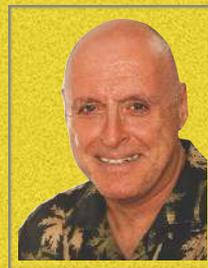


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 617 Jim Thorpe's Mismatched Shoes

What if you were facing stiff competition and on the day you had to face it down for the win, you discovered your basic support system wasn't available? I'm Jerry Roberts and the story of Jim Thorpe comes next on The Extra Point.

Jim Thorpe was a Native American athlete who competed in the 1912 Olympics, winning both the pentathlon, a series of five events; and decathlon, a series of 10 events. He lost his Olympic titles after it was found he had been paid for playing two seasons of semi-professional baseball before competing in the Olympics, thus violating the amateur rules that were then in place. In 1983, 30 years after his death, the International Olympic Committee restored his Olympic medals.

In 1913, Thorpe signed with the New York Giants, and he played six seasons in Major League Baseball. He became a two-sport pro athlete when he joined the Canton Bulldogs pro football team in 1915, helping them win three championships; and later played for six teams in the National Football League. All in all, he played professional sports until age 41.

Thorpe has been in the argument for being the greatest athlete of all time, and was inducted into the initial class of the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1963. He was portrayed by Burt Lancaster in the 1951 film *Jim Thorpe — All-American*.

Of all his athletic achievements, there is one that serves as inspiration for us all, taking place in the 1912 Olympics. If you Google "Jim Thorpe, different shoes" you'll see sites that report what took place before he won the pentathlon and decathlon.

On the morning of his competitions, Thorpe's shoes were stolen. He was able to borrow one from a teammate, then scrounged around and found another in a garbage can. There's a famous photo showing Thorpe wearing a pair

that are clearly mismatched. He had two shoes but one was too big so he had to wear an extra sock. I looked at the second shoe, the one from the trash can, and it didn't at all resemble a track shoe. If it wasn't, the feat was all the more amazing as that day Jim Thorpe won his two gold medals.

It got me to thinking, how good would Michael Jordan have been if his shoes were different and the same for any other athlete who figures into the greatest of all time conversation.

The message for you and me is that obstacles don't have to defeat us. We can use our intelligence, our wits, our effort, and our refusal to quit in order to come out ahead.

There was no guarantee for Thorpe that day. His mismatched shoes could have caused him to stumble and lose. That didn't keep him from giving it his best effort and on the biggest athletic stage in the world, he came out victorious.

Somebody once said, "Winners never have to explain anything." Others say, "You can have reasons or you can have results...but you can't have both."

If we're facing an uphill climb to what we want and something happens that could block our progress, will we give up and tell people our excuses, or will we go for the win and let others tell the story of our win — and what we had to overcome to earn it?

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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