

# Ed Sanicki "As Easy As 1-2-3"

©DiamondsintheDusk.com

**"Richie Ashburn is going to have to hustle with all he has to keep Sanicki from taking his job.  
-Eddie Sawyer, January 28, 1950**

Ed Sanicki isn't able to beat out Hall of Famer [Richie Ashburn](#) for the Philadelphia Phillies' center field job, but in 1949 he does something that no other major league player has ever accomplished.

Over a two-week span in September, Sanicki hits a home run in his first major league at bat and then adds two more home runs on his next two hits. Despite his auspicious debut of hitting home runs with his first three major league hits, the Paterson, New Jersey, product collects only two more career hits at the major league level before calling it quits three years later.

Born on July 7, 1923, in Wallington, New Jersey, to Michael and Anna Sanicki, he graduates from Clifton High School in 1941, where he stars in baseball, basketball and football. His father was born in Krakow, Poland, and had emigrated to America in 1911 at the age of 22.

A two-time all-state outfielder who hits .410 in his four scholastic seasons at Clifton, Sanicki is regarded as a "corking good football player," and matriculates to [Seton Hall](#) College in South Orange, New Jersey, where his tuition is paid for by Brooklyn Dodgers' President [Larry McPhail](#) because the school doesn't have a football team.

On April 19, 1942, Sanicki becomes the first-ever freshman to play varsity baseball at Seton Hall when he is 2-for-4 in a 15-0 season-opening win against [St. Peter's](#). The 1942 team finishes the season 11-0 and extends its two-year winning streak to 25 in a row. Four players from that team, coached by [Al Mamaux](#), eventually make it into organized baseball. Mamaux, a two-time 20-game winner with the Pirates in 1915 and 1916, compiles a 69-19-1 in six seasons (1937-1942) at Seton Hall.

Sanicki leaves Seton Hall a year later to enter the Navy and receives his training at Newport News NTS before proceeding to signal school. While working on earning his seaman rating, he is able to play in the area's Station League where in one game he hits two home runs against Boston Braves' 10-game winner [Lou Tost](#). Sanicki later sees armed guard duty on liberty ships, including several on the dreaded Murmansk run. While serving four years, he picks up boxing and is good enough to be a light heavyweight Golden Gloves champion. Playing center field for the [Rhode Island Naval Base](#) team in 1944, he leads the local military league in home runs and is second in batting average.

Home on leave in August of 1945, it's reported that Sanicki has been offered a contract by every team in the major leagues. Following a three-year stint in the Navy, Sanicki is discharged on December 13, 1945.

**"Brooklyn paid my way when I first entered Seton Hall. Larry MacPhail was running the club at that time. I had been playing football, as well as baseball at Clifton High. MacPhail told me to quit football, stick to baseball and I'd maybe be playing with Brooklyn."**

**- Ed Sanicki**



**Ed Sanicki  
1946 Waterbury Blue Rocks**



**Ed Sanicki  
1946 Waterbury Blue Rocks**

### Home Run No. 1

Philadelphia Phillies at Pittsburgh Pirates  
Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
September 14, 1949

PHILADELPHIA		PITTSBURGH	
ab	r h o a	ab	r h o a
Ashb'n,cf	5 1 2 6 0	Rojek,ss	3 1 1 0 0
Hammer,ss	5 3 2 3 1	c-Chesnes	1 0 1 0 0
Sisler,1b	3 2 0 8 1	Phillips,3b	0 0 0 0 0
Ennis,lf	4 2 2 1 0	Saffell,cf	2 1 1 2 0
Lopata,c	3 2 2 2 0	Hopp,1b	4 1 1 8 0
Nic'son,rf	3 0 1 1 0	Kiner,lf	4 1 1 0 0
a-Blatt,rf	1 0 1 0 0	W'lake,rf	4 0 0 2 0
Sanicki,rf	1 1 1 3 0	C'f'e,3b,ss	4 0 0 5 5
Jones,3b	4 0 2 1 3	Basgall,2b	4 0 0 3 2
Gollat,2b	5 1 1 2 4	M'C'ugh,c	2 0 0 5 0
Roberts,p	5 0 0 0 1	b-Restelli	1 0 0 0 0
		F'ernald,c	1 0 0 1 0
		Walsh,p	0 0 0 0 0
		L'rhuardi,p	2 0 1 0 1
		Sewell,p	1 0 0 1 0

