

JIM THORPE

Good day, everyone--it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

Did you ever see a rundown of the athletic record of the famous Carlisle Indian, the Irish Sac-Fox, Jim Thorpe? He has been called the greatest athlete who ever lived--a man who could do anything in sports; a natural. As an All-American football player he made mince-meat of the top teams in the country four years running, and the Carlisle Indians became American legend. Hundreds of times he had been seen kicking a football the length of the field on a fly. In his sixties, as a movie extra in full Indian regalia, he kicked one eighty yards. In 1912 in a collection of games against the best, he scored 25 touchdowns and 198 points.

He played baseball for the Giants and the Braves, and in almost every league in the minors when big-league days were over. Jim's life was sports--playing the game, any game. Baseball, in a sense, was his ruination...playing in summer leagues while still at Carlisle, the "dumb Indian boy" as he called himself, honestly used his right name--other collegians did not--and this cost him the trophies of his greatest triumph. In the 1912 Olympics, before the King of Sweden, Thorpe won the decathlon and the pentathlon (both)--no one has ever repeated that feat--and he won some \$50,000 in trophies. Listen--he took four out of five firsts in the pentathlon--four out of ten in the decathlon--and in the latter was never worse than fourth in any event, despite competition from the world's best athletes. But he is adjudged guilty forever--because he took expenses in a Carolina summer

ball season. Despite the fact that he was called the greatest football player of all time, he was that kind of natural athlete whose great prowess seemed to be in track and field. On one occasion, Carlisle was meeting Lafayette...two men got off the train at Easton--"Where's the team?" asked the Lafayettes--"Here," said Thorpe--"Only two?" they asked--"One," said Thorpe, "my friend's the manager." Jim Thorpe won eight firsts in eight events--the meet--and took the train back to Carlisle. Thorpe was the first star of the National Pro Football League with the Canton Bulldogs. He played with Fats Henry, Jock Sutherland and the stars of the day---no one was better than Jim Thorpe-- Pennsylvania's Carlisle Indian--nobody ever hit harder, played harder, lived harder nor more honestly. Yet, the shadow of the 1912 Olympics hovers over that Indian name Thorpe, and his own generation seems to have forgotten. But not this generation-- young people who would be the age of Thorpe's grandchildren. They want to see a wrong righted. Today, the Jaycees of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, are beginning a country-wide petition to bring Jim Thorpe's still-stored trophies from Switzerland to America and Pennsylvania. The young people say Jim Thorpe earned them honestly--that they are America's mementoes of its greatest athlete and should be here. If, one of these days you're asked to sign a petition for Jim Thorpe, do it. He was an honest Injun, and Pennsylvania's greatest athlete.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.