

“Humble Joe”

By

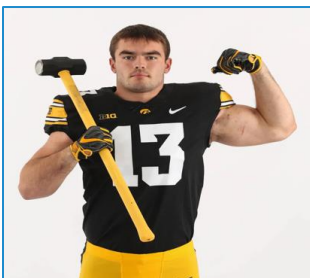
Luke McGrath

**2022 Big Ten Men’s Football Championship Junior Journalist
Fall Creek Intermediate School, 6th Grade, Fishers, Indiana**

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Picture this: you are at a University of Iowa versus Iowa State game. Your dad looks at you and points down to the Hawkeye's bench, “you are going to be a Hawkeye one day.”

Well, you are imagining exactly what Joe Evans experienced that day watching the Hawkeyes play the Cyclones.



Joe Evans is a 6-foot-2, 246-pound senior who grew up in Ames, Iowa, and went to Ames High School. Ames, Iowa is the home of the University of Iowa's rival Iowa State. Even after he grew up in Ames, he wanted to be a Hawkeyes.

“My dad, he played football at Iowa for about a year and some injuries kept him from playing. I always grew up an Iowa fan, and I always knew if I got the opportunity to come play for the Hawkeyes, that’s what I was going to do,” Evans said.

Evans started out being a walk-on with only having seven tackles his entire freshmen season. His sophomore year was more of the same except he moved from being a linebacker to a defensive end. Then, he earned a scholarship during his sophomore year. He was one of three walk-ons to get a scholarship, and he started to do great.

Evans has gotten so much better over the past two years. In his junior year, he had 33 tackles and seven sacks. This year he already has 37 tackles and six sacks, really stepping up his game. He is tied for 38th in the nation with two forced fumbles. And tied for 60th in the nation with 6 sacks. Evans has come up big when the Hawks needed him. In the South Dakota State game, he had a safety that really closed out the game. In the Ohio State game, he had a big hit on quarterback C.J. Stroud that forced a fumble, and Joe took the ball back for a touchdown. In the Wisconsin game, he forced another fumble which closed the game out with an Iowa win.

Even with all his incredible stats and game-changing plays, he is still one of the humblest people I know. I was only interviewing him for about 10 minutes, and he was one of the nicest people I had ever met. For example, any question I asked him about a play where he did something good, he always took that opportunity to start talking about someone else and how well that teammate set up the play.

He was so kind and thoughtful throughout the whole interview even though it was right after playing against a big rivalry, Wisconsin. Right when I walked over to meet him, he put his arm around me and asked me how I was doing.

But on the football field, I would not want to see this man running at me if I was a quarterback, I mean we saw what happened to Heisman Trophy Candidate, C.J. Stroud!

Everything Evans accomplishes is inspired by the motivation of his family. While other players might get ready for a big game by listening to music, Evans made sure to tell me what he does, “I see my family before the game, and I will give my dad a little chest bump and that’s in my head and then I know it’s go time.”

Evans's gratitude and motivation for his family frame his entire football career. He was always repeating his gratitude for the number of sacrifices they had to go through to get him there. Evans stated, "For me, it's, my family, who sacrificed so much just to get me in this position. Being able to hear my name and the Evans last name after making a play means they get to celebrate with me, too."



I thought that when I met this guy he was going to be an ungrateful, selfish, and full-of-himself type of guy because of how much of a beast he is on the field. But he was really kind, really humble, and he really looks up to his parents. I think that is amazing.

So, unless you're a quarterback, you are going to like Joe Evans.



One of Evans's best plays this year was the hit on C.J. Stroud. Ohio State is one of if not the best football teams in college football right now so for him to get that hit was incredible. Evans had this to say about it, "I knew it was gonna be a pass, so I just wanted to do whatever I could to just go and get a strip sack...I wanted to close out the game and the feeling from that is just.... it's like when Santa comes for Christmas."

Except the gift isn't that sack or the fumble. . .it's when Joe runs out of that tunnel, sees his family, and plays his heart out on the Hawkeyes field.



A post-interview picture with Joe Evans and me after the University of Iowa versus Wisconsin game.