counts.

If you know, for example, a state is going to go with either the Republican or Democratic candidate, then what's the point of voting if you're on the other side?

OK, so much for the soapbox.