

Jack Elkins, "Greensboro Born & Bred"

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A three-sport star and a highly regarded baseball prospect out of Grimsley Senior High School in Greensboro, North Carolina, Jack Elkins begins his professional baseball career with the Newport News Dodgers in July of 1947 - a full two years after signing a "secret" contract with the National League's Brooklyn Dodgers prior to the start of his senior season in 1945.



Frank Rickey

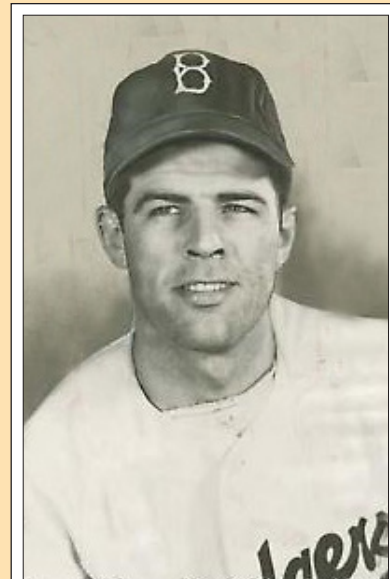
An 18-year-old Elkins signs with Brooklyn Dodgers scout Frank Rickey "sometime during the week of March 12" with the understanding that he will report to the Burlington Bees at an "unstated later date" and be paid \$1,000 if he remained with the Carolina (C) League team a month and \$200 a month afterward.

The *Greensboro Daily News* reports that Elkins, who had passed his Army physical in February and expects to be inducted into the Army later in the summer, assumes that the contract is to remain secret until his graduation in June thus allowing him to play his senior season.

Unfortunately for Elkins, the Burlington management announces his signing three days after Grimsley's opening game, a 20-1 win over Burlington High School. The game is later forfeited to Burlington. Elkins tells the *Daily News* that Rickey had assured him and his father that "he would be eligible to compete in high school baseball."

On April 16, Elkins is cleared to continue his season by the State Committee following a special meeting at Greensboro's King Cotton Hotel. However, the Committee rules that henceforth any player signing a professional contracts will be ruled ineligible. The ruling also allows Grimsley to "reclaim" its' victory over Burlington.

Two days later, the superintendent of the Winston-Salem school system phones the Greensboro superintendent with the "suggestion" that Greensboro declare Elkins ineligible for the remainder of the season "upon its own initiative." The request is declined.



Jack Elkins
1949 Brooklyn Dodgers Spring Training

Caption on Photo: "Jack Elkins, another Southern gentleman in the Dodger organization, this one being personally scouted, signed and sealed by Frank Rickey, brother of Branch. And since he received the personal okay of this redoubtable connoisseur of ivory, he is regarded as a fine prospect despite two rather indifferent seasons."

Jack Elkins Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	AB	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	AVG
1947	Newport News Dodgers	Piedmont	B	66	17	3	0	0	7	.258
1948	Greenville Spinners	South Atlantic	A	209	46	3	2	1	26	.220
1949	Lancaster Red Roses	Interstate	B	292	76	11	6	4	52	.260
1950	Lancaster Red Roses	Interstate	B	199	54	6	3	3	39	.271
1951	2 Teams	2 Leagues	A/B	314	82	22	3	0	37	.261
	Miami Sun Sox	Florida Int.	B	30	8	3	0	0	3	.267
	Pueblo Dodgers	Western	A	284	74	19	3	0	34	.261
1952	Pueblo Dodgers	Western	A	308	88	15	1	3	40	.286
1953	3 Teams	3 Leagues	A/B	300	75	14	4	5	74	.250
	Pueblo Dodgers	Western	A	94	29	2	1	3	40	.309
	Augusta Rams	South Atlantic	A	101	19	5	2	0	16	.188
	Newport News Dodgers	Piedmont	B	105	27	7	1	2	18	.257
1954	3 Teams	2 Leagues	A/B	258	57	8	1	8	33	.221
	Greensboro Patriots	Carolina	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
	Winston-Salem Twins	Carolina	B	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
	Charlotte Hornets	South Atlantic	A	16	2	0	0	0	0	.125
	Greensboro, Winston-Salem	Carolina	B	242	57	8	1	8	33	.236
1955	Burtner Furniture	Piedmont Softball League	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
1956	Bur-Gra Bees	Piedmont Industrial	-	42	14	-	-	-	18	.333
1956	Greensboro Patriots	Carolina	B	191	41	2	0	10	31	.215
1957	Bur-Gra Bees	Piedmont Industrial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	---
Minor League Totals		9 Seasons		2121	536	84	20	34	339	.253

