

# Buffalo State's Marist Veres Royal, 16, Breaks NCAA Age Record as Youngest College Football Player

*At Age 16, Marist Veres Royal makes NCAA history breaking the age record held by former Louisville and NFL Defensive Lineman Amobi Okoye.*

BUFFALO, NY, UNITED STATES, September 2, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At just 16 years old, Marist Veres Royal is rewriting NCAA football history. Born June 14, 2009, the 6'3", 275-pound Tight End and Fullback for Buffalo State University has become the youngest player ever to take the field in NCAA football competition, edging out former Louisville and NFL Defensive Tackle Amobi Okoye's 2002 record by four days (June 10, 1987).

In the Bengals' fall camp, the former rambunctious child actor who performed in The BeBop Channel's jazz series Giant Steps and The Harlem Film

Festival Award Winning World's Not for Me, has showcased his athletic potential, solidifying his role as a team contributor as Buffalo State prepares for its season opener on September 4th.

Royal's journey is as remarkable as his record. This past summer, at age 15, he posted jaw-dropping athletic metrics: a 320-pound bench press, eighteen 225 bench reps, a 1.58-second 10-yard split, a 7.1-second 3-cone drill, a 4.4-second shuttle, 33-inch arms, and 10-inch hands. These numbers (taken from videos on X), combined with his imposing frame, signal a future NFL prospect who has his sights set on becoming the NFL's youngest player at age 18, thereby beating Okoye's other record by a year.

"I'm honored to break this NCAA record and inspire others to chase their dreams, no matter their age," said Royal, whose passion is matched by his relentless drive and work ethic. Follow his journey on X at [@maristvroyal](https://twitter.com/maristvroyal).



16 year-old Buffalo State football player, Marist Veres Royal.



His record-breaking journey inspires us all as we head into the season.”

*Buffalo State head football coach Lazarus Morgan*

Beyond the field, Royal is a trailblazer in college athletics. As a 15-year-old accepted to the University at Buffalo in January 2025, he was a vocal objector in the landmark NCAA v. House settlement (USDC N.D. Cal. Case No. 4:20-cv-03919-CW [Document 628-5 at page 573](#) and Document 814 of 04/18/25), helping persuade Judge Claudia Wilken to adopt Designated Student Athlete (DSA) grandfathering

protections for current D1 athletes and incoming 2025 freshmen. Despite his advocacy, the University at Buffalo football team declined to classify him as a DSA, preventing his walk-on opportunity with the Bulls for the 2025 fall camp. Undeterred, Royal withdrew from UB and enrolled at Buffalo State, where he found a home under Head Coach Lazarus Morgan.

“I’m incredibly grateful Coach Morgan took the time to meet with me and bring me into the Bengals’ family after things didn’t work out at UB,” Royal said. “His support, along with my teammates’ encouragement, has been everything.” Morgan, who has embraced Royal’s unique story, praised the young star’s impact. “Marist’s maturity and performance during fall camp show he’s a vital part of our team,” Morgan said. “His record-breaking journey inspires us all as we head into the season.”

Royal’s teammates, who playfully tease him about his age, have rallied behind him, creating a tight-knit dynamic that fuels Buffalo State’s rebuilding efforts in the Empire 8 Conference. Rising up the depth chart during training camp, Royal’s work ethic and athleticism have earned their respect.

As Buffalo State gears up for a challenging opener against a formidable opponent, Royal’s story is poised to capture national attention. His combination of historic youth, elite athleticism, and off-field advocacy makes him a Division III phenom with NFL aspirations. From the courtroom to the gridiron, Marist Veres Royal is proving age is just a number.

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