Total 39 12 14 27 10    Totals 33 4 6 27 8  
 a-Singled for Nicholson in 7th.  
 b-Filed out for McCullough in 7th.  
 c-Doubled for Rojek in 8th.  
 Philadelphia ..... 2 2 0 0 0 1 4 0 3-12  
 Pittsburgh ..... 1 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 0-4  
 E-Castiglione. RBI — Nicholson 2.  
 Gollat, Hammer, Kiner 3, Jones, Hopp.  
 Ennis 2, Blattner 2, Sanicki 3, 2B-Lopata  
 Hammer, Ennis, Chesnes, 3B-Hopp.  
 HR-Gollat-Hammer, Kiner, Sanicki, DP  
 —Castiglione, Basgall and Hopp; Casti-  
 gione and Hopp; Castiglione and Basgall.  
 Left-Phila. 6; Pittsburgh 4. BB-Off  
 Walsh 2, Lombardi 3, Sewell 1, Roberts 2.  
 SO-By Walsh 2, Lombardi 2, Sewell 1.  
 Roberts 1. HO-Walsh 3 in 2 innings.  
 Lombardi 6 in 4 1-3 innings, Sewell 5 in  
 2 2-3 innings. W-Roberts (15-13). L-  
 Walsh (1-4). U-Stewart, Conlan and  
 Warneke. T-2:04. A-3,920 (paid).

Sanicki hits a three-run home run in his first major league at bat against Pittsburgh's Rip Sewell. Sanicki's ninth-inning blast over the left-field wall was the 116th and final home run allowed by the 42-year-old right-hander in his 13 major league seasons ... Pittsburgh's Ralph Kiner also hits his 49th round-tripper of the season.



### Home Run No. 2

Philadelphia Phillies at St. Louis Cardinals  
Sportsman Park, St. Louis, Missouri  
September 19, 1949

PHILADELPHIA		ST. LOUIS	
ab	r h o a	ab	r h o a
Ashburn,cf	5 0 2 3 0	Diering,cf	5 1 1 3 0
Hammer,ss	4 0 1 1 1	Sch'ensat,2b	5 0 2 2 2
Sisler,1b	4 0 0 8 0	Musial,rf	5 1 2 2 0
Ennis,lf	4 2 4 4 0	Shaug'ter,lf	4 0 1 2 0
Sem'bek,c	4 0 0 7 0	V.Jones,1b	4 1 2 6 0
Sanicki,rf	4 1 1 2 0	Marion,ss	4 0 1 1 2
W.Jones,3b	4 0 0 1 2	Rice,c	2 0 0 5 0
Gollat,2b	3 1 0 1 2	Wilber,c	2 0 1 4 0
Thompson,p	4 0 0 0 0	Claviano,3b	4 0 0 2 1
		Pollet,p	1 0 0 0 0
		a-Klein	0 0 0 0 0
		Brazie,p	0 0 0 0 0
		b-Kazak	1 0 0 0 0
		Staley,p	0 0 0 0 1
		c-Kur'ski	1 0 1 0 0
		d-Neison	0 0 0 0 0

Totals 36 4 8 27 5    Totals 28 3 11 27 6  
 a-Walked for Pollet in 6th.  
 b-Popped out for Brazie in 7th.  
 c-Singled for Staley in 9th.  
 d-Ran for Kurowski in 9th.  
 Philadelphia ..... 0 0 0 2 0 1 1 0 0-4  
 St. Louis ..... 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 2 0-3  
 E-V. Jones, Diering, RBI-Sanicki 3.  
 Hammer, V. Jones, Musial, Marion, 2B-  
 Musial, Diering, Marion, 3B-Ennis, HR  
 —Sanicki, V. Jones, Left-Philadelphia 6.  
 St. Louis 9, RBI-Thompson 1, Brazie 1.  
 SO-Thompson 6, Pollet 3, Brazie 2, Sta-  
 ley 2. HO-Pollet 6 in 6 innings; Brazie  
 1 in 1; Staley 1 in 2. W-Thompson (1-2).  
 L-Pollet (19-9). U-Bartick, Bogess, Bal-  
 lafant and Barr. T-2:27. A-16,874.

Sanicki homers and drives in three runs for the victors. He follows a fourth-inning single by Del Ennis with a home run deep into the left field seats off of St. Louis' Howie Pollet, whose record drops to 19-9 with the loss. Sanicki's home run is only the eighth allowed in 1949 by the Cardinals' ace left-hander in 218 innings.



