

= Chris Gragg =

Chris Gragg (born June 30 , 1990) is an American football tight end who plays for the Buffalo Bills of the National Football League (NFL) . Selected by the Bills in the seventh round of the 2013 NFL Draft from the University of Arkansas , Gragg accumulated 5 receptions for 53 yards in his first NFL season . His first professional touchdown came against the Pittsburgh Steelers on November 10 , 2013 .

After he graduated from Warren High School in Arkansas , where he played football as a wide receiver , Gragg committed to the University of Arkansas along with three other Warren players . Although he spent his freshman season as a receiver on the Arkansas Razorbacks football squad , the coaching staff converted Gragg into a tight end in 2010 . In his sophomore and junior seasons , the Razorbacks made appearances in Bowl Championship Series games and defeated the Kansas State Wildcats in the 2012 Cotton Bowl Classic , which culminated the 2011 season . A knee injury caused Gragg to miss eight games in his senior season as the Arkansas team finished with a losing record . Invited to participate in the NFL Scouting Combine , an evaluative competition among prospective NFL players , Gragg ran the fastest 40 @-@ yard dash time and had the second @-@ highest vertical jump among tight ends in attendance ; in the draft , the Bills chose Gragg with the 222nd overall selection , a pick Buffalo acquired from a trade with the St. Louis Rams . One of five tight ends in spring training , he made Buffalo 's regular @-@ season roster and played in nine regular @-@ season games during the 2013 NFL season .

= = Early life = =

Chris Gragg was born on June 30 , 1990 , in Pine Bluff , Arkansas , to Kelvin and Tenita Gragg , both of whom worked as educators . Kelvin coached the Warren High School football team , and Chris served as the team 's water boy until he was in junior high school . For the Warren squad , Gragg played football as a wide receiver alongside future NFL players Jarius Wright and Greg Childs . During his senior year , Gragg accumulated 420 receiving yards and caught 8 touchdowns . Recruiting website Rivals.com evaluated him as a 2 @-@ star prospect on a 1 ? 5 star scale and ranked Gragg as the 15th best player in Arkansas at his position , while Scout.com ranked him as the 148th best receiver in the nation . In July 2007 , Gragg committed to the University of Arkansas , as did three other players from Warren .

= = Collegiate career = =

In his freshman season , Gragg played in all 12 of the Arkansas Razorbacks ' games as the team finished with a 5 ? 7 win ? loss record . During the second game of the season , against the Louisiana ? Monroe Warhawks , Gragg caught a 25 @-@ yard pass from quarterback Casey Dick on fourth down and one to continue a drive that ended with the game @-@ winning touchdown . The catch was Gragg 's only reception in 2008 . After he dislocated his ankle in a preseason practice , he was given a medical redshirt and did not play for the 2009 season .

In 2010 , Gragg was converted into a tight end , which made three slots at the position on the Razorbacks ' depth chart . Garrick McGee , the offensive coordinator for the team , observed that " he 's a really big receiver in a tight end body " , and expected opponents to have " matchup problem [s] " against Gragg . When Arkansas faced the Georgia Bulldogs on September 18 , Gragg caught a touchdown from a 57 @-@ yard pass for his first reception of the year . The 2010 Arkansas Razorbacks ended the year with a 10 ? 3 record , and were invited to play in the Sugar Bowl against the Ohio State Buckeyes , a game that Arkansas lost 31 ? 26 after Ohio State defensive end Solomon Thomas intercepted a pass from quarterback Ryan Mallett in the final minute of the game . Gragg made one catch in the contest for 16 yards ; he finished the year with 8 receptions for 171 yards and two touchdowns .

Prior to the 2011 season , a writer for Arkansas Business predicted that Gragg " will figure prominently into the offense if he improves his blocking " : Gragg replaced D. J. Williams , the first

@-@ string tight end who graduated in 2010 . In the Razorbacks ' eleventh game of the season , Gragg caught 8 passes for 119 yards , both single @-@ game career highs , as the team defeated the Mississippi State Bulldogs and moved to a 10 ? 1 record . The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) system subsequently ranked Arkansas as the third @-@ best team in the nation , behind the Louisiana State University Tigers and the Alabama Crimson Tide , with the former scheduled as the Razorbacks ' next opponent . Brett Martel of Associated Press stated that the November 25 matchup , a part of the Arkansas ? LSU football rivalry , " could be even more important than the so @-@ called ' Game of the Century ' " between the Tigers and the Crimson Tide earlier in the year , as both teams in the rivalry competed for a position in the BCS National Championship Game . Though Arkansas opened with a 14 ? 0 lead , the Tigers regained the lead by halftime and won , 41 ? 17 . Out of contention for the National Championship Game , the team finished the year ranked sixth in the BCS standings and were invited to play in the 2012 Cotton Bowl Classic , where they defeated the Kansas State Wildcats 29 ? 16 : with the victory , Arkansas tied a team record for most wins in a season . Over the season , Gragg caught 41 receptions , third most on the team , for 518 yards and two touchdowns .