It is later determined that Rickey has also "secretly" signed Jack Ward of Thomasville High School and star players from both Kernersville and Altamahaw-Ossipee high schools. In fact, so many players are discovered to have sign pro contracts during the spring that the *Greensboro Daily News* decides that the paper will not recognize an all-state schoolboy baseball team for 1945.

Born on December 12, 1926, in Greensboro to Hugh and Bertha Elkins, the 6-2, 180-pound, left-handed hitting catcher will play for nine different minor league teams in six different leagues.

Tall but graceful with soft hands and a strong arm, Elkins finishes his professional baseball career in 1956 with his hometown

Jack Elkins [2 of 4]:



Jack Elkins
1948 Guilford College Quakers

January 7, 1948

Now a student at Guilford College in Greensboro, Elkins is declared eligible to play basketball by North State Conference Commissioner A.L. Hook ... Elkins will start at center for the 3-2 Quakers.

January 27, 1948

Elkins scores a game-high 21 points and leads Guilford past Elon 63-56 in a North State Conference game.

March 6, 1948

Elkins, despite leading the Quakers in scoring and earning All-North State Conference honors in basketball, has reportedly dropped out of school to report to the Greenville Spinners spring training camp.

Greensboro Patriots with 84 career doubles, 20 triples, 34 home runs, 339 RBIs and a .253 batting average ... his best season comes with the Pueblo Dodgers of the Western (A) League in 1952, when he hits a career-high .286 with 15 doubles and three home runs.

ELKINS CHRONOLOGY

April 16, 1945

Burlington Bees Secretary Brodie E. Hood makes his first statement on the controversy stating that Elkins never signed a contract with Burlington, but had "probably" had signed directly with the Brooklyn Dodgers ... Brodie says that Elkins' name was "mentioned" during a meeting of Dodger scouts earlier in the week ... at the meeting, Elkins name was placed on a list of prospective players for the Bees.

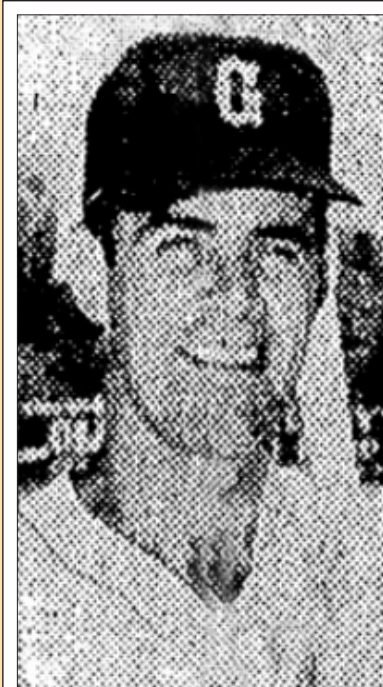
April 28, 1949

Elkins returns to Greensboro after serving "considerable" time in Europe with the occupation forces.

"After I get my high school credits, I am going to look around for a place to continue my education. I am going to college whether or not I play baseball."

July 30, 1947

Elkins, who signs with the Brooklyn Dodgers before entering the service, reports to the organization's Newport News affiliate in the Piedmont (B) League ... Elkins will back up 27-year-old World War II veteran Paul Kluk.