### Home Run No. 3

New York Giants at Philadelphia Phillies  
Shibe Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
September 28, 1949

NEW YORK		PHILADELPHIA	
ab	r h o a	ab	r h o a
Williams,2b	3 0 0 2 0	Ashburn,cf	4 0 1 0 0
Lofkman,lf	4 0 0 2 0	Hammer,ss	4 0 0 0 6
Thomson,cf	4 0 1 2 0	Glynn,1b	4 0 0 0 1
M'shall,rf	4 0 2 4 0	Ennis,lf	2 1 1 4 0
Irvin,1b	4 0 1 3 0	Lopata,c	3 0 0 4 0
Wettrum,c	4 0 1 8 0	Sanicki,rf	3 1 1 2 0
Lohrke,3b	2 0 0 3 0	W.Jones,3b	3 0 1 1 3
b-Th'pson	0 0 0 0 0	Gollat,2b	2 0 0 5 2
Rufer,ss	2 0 1 0 1	Meyer,p	2 0 0 1 2
a-Milne	1 0 0 0 0		
Kerr,ss	0 0 0 0 1		
c-Gordon	1 0 0 0 0		
Jones,p	3 0 0 0 2		
d-Rigney	1 0 0 0 0		

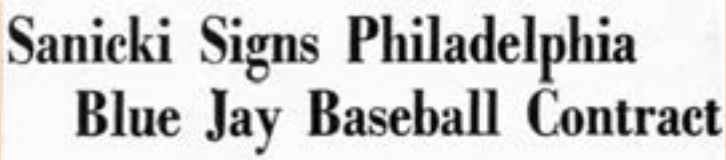
Totals 33 0 6 24 5    Totals 27 2 4 27 16  
 a-Filed out for Rufer in 7th.  
 b-Walked for Lohrke in 9th.  
 c-Grounded out for Kerr in 9th.  
 d-Filed out for S. Jones in 9th.  
 New York ..... 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0-0  
 Philadelphia ..... 0 1 0 0 0 0 1 0 x-2  
 E-None. RBI-Ennis, Sanicki, 3B-  
 Irvin, HR-Ennis, Sanicki, S-Meyer, Left  
 —New York 9; Philadelphia 4. BB-Off  
 Meyer 3, Jones 2. SO-By Meyer 3; Jones  
 4. Winner-Meyer (17-8). Loser-Jones  
 (15-12). U-Reardon, Jorda and Goetz.  
 T-1:47. A-1,908.

Eddie "The Mad Russian" Sanicki hits the third and final major league home run of his career off of Sheldon Jones, and Del Ennis adds his 24th of the season as the Phillies, behind the six-hit pitching of Russ Meyer, top the visiting New York Giants 2-0. Through his first five games, Sanicki is 3-for-12 with seven RBIs.



By 1945, MacPhail had moved to the American League's New York Yankees and a more mature Sanicki has to deal with a more reticent Branch Rickey.

"But it was different when I had to talk to (Branch) Rickey. I felt that I owed it to Brooklyn. So I asked Rickey to give me \$2,500 to sign. You see, I had a family to care for, and not much money. Well, he was willing to give me a tryout with the Dodgers, but no money. He said to me, 'You haven't played ball in four years, I can't give you any money, because you might not be worth anything to us.' Well, I figured that did it. I wasn't obligated any longer. I'd been talking to Chuck Ward, the Phillies scout. He was interested in signing me. When the Phillies came through with a \$2,000 offer, I was glad to go with them. I've never been sorry."



Sanicki plays seven years, all in the minors, except for the 20 games with the Phillies spread over two seasons in 1949 and 1951. Noted for his "close to the earth build," Sanicki totals 160 home runs with 617 RBIs with a .265 batting average and a .459 slugging percentage while playing for five minor league teams in four leagues at four different levels.

He signs with the Phillies on January 20, 1946, and expects to open the season with the Utica Blue Sox of the Eastern (A) League. Sanicki is so impressive during the team's spring training in High Point, North Carolina, that Joe Reardon, head of the Phillies' farm system, says Sanicki as "just a short step from the major leagues."

