



TOP AMERICAN SPORTSWOMEN

Jackie Joyner-Kersey

A multi-event track and field athlete born in 1962 in East St. Louis, Illinois, Jackie Joyner-Kersey is the winner of three Olympic gold medals. She competed in 4 Olympic Games (the last in 1996), and was the first American woman to score over 7,000 points in the heptathlon.

She was inspired by the 1976 Olympics, which she watched on TV. Like many other young sport talents in America, she was spotted in her high school and offered a college scholarship, which allowed her to develop her talent.



Ann Trason

An ultramarathoner and trail racer born in 1960, Ann Trason is an extreme distance runner. Her usual distances are 54 and 100 miles (87 and 161 km). A Californian, she frequently competed in a hundred-mile Western States Endurance Run, a race that starts in the Squaw Valley and finishes in Auburn.

One of her greatest achievements was winning the 1996 Comrades Marathon, the world's oldest 89 km ultramarathon in South Africa. It was also her personal triumph as the year before she had been forced to drop out due to an illness. Ann Trason suffered injuries that would discourage many others from running. Not her. She has always said that running heals.



Florence Griffith Joyner

A sprinter, the fastest woman in the world, also known as "FloJo", Florence Griffith-Joyner was born in 1959 in Los Angeles. She married Al Joyner, Jackie Joyner's brother. Her records for the 100 and 200 meters remain unbroken. She won three gold medals at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul.

Besides sports, she was interested in fashion. The colorful outfits she wore on the track surely brought style, variety and beauty into athletics. In 1998 she died of a seizure at age 38.



Mia Hamm

For those who consider soccer a masculine sport here's a warning from Pele himself: "All I can say is I'm glad I never had to go up against Mia Hamm." These words, which tell more about Mia than dozens of pages, appeared on the cover of her book "Go for the Goal".

This icon of women's soccer was born in 1972 in Selma, Alabama. Her lucky player's number was 9. She scored 158 international goals in her career, more than any other male or female player. Attendance nearly doubled at games in which she appeared.



Jean Driscoll

She was born in 1966 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with a spinal defect which impairs walking. Although she has never been able to use her legs, she won the Boston Marathon, women's wheelchair division, seven times. Victories in this race are perhaps more emotional than in other marathons. Every time Driscoll appeared in the Boston Marathon she broke the world record, which is now set at 1:34:22. Jean Driscoll tried other sports as well: soccer, racquetball, softball, tennis and football. She is both an active athlete and a coach.

Her message is clear. She wants to prove to herself and the rest of the world that the disabled can and indeed should, live a normal life.



Text by AIRC Krakow
Photos © AP Images

Jim Thorpe's Bright Path

The Origins of His Name

There was a streak of light that fell on the path leading to the home where he was born on May 28, 1888. His parents did not overlook this. They named him Wa-Tho-Huk, which means "Bright Path". Such were, as is believed, the origins of the Indian name of a Sac and Fox boy who grew to become one of the greatest and most versatile athletes of the 20th century, and whom the world remembers by the name of Jim Thorpe.

Before Sunshine there Comes Rain

The Indian name turned out to be prophetic. A bright path to a great career in a dozen of sports lay straight before him. Not before, however, the deaths in his closest family grieved and marred his youth. His twin brother died of pneumonia when they were 8, 2 years later his mother passed away, and before Jim was 17 he was already an orphan.

A Born Sportsman

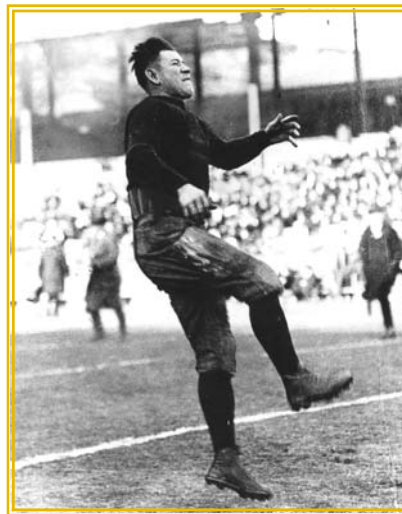
Sport was his refuge and part of his nature. The talent for sport was in his muscles, while the spirit of competitiveness was in his blood. In his school years, he would run the 20-mile distance home, but it gave him most pleasure when he could compete against other schoolboys. The legend has it that one day when he was passing track practice, he saw that none of the high jumpers could clear a bar set at 5 feet 9. He immediately joined in and, in his school overalls instead of a sports outfit, he easily cleared the bar.

