

The Thorpe Case.

Le monde athlétique a été, il y a quelque temps mis en émoi par la nouvelle que James Thorpe, le vainqueur célèbre du Pentathlon classique et du Decathlon aux Jeux Olympiques de Stockholm avait été reconnu pour non-amateur et avait lui-même avoué sa fraude.

Le fait est exact et c'est l'Amateur Athletic Union des Etats-Unis elle-même qui a pris l'initiative des sanctions qu'un tel fait lui semblait comporter. Toutefois le jugement suprême appartient au Comité International Olympique qui en a été saisi à la fois par le Comité suédois et par le Comité américain. La V^{me} Olympiade ayant pris fin, ses résultats dûment enregistrés sont sous la garde du Comité International qui, seul désormais, y peut autoriser des modifications. Le Comité International qui s'assemblera à Lausanne les 6 et 7 mai prochains, en délibérera et nul ne peut préjuger de sa décision. Le cas ne s'était pas encore présenté. C'est, en somme, une jurisprudence à établir.

Mais il nous a paru utile d'éclairer l'opinion en plaçant dès maintenant devant elle les pièces du procès. Nous avons obtenu le droit de les publier à condition que ce fut sous la responsabilité de la Revue et en dehors de l'officiel du Comité International. Il est bien entendu que c'est à titre privé et sans que les commentaires de nos lecteurs puissent engager en rien le Comité que nous donnons aujourd'hui le dossier complet de l'affaire Thorpe.

Il se compose des quatre pièces suivantes :

1°) *Note de M. James E. Sullivan au président du Comité International :*

Glenn S. Warner, Athletic Director at the Carlisle Indian School yesterday called on the Chairman of the National Registration Committee, James E. Sullivan at his office and presented communications from James Thorpe and M^r M. Friedman. Superintendent of the School in relation to published statements in regard to James Thorpe. The Chairman of the National

Registration Committee immediately placed the two communications in the hands of the President of the Amateur Athletic Union, Gustavus T. Kirby who then issued a call for the Chairman of the National Registration and the Chairman of the Legislation Committee, M. Bartow S. Weeks, who are both members of the American Olympic Committee to prepare a statement in regard to Thorpe.

2°) *Lettre de James Thorpe à J. E. Sullivan :*

Department of the Interior,
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE.

Carlisle, Pa., Jan 26th 1913.

James E. Sullivan,
New-York, N.-Y.

Dear Sir :

When the interview with M^r Clancy stating that I had played base ball on the Winston-Salem team was shown me, I told M^r Warner that it was not true and in fact I did not play on that team. But so much has been said in the papers since then that I went to the school authorities this morning and told them just what there was in the stories.

I played base ball at Rocky Mt. and at Fayetteville, N. C. in the summer of 1909 and 1910 under my own name. On the same teams I played with, were several college men from the north who were earning money by ball playing during their vacations and who were regarded as amateurs at home. I did not play for the money there was in it because my property brings me in enough money to live on, but because I liked to play ball. I was not very wise to the ways of the world and did not realize that this was wrong, and it would make me a professional in track sports, although I learned from the other players that it would be better for me not to let anyone know that I was playing and for that reason I never told anyone at the school about it until today.

In the fall of 1911 I applied for re-admission to this school and came back to continue my studies and take part in the school sports and of course I wanted to get on the Olympic team and take the trip to Stockholm. I had Mr. Warner send in my application for registering in the A.A.U. after I had answered the questions and signed it, and I received my card allowing me to compete in the winter meets and other track sports. I never realized until now what a big mistake I made by keeping it a

secret about my ball playing and I am sorry I did so. 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 had done except that they did not use their own names.

I have always liked sport and only played or run races for the fun of the thing and never to earn money. I have received offers amounting to thousands of dollars since my victories last summer but I have turned them all down because I did not care to make money from my athletic skill. I am very sorry, Mr. Sullivan, to have it all spoiled in this way and I hope the Amateur Athletic Union and the people will not be too hard in judging me.

Yours truly,
(Signed) JAMES THORPE.

3°) *Lettre du Directeur de l'Ecole de Carlisle à J. E. Sullivan.*

Departement of the Interior
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,

Carlisle, Pa., Jan. 26th 1913.

James E. Sullivan. Sec.,
Amateur Athletic Union,
New-York City.

