

Name _____ Date _____

Jim Thorpe Biography and Questionnaire

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/athletes/jim_thorpe.php



Occupation: Olympian and football player

Born: May 28, 1888 in Prague, Oklahoma

Died: March 28, 1953 in Lomita, California

Best known for: Being one of the greatest athletes in history and a Native American who attended Carlisle Industrial Indian Boarding School.

Jim Thorpe was born into the Native American tribe of the Sac and Fox. His father, Hiram Thorpe, was a Sac and Fox while his mother, Charlotte, was from the Potawatomi tribe. Jim's native name was Wa-Tho-Huk, which meant "Bright Path".

Jim grew up with his twin brother Charlie on a farm in Oklahoma where he learned how to hunt, ride a horse, and set a trap. Jim loved playing outdoors. He wasn't very tall, but he was athletic and strong.

When Jim turned six years old, he and his brother Charlie went to attend the local Indian boarding school. Jim didn't like school at all, but Charlie enjoyed it. Charlie was smart and he tried to help Jim with his studies.

When the twins were nine years old, Charlie got sick and died. Jim was very sad and wanted to quit school. He ran away from school, running the twenty-three miles' home to see his parents. Jim's father was determined that he get an education. He sent Jim to another school further away in Lawrence, Kansas.

Jim became a standout on the school's track team. He also wanted to play football, but they said he was too small.

When Jim turned sixteen, he went to attend the Carlisle Industrial Indian School in Pennsylvania. He hoped to study electricity there and play on the track team.

At first Jim wasn't given a chance to join the team. Then one day, while he was walking past the track field, he noticed some of the varsity athletes practicing the high jump. He went over and asked if he could try. He was wearing his work clothes and the varsity players put the bar higher than anyone had ever jumped at the school. They thought it would be funny. However, Jim got the last laugh when he promptly ran up to the bar and jumped right over it. They were amazed!

The next day Jim was called into the office of the famous coach of Carlisle, Pop Warner. Pop told Jim he had broken the school record. He asked Jim to join the team. Soon Jim was winning track events at major college meets in all sorts of events including the high jump, sprints, and the hurdles.

Jim wanted to play football too, but Pop Warner thought he was too small. He gave Jim a chance in practice, however, and Jim ran right through the defense on his first try. Soon Jim was the star of the team. He played running back, place kicker, punter, and defense. He was named All-American in 1911 and 1912 and even led his team to the national championship.

In 1912, Thorpe tried out for the United States Olympic team. He participated in the pentathlon and the decathlon. The pentathlon was five events including the javelin throw, long jump, discus throw, 1500-meter race, and the 200-meter dash. The decathlon included ten track and field events. With Thorpe's all around talent, he took the gold medal in both events winning by a large margin.

After the Olympics, Jim went on to play professional sports. He played baseball for the New York Giants, the Cincinnati Reds, and the Boston Braves. He also played professional football and basketball. As a football player he played for a number of teams including the Canton Bulldogs, the football New York Giants, and the Chicago Cardinals. The Canton Bulldogs won three championships while he was on the team. Jim Thorpe also became the first president of the American Professional Football Association which later became the National Football League (NFL).

Jim Thorpe died of a heart attack in 1953. He had been married three times and had eight children.



Interesting Facts about Jim Thorpe:

- Legend has it that when Jim was awarded the gold medal, the king of Sweden said, "You, sir, are the greatest athlete in the world."
- He lost his gold medals in 1913 when it was discovered that he had played baseball for money before the Olympics. His medals were later reinstated in 1982.
- He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1963.
- His best season as a baseball player was his last when he had a .327 batting average.

- He was voted the greatest American football player of the first half of the 20th century.
- There is a 1951 movie about him called *Jim Thorpe-All American*. Movie star Burt Lancaster played the lead role.
- He once kicked a wind-assisted punt of 95 yards.

Jim Thorpe's Biography

Name:

Date:

*Insert image
here.*

Early Life

Describe the early life of Jim Thorpe. Include date of birth, family members, education, important events, and so on.

Public Life

Describe the Jim Thorpe's adult life or public life. What work did he do? How did he become well known? What were his most important accomplishments?

In my opinion...

Tell what you think about Jim Thorpe. Do you think that he was important? How is the world different because he lived?

I thought this article...

Tell whether you liked or didn't like this article. Give three reasons for your opinion.