



## **Mike James, the EuroLeague's new career scoring king!**

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The 10-year veteran has surpassed another great, Vassilis Spanoulis, in total career points.

History was made this Thursday night as Mike James of AS Monaco overtook Vassilis Spanoulis to become the all-time leading scorer in the Turkish Airlines EuroLeague.

With a combined total of 4,457 points, the AS Monaco star is now in first place overall, having surpassed Spanoulis's total of 4,455. Even more impressive is the fact that James managed to do so in 271 games, compared to 358 for the former Olympiacos Piraeus and Panathinaikos AKTOR Athens legend.

### **Mike James's route to 4,457 points**

Now in his 10th season in the EuroLeague, the 33-year-old guard netted 467 points in 45 games for Baskonia Vitoria-Gasteiz (2014-16), 522 in 37 appearances for Panathinaikos (2016-18), 595 in 30 contests for EA7 Emporio Armani Milan (2018-19), 1,112 in 55 fixtures for CSKA Moscow (2019-21), and now 1,760 in 104 games for Monaco (2021-present).

It has been quite the journey for James, after all. Having started out as a role player in his first few games at Baskonia, it didn't take long for the Portland native to firmly establish himself as one of the EuroLeague's best players with his scoring and playmaking. There was a jump in his production when he arrived in Athens, but it rose further upon his move to Italy.

In that 2018-19 campaign with Milan, James scored by far his most points in a season to that point (595, beating the 328 he recorded from the 2016-17 season) and posted his best scoring

average at 19.8 points per night. He also set what back then a new career high in points with the 35 he netted in a 92-89 defeat at Real Madrid on March 20, 2019. Due to his exploits on that end of the floor, he ended up winning the Alphonso Ford Top Scorer Trophy and was named to the All-EuroLeague Second Team for the first time. In short, James had established himself as a star in the league.

Those performances caught the attention of CSKA, where James once again improved his scoring average, posting 21.1 points per game across 28 appearances in his first season in Moscow. He came just 5 points short of matching his season tally with Milan, having played two games less.

In James's second campaign with CSKA, a year in which he posted 19.3 points per night and scored 522 points in 27 games, he had his two best scoring nights in the EuroLeague. After setting a new personal best with 36 points in an 87-96 triumph at Khimki Moscow Region on December 11, 2020, he bettered that tally a few months later with 37 points, which remains his career high to date, in a 105-103 double-overtime loss at Valencia Basket on February 4, 2021.

### **Making history in Monaco**

Following a brief stint in the NBA with the Brooklyn Nets, James returned to the EuroLeague in search of a new challenge. Despite Monaco having just won the BKT EuroCup, the 33-year-old took his talents to the principality club. Ever since, James has shined on a night in, night out basis and helped turn Monaco from a EuroLeague newcomer into a Final Four force.

The 2021-22 season, his first in Monaco, saw the club surprisingly reach the EuroLeague Playoffs on the back of a record season by James, as he set career bests in games played (38), points scored (622), rebounds grabbed (121), assists made (219) and steals (47). Despite having an MVP-level season in the eyes of many, the first MVP award of his career passed him by. He did, however, earn his first selection to the All-EuroLeague First Team.

Perhaps inspired by the personal disappointment of the prior campaign, with Monaco falling in a five-game series to Olympiacos and James not earning MVP honors, he went a step further in 2022-23 and guided the Monegasque club to its first-ever Final Four. Last season, he broke the 600-point mark for the second season in a row, having scored 605 in 38 appearances. Another All-EuroLeague selection came, too, as he was named to the All-EuroLeague Second Team.

So far this year, James has had his best scoring average since landing in Monaco, posting 19.3 points per contest, after putting up 16.4 in 2021-22 and 15.9 in 2022-23. It seems that he knew that history was in his sights, as he revealed to former CSKA teammate Kyle Hines during an episode of the A Quarter with Kyle Hines podcast, which was released in early January.

"I think I had an idea that I was getting close a couple of years ago, because Chris Singleton actually brought it up to me. He was like, 'Yeah, you're going to break the all-time scoring record,'"

James recalled. “He showed it to me and I’m like, ‘Man, I ain’t that far, though.’ Then this summer, me and my friends were sitting down and talking, I’m like, ‘Man, I really am close. I might get it this year if some stuff goes my way, it could happen.’ It’s just crazy to think about.”

Well, it’s not crazy anymore. Congratulations, Mike!

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