

= Ched Evans =

Chedwyn Michael " Ched " Evans (born 28 December 1988) is a Welsh footballer who plays as a striker for League One club Chesterfield .

Born in St Asaph , Denbighshire , Evans was signed by Manchester City from Chester City 's youth set up in 2002 and he subsequently progressed through the ranks . Evans was loaned to Norwich City in 2007 , where he scored 10 goals in 28 league appearances , before returning to his parent club . With first team opportunities at City limited he was subsequently sold to Sheffield United for £ 3 million in 2009 . After an unspectacular first two seasons at Bramall Lane he scored 35 goals during the 2011 ? 12 season . He also represented Wales at Wales under @-@ 21 and senior level , scoring on his debut for the national side in 2008 , and making a total of 13 appearances .

Evans was convicted of rape in April 2012 and spent two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years in prison . His conviction was quashed on 21 April 2016 by the Court of Appeal , after a referral by the Criminal Cases Review Commission , and a retrial has been ordered . In June 2016 , he signed a contract for Chesterfield .

= = Club career = =

= = = Manchester City = = =

Evans began his playing career in Rhyl , before spending two seasons in Chester City 's youth set @-@ up from where he moved to Manchester City in 2002 following the closure of Chester 's youth team . During the 2006 ? 07 season , Evans was a regular in the Academy and reserve teams and was also in the side that reached the final of the 2006 FA Youth Cup , where City lost to Liverpool . In May 2007 , Evans signed his first professional contract with Manchester City .

In September 2007 Evans came off the bench to make his senior debut in City ? s 1 ? 0 League Cup victory against Norwich City . With first choice opportunities at City limited Evans moved on loan to Norwich City in November of that year , agreeing a deal until 1 January 2008 . He made his debut for Norwich the following week when he came on as a substitute in the 3 ? 1 victory over Blackpool . His first goal for the club came two games later , and just two minutes into his first start in a 2 ? 1 victory over Plymouth Argyle at the start of December . Evans returned to Manchester City after his initial loan deal expired in January 2008 , having made eight appearances and scored two goals .

Initially , Norwich manager Glenn Roeder 's attempts to extend the loan were refused , however , on 10 January , the two clubs agreed a deal to allow Evans to return to Norwich on loan until 26 February , with Manchester City able to recall him after an initial period . However , after talks between the two clubs at the end of January 2008 , the deal was extended to allow Evans to stay with the Carrow Road club until the end of the season . Then Manchester City manager Sven @-@ Göran Eriksson stated he had no plans to sell Evans and that he would not be leaving the summer transfer window . Evans played regularly for Norwich for the remainder of his loan spell and by the end of the season he had notched up 10 goals from 20 starts and eight substitute appearances .

Evans made his Premier League debut for Manchester City in the opening game of the following season on 18 August , against Aston Villa . He was not chosen for the starting eleven but replaced Valeri Bojinov , who suffered an injury during the pre @-@ game warm @-@ up . Evans scored his first Premier League goal for Manchester City against Portsmouth on 21 September , scoring the fifth goal as City went on to win 6 ? 0 . With City 's acquisition of Craig Bellamy and later Emmanuel Adebayor , Roque Santa Cruz and Carlos Tevez , Evans opted to leave in 2009 in order to get more first team football .

= = = Sheffield United = = =

Evans joined Sheffield United for an initial fee of £ 3 million plus possible future add @-@ ons on a

three @-@ year deal in July 2009 , making his debut for United in the first game of the new season ; a 0 ? 0 draw with Middlesbrough . Having bagged a brace for the Wales U21s during the midweek fixtures he then scored his first goal in Blades colours on his home debut , a 2 ? 0 win over Watford . Despite a promising start Evans struggled to maintain any real form and was often relegated to the role of substitute during his first season with the Blades , making 36 appearances but scoring only four goals . The following season Evans was a regular first team choice and his form and scoring rate began to improve , despite the club going through a season of turmoil and battling against relegation . He finished the campaign as top scorer with nine goals in all competitions , but was unable to prevent the team dropping out of the division .

With the Blades now in League One there was speculation that Evans would be sold to ease the club 's wage bill but an injury picked up in the last days of the previous campaign meant he was unavailable until early September , preventing him from moving on to another club . Having returned from injury Evans hit a rich vein of form scoring regularly in both league and cup competitions as the Blades contested for promotion . On 28 March 2012 he scored a second @-@ half hat trick within 15 minutes against Chesterfield giving him his thirtieth goal of the season in a 4 ? 1 win for Sheffield United at Bramall Lane . During this impressive third season , Evans drew attention from Championship and Premier League clubs with his contract scheduled to expire in the summer . However , Blades manager Danny Wilson stated that Evans " [wasn ? t] even thinking about leaving Bramall Lane " , adding " Of course we don ? t want to lose Ched . We still need to achieve sustainability whatever division we are in and of course people are bound to take notice of the goals he ? s getting , maybe I ? m in cloud cuckoo land but I don ? t think it always comes down to money and , talking to Ched , I know he ? s very happy . " Evans was named League One Player of the Month for March 2012 , having scored 10 goals in 8 games . He was nominated for ' League One Player of the Season ' , and in April 2012 Evans was named in the League One PFA Team of the Year . He ended the season with 35 goals in all competitions , but following his rape conviction Evans was released by United at the end of the season .

