

'He Comes Off the Bench Swinging,' Says Pee Wee

# Duke Proves Dynamo in Dodger Drive

## He's Still King of N.L. Center Field Domains

'Steel Springs in His Legs,' Said Rickey on His First Look--and It's Still True

By ROSCOE MCGOWEN  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Mayo Smith, manager of the Phillies, was talking to a group of visiting writers on his bench while the Dodgers were taking batting practice just before their first game in Connie Mack Stadium this year.

Suddenly Smith interrupted the conversation with a gesture toward the big fellow at the plate—Edwin (Duke) Snider.

"There," said Mayo, "is a helluva ball player. You can have Willie Mays. I'll take Snider."

When some time later Smith's comment was relayed to the lucky manager who has The Duke playing for his team—Walt Alston—Smokey grinned slowly and said:

"I should say that's about right."

The Duke gave Smith no reason to revise his positively expressed opinion that night. Snider lined a single to right-center on his first trip to the plate, was robbed of a hit by Bobby Morgan the next time up, and the third time up walloped one of his longer home runs far over the right field wall on a first pitch from Hermie Wehmeier.

This homer, The Duke's No. 3, also scored Junior Gilliam, who had tripled, and Jackie Robinson, who had walked, and insured the Brooks' seventh straight victory of their record get-away string of ten games.

### Defensive Star, Too

The next night The Duke went over close to the distant left-center field wall to pull down one of Stan Lopata's long drives at a moment when the Phils had two runners aboard and were only one run behind.

A few days later, at Ebbets Field, Snider belted another home run good for three runs that helped the Brooks to a 14 to 4 rout of the Phillies. This one The Duke smacked off Smith's ace righthander, Robin Roberts.

No wonder Smith regards Snider as a great player. He isn't alone in his opinion. There are numerous other observers—players, baseball men and writers alike—who have unstinted admiration for the skills of this big Californian portside slugger.

"Duke can do a lot of things," said Pee Wee Reese, captain and shortstop of the Dodgers and a Grade A himself.

"I'll tell you one thing," Pee Wee continued. "He comes off that bench swinging. He's ready to take that cut at any pitch he feels he can hit and he has so much power that he can hit 'em out of the park in any direction."

### Record "Speaks for Itself"

Alston, not inclined to break out in elaborate praise of any player, at first said he thought Duke's record "speaks for itself."

But a few comments and questions draw something more out of Smokey.

"I don't think I've ever seen an outfielder who can go so high to catch a ball while running at full speed. I don't know how he does it. But he catches 'em and he doesn't have trouble with the walls," said Alston.

Perhaps how The Duke does it can be explained in no better way than by repeating Branch Rickey's well-known comment when he first brought Snider to a Brooklyn training camp. "The boy," said The Mahatma, with a typical Rickeyan turn of a phrase, "has steel springs in his legs."

