

**DE | 57**

AJ EPENESA

AGE: 25 (September 15, 1998) | **HT:** 6-6 | **WT:** 260**COLLEGE:** Iowa**NFL EXP:** 5 Years**HOMETOWN:** Edwardsville, IL**ACQUIRED:** Draft (2020, R2) **ajepenesa24** **supersamoan94**

FIRST-AND-10

AJ EPENESA re-signed with the Bills in 2024 on a two-year deal after finishing his fourth season in Buffalo in 2023. Epenesa was selected by the Bills in the 2nd round (54th overall) in 2020.

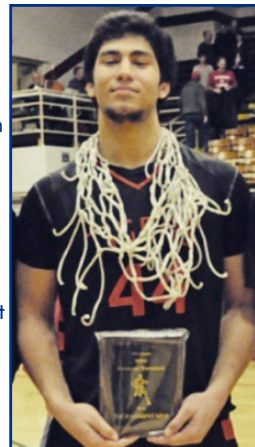
SHOUTOUTS

- Tied his career high in sacks (6.5) and TFLs (7), and recorded new career highs in tackles (20), passes defended (8) and INTs (2) in 2023.
- Intercepted Patrick Mahomes at KC (12/10/23) for his second INT of the season. Epenesa became the 12th Bills defensive lineman with 2 interceptions in his career, and only the third with multiple in a season, joining Ron McDole (2 in 1968) and Sean Moran (2 in 1997).
- Collected half a sack of Russell Wilson for his 6.5 sack of the season vs DEN (11/13/23) tying a personal season-high (had 6.5 in 2022).
- Recorded his fifth sack of the season, vs TB (10/26/23) taking down Baker Mayfield and collected a TFL.
- Collected a sack of Tyrod Taylor against the Giants (10/15/23) and totaled three tackles and one TFL.
- Had 2.0 sacks against the Jaguars (10/9/23) and defended 3 passes which both mark as a career-high. And first Bill since 2020 with defensive "trifecta" (sack/FF/FR) recording a strip sack of Trevor Lawrence.
- Recorded first career INT (Sam Howell) at WAS (9/24/23), and returned pickoff 32 yards for a TD, first DL to score on INT return since Aaron Schobel 9/14/09. The INT marked his first INT TD of his football career. His last TD came in college with Iowa in 2018 (11/17) on a fumble recovery vs. Illinois.
- Collected his first sack of the year at WAS (9/24/23).
- Finished 2022 third on the team with 6.5 sacks, five passes defenses, and two forced fumbles, all new career highs.

IF YOU HAVEN'T HERD

HOOP STAR

A three-sport star growing up, Epenesa played on the St. Louis Eagles AAU basketball team that featured Celtics star Jayson Tatum and former Iowa star Tyler Cook. "His athleticism is freaky," Cook told The Athletic. "When I was in eighth grade, I promise you A.J. was better than I was. I'm not going to lie about that at all. A freak athlete, man. People don't know how skilled of a basketball player he was, too. He could shoot it, put it on the deck. I talk to him about it every time I see him."



IT CAN ONLY BE JARED

According to a story by The Athletic, A.J. Epenesa's middle name, Jared, came from his father's best friend in college. Former DT Jared DeVries used to lend his car in college to Eppy Epenesa, so he could drive 50 miles to see his fiancée (now wife) Stephanie and their newborn daughter, Samantha. "Naming him after Jared has to do with my friendship with Jared, which will stick for life," Eppy said. "I'm glad I did that. It's a blessing just to have Jared as my friend."

PERSONAL

Full name: Andrew Jared Epenesa. Is the son of Stephanie and Espensa "Eppy" Epenesa. His father, a native of American Samoa, played DT at Iowa. Has a sister, Samantha, and two brothers, Eric, an outside linebacker at Iowa, and Iose. Majored in communications. Fan of the St. Louis Cardinals. Played football, basketball and track in high school, scoring over 1,000 points in basketball and earned All-America honors as a discus thrower.