

## Introduction:

How did a kid growing up in between fatal familial drama become one of the greatest Wide Receivers to ever play in the National Football League? From overcoming tragedy at only nine years old to tying the NFL record for most consecutive 1,000 yard seasons, Mike Evans is a complete and utter force of nature. He's accomplished more in his first eleven years as a pro than most have throughout their entire careers. From Galveston, Texas to Super Bowl Champion, please, join me as I dive into the life and career of the legendary Tampa Bay Buccaneers Wide Receiver, Mike Evans.

## Early Years:

Michael Lynn Evans Jr. was born August 21, 1993 in Galveston, Texas where he attended Ball High School. Evans was established as a Basketball player and Track runner in High School; but, he didn't pick up Football until his senior year, leading to him not being heavily recruited by any college programs. Evans was born to parents Mickey Evans and Heather Kilgore. Unknown to friends and family, Mickey had a history of abuse towards Heather. Sam Kilgore, Heather's brother, who was serving a burglary sentence in prison, wanted to take care of his sister after she got pregnant. After being released from jail, Sam went to live with Heather, where he witnessed Mickey physically assault her. Mickey went to jail for 30 days, but Sam wasn't going to forget what he did to his sister. After a night out with Heather, Sam returned back to the house where Mickey was babysitting Mike and his sister. Sam got a gun from his bedroom and fired it at Mickey. Sam fatally shot him as he was running away, all while Mike, at the age of 9, was asleep upstairs in his sister's room. Sam Kilgore is now serving a life sentence, and Mike Evans eventually forgave his Uncle for the murder of his father.

## College:

In 2011, Evans signed to play as a Wide Receiver for Texas A&M. He was red shirted his Freshman year of college; however, in 2012 Evans hit the ground running for the Aggies as he had 82 receptions, 1,105 yards, and 5 touchdowns. He became the key target in Quarterback Johnny Manziel's Heisman winning season. Evans biggest game his freshman season came on October 13th, 2012 when the Aggies beat Louisiana Tech 59-57. Evans had 137 yards and a touchdown on 4 receptions. Due to his incredible first season, Evans received Freshman All-Southeastern Conference honors from the SEC coaches. In 2013, Evans was ready to take a huge leap going into his Sophomore season. Against the #1 ranked Alabama, Evans recorded a Texas A&M record as he achieved 279 yards on 7 catches in a 49-42 loss. Evans then went on to break his own record four games later against the #24 Auburn as he recorded 287 yards on 11 receptions and 4 touchdowns. Evans totaled 69 receptions, 1,394 yards (which was 2nd in the SEC and 7th in the NCAA), and 12 touchdowns (which led the

SEC and was 10th in the NCAA) in his Sophomore season. This means that Mike Evans caught 13 less passes, but recorded nearly 290 more yards and 7 more touchdowns. Due to his incredible jump, Evans was a finalist for the Biletnikoff Award, a Semifinalist for the Maxwell Award, and the Walter Camp Player of the Year. He was selected to the AP All-American First Team and earned him a First Team All-SEC selection. In January of 2014, Evans decided to forgo his Junior and Senior years of College as he declared for the NFL draft. Sports Illustrated named Evans the top Wide Receiver prospect heading out of college.

What made them special & draft:

Entering the draft, it was clear that Mike Evans was a consensus top 10 pick. At the NFL combine, Evans recorded a 4.53 second 40-yard dash, 4.26 second 20-yard shuttle, 37 inch vertical, and 12 reps in the Bench Press. At the time, analysts praised Mike Evans for his size, strength, and leaping ability. Evans is still known to this day for his jump-ball receptions and reliable catching ability. He was known for picking up major chunks of yards after the catch and is still reliable for that today. While all of this was great, many had concerns about Evans acceleration and agility, as he was much bigger than a lot of other receivers. He had great speed for his size, but he was still behind a lot of smaller receivers. Evans didn't have a lot of route-running experience and was still developing his blocking techniques. It was clear that Evans was a passionate and emotional ball player, which can be a blessing and a curse. On draft night, Evans was selected Seventh Overall by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. At the time, the Bucs finished their last season 4-12 and started the season 0-8. The team desperately needed some big offensive playmakers, and Mike Evans was hoping to be the key to that problem.

NFL Career:

And so Mike Evans NFL career began. Once Evans found his footing, there was no looking back. Evans became the first rookie receiver since 1998 to have three consecutive games of 100 yards and one touchdown. He also became the youngest player in NFL history to record 200 yards in a single game. Evans was named to the PFWA All-Rookie Team and was ranked 75th by players on the Top 100 list. In the 2015 season, Evans recorded more receiving yards, but only 3 touchdowns. In 2016, Mike Evans became only the fourth player in NFL history to start his career with three consecutive seasons of 1,000 receiving yards. Evans was selected to the Pro Bowl for the first time, he was ranked 29th in the Top 100 list. Evans struggled in the 2017 season, as his only 100+ yard game came in Week 16. Despite this, he still finished the year with his fourth consecutive recording of 1,000 receiving yards. In 2018, Evans signed a 5-year, \$82 million contract extension with the Bucs. Evans broke the franchise record for touchdown for career touchdown receptions with 35, for receiving yards in a career, for games with 100+ receiving yards, and for receiving yards in a single season.

