

Camaraderie, dedication, important for Sports Days



Camaraderie, dedication, important for Jim Thorpe Sports Days players

Learn more about student-athletes competing in this weekends games

All athletic events are free and open to the public event schedule can be found [here](#), [event locations](#), [directions to the YMCA for raquetball](#), [directions to Letort Park for softball](#)

For photos from this years event go [here](#)



Brigadier Ajit Mudholkar from India, and Brigadier Naushad Kayani from Pakistan, members of the Jim Thorpe Sports Day tennis team, share a laugh with one of the coaches, Capt. Derek Leo, post Judge Advocate. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman.

April 20, 2009 -- The Webster dictionary defines "esprit de corps" as the common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, and strong regard for the honor of the group. This is especially true for the seven student-athletes profiled below who will be competing in this weekend's Jim Thorpe Sports Days.

Two of those athletes are two Army War College International Fellows in the Class of 2009--Brigadier Ajit Mudholkar from India and Brigadier Naushad Kayani from Pakistan.

Both are members of the Army War College Jim Thorpe Sports Days tennis team and both will be doing their best to assist their teammates in winning the tennis trophy.

"We want to be part of the academic, social and sports events. They accepted us as students so we want to do our best for the college," said Mudholkar, with Kayani's agreement.

"We want to beat the other teams," he said.

Jim Thorpe Sports Days is an annual event held here combining sports, fellowship and camaraderie. The event

is 35 years old.

Students of the Army War College compete against students from the other military senior service colleges in approximately 70 different competitive events covering 14 different sports.

Athleticism comes easy

Mudholkar enjoyed playing other sports but his fascination with tennis started in 1978. Mudholkar was selected to participate in the Indian Army Championship in 1984.

"Representing the Army itself was a great achievement, he said."

Asked to describe Mudholkar's skill, Kayani said that Mudholkar's overall game is excellent. Fellow student Robert McIlwaine noted that Mudholkar has a wicked serve.

Kayani is a squash, cricket and hockey player, who was selected to participate in the Pakistan Army Championships in 1984 through 1986.

Mudholkar described Kayani as a very effective doubles tennis player, despite the fact that Kayani didn't take up the game until 1996.

"I was not impressed by tennis at that time because it was a slow game," said Kayani. "I am a part-time player.

"I play for enjoyment as a team."

The Jim Thorpe tennis team



Kayani practices his serve April 16. Photo by Kelly Schloesser.

Tennis team players include India Brig. Ajit Mudholkar , Pakistan's Brig. Naushad Kayani, Col. Eric Clayburn, Col. Gary Johnston, Air Force Lt. Col. Rick Matton, and Lt. Col. Trygve Trosper. Coaches are Dr. Marybeth Ulrich, Capt. Derek Leo, and Jan Helis.

"I feel that our players are very motivated, spirited, and good sportsmen. Jim Thorpe was a great icon and motivator," said Mudholkar.

"Marybeth Ulrich is a motivating coach for us," he added. "She makes us sweat. She pushes us hard on the court to improve our shortfalls."

They're preparing especially for the competition with the Air War College team. They hear there's a French International Fellows who is very good.

They are both looking forward to competing in Sports Days.

"You meet a lot of new people," said Kayani. "We get to know our team members well and form a strong bond. It is relationship that matters the most."

In every way, this has been one of the best years of our lives as well as our families, said Mudholkar.

Dedication pays off for Jim Thorpe golf team

His father introduced him to golf as a child, and he's playing for the Jim Thorpe Sports team 33 years later.

"It is actually my passion, if I am not playing it, I am watching it on TV or reading about it," said Lt. Col. Teddy Fox, Army War College student.

As a high school senior, Fox went to the Nebraska statewide tournament in 1983 and placed 8th in the state. Awarded a golf scholarship to a junior college in Iowa, he stayed one year and transferred to the University of Nebraska but did not play golf because of other priorities which included ROTC.



The sun came out and so did members of the USAWC Men's Golf team trying to get some practice in before competing this Friday and Saturday in the Jim Thorpe Sports Days. Photo by Suzanne Reynolds.

Fox didn't get back into playing golf until he was a captain at Ft. Knox, Ky. In 2007 when Fox was stationed at Ft. Jackson, S. C., he made the Ft. Jackson golf team. He participated in some tournaments with the largest being held at the Jacksonville Naval Station in Florida in October 2007.

"All services participated in this tournament sending their best golfers, said Fox. "There were some awesome golfers that showed up at this tournament and it was a very tough golf course." He placed 33 out of 120 golfers.

After graduation from the Army War College in June, Fox will be assigned to U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army Headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany, as the deputy adjutant general. He'll be returning to a very nice course he played when stationed there 2002 to 2004, he said.

The Jim Thorpe golf team

The golf team is scheduled to play a two-day tournament on April 24 and 25 starting at 8 a.m. (shot-gun start) at the Carlisle Barracks Golf Course.

"Our chances are great," said Fox. "We have some super golfers."

"There are 12 players on the men's team with 5 to 6 having single-digit handicaps and consistently shooting in the 70's with the rest shooting in the 80's," said Fox.



A few of the USAWC Women's golf team members also take advantage of the sunshine to practice for this week's Jim Thorpe Sports Days. Photo by Suzanne Reynolds.

The men's golf team includes Marine Lt. Col. Tom Eipp, Col. Norm Allen, Col. Marlon Blocker, Lt. Col. Ernie Erlandson, Lt. Col. Teddy Fox, Col. Scott Kimmel, Col. Bob Knutson, Col. John Laganelli, Col. Tarek Mekhail, Lt. Col. Rod Mentzer, and Lt. Col. Frank Zachar.