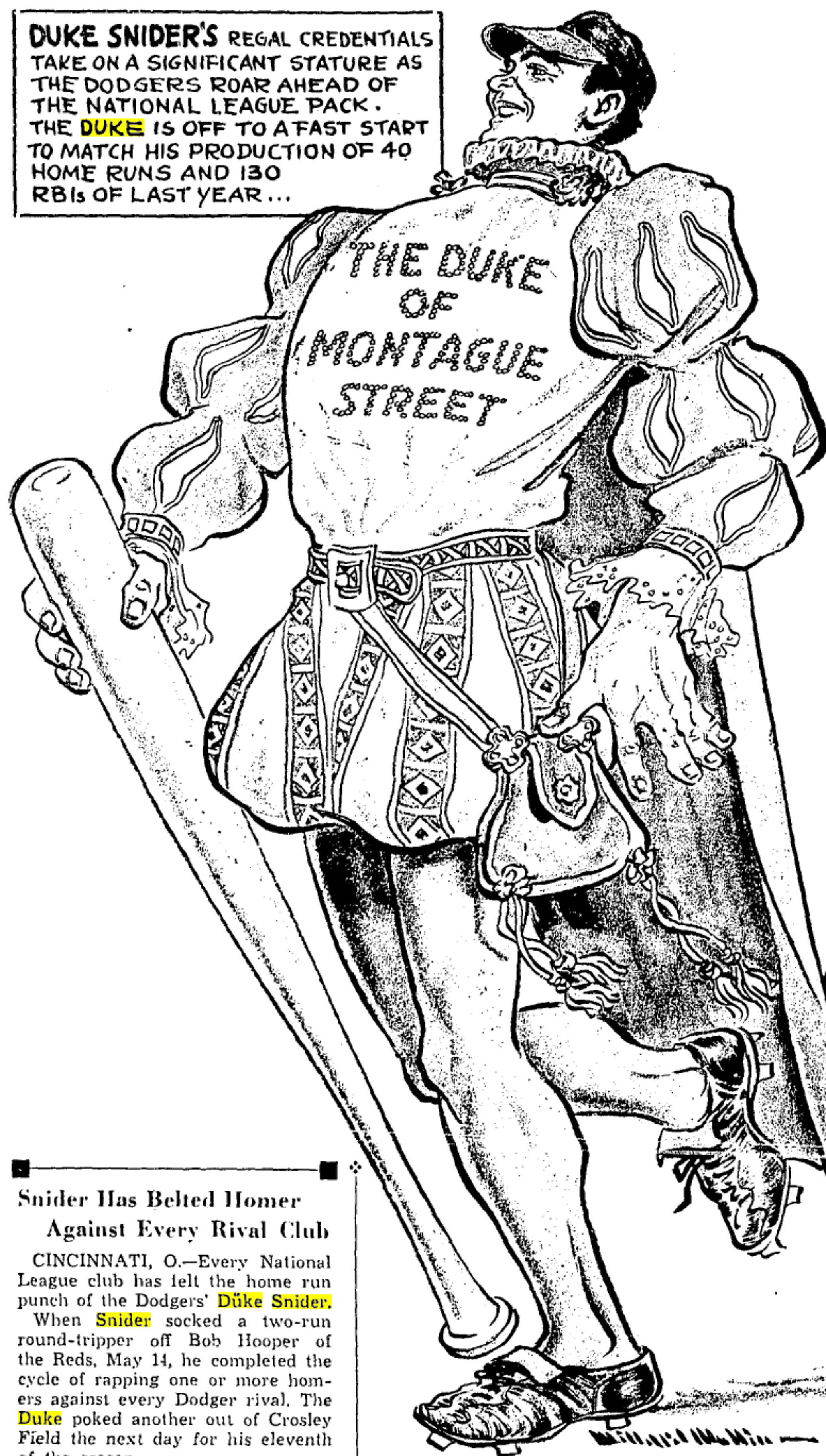
At one time in spring training Rickey detached Snider from the squad and sent him back to Vero Beach "to learn the strike zone," Rickey said.

At that time—and at times later—Snider swung at a lot of bad balls and his strikeout total for a season ran very high—well up toward a hundred. The Duke swings so hard

## The Peer of Punch

By Mullin

DUKE SNIDER'S REGAL CREDENTIALS TAKE ON A SIGNIFICANT STATURE AS THE DODGERS ROAR AHEAD OF THE NATIONAL LEAGUE PACK. THE DUKE IS OFF TO A FAST START TO MATCH HIS PRODUCTION OF 40 HOME RUNS AND 130 RBIs OF LAST YEAR...



### Snider Has Belted Homer Against Every Rival Club

CINCINNATI, O.—Every National League club has felt the home run punch of the Dodgers' Duke Snider.

When Snider socked a two-run round-tripper off Bob Hooper of the Reds, May 14, he completed the cycle of rapping one or more homers against every Dodger rival. The Duke poked another out of Crosley Field the next day for his eleventh of the season.

The Phillies have contributed the big bulge to Snider's home run total, having been tagged for three. Snider hit two at the expense of each the Cubs and Reds and one each against the Giants, Pirates, Braves and Cardinals.

that, once he commits himself on a pitch, he is unable to hold the swing.

"He doesn't swing at many bad balls now," said Reese, and Alston confirmed this.

A few years ago, possibly four, your agent wrote an adversely critical piece in The Sporting News about The Duke, which at the time strained friendly relations.

It was set down that The Duke, when he wasn't hitting well, was inclined to brood about it while in center field, with the result that occasionally he didn't get the jump on a ball that, with his normal skill, he would have caught.

"I guess," The Duke told the author a bit caustically, "I'll have to have you come out there and show me how to play center field."

That challenge wasn't taken up at the time. But your agent immodestly admits now that in his long ago younger days he was what is known in the trade as a "ball hawk."

However, The Duke didn't need anybody to show him how to play center field; all he required was to make full use of the fielding ability with which he had been endowed.

"I had been told that about Snider," said Alston, referring to the brooding of Center Fielder Snider when Slugger Snider was not connecting with his bat. "But I'll say I've never seen any signs of it since I've been here." Smokey has seen no such signs

because now they are non-existent. The Duke no longer broods when he goes into a hitting slump—which has happened to him now and then, but with increasing rarity because he has "learned the strike zone."