= = International career = =

= = = Wales U21s = = =

Evans gained his first Wales U21 cap in 2007 . He became a regular member of the squad and in November 2007 he scored a hat @-@ trick against France U21s . In doing so he became only the fourth player to have scored a hat @-@ trick for the under @-@ 21 side , along with John Hartson , Craig Davies and Lee Jones . Evans scored a brace against Bosnia and Herzegovina U21s in October 2009 , taking his tally for the Welsh U21s to 13 goals in 12 games .

= = = Wales = = =

Evans made his senior debut for Wales on 28 May 2008 , scoring the winning goal (with a back heel) in a 1 ? 0 away friendly victory against Iceland . He made 13 appearances for Wales in total , scoring once .

= = = Team GB ambitions = = =

On 28 March 2012 Stuart Pearce , the Great Britain Olympic football team manager , was present at the match against Chesterfield , in which Evans scored a hat @-@ trick , taking his season tally to thirty , in a 4 ? 1 win at Bramall Lane . Evans commented on the possibility of representing Team GB at the London 2012 Summer Olympics : " If I was asked then it 's something I 'd definitely look at doing . I don 't know whether I even will be though ... But if the chance was there then , like anyone else , I ? d certainly have to think about it . "

= = Personal life = =

Evans was born in St Asaph , Denbighshire . His father left the family after Evans 's birth .

After signing for Sheffield United , Evans moved to Millhouse Green , Penistone , in the nearby Barnsley area . After the death of former Wales boss and Sheffield United player , coach and manager Gary Speed , Evans revealed a message under his shirt after scoring his first goal in the FA Cup win over Torquay United , which read : " Rest in peace Speedo . " Evans stated regarding the death of Gary Speed that " I was a man on a mission . I had a message on my top for Gary Speed which I wanted to show . I 'm thankful I got the goal ... the crowd started singing [Speed 's name] ? it gave me goose pimples ... not one person has a bad word to say about him , he was a gentleman ... even people who haven 't met him know how much of a nice man he was ... it still hasn 't hit home , it still feels surreal . "

Since 2009 , Evans has been dating Natasha Massey . Massey 's father , Karl , a businessman , funded a website , " Chedevans.com " , which proclaimed Evans to be " wrongly convicted of rape on 20th April 2012 " . He also hired lawyers for an appeal . In January 2015 , the Attorney general 's office announced that they were " considering the issues " of a possible breach of the contempt of court laws by the website . Evans and Massey have a son , born in January 2016 .

= = = Rape trial = = =

Evans and another footballer , Clayton McDonald , were tried at the Crown Court at Caernarfon after being indicted of the rape of a 19 @-@ year @-@ old woman , who was deemed too drunk to consent , at an hotel near Rhyl in May 2011 . Evans was convicted on 20 April 2012 and was sentenced to five years imprisonment . He was eligible for release after serving half of that sentence . During his incarceration , Evans worked as a painter and decorator in the prison in order to afford a healthy diet . In August 2012 , Evans was refused leave to appeal against the conviction by a single Court of Appeal of England and Wales judge and the full court upheld the decision in November . Evans continues to maintain his innocence and in November 2013 recruited a new legal team to attempt to clear his name .

He was released on 17 October 2014 , although he remains on the Violent and Sex Offender Register indefinitely . Following his release , the Criminal Cases Review Commission announced that they were fast @-@ tracking a review of his conviction . In January 2015 , it was reported that Evans had submitted fresh evidence to the Criminal Cases Review Commission , with the claim that it would strengthen his case . In October 2015 the Criminal Cases Review Commission , following a ten @-@ month investigation , and relying on " new material which was not considered by the jury at trial " referred the case to an appeal before the Court of Appeal . The Chair of the commission stated that the " decision of the commission is not a judgment on guilt or innocence in relation to Ched Evans , nor is it a judgement about the honesty or integrity of the victim or any other person involved in the case . "

On 22 March 2016 the case was heard by the Court of Appeal , which imposed a ban on reporting details of the legal argument . On 21 April 2016 , the appeal was allowed and the conviction quashed . A retrial was ordered , and the details of the reasons for the decision cannot be reported until the conclusion of the retrial . Evans ' retrial is due to begin on 4 October 2016 .

= = Attempts to find a new club = =

= = = Sheffield United = = =

In April 2014 , Sheffield United Co @-@ Chairman Kevin McCabe and new manager Nigel Clough met with Evans in HM Prison Wymott to discuss the possibility of Sheffield United re @-@ signing Evans after his release from prison . Following speculation that Evans could rejoin his former club , a petition was signed by 150 @,@ 000 people urging the club not to do so , which stated that it

would be a " deep insult to the woman who was raped and to all women like her who have suffered at the hands of a rapist " .