"The women's team has three players. They are a solid team and should do well," said Fox, referring to Col. Tricia Anslow, Chap. (Lt. Col.) Marti Hayes, and Belinda Gemme.

The coach is Col. Scott Horton (USAWC staff).

"I think our toughest competition and biggest challenge will be the Air Force because they can play year round in Alabama.

Track team member fights through pain to compete



Air Force Col. Ben Leitzel, coach of the track team goes for a run. Photo by Kelly Schloesser.

The five-mile Jim Thorpe race is barely a warm-up for running fanatic and track team member, Lt. Col. Frank Donovan.

Just two weeks ago, Donovan competed in a 100-mile Ultra-Marathon in North Carolina, finishing in a mind-blowing time of 21 hours and 18 minutes.

"I actually found it kind of enjoyable," said Donovan, after asking him about the shear pain and the exhaustion his body must go through in a race of that length.

Donovan had spent the past several months recuperating from a softball injury and has been working at length to ensure that he would not just run again but run well.

"Completing the race was really just to demonstrate to myself that I could this," said Donovan.

He also noted that without the help of Lt. Col. Allyson Pritchard at APFRI, he may have never fully recovered from the softball injury that resulted in a torn quad.

"She was awesome. Without her help I could never have done it," said Donovan.

Donavan also expressed his gratitude to the track coach, Air Force Col. Ben Leitzel.

"He's great. Some coaches coach from the sideline. Not Ben. He's out there up-front setting the pace. And you better keep up."

As for the teams' likelihood of beating out the other war college competition, Donovan said the team is great and is likely to do very well.

Life-long soccer player to test soccer skills

A lifetime of soccer practice will soon be put to the test for one student during Carlisle Barracks' annual Jim Thorpe Sports Days competition.

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Rick Uribe has been playing soccer for most of his life, including his time in college at California Polytechnic State University as a midfielder and forward, and is now the captain of the team for JTSD.

The 16-person team will be playing against teams from the Air War College, National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

"This is a great opportunity for us," he said. "The competition between strategic leaders and the teamwork involved helps to build friendships and relationships that will last a long time. We will run into each other down the road and be able to utilize the same camaraderie and teamwork that we have here to solve problems in the future."

Former four-sport athlete to help lead softball team

Most of us slacked our way through high school but that's not the case for Air Force Col. Mitch Berger, student and member of the softball team.

"I played four sports in High School; soccer, basketball, baseball and swimming," he said. "Sports kept me out of trouble and fueled the competitive fires. I was offered a scholarship to continue the last two years of college, but at the time I was tired of school and was looking for another challenge. That is when I enlisted in the Air Force."

The college third and first baseman said he looks forward to the games.

"We have a solid team with an exceptional offense and solid defense," he said. "We should be very competitive."

JTSD Background

Named in honor of Jim Thorpe, the great American athlete, Jim Thorpe Sports Days is an annual event which began in 1974 and demonstrates teamwork, discipline and physical fitness in a collegial environment.

Like the traditional rivalry of the annual Army-Navy Football Game, Jim Thorpe Sports Days pits Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force, Coast Guard, Interagency and International Fellow students against each other in an annual match up of the nation's senior service schools.

"This is a great opportunity to show your service spirit, just like the Army-Navy Game," said Dr. Craig Nation, an Army War College faculty member who has participated in the games as a running coach for ten years.

"The games are a great part of the senior service school experience," he said.

The opening ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. on April 24 on Carlisle Barracks' Indian Field. The historic Indian Field is located at the corner of Ashburn Drive and Forbes Avenue.

The colorful ceremony kicks off the sports competition between student athletes of the Army War College, Air War College, Naval War College, National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces. The athletes of the various senior service colleges will march onto the field, the official 'Olympic' style torch will be lit and the Carlisle Barracks cannon will be fired. Immediately following the ceremony the competition begins with the always exciting men's and women's relay runs on the Indian Field track.

Nation will serve as an assistant running coach for this year's competition. Although he has never participated in the games, as an athlete he said he feels that the competition, "builds team work and discipline, and generate relationship that carry over into professional life."

He also reflected on his athletic and personal relationship with Col. Brian Allgood, the top runner in the USAWC class of 2002. Allgood was killed in action when his helicopter crashed in northern Baghdad in January of 2007.

"Brian gave 110 percent of himself both off and on the track and is a symbol of the warrior spirit and we honor his service," said Nation.

During the three –day series of sports competitions, student athletes participate in 14 sporting events to include ladies one-mile relay, men's two-mile relay, ladies 5K run, men's five- mile run, men's and women's bowling; men's and women's golf; racquetball; basketball; soccer, softball, tennis, and volleyball.

In addition to individual medals in each event, the college that accumulates the most points will be awarded the Commandants Cup which maintains the trophy until next year's competition.

"This competition and the planned social events give us an opportunity to share sportsmanship and comradeship" said Maj. Gen. Robert Williams, USAWC Commandant. "General of the Army Douglas MacArthur said that 'upon the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that upon other days, on other fields, will bear the fruits of victory.' Let us sow the seeds during Jim Thorpe Sports Day 2009 with good sportsmanship that will later serve our Nation on other fields of strife."

The student athletes compete in soccer, golf, volleyball, basketball, softball, bowling, tennis, racquetball and in several running events. These events begin at 5 p.m. on April 23 and continue through April 25. The events are

held on Carlisle Barracks and other off-post locations.

The Opening Ceremony and sports events are open to the public.

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