## Ed Sanicki Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Lev	W-L	Finish	Age	AB	R	HT	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	SLUG	OPS	AVG
1941	Red Bank Pirates	Passaic-Bergen	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--
1942	Seton Hall University		College	11-0	-	-	43	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	.372
1942	Uncle Sams	Passaic-Bergen	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--
1943-1945	U.S. Navy																
1945	Uncle Sams	Passaic-Bergen	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	.393
1945	Paterson Blue Jays	Passaic-Bergen	SPro	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	--	--
1946	Wilmington Blue Rocks	Intertstate	B	87-53	*1 of 8	22	537	113	165	22	4	*30	*144	19	.531	.923	.307
1947	Wilmington Blue Rocks	Intertstate	B	79-60	#2 of 8	23	510	*127	163	26	3	*37	*109	6	.600	1.046	.320
1948	Toronto Maple Leafs	International	AAA	78-76	4 of 8	24	526	82	124	19	4	*21	*107	3	.407	.747	.236
1949	Toronto Maple Leafs	International	AAA	80-72	5 of 8	25	571	105	153	19	2	33	*102	1	.482	.840	.268
1949	Philadelphia Phillies	NATIONAL	MLB	81-73	3 of 8	25	13	4	3	0	0	3	7	0	.923	1.209	.231
1950	Toronto Maple Leafs	International	AAA	60-90	7 of 8	26	303	44	64	8	0	10	42	6	.337	.676	.211
1951	Philadelphia Phillies	NATIONAL	MLB	73-81	5 of 8	27	4	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	.750	1.350	.500
1951	Schenectady Blue Jays	Eastern	A	73-66	5 of 8	27	397	61	99	17	0	20	65	3	.443	--	.249
<b>1952</b>	<b>2 Teams</b>	<b>Texas</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.347</b>	<b>.894</b>	<b>.238</b>
	Tulsa Oilers	Texas	AA	78-83	6 of 8	28	185	27	41	11	0	2	22	0	.281	--	.221
	Houston Buffaloes	Texas	AA	66-95	8 of 8	28	278	28	69	9	2	7	26	1	.370	--	.248
<b>Major League Totals</b>		<b>2 Seasons</b>					<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>.882</b>	<b>1.251</b>	<b>.294</b>
<b>Minor League Totals</b>		<b>7 Seasons</b>					<b>3307</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>.459</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>.265</b>

\*Denotes league leader

**ML Debut: September 14, 1949, at Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:** replaces Buddy Blattner in right field in the seventh inning; goes 1-for-1 with a 3-run home run to deep left field against Rip Sewell in a 12-4 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates.

**ML Finale: May 12, 1951, at Polo Grounds, New York, New York:** pinch hits for pitcher Leo Cristante in the sixth inning; strikes out against Monty Kennedy with bases loaded in a 6-5 win over the New York Giants.

\*1946 Interstate League - Wilmington lost to Harrisburg 4 games to 1 in league finals

#1947 Interstate League - All-Star Outfield First-Team; League Player of the Year; Wilmington beats Allentown 4 games to 3 in league finals

1948 International League - Led in assists (29) and double plays (6)

1949 International League - All Star First-Team

### John Cappa



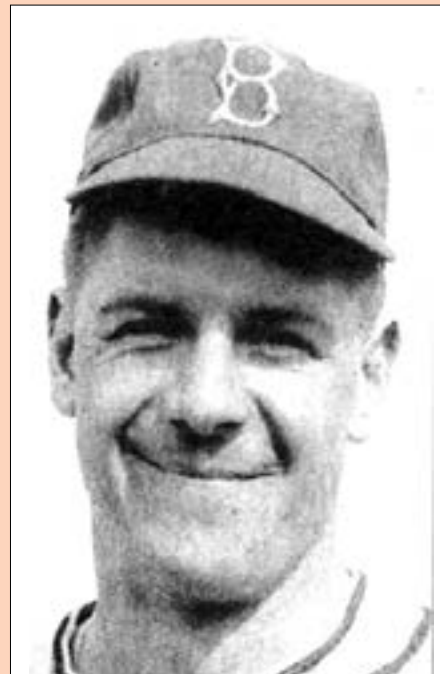
Playing for the Allentown Cardinals in 1944, Paterson, New Jersey, native John Cappa hits .322, drives in 106 runs and sets the Interstate League single-season record for home runs with 30. Sanicki will tie his record in 1946 and then eclipse it a year later with 37 home runs. He will hit only 16 more home runs in four other minor league seasons before retiring in 1948 after hitting .234 for the South Atlantic League Charleston Rebels.

Despite his impressive spring training, a 22-year-old Sanicki is sent to the Waterbury Blue Rock of the Interstate (B) League. In his second at bat with the Blue Rocks, Sanicki homers off of Lyle Bliss and drives in four runs in a 17-1 season-opening win over the Lancaster Red Roses. He sets Interstate (B) League single-season records for home runs (30) and RBIs (144) and steals a career-high 19 bases.

The following year he is named the Interstate League Player of the Year after hitting .320 and leading the league in runs scored (127), home runs (37), total bases (306), OPS (1.046) and slugging percentage (.600).