In November 2014 , following his release from prison , it was announced that Evans would resume training with Sheffield United after the Professional Footballers ' Association had requested that Sheffield United let Evans train at the club as they were his last club before his conviction . The decision was controversial , and caused television presenter Charlie Webster , businesswoman Lindsay Graham and musicians Dave Berry and Paul Heaton to resign as patrons of the club . Athlete Jessica Ennis @-@ Hill stated that she would want her name removed from a stand at Bramall Lane if Evans were signed by the club .

The Football League stated that although they recognised the gravity of Evans ' crime , they valued the reintegration of reformed criminals and could not take any action against any club which would hire Evans . Sheffield United manager Nigel Clough said on 12 November that the club were " nowhere near " signing Evans , citing his 30 months out of the professional game and an important run of fixtures as reasons why a decision would not be taken immediately . DBL Logistics , Sheffield United 's sponsor on the back of their shirts , stated that they would end their sponsorship if Evans were signed by the club . John Holland Sales , who sponsor on the front of the shirts , declared that they would " re @-@ evaluate " their relation to the club if he were signed . On 20 November , Sheffield United withdrew their offer to allow Evans to use their training facilities . Co @-@ chairman Jim Phipps , however , attributed the decision to " mob @-@ like behaviour " , stating his belief that Evans had a right to return to his career having served his sentence .

= = = Hartlepool United = = =

In December 2014 , Hartlepool United manager Ronnie Moore said that he would like Evans to join the club . The comment brought criticism from Hartlepool 's MP , Iain Wright , who described Evans as a " pariah " . The club later followed up this headline with a statement saying that Hartlepool does not wish to sign Evans .

= = = Hibernians = = =

On 2 January 2015 , Hibernians of the Maltese Premier League , through their English vice @-@ president Stephen Vaughan , announced that they had offered Evans a contract up to the end of the season . The British Ministry of Justice said that such a move would not be possible as Evans was a convicted sex offender on licence and , as such , barred from working abroad . Malta 's Prime Minister , Joseph Muscat , warned Hibernians that hiring Evans could affect the whole country 's reputation , while Justice Minister Owen Bonnici stated that Evans had a right to return to his profession after being released from prison .

= = = Oldham Athletic = = =

On 4 January 2015 , it was reported that Evans had been in discussion with League One club Oldham Athletic and was expected to sign for them in a deal which may be worth as little as £ 400 per week . The club 's manager Lee Johnson was reported to have expressed " grave reservations " about the signing , but was overruled by the club 's owner Simon Corney . A petition against the signing gathered 19 @,@ 000 signatures within a few hours and over 30 @,@ 000 by the next day , while politicians such as Labour Party leader Ed Miliband voiced their opposition to the move .

On 8 January 2015 , Oldham Athletic ended their interest in signing Evans , citing that proceeding could have resulted in " significant financial pressure " and would have " continued to be a divisive influence " , while condemning the " vile and abusive threats , some including death threats , which have been made to our fans , sponsors and staff " . BBC Sport reported that a named relative of a staff member was threatened with rape , and that one sponsor already having ended their association with Oldham in protest and another saying that it would follow suit if Evans signed . The petition against Evans signing had reached over 60 @,@ 000 signatures . Meanwhile , a total of ten

other clubs (other than Oldham and Sheffield United) from League One and League Two told BBC Sport that they would not sign Evans .

Evans stated that he withdrew from the deal due to " mob rule " , and that he was concerned the building of Oldham 's new stand would be adversely affected by his signing . He also apologised for any grievances he had caused due to his rape case , but maintained his innocence . Journalist Henry Winter , writing for The Daily Telegraph , refuted Evans ' claims , instead saying that " it was people ' s disgust that a convicted rapist felt he could swan back into a high @-@ profile job after revealing no remorse for a crime that would preclude re @-@ employment for many " , while criticising Evans for making " his statement of contrition ... on the offensive , legally questionable website that continues to make life miserable for his victim " .

= = = Grimsby Town = = =

On 8 January 2015 , it was announced by Grimsby Town director John Fenty that a financial backer had offered the club to pay his full wages in order to bring Evans to the Conference Premier club . Having held a board meeting along with team manager Paul Hurst it was decided that the move would be of too high risk for the club . Grimsby had previously employed Clayton McDonald , the fellow footballer and friend of Evans who was acquitted in the same case , during the 2013 ? 14 season .

= = = Chesterfield = = =

On 20 June 2016 , Evans signed his first contract since his release from prison and the quashing of his conviction , signing for one year at Chesterfield in League One . He was signed by his former Sheffield United manager Wilson , and their first @-@ team coach was his former Blades teammate Chris Morgan .

He scored on his debut for Chesterfield on 23 July , his first game in nearly four years , in a 3 ? 0 friendly win over Ilkeston .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Club = = =

As of 14 April 2012 .

1 . ^ Statistics includes Football League Trophy .

= = = International = = =

As of 5 May 2012 .