

MINI-BIO: EDDIE RUCINSKI

By Bob Carroll

Although he was stuck on some of the weakest teams ever to lose in the National Football League, Eddie Rucinski nevertheless put together an admirable career of a half dozen seasons. What he might have been able to accomplish with stronger teams can only be left to speculation. In his six NFL years, Eddie's teams won 17 games and lost 46, a woeful .270 percentage.

After starring as a pass receiver for Indiana University under the famed "Bo" McMillin, Rucinski was drafted by the Brooklyn Dodgers who had suddenly become one of the league's stronger teams under another legendary coach -- "Jock" Sutherland. Before reporting, Eddie started at right end for the College All-Stars in the annual bash against the previous year's NFL champs, in this case, the Chicago Bears who had crushed the Washington Redskins 73-0 in the 1940 title game. The All-Stars fared marginally better, losing 37-13.

The 1941 Dodgers were probably the strongest team Eddie was to play for. They finished just behind the New York Giants in the Eastern Division, as Rucinski and All-NFL Perry Schwartz formed a superior brace of targets for "Ace" Parker's passes. By the next year, Sutherland, Parker, and others were in the service. Brooklyn dropped to the bottom of the division, and with a paucity of passing talent on hand, Eddie's receiving stats tumbled. Still, he was chosen to start for an all-star team that met and defeated champion Washington in a post-season "Pro Bowl" game.

Over the winter, the Chicago Cardinals obtained Rucinski in a screwy deal for former star end Gaynell Tinsley who had been retired for two years and chose to remain so. In Chicago, Eddie emerged as a top receiving threat and won All-NFL honors. Unfortunately, he got little help -- the Cards lost every game. In 1944, a wartime combine of the Cardinals and Pittsburgh, familiarly called "The Carpets," went 0-10.

Injuries plagued Rucinski in 1945, but he played in the Cardinals' only win in three seasons, a 16-7 upset of the Chicago Bears. As the post-war Cardinals led by the "Dream Backfield" began to flex their muscles, Eddie finished his career, playing primarily as a defensive back.

Edward A. Rucinski

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College: Indiana

Roosevelt HS, East Chicago, IN

Born: 07/12/16, East Chicago, IN

Drafted Round 4 by Brooklyn 1941

* College All-Star Game 1941

* Pro all-star game 1942

* All-NFL: 1943

YEAR	TEAM	LG	Gm	-- PASS RECEIVING ---			
				NO	YDS	AVG	TD
1941	Bkn	N	11	17	204	12.0	1
1942	Bkn	N	11	9	99	11.0	1
1943	ChiC	N	10	26	398	15.3	3
1944	C-P	N	10	22	284	12.9	1
1945	ChiC	N	8	23	400	17.4	2
1946	ChiC	M	10	2	23	11.5	0

6 yrs 60 99 1408 14.2 8

* - led league