Jack Elkins
1954 Greensboro Patriots

1948 Guilford College Quakers (10-11) - 8th Place Carolinas Conference



First row, left to right: Mann, Halcistraw, Grubb, Johns, Chatham. Second row: Highfill, Perrell, Balb, Hall, Leonard. Third row: Hansard, Elkins, Dempsey, Coleman, Schoelkopf. Coach Lentz.

Jack Elkins [3 of 4]:

June 1948

Elkins is hitting .242 for the Greenville Spinners but is forced to miss a road trip with an infected leg.

July 10, 1951

Pinch hitting for catcher Al Ronning, Elkins singles home George Freeze with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning as the Pueblo Dodgers (49-38) reclaim first place in a tight Western League race beating Wichita 6-5.

The one-run victory proves to be the high water mark of the season for the Dodgers as they go 25-42 in their remaining games and finish in sixth place 16 games behind the first place Omaha Cardinals.

1952

Elkins heads south to Mexico to play winter ball for Los Mochis in the Mexican Pacific Coast League.

Local Athlete Is Purchased From Brooks

March 1, 1954

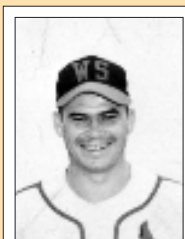
Greensboro Patriots Business Manager Jack McCaffrey announces that the team has purchased the contract of catcher Jack Elkins from the Brooklyn Dodgers organization.

July 5, 1954

Unable to dislodge starting catcher Guy Morton, Elkins is sold to league rival Winston-Salem ... Elkins will pay immediate dividends for the Twins, homering in each of his first two games.

March 26, 1955

Winston-Salem begins its spring training without Elkins ... team officials say they have no word from their starting catcher ... Elkins will remain out of professional baseball for the entire 1955 season choosing instead to play in local baseball and softball leagues.



Bill LaFrance
1950 Winston-Salem
Cardinals

March 22, 1956

Two Carolina League veterans - Elkins and Bill LaFrance - sign with the semipro Bur-Gra Bees of the Piedmont Softball League ... LaFrance last played in the minor leagues with the Augusta Tigers in 1952; has a .283 batting average and 87 home runs in seven minor league seasons ... earns Georgia-Florida League all-star honors in 1947 after hitting .304 with 18 home runs and 111 RBIs.

June 6, 1956

Elkins has four hits, including a two-run home run in the eighth inning lifting the Bur-Gra Bees to a 10-8 win over Siler City in a Piedmont Industrial League game.

June 26, 1956

Elkins signs with the Greensboro Patriots ... to make room for Elkins the Patriots return Ed "Horsey" Cannon back to the Cincinnati Reds ... two weeks later Cannon is named to the Carolina League All-Star team.

September 22, 1948
Capital City Park, Columbia, South Carolina

Elkins Catches Final Championship Contest

COLUMBIA, Sept. 22. — (AP) — Greenville wore the South Atlantic League crown today after setting Columbia down 2-1 last night to take the Shaughnessy playoff series four games to one.

The Spinners collected their pair of tallies in the second frame when First Baseman Ben Taylor slapped a homer over the 385-foot center-field fence with one man on. Jack Elkins of Greensboro, N. C., caught for the Spins.

Greenville	020	000	000	---	2	8	1
Columbia	000	000	100	---	1	5	0
Mondorff and Elkins; Smith, Borsch (7) and McLeod.								

July 25, 1952
Rosenblatt Stadium, Omaha, Nebraska



Omaha Cardinal Ed Phillips scores as a shorts-clad Elkin awaits throw.

Jack Elkins [4 of 4]:

August 5, 1956

Despite a batting average that is hovering around the .200 mark, Elkins is named to the West squad for the East-West All-Star game.

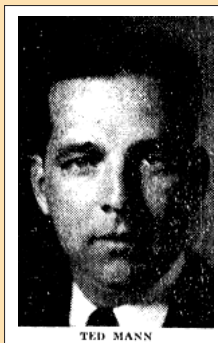


Jack Elkins
1956 Greensboro Patriots

August 13, 1956

Elkins is fined \$100 and suspended for 10 days by Carolina League President Ted Mann after he fails to show up at the East-West All-Star game in Winston-Salem.