In July 2012 , Gragg was listed as a preseason nominee for the John Mackey Award , a recognition presented annually by the Nassau County Sports Commission to the best tight end in college football . Though voted to the second @-@ team of the Coaches Preseason All @-@ Southeastern Conference (SEC) squad , an honorific roster composed of the second @-@ best players in the SEC , ESPN writers Edward Aschoff and Chris Low ranked Gragg as the best tight end in the conference . In Arkansas ' season opener against the Jacksonville State Gamecocks , Gragg accumulated 110 yards and two touchdowns over 7 catches , a performance for which he earned the John Mackey Tight End of the Week award . On September 9 , Gragg suffered a bone bruise in his knee against the Rutgers Scarlet Knights which caused him to miss the next three games ; upon return , Gragg reaggravated the injury and missed the rest of the season 's matches . He finished his final season at Arkansas with 22 receptions for 289 yards and three touchdowns , while the team ended with a 4 ? 8 record ; academically , he graduated with a degree in sports management . After his senior year , Gragg participated in the NFL Scouting Combine , where he ran the fastest 40 @-@ yard dash time , the third @-@ fastest 3 cone drill , had the third @-@ longest broad jump , and the second @-@ highest vertical jump of all tight ends in attendance . In an overview of his Combine performance , a writer for the NFL praised his speed and " receiver @-@ like hands " , but criticized him for a lack of agility and occasional dropped passes . The writer compared Gragg to tight end Daniel Fells .

= = Professional career = =

The Buffalo Bills selected Gragg with the 222nd overall selection in the 2013 NFL Draft , a slot they obtained from a trade with the St. Louis Rams . When he was drafted , Gragg became the second tight end Buffalo had ever selected out of Arkansas , and the first Arkansas player to be selected by the Bills since 1973 . Gragg was the first rookie out of the 2013 Bills ' draft class to sign a contract . In preseason practice , Gragg was one of five tight ends on the Buffalo team as he tried to earn one of the 53 positions available on the active roster . While the team trained at St. John Fisher College , Buffalo head coach Doug Marrone praised Gragg for his knowledge of the Bills ' playbook and his vertical running speed . In four preseason games , he totaled 5 receptions for 38 yards . When the Bills cut their roster to 53 players , Gragg made the team ; on an " A ? F " scale , ESPN columnist Mike Rodak gave the Bills a " C " grade in tight end depth and stated that Gragg " would be in the bottom 10 percent of NFL starters at [the position] " . Gragg made his regular season NFL debut on October 13 against the Cincinnati Bengals , and caught his first career reception and touchdown against the Pittsburgh Steelers four games later . When Buffalo faced the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on December 8 , Gragg started in a game for the first time during the regular season . By the end of 2013 , Gragg caught 5 receptions for 53 yards and a touchdown in nine career games played . Collectively , the Bills finished last in the AFC East with a 6 ? 10 record .

Prior to the Bills ' 2014 training camp , Rodak gave Gragg a " 45 % " chance to make Buffalo 's 53

@-@ man roster : Rodak described him as " the most athletic tight end " with the Bills , but also wrote that " there might not be a spot for Gragg " with tight ends Tony Moeaki , Scott Chandler , and Lee Smith on the team as well . During the preseason , Gragg was hospitalized with heat cramps , but returned to practice on July 30 . The Bills faced the New York Giants in their first preseason game , a Pro Football Hall of Fame Game , and according to Jay Skurski of The Buffalo News , Gragg " [had] a chance to impress " with Moeaki and Chandler injured and unable to play : in the game , Gragg had 4 catches for 24 yards and a fumble . He finished the preseason with 10 receptions for 66 yards , and made the regular season roster . In the fourth quarter of the Bills ' October 5 matchup against the Detroit Lions , Gragg caught a touchdown pass that , with an added two @-@ point conversion , tied the game ; Buffalo won the contest , 17 ? 14 , and moved to a 3 ? 2 record . When he attempted to catch a low @-@ thrown pass in the second half of a game against the New York Jets on November 24 , Gragg injured his right knee , which caused him to miss the remainder of the Bills ' season . During 2014 , over the ten games in which he played , Gragg accumulated 7 receptions for 53 yards and a touchdown as Buffalo finished with a 9 ? 7 record , second in the AFC East behind the New England Patriots .

= = Personal life = =

Chris 's brother , Will , also plays football as a tight end : Will said that Chris taught him how to catch , and that when Chris learned something new in Buffalo or at Arkansas , Chris taught it to him . Will transferred to Dumas High School when Kelvin accepted a position as the superintendent of the school district . Will , who received offers from forty @-@ five collegiate schools , committed to the University of Arkansas in September 2014 and signed with the institution in December .