A Long List

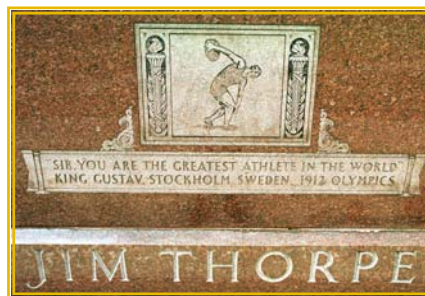
Jim Thorpe's sports performance list is long: football and baseball (which he played longest and perhaps loved best), track and field events such as high and long jump, pentathlon (hurdles, high jump, shot put, long jump and 800 meters), decathlon (which in addition has 100 m, 400 m, discus throw, pole vault,



Jim Thorpe at the 1912 Olympic Games
Photo from Wikipedia



Thorpe getting off a kick during his playing days Photo © AP Images



Olympian Jim Thorpe's burial crypt in Jim Thorpe, Pa. is inscribed with King Gustav of Stockholm Sweden's statement.
Photo ©AP Images/Chris Gardner

javelin throw and 1500 m) and basketball.

Double Olympic Champion

When a sportsman excels in so many sports, and wins the Olympic gold in the two most demanding - pentathlon and decathlon - and, whose record in the latter takes 15 years to beat, this really is a feat. Such, indeed was Jim Thorpe's achievement in the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. *Sir, you are the greatest athlete in the world*, said King Gustav V of Sweden upon the presentation of two gold medals to the athlete, and was reputedly answered by Thorpe: *Thanks, king*.

Joy Lasted But Six Months

The year of great success and popularity, crowned by a ticker-tape parade that he was given in New York, was followed by a year of hardships resulting from accusations against his amateur status. In 1913, six months after the Olympics, newspapers wrote that Thorpe had been paid for playing baseball in a minor league two years prior to his start in the Olympic Games.

Stripped of His Gold

With the strict rules about amateur and professional sport at the time and the unsympathetic approach from the secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union, who dismissed Thorpe's explanation: *I hope I will be partly excused by the fact that I was simply an Indian schoolboy and did not know all about such things*, and, indeed against the Olympic Games rules, which set a thirty-day deadline for appellations, a decision was passed to strip Jim Thorpe of his gold medals.

Not Much Left for Retired Sportsman

Jim Thorpe lived in times when earning a great name did not immediately translate into earning huge amounts of money. Neither did it safeguard a special celebrity status. Striving hard for money in various jobs when his sports career ended in the 1930s, and faced with a drinking problem, Thorpe was penniless and living in a trailer when he died of a heart attack on March 28, 1953. His Olympic medals were restored to him posthumously in 1982.

This All-American AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Nearly half of all Americans say that football is their favorite sport to watch, making it the number one national sport in the United States.

The object of the game is to score points by carrying or throwing the ball into the opposing team's end zone. The ball can also be handed from one teammate to the other. Points are scored in a variety of ways, such as kicking the ball through the goal posts on the opposing side, carrying the ball over the goal line or throwing it to another player past the goal line. The primary method of scoring is a touchdown. To score it a team must take the football into the opposite end zone. A 'touchdown' earns the team 6 points, a 'field goal', scored by kicking the ball over the crossbar and through the goal posts is worth 3 points. There is also a 'safety', which is earned

by the defense and is worth 2 points.

American football is played on a specially marked field, with the goal lines 100 yards (91m) apart from each other. In between them white lines mark 5-yard patches, while two rows of lines, called hash marks, cross the field horizontally.