The Duke still strikes out quite a lot. In his first full season of 1949—the year after Rickey sent him to Vero Beach for the strike zone lessons—he led the National League with 92. His low was 77 in 1952, but the following year he whiffed 90 times and last year again led the league with 96. In his first 32 games this season he had struck out 21 times. If that average were maintained, The Duke would wind up with about 101 strikeouts.

### Drawing More Walks

But there is one important difference. He doesn't swing at bad balls and thereby draws many more walks. For instance, this year he had drawn the practically phenomenal number of 33 passes in his first 32 games.

That, plus his lusty hitting, had made him an extremely potent force in the Dodger attack. His on-base average in those 32 games (70 times in 151 times up, with 37 hits in 118 at-bats, plus 33 walks) was .450.

Moreover, at that time he was leading the league in runs, 34; runs batted in, 36, and home runs, 11. Incidentally, he had been on base on hits or walks in every one of the 32 games. His batting average was a neat .314.

On the comparison with Willie Mays, which was publicized greatly last year, The Duke of Montague Street was slightly annoyed. When questioned on the matter, Duke naturally didn't care

## Snider's Class Reflected in World's Series Records

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Duke Snider has been quite a performer in World's Series play, both with his bat and his glove.

The Duke holds one record all alone—most total bases in any World's Series, 24. Snider accomplished that in the seven-game 1952 battle with the Yankees when he whacked four home runs, two doubles and four singles.

He tied with several other players in runs batted in with eight—one behind the all-time leader, the late Lou Gehrig.

In the 1952 Series, Duke tied with his teammate, Pee Wee Reese, for the highest Series batting average, .345. In the previous Series Snider compiled a .320 mark.

In the 1952 classic The Duke became one of a dozen players to hit two homers in one game—and no other player has done it since.

Snider also is tied with Babe Ruth and Pete Fox for extra-base hits, six, in a World's Series.

Snider is tied with the two Yankee immortals for hitting four home runs in a World's Series—although Gehrig hit his quartette in only four games in 1928. Ruth hit three in one game in both the 1926 and 1928 Series, both with the Cardinals.

On the glove side, The Duke made a fantastic leaping catch of a drive by Yogi Berra—the same game in which Carl Furillo and Andy Pafko also made great catches.

MCGOWEN.

## Sends Baseball Suit to His Son, 5

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Duke Snider is a good family man and will be a bigger family man next September when his charming little wife, Beverly, will present him with his third child.

On the first western trip this year The Duke left the St. Louis hotel without breakfast to go down town and buy his 5-year-old son, Kevin, a baseball suit (not a Davy Crockett suit, although young Kevin already may have one of those, in common with thousands of other small fry).

The other Snider offspring is a girl, 3-year-old Pamela—and it is not of record that The Duke is trying to make a ball player of her.

In his preparation for the day, probably several years hence, when the "steel springs" may have gone out of his legs, Snider is operating near his Lynwood, Calif., home an avocado farm (or grove, or orchard) in partnership with Cliff Dapper, who once had a brief shot at being a Dodger catcher.

This ought to be a profitable enterprise if the grower gets a fair percentage of what your agent has paid for a single one of these delicious salad pears—65 cents, no less.

MCGOWEN.

much about discussing it. But finally, swung through Texas on an exhibition tour the Brooklyn scribes heard remarks from local writers like this:

"That's where Snider hit one last year (or the year before)."

And some distant point on the right or right-center field wall would be pointed out, with the added information that nobody ever had hit one that far before.

There was, of course, no question about the sweeping power of his swing. The question was whether he would be able to make use of it in the major leagues.

As of now The Duke has answered that question with emphasis and finality.

Perhaps his manager, Alston, said enough when he said Snider's record "speaks for itself."



# Snider Began to Play at 4, Never Quit

## Duke's Dad Pitched and Hit to Him in the Family Yard

### A Fishing Expedition....

BROOKLYN NATIONAL LEAGUE BASEBALL CLUB

*Dodgers*

OFFICES  
215 MONTAGUE ST.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

GAMES AT  
EDBETS FIELD

May 29, 1943

Dear Sir:

As a high school athletic leader, you are interested, I am sure, in the development and progress of boys of superior ability in sports. I know also that your interest in boys continues even after they have finished competing under your direction.

Consequently, it occurs to me that with the school year drawing to a close you possibly have in mind some outstanding young athletes for whom you would like to secure a trial in professional baseball.

