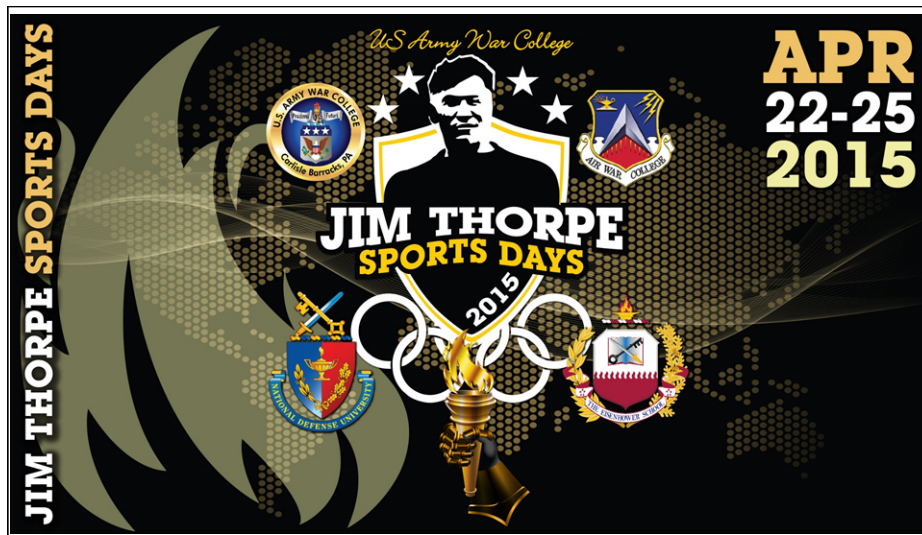


# Spring is coming, so is Jim Thorpe Sports Days 2015

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A colorful opening ceremony will kick off the Jim Thorpe Sports Days competition Thursday, April 23 at 5 p.m. on Carlisle Barracks' historic Indian Field where Jim Thorpe and others once displayed the teamwork, discipline, and physical fitness that inspires the

athletic games at Carlisle.

The colorful ceremony will include a 13-gun salute from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard; an Olympic-style walk-on with the athletes of every school; the National Anthem, welcome remarks from Maj. Gen. Bill Rapp, Army War College Commandant, a torch relay lap around the track, and lighting of the cauldron.

This year teams from the U.S. Army War College, National War College, the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy and the Air War College will compete in the three-day competition with the winner awarded the Commandants' Cup.

Sports events include golf, soccer, softball, volleyball, basketball, trap and skeet, men's and women's relays, cycling and a 5K run.

Students from these senior service schools average 22 years of military service and 42 years of age. Also competing are international officers from each of the schools.

Immediately following the torch lighting, the men's and women's one-mile relay team competition on the Indian Field track will begin.

The games will run from April 23-25 and a schedule will be posted at [www.carlisle.army.mil](http://www.carlisle.army.mil) Scores and updates

will be added throughout the games at [www.facebook.com/usawc](http://www.facebook.com/usawc)

### **Why Jim Thorpe Sports Days?**

Very early in its existence, organized physical exercise became a part of the Carlisle Indian School routine. The Jim Thorpe Gym, in use today, was built for the Indian School students' use.

The Carlisle Indian School first played collegiate football against Yale in 1896. Soon its teams were regularly playing Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Syracuse, Lehigh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Princeton. By 1897, Carlisle football was known throughout the country, a fame that garnered financial support. Baseball, track, and lacrosse teams were also well known. Some athletes were celebrated by the popular media, including Jim Thorpe, Charles 'Chief' Bender and Louis Tewanima -- and coaches and trainers, "Pop" Warner, Vance McCormick, and Wallace Denny.

Jim Thorpe, the school's greatest football and track and field athlete, won the decathlon and pentathlon at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm. Because of the accomplishments of Thorpe and long-distance runner Tewanima, the Indian School accumulated more points at the 1912 Olympics than any college or university in the United States.

### **About Jim Thorpe**

Jim Thorpe was born circa May 28, 1888, near current-day Prague, Oklahoma. An All-American in football at the Carlisle Indian School, he won the pentathlon and decathlon at the 1912 Olympics before his gold medals were revoked on a technicality. Thorpe played professional baseball and football, and sought an acting career after retiring from sports. He died on March 28, 1953, in Lomita, California.

### **Early Years and Schools**

Jim Thorpe was born circa May 28, 1888, near current-day Prague, Oklahoma. A child of Sac and Fox and Potawatomi Indian bloodlines, as well as French and Irish roots, he was given the name Wa-Tho-Huk, meaning "Bright Path," but christened Jacobus Franciscus Thorpe.

Thorpe learned to hunt and trap prey at an early age, developing his legendary endurance via extensive excursions through Indian Territory. His aversion to the classroom was exacerbated by the early deaths of his twin brother and both parents, and his stints at the Haskell Institute in Kansas, the local Garden Grove school and the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania were marked by long bouts of truancy.

As a student at Carlisle in the spring of 1907, Thorpe joined a track-and-field practice session on campus. Clad in his work clothes, he launched himself over a 5'9" high bar to break the school record, catching the attention of coach Pop Warner. Thorpe soon became the star of the track program, and with his athletic skills he also enjoyed success in baseball, hockey, lacrosse and even ballroom dancing.

However, it was football that propelled Thorpe to national renown. Starring as a halfback, place kicker, punter and defender, Thorpe led his team to a surprise victory over top-ranked Harvard in November 1911, and fueled a blowout of West Point a year later. Carlisle went a combined 23-2-1 over the 1911-12 seasons, with Thorpe garnering All-American honors both times.

### **Olympic Glory and Downfall**

Named to the U.S. team for the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, Thorpe burst out of the gate by winning four of five events to claim the gold medal in the pentathlon. A week later he overwhelmed the field in the decathlon, winning the high jump, the 110-meter hurdles and the 1,500 meters despite competing in a pair of mismatched shoes. Finishing the three-day event with a total of 8,412.95 points (of a possible 10,000), a mark that bested the runner-up by nearly 700 points, Thorpe was proclaimed by Sweden's King Gustaf V to be the greatest athlete in the world.

Thorpe was honored with a ticker-tape parade in New York City as part of his hero's welcome home. However, a newspaper report the following January revealed that the Olympic champion had been paid to play minor league baseball in 1909 and 1910. Despite his handwritten plea to the Amateur Athletic Union, Thorpe was stripped of his amateur eligibility and forced to return his gold medals, his historic performance stricken from the Olympic record books.

### **Professional Sports Career**

In 1913, Thorpe married his college sweetheart, Iva Miller, and signed to play professional baseball with the New York Giants. Troubled by the curveball, Thorpe batted just .252 over a six-year big-league career with the Giants, Cincinnati Reds and Boston Braves, although he managed an impressive .327 average in his final year.

Thorpe made a much bigger impact in the early stages of pro football. He signed with the Canton Bulldogs for \$250 per game in 1915, justifying the price tag by drawing massive audiences and leading the team to championships in 1916, '17 and '19. In 1920, the Bulldogs were among the 14 clubs that made up the American Professional Football Association -- soon to be renamed the National Football League -- with Thorpe serving as league president for a season. He went on to found the Oorang Indians, an all-Native American team that performed "war dances" and other rituals to entertain audiences, and also played for the NFL's Cleveland Indians, Rock Island Independents, New York Giants and Chicago Cardinals through 1928.