Elkins, also a salesman for a pharmaceutical firm, is attending to business in Charlotte and had informed Greensboro General Manager Rufus Blanchard earlier that he would be unable to play in the game.



TED MANN

"There isn't anything I can do but go by the rule book," says Mann. "The rules say that a player who fails to appear for the All-Star game must be fined \$100 and suspended 10 days."

The rule was put in place after the 1948 All-Star game when Danville manager Herb Brett withheld three of his players in the league's inaugural All-Star game.

1957 Greensboro Patriots Pre-Season Roster

The current Patriot roster includes the following players: Pitchers—Paul Aylward (service), James Dokos (Lafayette), Ken Hammel (service), Charles Herrlein (service), Harry Holtsma (Patriots), Ron Jirsa (Corning), Joe Ross (Patriots), Don Soderstrom (Corning-Lafayette) and Ernie Sadler (service).

Catchers—Jack Arrigo (Corning), Dave Charron (rookie), Fred Bower (Lafayette), Jack Elkins (Patriots), Eddie Irons (Albany) and Phil Stackpole (Patriots).

Infielders—George Contratta, 1b. (Patriots); Al Lafemina, 3b. (rookie); Dean Mickelson, 2b. (Corning); Don Ganes, 1b. (rookie); William Halter, 1b. (rookie); Ezell King, 1b. (Tucson).

Outfielders—Jim Blackwell (rookie), George Desmeulos (Leesburg, Fla.), Armand DiFerdinando (Corning), George Lewis (Corning), Mike Marko (rookie), Jim Herbert (rookie), and Buster Radebach (Patriots).

August 15, 1956

Carolina League directors unanimously vote to remove Elkins' suspension and he plays that evening against the Hi-Toms and goes 1-for-4 in 2-1 loss.

March 3, 1957

Elkins is listed on Greensboro's preseason roster.

March 4, 1957

Burlington Bees manager Lou Foust announces that the team has signed Jack Elkins for the upcoming season.

Elkins Suspended For 10 Days Plus \$100 Fine Tab

Jack Elkins, No. 1 catcher for the Patriots, was suspended for 10 days and fined \$100 by Carolina League President Ted Mann for failure to show up for the East-West All-Star game at Winston-Salem last night.

Elkins was selected as one of the two West catchers. Haven Schmidt of the Hi-Toms was obtained as a replacement prior to the game when officials were notified that the Pat receiver would not be present.

The Patriot, who doubles as a salesman for a pharmaceutical firm, was reported working in Charlotte yesterday and business prevented him from being at Winston-Salem. He informed Pat General Manager Rufus Blanchard Sunday that he would be unable to play and Blanchard notified President Mann.

"There isn't anything I can do but go by the rule book," said Mann in announcing the suspension and fine. "The rules say a player who fails to appear for the All-Star game must be fined \$100 and suspended 10 days. I have no alternative but to enforce the rule."

It takes an unanimous vote of the loop directors to change a league rule. President Mann held a meeting with four directors at last night's All-Star game about the situation and there was disagreement over whether the rule should be suspended in Elkins' case despite the circumstances. The Pat catcher had support for his case but some felt that the rule was a rule and it should be carried out in fairness to the pennant contenders.

Bob Walsh will take over the catching duties of Elkins for tonight's game with the Hi-Toms. Elkins has done the bulk of the Pat catching in recent weeks although he is hitting only .200.

February 14, 1998

Elkins dies in Greensboro at the age of 71.

Two of Elkins' sons followed in their father's footsteps as Rod and Mike both play football at Grimsley High School before going on to play collegiately at North Carolina and Wake Forest, respectively ... Rod throws for 2,707 yards and 25 touchdowns with the Tar Heels between 1979 and 1982, while Mike totals 7,304 yards and 43 scores for the Demon Deacons between 1985-88 ... the younger Elkins was a second round draft pick (32nd overall) in 1989 by the Kansas City Chiefs.