You will understand, I know, that I would not ask you to take from the amateur athletic field any boy whose own best interests dictate that he remain outside professional ranks at this time.

However, I am definitely interested in recruiting young athletes of potential major league ability for the Brooklyn Baseball Club. As you know, interesting and profitable careers await boys having the physical requisites and character to make good.

I believe our organization offers unusual advantages to such players since our system of operation is one in which our success is dependent upon the skill and rapidity with which we can aid young athletes to reach the majors.

For your convenience, I am enclosing a business reply card. Should you wish to write me in greater detail about any boys, please do so. In any event, your reply will receive careful and appreciative attention.

Sincerely yours,

*Branch Rickey*  
Branch Rickey, Jr.  
Director  
Minor League Clubs

BR/h  
Enc.

SOMETHING IN THE MAIL FROM BRANCH RICKEY, JR.

## It's a Duke's Mixture of Whiffs, Home Runs

Benching in Mid-Season of 1952—With Mrs. Snider Fearing Salary Slash—Brought Reversal of Form

By ROSCOE MCGOWEN

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

In four full seasons and part of two others with the Brooklyn Dodgers, Edwin (Duke) Snider has put a lot of "good wood" on a lot of good baseballs in a highly commendable effort to win games and advance his own fortunes.

When some of his hitting exploits are totalled they are quite impressive. For instance, the Duke has made 749 hits, including 265 extra-base blows—119 doubles, 37 triples and 109 home runs—and has batted in 418 runs.

He has made some extraordinary catches and throws over these same years, demonstrating a defensive ability that seemed to have no limits. No catch he ever made

was more spectacular, in the circumstances, than the one he came up with in the fourth game of the 1952 World's Series when he made an acrobatic leap near the auxiliary scoreboard at the Yankee Stadium to rob Yogi Berra of a fourth-inning bid for an extra-base hit.

But during these same campaigns, Duke has struck out 398 times and the comparison is not good—has drawn only 246 bases on balls.

It was this propensity for striking out, caused chiefly by Snider's inability to refrain from swinging at bad pitches, that impelled Branch Rickey, then head man of the Dodgers, to make one of the moves in the spring of 1950 that only The Mahatma would make.

The Dodgers, whose training base was at Vero Beach, Fla., had moved down to Miami for the remainder of the training period and to play a series of exhibition games when one morning Rickey announced:

"I am sending Snider back to Vero Beach to find the location of the strike zone."

So the unhappy young Californian, who the previous season had led the National League in strikeouts with 92, but who also had contrived to hit 23 home runs and bat in 92 runs—one for every at-bat—went back to Vero to submit to the instructions and min-

### 'Always Keep Up With Game by Reading Sporting News'

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Here's an unsolicited bit of advice to ball players from Duke Snider, star center fielder of the Brooklyn Dodgers: "Successful men obtain as much information as possible about their own particular business or profession. That's why I read The Sporting News every week. I like to know what's going on in my business."

illustrations of George Sisler, one of the game's greatest hitters.

Maybe Duke found out something about the strike zone. He wasn't inclined to talk about the matter much and quite possibly his personal feeling was that if he were let alone he'd get along all right. But a fellow couldn't argue with the boss, could he?

At any rate Snider went through the 1950 season to achieve the highest batting average of his major-league career, .321, reduced his strikeouts to 79, smacked 31 home runs, a new high, and batted in 107 runs, another top mark for him.

The next year, although hitting 29

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## Father Taught Him to Swing Lefthanded

Played Softball in School, Worked Through Minors; Quit Pigskin for Diamond

By FRANK FINCH  
LOS ANGELES, Calif.

The Duke Snider Story is not one of those pat "success" tales of how to become a major leaguer and World's Series hero in one easy lesson.

Rather, it is the story of a small boy who wanted to be a baseball player even before he knew whether he was any good at the game and who, once he'd made up his mind, never swerved from the path to stardom.

It is the story of hard work, parental devotion, patience, momentous decisions which would alter the course of his life, the dark interlude of war, the bush leagues, the minors and, finally, sharing immortality with Babe Ruth and Lou



Duke Snider

Gehrig as the only men who ever hit four home runs in a World's Series.

In making good, Duke Snider didn't have it any tougher than countless others; his great natural talents, perhaps, made it even easier for him than for the average player.

### Bat for Xmas as Toddler

Duke's pre-eminence as a Brooklyn Dodger outfielder and slugger is all too well known to be repeated here, but the story of his early background and development is one which should prove both a guide and an inspiration to America's small fry, sandlot division.

