



Scott Barnett Emerald

Senior defensive tackle Caleb Smith gets a rare chance to carry the ball after the only interception of his career against Nevada.

# Everybody's BUDDY

For the past five years, Caleb Smith has brought dedication and intelligence to the Oregon football team

By Mirjam Swanson  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Meet Caleb Smith. Big dude, right? Six-foot-5, 282 pounds. But that's all relative. He'll tell you himself. He's small for a defensive lineman on a big-time Division 1-A college football team.

So forget all the preconceptions. About size. About athletes. About intelligence. About people.

And please, meet Buddy. "Buddy is a veteran," Oregon head coach Mike Bellotti said. "He's truly looked on as one of the leaders on this team. He's like a coach on the field."

He's also much like a coach in how he responds to questions — dude can elaborate beautifully.

Like this: "I don't think we have any one guy on defense who everyone looks to in times of crisis," Smith begins. "We all look to each other collectively, 'cause there are guys like myself, Peter Sirmon, Michael Fletcher, Brandon McLemore, Justin Wilcox, Terry Miller — you name it. When things are going bad, we don't start point fingers, which can be very detrimental to your success. We don't look for one guy to rally around. We just rally around each other because we've been here so

long, we're able to be open and honest with each other when stuff is going bad. We can look each other in the eye and say 'All right, let's pick it up ...'"

Despite his penchant for articulation, Smith is unsure what he'll be doing after he completes his graduate work in Oregon's renowned Warsaw Sports Marketing program next year.

He knows it will be something with sports. And with business. And, most definitely, with people.

"He keeps it real," junior cornerback Ryan Mitchell said. "He always lets you know what he's thinking. That's good, 'cause a lot of people sit in the back and don't let you know what's up. Nothing gets done like that."

Be assured, Smith gets it done. Never one of the Ducks' most spectacular players, Smith's improved considerably in his five-year career.

He's already earned a degree in business administration, finishing his undergraduate studies with a cumulative grade point average of 3.42.

This year, he's getting himself out of bed for 8 a.m. sports marketing classes.

All that, and he said he's the one who keeps things tidy at home, constantly cleaning up after his teammates/roommates.

*"He keeps it real, he always lets you know what he's thinking."*

Ryan Mitchell  
junior cornerback

"I'm really tidy," said, Smith, who arrived at Oregon from Vashon, Wash. "That's probably pretty annoying to some of the guys, 'cause I really like have things in order. It's gotta be hard to relax when you have someone walking around the house picking up."

He's managed to pick up a few things on the field as well. So even though his teammates might not enjoy all of Smith's living habits, they're certainly more comfortable with his on-the-field routines.

"He can play any position down there," senior rover Michael Fletcher said. "He's probably the most intelligent player that we have on the defensive line."

Those smarts helped Smith earn Pac-10 first-team all-academic honors last season.

"That means a lot," he said. "Because for me, I know football is not gonna be carrying me better

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