



**Cornerback Jimmy Smith (3) says press coverage and physical play are among his fortes.**  
**Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com**



04/27/2011 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

## Brooks: Smith Faces Forward, Sees Bright NFL Future

*(Third Of Four Stories On The Buffs And The 2011 NFL Draft)*

**BOULDER** - Jimmy Smith is fast enough to keep most issues in front of him, put others behind him and, if forced to, quickly make up ground. That's *on* the football field.

Off of it, well, that's another matter; his speed isn't as much of a factor. He's not trying to outrun his past, but forgive him if he is a little puzzled that it is dogging him as it has for the last several months - just in time for the 2011 NFL Draft.

The former Colorado cornerback generally is regarded among the top five at his position in this week's draft, joining Patrick Peterson (LSU), Prince Amukamara (Nebraska), Aaron Williams (Texas) and Brandon Harris (Miami). Peterson, Amukumara and Smith appear the best first-round candidates, with Peterson likely to be the first corner taken.

### BUFFALO EXTRAS



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Jimmy Smith Fumble Recovery

From there, there is hedging among analysts on whether Amukumara or Smith will be chosen next. And in Smith's case, a trio of 2007 indiscretions as a CU freshman - a positive drug test, a pair of alcohol citations - is being identified by draft handicappers as "baggage" or "character issues" that could devalue Smith on draft day. (Round 1 is Thursday, Rounds 2-3 are on Friday, Rounds 4-7 on Saturday.)

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Jimmy Smith Pass Breakup

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Smith told me he hasn't been reading, listening to or watching any of the pre-draft coverage that alludes to his past and what that might mean for his immediate future. He is of the opinion that mistakes made as a college freshman shouldn't forever form a dark cloud above him. He says he has moved on, done right and would hope that his model behavior since 2007 has been recognized.

"I control what I can control," he said from his home in Colton, Calif. "The stuff that's being talked about is from a long time ago. I don't think any of that is going to be a factor - not for the teams that are really interested in me."

Smith, of course, isn't about to undersell himself or his ability. In a video produced by *NFL.com*, he put his swagger front and center, imploring teams to "draft me because I'm the best corner in the draft and I can support the run. I'm the biggest corner in the draft, I can move and I'm the most athletic. There's no corner in the draft that can cover the way I can cover."

No, he isn't short on confidence, and the bulk of the draft watchers believe he has the size, ability and speed to match. The NFL officially lists him at 6-foot-2, 211 pounds, with a 40-yard dash timing of 4.46 seconds. The NFL's overview contends "corners with Smith's size, speed and confidence in press coverage don't grow on trees ... (his) tools and upside will likely land him in the second round."

However, that projection is subject to change - and it appears it will. A number of mock drafts have Smith going late in the first round, with veteran NFL writer Peter King of *SI.com* predicting Smith will be taken by Baltimore with the 26th pick of Round 1.

King's synopsis of that selection: "Smith would love to play alongside Ed Reed and behind Ray Lewis. Some teams are shying away from him because of off-field problems. Some teams would like to shy away because of off-field problems but can't - because he might be as good a player as Patrick Peterson when his career's over. The Ravens can put in enough safeguards to make sure Smith behaves. And this just in: They desperately need a shutdown corner."

In a brutally candid interview last August as his final CU season loomed, Smith outlined his senior goals. They included becoming more of a leader ("I'm not a leader by choice, but you kind of have to be in your fifth year.") and not taking any plays off ("There's a handful of times that I should have been more ready ... I attribute that to focus and intensity.").

He also told me that by mid-summer, agents already had begun circling, so much so that he changed his cell number. And he said this about the NFL: "I have to think about it at this point. I mean it definitely alters the way I do things; I have to stay on the straight and narrow path. The more I think about it, I think the more I grow up here at school. I know they're not taking any crap up there (NFL) and I have to make sure I'm good down here before they even take me. Besides the football, that's all a part of making it in the NFL."

All the right words never hold up without corresponding behavior, and I came away from that interview with Smith believing his "baggage" and "character issues" were in his past. As a CU senior, Smith did exactly what he and others expected of him.

His teammates voted him the Buffs' most outstanding defensive player, and Big 12 Conference coaches made him one of their first-team all-conference defensive backs. With Smith at right corner - he started all 12 games there - most of CU's opponents tossed their passes to the opposite side of the field. He allowed one touchdown in man coverage (Texas Tech), broke up five passes and made 70 tackles (183 for his career).

Growing up, Smith believed his first sport was basketball but eventually was convinced otherwise by older brother Ryan, who still coaches football and track in California and has been nearly a lifelong mentor for Jimmy as he

successfully navigated what could have been misguided and badly spent formative years.

When Smith turned from hoops to football and honed in on playing cornerback, he began watching bigger NFL corners, hoping to pattern himself after players such as Dale Carter, who played for five NFL teams from 1992-2005, and current corners Nnamdi Asomugha (Raiders) and Darrelle Revis (Jets).