Let's let Duke tell it in his own words: "My father, Ward Snider, was an old-time Cincinnati Reds' fan from Springfield, O. When I was only three or four years old he gave me a bat and a softball for Christmas. He taught me how to throw and how to catch the ball, and he always insisted on placing the bat on my left shoulder, although I am naturally righthanded. He knew the advantages a lefthander has—fewer steps to first base and those short right field fences.

"Well, I practiced with a ball and bat every chance I got. While lots of other kids in the neighborhood spent their spare time at the beach, I was getting my sun-tan playing softball.

"The first real game I remember playing in was while I was in the fourth grade at George Washington grammar school in Compton," Duke recalled. "It was hit-or-miss; us kids got up our own games. That was in 1935. I was nine years old and kind of runty. I didn't start to grow until I was in the ninth grade.

"In 1936 we began to take the game

### Duke Sees Brooklyn on Top Again After Hot '53 Race

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—An "improved" Brooklyn team will repeat its 1952 victory in the 1953 National League race, predicts Duke Snider, the Dodgers' star center fielder.

"I look for the Giants, Cards and Phils to furnish the competition again," said Snider. "I'll be a closer race from top to bottom, but we'll win it."

## ....Leads to Prize Catch

Playground and Recreation Department

COMPTON, CALIFORNIA

W. I. SCHLEIBAU, Director

June 3, 1943

Mr. Branch Rickey, Jr.  
Brooklyn National League Baseball Inc.  
Brooklyn, New York

Dear Mr. Rickey:

Enclosed you will find a card concerning Edwin Duke Snider, a player on the present Compton High School Baseball Team. Duke has one more year of eligibility for high school baseball, and is then much interested in playing professional. You may see by the card that he has played every sport during every year of his high school career and he has also spent some three years playing with the Compton Merchants Semi-Pro Baseball Team. Duke throws right handed and bats left handed. He has one of the finest arms of any young player that I have seen in the past few years, and he has constantly batted, during the high school season, well over .400 as an outfielder, but during the past season we have drafted him as a pitcher because of his strong right arm.

Although Duke Snider is not interested in playing professional baseball for another year, I might not again have the opportunity to recommend him to a baseball concern, and that is the reason that I am writing you now concerning this athlete. He is definitely not interested in going to college and wishes only to make a success of baseball.

I have been watching baseball since I was Mascot of the Shell Oil Winter League Baseball Team in the City of Long Beach some 18 years ago, and I have seen some of the best in baseball. During the past 10 years, I have been connected directly with coaching, and it is my belief that Duke Snider is one of the finest baseball prospects that I have ever seen.

Sincerely yours,

*Wm. I. Schleibau*  
Wm. I. Schleibau  
Baseball Coach

WS:mjm  
Enclosure--1

AND THE REPLY THAT BROUGHT DODGER OFFER

seriously. Our catcher's dad was employed by the Compton City playground department and he helped organize a five-team league in the city's grammar schools. Our team won the fifth grade and sixth grade championships. By then I was dividing my time between pitching and playing second base.

"During the summer we'd choose up sides for softball. There wasn't any Little League baseball for youngsters in those days.

"When I entered the Enterprise Junior High in 1937, I was concentrating on pitching. Dad worked at the Good-year tire plant where they had a real good softball team. He'd get tips from the pitcher and pass them on to me. After school I'd pitch to dad in the driveway of our home and then he'd hit me a few flies and grounders. He wanted me to be a well-rounded player.

### Turned to Baseball at 14

"We won the league softball championship for Enterprise during the next three years," Snider went on. "When I was a tenth grader we didn't finish on top, however. Three of our best hitters were Japanese boys and when the war started they were evacuated from the Pacific Coast and sent to internment camps in the Midwest.

"In the summer of 1941, just before I entered the tenth grade, I played my first baseball. I was 14 by then and I had grown ten inches and put on 25 pounds in about 15 months. We had a summer playground league; I was young enough to play for the juniors and good enough to play for the seniors. Whenever the seniors were short a player, they'd let me fill in. I hit over .400 and led the league in homers. I socked five.

"The following summer I played semi-pro ball for the Compton Merchants. I started at third base, but wasn't so hot; the balls came down the line too fast. I moved to the outfield."

Joe Rozelle, Duke's coach at Enterprise, recalls: "Snider's reactions were fast, even then. He was like a cat in his movements and he had great competitive spirit."