Evans again recorded 1,000 receiving yards and became the youngest player in NFL history to reach 6,000 receiving yards. He was selected to his second Pro Bowl, although he had still never seen a playoff appearance. In 2019, Evans became the youngest player to record 7,000 receiving yards in a career and joined Randy Moss as the only players to consecutively record 1,000 receiving yards through the first six seasons of his career. He was selected for his third Pro-Bowl. In 2020, Evans had a new Quarterback leading the Buccaneers in Tom Brady. The Buccaneers achieved their first positive record since 2016 and achieved their first playoff spot since 2007. Evans set an NFL record as he became the first wide receiver to consecutively record 1,000 receiving yards in his first seven-years as a professional NFL player. The Buccaneers went to the Super Bowl off of an incredible run from both Brady and Evans, where they won 31-9 over the Kansas City Chiefs. In 2021, Evans extended his consecutive 1,000 receiving yards to start a career record to 8 and broke his own franchise record of receiving touchdowns with 14. The Buccaneers went to the Playoffs again, but lost to the Los Angeles Rams in the Divisional Round. He was named to his fourth Pro-Bowl. In 2022, Evans achieved 10,000 receiving yards in his career and once again recorded 1,000 receiving yards on the season. Tampa Bay made the playoffs again, but lost in the first round to the Dallas Cowboys. 2023 was the final year of Evans contract with the Buccaneers and he was hoping for an extension before the season started, but it never came. This made him a free agent at the end of the season. With the future unknown, Evans went out and had another historic season, recording his 10th consecutive 1,000 receiving yard season. The Buccaneers went to the playoffs again, but lost to the Lions in the Divisional Round despite Evans recording 147 yards and a touchdown. He was selected for his fifth Pro-Bowl team and ranked 26th by fellow players on the Top 100 list, his highest recorded spot to date. And so we arrive at the 2024 season. Evans signed a 2-year, \$54 million dollar extension with the Buccaneers, meaning he spent the first 11 seasons of his career (and counting) with the same team. In Week 5, Evans reached his 100th career touchdown. Then, in Week 7, Evans recorded his 100th career receiving touchdown. This made him the eleventh player to have at least 100 career receiving touchdowns, seventh to do it on one team, and fifth fastest to achieve this accomplishment. In Week 18, Evans was able to get to 1,004 receiving yards on the season. This extended his record to 11 years and he tied Jerry Rice for most consecutive 1,000 receiving yard seasons. The Buccaneers finished 1st in the NFC South and they recently faced the Washington Commanders in a tight race in the first round of the Playoffs. In the game Mike Evans recorded 92 receiving yards on 7 receptions with 1 touchdown; but, it wasn't enough as the Buccaneers fell to the Commanders 23-20. So Mike Evans and the Buccaneers look onto the 2025-26 NFL season with high hopes. But at this moment in time, Mike Evans has 836 receptions, 12,684 receiving yards, and 105 receiving touchdowns for his career. He holds countless Franchise and NFL records and has been All-Pro Second-team twice, a

Pro-Bowler five times, and of course, a Super-Bowl Champion. League-wide, Evans has the most receiving touchdowns and 3rd most total receiving yards of all active players.

#### Legacy and Future:

And so Mike Evans' career continues to thrive. His on-field achievements speak for themselves, but off the field he is just as outstanding. In 2017, Mike Evans and his wife Ashli created the Mike Evans Family Foundation to help victims of domestic violence. The foundation also hosts free football and basketball camps for children in Galveston, Texas. In total, he holds eleven franchise records for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and five National Football League records. With all of this being said, I think it's safe to say that Mike Evans is a lock for the Football Hall of Fame and there isn't much argument against it. As of right now, he has the 24th most receiving yards in NFL history, the 9th most receiving touchdowns, and 8th All-Time in yards per touch with 15.2. And that's with his career still being far from over. Mike Evans is easily the most consistent year-to-year receiver of all time and while his story is still playing out in real-time, I think it's safe to say that when it's all said and done, Mike Evans will be a top 5 Wide Receiver of All-Time.

#### Conclusion/Outro:

Mike Evans. #13 for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for 11 years running. From a tragic past, to one of the greatest Wide Receivers of All-Time. It's impossible to not be inspired by his story, but do you rank him as high as I do? Where does his career go next? Will he surpass Jerry Rice or fall short tying him for 11 consecutive seasons of 1,000 receiving yards? All this and more hang in the balance for Mike Evans, but for now... let's gear up for 2025.