

BLOGS



Ray Quick To Welcome Jimmy Smith

The Hall of Fame linebacker didn't waste any time getting Smith on the phone.

Posted by Mike Duffy on Saturday, May 7th, 2011 at 8:18 am | Categories: [Mike Duffy](#)

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It didn't take long for Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis to get in touch with the newest member of his defense.

Shortly after first-round draft pick Jimmy Smith was selected 27th overall, Lewis called the Colorado product with a message of congratulations and welcome.

"He just told me I'm welcome here with open arms, and hopefully we can get together and talk and kind of let me know, you know, that he's 'Ray-Ray,'" a beaming Smith said in his introductory press conference. "I just honored to be on a team with Ray and this defense."

It's going to take a close relationship with veterans like Lewis to bring the rookies up to speed if the NFL continues the lockout this offseason, so Smith's conversation with No. 52 is a good sign.

Smith said he wasn't surprised to hear from the linebacking great after hearing about his relationships with other players around the league and knowing his history in Baltimore.

"I don't know if it was such a surprise because everyone knows this is his defense, so I think he'll have something to say," said Smith. "For me, it's just an honor. I'm just really happy that I'm playing for the Ravens. When you think about the Ravens, you think about defense.

"Being a defensive player, I'm just really excited about it."

Smith is one of the lucky ones who made it to their respective team's facility last Friday during the one-day moratorium on the work stoppage, allowing him to pick up a playbook.

For his part, Smith is hoping to meet his teammates face-to-face and get to work.

"I'm more excited about that than everything else, just to know that I have basically three Hall of Famers playing defense and they are going to be the guys to teach me how to be a better player," said Smith. "What else would you want to learn from than an Ed Reed, Ray Lewis and Haloti Ngata?"

"It's truly a blessing to have players like that to be on the team with."

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Ravens did their homework on Jimmy Smith

By Aaron Wilson, Times Staff Writer | Posted: Saturday, May 7, 2011 1:29 am

OWINGS MILLS -- The Baltimore Ravens did a significant amount of research before taking a risk on imposing University of Colorado cornerback Jimmy Smith with their first-round draft pick.

Smith reportedly failed multiple drug tests, including one for misuse of codeine, was arrested twice for underage alcohol offenses, once for third-degree assault and had a pair of abortions paid for by parents of women he impregnated in college.

The Ravens spent several months looking into Smith's background leading up to interviewing him at the NFL scouting combine, having him in for a visit to their training complex and working him out prior to drafting the All-Big 12 cornerback.

Here's what general manager Ozzie Newsome had to say about the Ravens' due diligence on Smith during a conference call with season-ticket holders:

"The process begins with our area scouts. We had three scouts go into Colorado, and not only do they evaluate how a guy plays on tape, they get a chance to watch him in practice, how he interacts with his teammates. They get a chance to talk to the trainers, the coaches, the secretaries in the building. So, they are able to gather a lot of information from him. When we go to Indy for the Combine, we are allowed to interview 60 players in 15-minute increments, and we had the opportunity to interview him for 15 minutes. But, that's not enough time to get him to answer all the questions. So, we are allowed to bring 30 players into Baltimore, and he was one of the 30 that we brought to Baltimore.

"What he does at that point is he gets the opportunity to spend individual time with myself, with the head coach, with the defensive coordinator, with the defensive backs coach. Also, our defensive backs coach and our defensive coordinator went out to Colorado and worked him out, took him to dinner. With all of that being said, you get the opportunity for eight or nine people who have been in the League for a lot of years and have been around a lot of players. Talking with any player, we get a chance to evaluate what that risk is if we take a player, whether that's in the first round or the seventh round."

The 6-foot-2, 211-pounder insists that his past mistakes aren't dire indicators of future trouble.

"Most of the mistakes I made, or the bad decisions I made were when I was 18, 19 years old, so they were more of a maturity thing," Jimmy Smith said. "I want people to know that I don't have any character issues and that I made some bad decisions when I was a young kid just like most Americans.