"In the fall of '42," Duke continued, "I entered Compton High. I played tail-back on the football team and was lucky enough to complete a couple of

### Basketball 'Helps Reflexes and Strengthens Your Legs'

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Basketball, but not football, is helpful to a baseball player, avers Duke Snider, Brooklyn's home run walloper who was a three-sport star at Compton High School.

"Basketball is good for the reflexes, strengthens your legs and increases your agility," he said. "On the other hand, there is too much body contact in football. It ties up your muscles so that you can't hit that high, fast one. Al Dark, Jackie Jensen, Sam Chapman and Jackie Robinson were great football players, but they are the exceptions in baseball that prove the rule."

60-yard passes during the season. When baseball time rolled around, our coach, Bill Schleibau, decided that if I could throw a football that far, I ought to be able to throw a baseball pretty hard, too.

"Well, I hurled a no-hitter against Beverly Hills in my first league start. When I wasn't pitching I played center field.

"On Saturdays and Sundays I'd go to Wrigley Field to watch the Los Angeles Angels play. My favorites were Andy Pafko and Eddie Waitkus. Little did I dream then that one day I would be playing with Andy and against Eddie. It will make them feel pretty old when they read this, but it's the truth, so help me.

"It was about that time—the spring of '43—that Coach Schleibau recommended me to the Dodgers after receiving that letter (see illustrations above) from Branch Rickey, Jr.

"The coach knew that I didn't want to go to college if I could make good in baseball," Snider went on. "I had had feelers from St. Mary's, UCLA and a couple of other schools that wanted me for football, and I realized that if I failed in professional baseball I would ruin all chance of getting a college athletic scholarship.

"We talked it over and I told the coach to go ahead and answer Mr. Rickey's letter.

"I was playing summer ball for the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4, COL. 1)



# Dodgers Inked Duke at 17 for a Bonus of Only \$750

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Montebello Merchants when the Brooklyn scout, Tom Downey, invited me to attend the Dodger tryout camp at Long Beach in September. Of course, he couldn't sign me until I graduated the next February, but he told me at camp that he'd like to have me go to spring training with the Dodgers.

"Scouts from the Cardinals and Reds also had talked to me and I didn't make up my mind until Downey came to my house a few days after I graduated. I signed for a \$750 bonus. They weren't passing out the big dough during the war years," Duke said with a sigh.

"Downey gave me my choice between signing for a \$1,000 bonus and \$200 a month salary, or a \$750 bonus and \$275 a month. It didn't take me long to figure out that one.

"I reported to the Dodgers in March, 1944, at Bear Mountain, up the Hudson River from New York. Snow was still on the ground, so we worked out in the huge field house at nearby West Point.

## Homered Over Glenn Davis

"During our stay at Bear Mountain we played the Army varsity nine a couple of times. I replaced Dixie Walker in the fourth inning one day and hit a homer over Glenn Davis' head. Gee, was that a thrill!

"I was under contract to Montreal, but Leo Durocher let me take batting practice with the Dodgers for a couple of weeks, and even used me in a couple of games against the Yanks. I remember getting a hit off Hank Borowy.

"No, Dixie Walker or the other regulars didn't give me any timely tips," Snider replied to a question. "I was just a 17-year-old punk. None of those guys would help you unless you came right out point-blank and asked them.

"We have a different bunch of guys at Brooklyn now; they're more friendly. I think that Vero Beach camp made us one big, happy family. Everybody gets into the act at Vero. I think it's a great idea.

"I had a cup of coffee with Montreal in '44. Played in two games and batted twice—both blanks. Then they sent me to Jake Pitler down at Newport News in the Piedmont League. In my first game I hit my first home run as a pro and I led the league that year with nine. Don't forget, the bushes were using re-covered baseballs during the war and it was like hitting a mushy cantaloupe.

"I joined the Navy in December of '44 and spent a year overseas as a fireman, second class, on a submarine ten-

## 'Pitchers Will Worry Now, After Those 4 Home Runs'

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Duke Snider can hardly wait for the 1953 National League pennant race to start.

"I finished strong at the plate this year and my four home runs in the World's Series gave me terrific confidence," said the Brooklyn basher. "I figure the pitchers are going to start worrying about me for a change. They've been giving me nightmares long enough."

der at Guam. I wasn't looking for a promotion; I just wanted the war to end.

"We played lots of baseball and basketball on Guam. Pee Wee Reese was stationed there, too, but I never bumped into him.

"After getting discharged in June of '46 I was sent to the Dodger farm at Fort Worth, where I played in 68 games. I couldn't get going until late in the season and finished with a .250 batting average, but I made four homers in the playoffs and batted .400.

