

Jim Thorpe's Tragedy.

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. In fact, I did not know that I was doing wrong, because I was doing what I knew several other college men were doing, except that they did not use their own names

So says Jim Thorpe, the world's greatest athlete, at the end of his confession of professionalism. Because, during his summer vacation, this Indian, new to the ways of civilized sport, accepted money as a member of an insignificant and unheard-of professional baseball team in North Carolina, Thorpe is to be ostracized and banished forever from the realm of amateur athletics. There is real tragedy in the tremendous fall of this man from the summit of undisputed athletic supremacy.

Thorpe has brought humiliation to athletic America to take the place of the pride which has been felt for his achievements. All the trophies he won at Stockholm must be returned, an apology must be tendered to the Swedes, and the standings of the Olympic games must be revised. Yet, for all this, there are few Americans who will not have sympathy rather than reproach for the clean-minded and stalwart-bodied aborigine. There is small reason to doubt him when he says that he did not know he was doing wrong, nor is it likely that he was a party to any conspiracy to deceive.

On the other hand, the laws of amateur sport must be strict and merciless, if amateur sport is to continue to exist. That America has herself discovered Thorpe's delinquency, that America has brought him to court for his violation of the letter of the law and is prepared to make full acknowledgment and apology, is sufficient proof that in no other country do amateur athletics stand on a firmer and purer basis.