Each game starts with a kickoff performed by the team that wins the coin toss. When the ball lands, it is recovered by players. The runner nearest the ball catches it and runs towards the other team's goal. The opposing players run to tackle him and the runner's teammates try to block them.

Except at the beginning of halves and after scores, the ball is always put into play at the 'line of scrimmage' with offensive players of one team facing defensive players of the other. An offensive player, the cen-

ter, then passes the ball between his legs to a teammate.

It is perhaps strange that the game, which allows touching and carrying a ball is called football, while a game that relies on the using of feet is not football but soccer.



Linemen of Poland's only American football team "The Crew" await a snap during a practice session in Wroclaw, Poland, on Tuesday evening, March 21, 2006. The Crew, which plays in the Czech Republic's football league and is coached by American Lowell Hussey, starts regular season play in April. (Photo © AP Images / Piotr Hawalej)

QUIZ

QUIZ

QUIZ

QUIZ

QUIZ

QUIZ

QUIZ

ARE YOU A SPORT?

Answer the quiz questions and add up your score. The answers are on p. 4.



1. You're playing cards with your family. It's the third time you lost. Do you?
a/ grind your teeth and think: "I must win next time!"
b/ excuse yourself from the game saying you've got a crushing headache,
c/ compliment the winner: "Wow, it looks like it's your lucky day!"

2. Your team has just won a game of soccer. Jim scored the winning goal, but it was you who passed the ball to him so brilliantly. After the match, everyone praises Jim and your contribution is overlooked. You:
a/ look miserable and think "I won't pass to anyone next time, but shoot the goal myself,"
b/ stay back but feel content with how you played,
c/ wait in a line to congratulate Jim.

3. During the workout in the fitness center you have to leave the room for a minute. When you come back, your place is taken. You have just one series to finish. Do you?
a/ come up to the person and say: "Sorry, I was practicing here," expecting him/her to go,
b/ don't say anything and wait till the person finishes,
c/ come up and say: "Can we practice in turns? I just have one series to finish here."

Now add up your score: 1a=2; 1b=3; 1c=1; 2a=3; 2b=1; 2c=2; 3a=3; 3b=2; 3c=1 The answers are on p. 4.

USEFUL LINK: The following page: http://entertainmentstudios.com/american_athlete/index.asp
"The American Athlete," is hosted by actor/comedian Byron Allen and features one-on-one interviews with today's hottest and most recognizable superstar athletes. You can watch and listen to the Interviews.

Activity Page

Win a Prize!

MARCH 2007
CONTEST

Name at least one American city where the Olympic Games were held. Send the answer (with your home address) to: zoom@usinfo.pl by April 8, 2007

Win a Prize!

The answer in the February 2007 Contest was:

1861 - 1865

Thank you for participating

The winners are:
Marta from Toruń,
Ryszard from Kraków
and Katarzyna from Żary

CONGRATULATIONS

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Exercise 1

Name the sports in the pictures:

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



Exercise 2

Put the words below under the appropriate heading:

swimming | baseball | soccer
| |

trainer, lane, pitcher, breaststroke, goal, batter, line judge, catcher, baseman, crawl, goal keeper, penalty area, center line, referee, back judge, fielders, sidestroke, sideline.

Exercise 3

Where are these games/sports played: (e.g. in a stadium)

1. ice hockey
2. volleyball
3. swimming
4. football
5. tennis
6. baseball
7. badminton
8. handball

Answers to the "Are you a Sport?" Quiz:

Before you read the interpretation of your answers, do you know what exactly being a good sport means? It doesn't necessarily have to do with doing sports. If someone is a good sport, it means he or she is a generous, pleasant and cheerful person, especially in difficult situations.

1. score 3-4

Congratulations! You are a good sport.

You can cope with difficulties and, what's more, you have confidence in yourself. You don't need to be number one all the time. Your friends like you and your approach.

2. score 5-7

If not exactly a good sport yet, you're struggling to be one. Stay cool in unpleasant situations and you will be there soon.

3. score 8-9

You must have the first place in whatever you do. You need the limelight and the podium. You lack self-confidence though; you have a long way to go before you become a good sport.

Find answers to activities on this page at www.usinfo.pl/zoom/