"The next spring we trained in Havana," Duke recalled. "I stuck with the Dodgers until July 4, when I was optioned to St. Paul. I was there a couple of months and hit .316. Then Durocher recalled me. After they clinched the pennant I got in a few games, but wasn't eligible for the Series.

"I figured I was ready to stick with the Dodgers in '48, particularly after hitting my first two big league homers off Curt Simmons one day, but when I ran into a slump Durocher told me I was going to Montreal.

"All you need, kid, is a little more experience," Leo told me.

"It was a letdown, but I stayed in there swinging for Clay Hopper at Montreal. I socked 17 homers, batted in 77 runs and hit .327. Montreal was about 15 games in front when Burt Shotton—Durocher had moved over to the Polo Grounds—recalled me.

"We went into first place on Labor Day, although the Braves finally beat us out. I was playing regularly by then and I have been ever since.

"It's a wonderful feeling to be a big leaguer, especially when you've dreamed about it ever since you were a kid.

"Have I any advice for youngsters who want to make a career of baseball? Yes, and it's simple. Play baseball. Play it every chance you get. Watch the professionals. Read about it. Dream about it, but above all, play it," Snider concluded.

## Nothing Simple to Hitting, Snider Advises Youngsters

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Batting a ball isn't as simple as it looks, according to Duke Snider, the Dodgers' World's Series star.

"In the split second from the time the ball leaves the pitcher's hand until it reaches the plate," said Snider, "you have to think about your stride, your hip action, your wrist action, determine how much, if any, the ball is going to break, and then decide whether to swing at it."

hotel room in Cincinnati after a long talk with Bavasi, it could be said that, as the late Charles H. Ebbets once put it, the Duke was entering "the dawn of a new area."

Certainly it is true that the next day Snider was observed grinning and talking animatedly with his manager—something that had not been observed before then—and that he entered into his part-time baseball chores (for several games he was used only as a pinch-hitter and to play in the outfield in late innings as a defensive measure) with the spirit and hustle of a highly ambitious rookie.

There can be no question but that Snider's reaction to Drensen's move in benching him lifted the Duke much higher in the manager's esteem, not to mention that of O'Malley and Bavasi.

It proved—and Snider was to go on and make the proof conclusive—that Duke was not merely a "potential" major league ball player, a favorite word of Rickey, but that he actually had become a major leaguer.

At this point a personal note must be inserted in the Snider saga. Earlier in the season I had written a piece for THE SPORTING NEWS which was keenly critical of Snider's play—adverse criticism which was reluctantly made but which, having lashed my own son for

# Series Star and Own Rooting Section



THE DODGERS' World's Series hero and his family smiled for the photographer at their home in Lynwood, Calif. Mrs. Snider holds daughter Pamela. Son Kevin is perched in Duke's lap.

## Dodgers Plan Special Camp for Returning Service Vets

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—The Dodgers will hold a special spring training camp for discharged service veterans next March, it was revealed by Matt Burns of the Brooklyn farm organization.

Burns said that the Dodgers expect no fewer than 65 former minor leaguers to arrive at the Vero Beach camp shortly after the Flock departs for Miami. BEN GOULD.

what, in my admittedly faulty judgment, were his shortcomings, I felt was justifiable—and I awaited the Duke's reaction with some trepidation.

He didn't disappoint me, I'm glad to say. He didn't sulk and refuse to speak to me. He came to me and disagreed with some of the points made, not violently, but good-naturedly and spiritedly.

Without putting it in so many words he made it clear that he thought he was a good ball player and that, furthermore, he intended to prove it. Which was the original idea when the story was written, because there would be no point in writing such a story about a fellow who wasn't going to make it, who didn't have the ability to make it, which Snider had, and has.

What Snider did during the month of September, when there were times that the specter of the 1951 disaster seemed to be hovering over the Dodgers, is pretty much common knowledge. So, too, are the feats he performed in one of the most exciting and closely contested World's Series in many a moon.

Maybe that half season and that World's Series are not enough to convince some still skeptical observers—or not exactly skeptical but, let us say, of the "show me" brand—that the Duke has really grown into a major leaguer.

They may say, in fact some will say: "Let's wait until the end of next season and see what the record shows on him then."

This observer, however, feels that he has been shown enough and that judgment of Snider is under no compulsion to "Wait 'til next year."

So one vote of confidence in Duke Snider is hereby cast—confidence that the 26-year-old player with "steel springs in his legs" will be a better ball player and competitor next year and for several years thereafter.

