

Jim Thorpe Presentation

Intro: It was hard to decide what topic, or person to pick for this presentation because there was so much in the topic of first nations that interested me. The reason I picked Jim Thorpe was mainly because it is people like him are influential to me and as well to other athletes, and also because they inspire me to do better and to give it my best whenever I'm doing offseason training, practicing or playing in a game. It is because of people like Jim Thorpe that I have been so successful with the football and have made it to university level.

Jim Francis Thorpe was born on the Sac and Fox Indian reserve in Prague Oklahoma in 1887, and when he was born he was given the nick name Wa-tho-huck, which means Bright Path. He was arguably the greatest athlete of the first half of the 20'the century and was voted so in a poll in the 1950's, as well he was named ABC's wide world of sports athlete of the century continuously between 1996 and 2001.

Jim Thorpe played as an outfielder in major and minor league baseball (MLB) for 20 years for various teams like the Cleveland Indians, Cincinnati Reds, and the New York Giants. A big highlight for him in baseball was in one of his games he hit 3 home runs into 3 different states in one game that was played on the Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas border, two over the wall where one landed in Arkansas and the other landing in Oklahoma, and an in the park home run in Texas. As well something that I found to be interesting was that he is one of two men in history that has played for the New York Giants in 2 different sports, football being the other sport.

Jim Thorpe was very successful in his football career. At 25 in his final year of college he led his football team, the Carlisle Indian School to the National College Championships, and finished the season with 25 touchdowns and 198 points. After That season he went pro with football and played as a halfback for the New York Giants and because he was such a good football player, there is an award named after him that is given to the best halfback in college football. Jim Thorpe had many career highlights as a New York Giants football player, highlights like his inductions into the college football hall of fame, and pro football hall of fame, and as well was the first president to what is now known as the National Football League (NFL).

Jim Thorpe also had a very decorative Olympic career. Representing his country, in the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm he won gold medals in pentathlon and decathlon. But many had called Jim Thorpe's Olympic career a scandal. On January 12, 1913 both of his medals were stripped because he was a professional athlete in baseball, and the rules back then the rules were that no professional athlete could compete in the strictly amateur Olympic Games. But several years later in 1982, the International Olympic Committee restored Jim Thorpe's medals, and as well in 1983 replicas were given to his family, and Jim Thorpe was also inducted into the hall of fame in this sport as well.

Another interesting fact that about Jim Thorpe that I found was that after his professional career had ended in 1929 at the time of the depression, he started to work as an unaccredited extra in Hollywood. In his career he mainly played the role as a Native American, and occasionally a baseball player. According to the internet movie data base Jim Thorpe is credited with 59 rolls and is unaccredited with 39 rolls.

Interview

For my interview, I decided to interview Ken Badger, and the first questions that I wanted to ask was:

- 1) It is people like Jim Thorpe that motivate me to keep trying to get better, and to be successful in football, does Jim Thorpe or any other person give you the same feeling that I feel?

Ken: "Yes, like you mentioned it's not one person it's those people in general that keep me motivated, playing the sport is one thing, but it's the wanting to be there and get better that makes the difference".

- 2) Why is it that First Nations People are more likely to play a sport like lacrosse, rather than sports like football, baseball, or even hockey, when there is more than enough opportunity to get involved with each sport?

Ken: "Lacrosse has always and will always be a huge sport to First Nations Peoples, and throughout Canada there are more First Nations players that are successful in that sport and as a kid growing up you kind of look up to those players, and even might want to try and follow in their footsteps.

- 3) Why did you choose football over any other sport?

Ken: "Well I'm from Saskatchewan, and football in Saskatchewan is pretty big, so that was one of the main reasons why I chose to play it. I'd also say I chose to play football because I'm just a big guy and well I just didn't see myself playing sports like lacrosse and hockey mainly because the way I'm built just doesn't fit with those sports".

References

Interview – Ken Badger

Internet:

- www.cmgww.com/sports/thorpe/index.php
- www.essortment.com/all/jimthorpeolymp_rfp.htm
- www.imdb.com/rare/nm0861680/
- www.youtube.ca – general search on Jim Thorpe brought up some instructional videos.

Simon Fraser University Library

- Anderson Lars – Carlisle vs. Army: Jim Thorpe, Dwight Eisenhower, Pop Warner, and the forgotten story of football's greatest battle.
- Bill Crawford - The Rise and fall of Jim Thorpe and Bill Crawford.