Smith considers himself "a freak athlete" and says his strong suits are "press coverage, physical play, my speed and my height and reach advantage . . . I've taken a little bit of their games, but I've got my own type of game and technique."

He told *NFL.com*, "I like to come up and make tackles. I like to make plays when the ball is in the air. I'm a big-time playmaker. I like to play in the big-time games."

Smith believes he performed well at this winter's NFL Combine, but said a "tweaked hamstring" kept him out of the Senior Bowl. Succeeding interviews and individual workouts with NFL teams left him "pretty confident I'll go pretty high . . . nobody told me it would be in the first round, but you never know," he said. "All the teams told me they were very interested, but I think they all tell you the same stuff. You don't know for sure until the day it happens."

On that day, Smith and his family "will have a little barbeque and relax," he said. "I'm not going to be nervous because I can't control it. If I drop to the second level, that's OK. It's an honor to be in the position I'm in. Right now, I just want to get back to playing football."

*(Thursday: Nate Solder - Small-Town Kid With Big-Time Future)*

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SHOW MENU



# CU Buffs believe they can hit 25K for football season-ticket holder

## Bohn & Co. optimistic about football season ticket sales

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 04/26/2011 11:53:40 PM MDT

University of Colorado athletic department officials are pleased with the number of football season ticket holders who have renewed their tickets for the 2011 season and remain optimistic about hitting a goal of 25,000 season tickets sold.

Athletic director Mike Bohn said 81 percent of 2010 season-ticket holders have renewed their seats for the Buffs' first season in the Pac-12 Conference and the first year of the Jon Embree era in Boulder, and he anticipates being at capacity with the 41 suites in Folsom Field.

Bohn said the department is going through the annual seat improvement process, allowing existing season tickets holders to upgrade their seats, before new customers begin filling vacancies. He said the ticket office already has \$100 deposits from 1,378 new season-ticket customers on hold, waiting for their opportunity to choose seats.

"It inspires us and energizes us with the type of support we're receiving," Bohn said. "It all started with the way the fans responded to interim coach Brian Cabral last fall and triggered right into basketball and now the momentum continues to flow right into the football season."

CU announced in early March that it would no longer provide a waiver to its oldest and most loyal season-ticket holders, preventing them from having to pay mandatory donations of between \$25 and \$300 per seat on top of the cost of their tickets depending on their location in the stadium.

Bohn said 90.6 percent of the 1,200 customers affected by that change have renewed their seats, agreeing to make the required donations. CU said it decreased ticket prices in 60 percent of the stadium in March and Bohn said Tuesday that 93.8 percent of season-ticket holders in those areas had renewed.

Bohn said 88.6 percent of 2010 season-ticket holders seated in premium seating sections between the goal lines have renewed their seats for the coming season. The cost of many of those seats was raised by \$7 a ticket in March.

By far the biggest decreases in renewals comes from faculty and staff who were not previously donors (75.6 percent) and former letterwinners who were not previously donors (75.5 percent).

"We recognize the importance of long-standing support and the ownership that fans have in their particular seats," Bohn said. "Any time you wrestle with disrupting passion, emotion, connection it is certainly dicey. But my hat is off to our fans who have answered the call to help us with out consistency and continuity, just like they did this year in men's basketball and the record-setting season there."

Bohn caught some of his staffers off guard in March when he publicly announced he was targeting 25,000 season tickets sold for the 2011 season. The program sold 19,638 season tickets last year, so achieving the goal would be a large increase in one year by CU standards.

At the close of business Tuesday, Bohn said there are 17,617 season tickets already sold for next season with those 1,378 new customers who already have put down deposits waiting in the wings. The school record for season-tickets sold in one year is 30,076.

Bohn says he believes now more than ever that 25,000 is reachable based on the response to date and knowing that key sales months of July and August are coming.

"We have a lofty goal of 25,000 season tickets this year, but we believe with the energy around the team and coaches coupled with the price adjustments and the strength of schedule, we believe we can reach that number," Bohn said.

But it's not just ticket sales that are fueling the department's optimism. Support for the program is on the upswing in other

areas.

Bohn said there were 99 Buff Club members in California prior to the announcement last summer that the school would join the Pac-12 Conference. That number has grown to more than 500 and the athletic department has set a goal of 3,000.

#### **2011 CU football schedule**

**Sept. 3** -- at Hawaii

**Sept. 10** -- CALIFORNIA (non-conference)

**Sept. 17** -- Colorado State (Invesco Field)

**Sept. 24** -- at Ohio State

**Oct. 1** -- WASHINGTON ST.

**Oct. 8** -- at Stanford

**Oct. 15** -- at Washington

**Oct. 22** -- OREGON

**Oct. 29** -- at Arizona St.

**Nov. 5** -- USC

**Nov. 12** -- ARIZONA

**Nov. 19** -- at UCLA

**Nov. 26** -- at Utah

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