Antonio Brown lands the cover of Madden 2K19

On July 18th, 2K Sports announced that Antonio Brown will be on the cover of Madden 2k19. Antonio Brown has been the face of the Steelers organization for the past five seasons. For five seasons in a row, Brown has recorded over 100 receptions and 1000 receiving yards in each season. Last season he recorded 1,533 receiving yards and 101 receptions. He is ranked second in the NFL Top 100, improving from fourth in prior to the 2017 season. He ranked first in the NFL in receiving yards in the NFL 2017 season, beating Julio Jones nearly 100 yards.

The last Steeler to be on the cover of Madden was Troy Polamalu in 2009, who shared it with Larry Fitzgerald of the Arizona Cardinals. Previous wide receivers to be on the cover of Madden have been Odell Beckham Jr. on Madden NFL 16, Calvin Johnson on Madden NFL 13, and Larry Fitzgerald on Madden 2009. Brown was in the contention for the Madden NFL 16 cover; competing against Rob Gronkowski, Patrick Peterson, and Odell Beckham Jr. Antonio Brown has been rated 99 on Madden, which to him is not enough, “he doesn’t know why they didn’t call it the ‘100 club’”.

As a franchise player for the Pittsburgh Steelers, Brown receives a franchise contract. Under his current contract, he receives $68 million over four years. Over the seven seasons that Brown has been with the Steelers, he is currently ranked second in career receiving yards behind Hines Ward. At the rate that Brown is going, he can beat Ward in less than three seasons.

There is rumored to be a curse on players who become the cover athlete of Madden NFL. It is said to believe that Michael Vick started the Madden Curse. He suffered a fractured fibula in 2003 after being placed on the Madden 2004 cover. After Drew Brees was on the cover of the Madden 11 cover, he had a career high of 22 interceptions in the 2011 season. Brett Favre led the NFL in interceptions just a season after being on the cover of Madden 09. Troy Polamalu missed seven games due to injury after being on the cover of Madden 10. After Daunte Culpepper was on the cover of Madden 2002, he suffered a season ending knee injury. Shaun Alexander was never the same after being on the Madden 07 cover; he broke his foot and was never able to fully recover. Donovan McNabb was on the cover of Madden 06, then later suffered a groin injury that put him on injury reserve for the rest of the season. Rob Gronkowski suffered from the Madden curse when he faced a season-ending back injury after being on the cover of Madden 17. Hopefully the curse can skip Antonio Brown this season, because the Steelers have high expectations for the star wide receiver.