## RIVERA

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Frick conceded this was difficult to define. Then he was asked whether attending a racetrack would be considered a violation.

"No," snapped Frick. "Everybody goes to a racetrack. That's no crime. It's an American right."

The commissioner said he had warned Rivera that he had two strikes against him and explained that Jim was lucky to have got as far as he had in baseball in view of his early history.

"In light of that history, he was permitted to come into baseball," Frick continued.

"Thus, all that preceded Rivera's entry into baseball became a closed book insofar as action on him was concerned.

"Having been permitted to play in the minor leagues, he could not be barred from the majors," the commissioner added.

Rivera already has felt the difference in his situation. He has been told that he cannot play in the Puerto Rican Winter League. He is driving a truck at Whiting, Ind.

### Text of Frick Decision

Here is the official decision as given out by Commissioner Frick:

"The commissioner has made a full and thorough study of the case of Player Jim Rivera.

"It is obvious that Mr. Rivera has been guilty of a certain type of moral delinquency. As concerns criminal charges, he has been completely ex-

### Rivera Decision Fulfilled

#### Hopes of Mrs. Comiskey

CHICAGO, Ill.—"I had hoped and prayed that Jim Rivera would be given another chance," Mrs. Grace Comiskey, president of the White Sox, said when she learned of Commissioner Ford Frick's decision. "He really deserves a chance because I believe the recent charge against him was unfair.

"I don't believe the fans will reject him. I have had many, many letters from fans all favorable to Rivera's cause.

"We'll sit back and watch him play now and hope he'll appreciate this new lease on baseball life given him."

## Harridge Says Frick Made Only Fair Ruling Possible

CHICAGO, Ill.—President Will Harridge of the American League praised Commissioner Ford Frick's decision in the Jim Rivera case.

"In placing Rivera on probation, Commissioner Frick made the only fair ruling possible under the circumstances," Harridge declared. "It places Rivera on his guard. He knows what the answer will be if it occurs again. At the same time it places the club under obligation publicly.

"It isn't an easy thing to keep a player in line off the field at all hours of the day. I know how difficult it was for the Yankees when Babe Ruth was kicking up his heels."

operated by the courts, and the commissioner cannot place himself in the position of going over the heads of an American grand jury. At the same time, the commissioner recognizes, as does the Chicago American League club, that they have an obligation to the public to maintain the highest possible standards of morality among all men who are connected with the game.

"After due consideration, and with the full agreement of the Chicago American League club to accept such responsibility, the commissioner is ruling that Player Rivera shall be placed on probation.

"During that probation he shall remain with the Chicago American League club and the club will assume full and complete responsibility for his conduct and behavior off the field and on.

"The Chicago American League club will immediately report to the commissioner fully and completely any incident of misbehavior on or off the playing field in which the player is involved, to the end that proper disciplinary action may be taken.

"For the period of one year the Chicago American League club is prohibited from making any deal or any trade or transfer of the player's contract; nor are they to request waivers on his services for the purpose of unconditional release.

"During that year, Player Rivera may be removed from the player control list by the Chicago American League club only by voluntary retirement or by suspension."

## MIXTURE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

homers, batting in 101 runs, and being second only to Stan Musial in the slugging averages, his batting average dropped to .277 and his strikeouts ascended to 97. The only reason Duke didn't lead the league in whiffs again was that Gil Hodges struck out 99 times.

Mid-season of 1952 brought a crisis in the lives of the whole Snider family—Duke, his little wife, Beverly, his small son, Kevin, and his baby daughter, although the youngsters fortunately were unaware of the situation.

It happened in Cincinnati when Manager Chuck Drensen, who had been observing with increasing concern certain futilities on the part of his talented young center fielder, finally decided to bench him.

### Wife Picks Up Phone

The benching, in itself, would not have brought about any crisis, but it also is possible that it wouldn't have brought about the desired result. Some stories were written for the papers back home in which Snider wasn't treated kindly, to put it mildly.

When Beverly Snider read one of them, in which it was set forth as practically conclusive that her husband would get a 25 per cent slash in salary next year, she wasted no time getting her husband on the telephone.

Thereafter the telephones were pretty busy for a while. Walter O'Malley, Dodger president, called Mrs. Snider to try to assure her that the story was baseless, that her husband wasn't in anybody's doghouse, and so on.

Drensen talked to Snider to give similar assurance and Buzzie Bavasi, Dodger vice-president, was sent to Cincinnati by O'Malley to talk to Snider in person.

When Snider finally came out of the