Back for a second-straight year in Waterbury because Phillies' President [Bob Carpenter](#) doesn't think the 23-year-old outfielder could break into the Utica outfield, Sanicki is switched to centerfield and is named the Interstate League Player of the Year again after hitting .320 with 109 RBIs and a league-high 37 home runs. The 37 home runs are a league record. After the season is over, Sanicki receives good news when Carpenter assigns him to Toronto for the 1948 season.

Another outstanding spring training has Sanicki being mentioned as possibly making the Phillies' opening day roster in 1948. However, despite hitting over .400 in spring training games, he opens the season in Toronto. He plays in all 154 games and despite hitting a "meager" .237, he manages to lead the International League in RBIs (107), assists (29) and double plays (6).



Ed Sanicki  
1951 Schenectady Blue Jays

## Ed Sanicki [4 of 5]:

Sanicki begins 1949 in Toronto and leads the team in walks (77), hits (153), runs (105), home runs (33) and RBIs (102). He hits .268, has 18 assists, grounds into 12 double plays and is caught stealing in 10 of his 11 attempts. On September 11, after finishing sixth in league MVP voting (Montreal's [Bobby Morgan](#) edges Baltimore pitcher [Al Widmar](#) for the honor), Sanicki is called up to the major leagues and along with outfielder [Bill Glynn](#) is told to report to the parent club after the end of the International League season.



Ed Sanicki  
1949 Toronto Maple Leafs

On September 14, three days after being called up from Toronto, Sanicki hits a three-run home run in his first major league at bat off of 42-year-old [Rip Sewell](#) in the ninth inning of a 12-4 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates. He will homer twice more in the next two weeks and finish his Phillies' audition with three hits (all home runs) and seven RBIs in 12 at bats.

A month before he was called up, Sanicki is told by team president Bob Carpenter that he will be on the team roster in 1950,

**"I talked with Bob Carpenter at Toronto last week and he told me I would definitely be on the Phillies roster next season. Richie Ashburn, according to Carpenter, hasn't been playing as a great as he did last year and the Phillies' owner told me he believed I should win the outfield berth."  
- Ed Sanicki**

On November 7, Sanicki inks his first major league contract with Philadelphia for the 1950 season. In the off-season, [Eddie Sawyer](#), who directed the Phillies to a third-place finish in 1949, their best finish in 32 seasons, is quite effusive about a player with only three major league hits to his credit.

**"The job is his if he can hold it. He is a better center fielder than Richie Ashburn. It all depends upon his hitting."  
-Eddie Sawyer**

Despite the plaudits, Sanicki will find his path to success and a roster spot blocked by 29-year-old [Dick Sisler](#), a converted first baseman who starts the season as the team's starting left fielder, with Richie Ashburn moving to center and [Del Ennis](#) in right field. The odd man out, Sanicki is sent back to Toronto to play every day, and is placed on the proverbial 24-hour recall provision.

### Hometown Press

## Sanicki Has Top Slugging Mark; Honors to Kiner

Eddie Sanicki, the Clifton-Parsippany outfielder, only saw action in 13 games with the Philadelphia Phillies last season, but his .750 was the best slugging percentage in the National League.

Sanicki only came to bat four times, and had a total of three hits. He batted in a run, walked once and fanned once before returning to the minors.

In the December 21, 1951, edition of Sanicki's hometown newspaper, *The News of Paterson, New Jersey*, runs the headline that their local product, despite having only four at bats, had the "best slugging percentage in the National League." Pittsburgh's Ralph Kiner actually captured league slugging percentage laurels with a .627 mark in 531 at bats. Sanicki, with one putout and no errors, is also one of 13 NL outfielders (with 10 or more games) to have a 1.000 fielding percentage.

## Utica Outfield



Despite an outstanding season in 1946, Sanicki is sent back to Waterbury for a second-straight year because Philadelphia President Bob Carpenter didn't think the 23-year-old Sanicki could break into the Utica outfield. Carpenter may have a point as Utica's outfield in 1947 was Richie Ashburn (.362), Vance Dinges (.288) and Ettore Giammarco (.297). Ashburn (above) leads the Eastern League in runs scored (128) while Giammarco is third in RBIs (95).



**"Give Sanicki a year or two and he'll be one of the finest players in the majors."  
-Eddie Sawyer, May 1950**

On June 1, an overweight Sanicki is in the worst slump of his career, hitting just .195 and showing little of the form that made him one of the most feared hitters in the International League the past two seasons. For the first time in his career he is benched. On July 18, Sanicki suffers torn ligaments in his right knee against Rochester and has to be carried off of the field. He returns to the team on a limited basis by late August.