My dear Sir :

Immediately on hearing of the news-paper charges made against James Thorpe, a Sac and Fox Indian student of this school, to the effect that he played professional baseball previous to the Olympic Games last July, the school authorities instituted a thorough investigation. I have just learned that Thorpe acknowledges having played with a Southern professional base ball team.

It is with profound regret that this information is conveyed to you, and I hasten to assure your committee that the faculty of the school and the Athletic Director, Mr. Glenn Warner, were without any knowledge of this fact until today.

As this invalidates Thorpe's amateur standing at the time of the games in Stockholm, the trophies which are held here are subject to your disposition. Please inform me of your desires in the matter. It is a most unpleasant affair, and has brought gloom on the entire institution.

Very respectfully,
(Signed) M. FRIEDMAN,
Superintendent.

4°) *Déclaration de l'Amateur Athletic Union des Etats-Unis.*

The Team Selection Committee of the American Olympic Committee selected James Thorpe as one of the members of the American Olympic Team, and did so without the least suspicion as to there having ever been any act of professionalism on Thorpe's part.

For the past several years Thorpe has been a member of the Carlisle Indian School, which is conducted by the Government of the United States at Carlisle, Pa., through the Indian Department of the Department of the Interior. Mr. Glenn Warner, formerly of Cornell, a man whose reputation is of the highest and whose accuracy of statement has never been doubted has been in charge of the athletic activities of the institution. During the period of Mr. Thorpe's membership at Carlisle he competed on its football, base ball and track and field teams, and represented it in inter-collegiate and other contests, all of which were open only to amateurs, as neither Carlisle nor any of the Institutions with which it competes has other than amateur teams. Thorpe's standing as an amateur had never been questioned, nor was any protest ever made against him nor any statement ever made as to his even having practiced with professionals, let alone having played with or as one of them.

The widest possible publicity was given of the team selected by the American Olympic Committee, and it seems strange that men having knowledge of Mr. Thorpe's professional conduct did not at such time for the honour of their country come forward and place in the hands of the American Committee such informations as they had. No such information was given, nor was a suggestion even made as to Thorpe being other than the amateur which he was supposed to be. This country is of such tremendous territorial expanse and the athletes taking part therein are so numerous, that it is sometimes extremely difficult to ascertain the history of an athlete's past. In the selection of the American Team the Committee endeavoured to use every possible precaution, and where there was the slightest doubt as to a man's amateur standing, his entry was not considered.

Thorpe's act of professionalism was in a sport over which the Amateur Athletic Union has no direct control; it was as a member of a base ball team in a minor league and in games which were not reported in the important papers of the country. That he played under his own name would give no direct

notice to any one concerned as there are many of his name. The reason why he himself did not give notice of his acts, is explained by him on the ground of ignorance. In some justification of this position, it should be noted that Mr. Thorpe is an Indian of limited experience and education in the ways of other than his own people.

The American Olympic Committee and the Amateur Athletic Union feel that while Mr. Thorpe is deserving of the severest condemnation for concealing the fact that he had professionalized himself by receiving money for playing base ball, they also feel that those who knew of his professional acts are deserving of still greater censure for their silence.

The American Olympic Committee and the Amateur Athletic Union tender to the Swedish Olympic Committee and through the International Olympic Committee to the Nations of the World, their apology for having entered Mr. Thorpe and having permitted him to compete at the Olympic Games of 1912.

The Amateur Athletic Union regrets that it permitted Mr. Thorpe to compete in amateur contests during the past several years, and will do everything in its power to secure the return of prizes and the re-adjustment of points won by him, and will immediately eliminate his records from the books.

Dated New York City, January 27th, 1913.

(Signed)

GUSTAVUS T. KIRBY,
President Amateur Athletic Union
and Vice-President American Olympic
Committee.

JAMES E. SULLIVAN,
Chairman National Registration Com-
mittee, Secretary Amateur Athletic
Union and Secretary American Olymp-
pic Committee.

BARTOW S. WEEKS,
Chairman Legislation Committee A. A. U. and Vice
President American Olympic Committee

Nous nous abstiendrons d'insister aujourd'hui sur l'intérêt de ces documents. Mais nous croyons pouvoir dire qu'à notre avis ils font le plus grand honneur au Comité Olympique américain, ainsi qu'à l'Amateur Athletic Union.

