

**January 20, 2006**



An Interview With:

## **STEVE SMITH** **Carolina Panthers**

**Q. Anything you're doing differently this week than the last two weeks?**

STEVE SMITH: Yeah, obviously last two weeks, you know, we've interacted with those opponents more than once, whether it be preseason or regular season with Seattle. The only information I got -- I gather is from the guys that played with them and against them last year. But they're very good. So I just watched a lot of film and see some things and the successful things they did against Washington and raised some eyebrows of really how good their defense is. How good that team is overall, how good they are.

**Q. Are you happy with the numbers you and Jake are putting up post season?**

STEVE SMITH: We're having a lot of fun. Obviously you get this deep into the playoffs and this deep into the season it's very fun. The numbers speak for themselves. But there's some good and bad to that, and so you've just got to work with that.

**Q. What do you think is good about what you're doing during the playoffs.**

STEVE SMITH: The good part is we're winning. And the bad part is I realize that whether we win or lose my success and my productivity every game varies. The last two weeks obviously it's increased, but I think it's going to decrease in the next couple of games, if we're fortunate enough to win, just because of the defenses that we're facing the next couple of weeks are very good. If we're blessed enough to face them.

**Q. John Fox called you guys the odd couple?**

STEVE SMITH: Who?

**Q. John Fox, you and Jake?**

STEVE SMITH: Oh, yeah, we are. I think we came in kind of just long enough trying to really

implement what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it and I think it's worked to our advantage.

**Q. Can you talk about how you guys are different personality-wise?**

STEVE SMITH: He's a guy that's feisty. He's really gung ho, really wants to get out there. He's kind of funny, because he wants to get in guys' face. He can't fight it, so things like that, he's very vocal. When the guy is getting a guy, yeah, this is how we do it. That's just how it is, so you've got to love him for it.

And then the odd part is me and him go at it a lot, back and forth. And there's never really any hard feelings, we don't take it personally. We take it professionally, but we take our roles at each other and what we bring to the table, personally.

**Q. Steve, how does it affect your mentality, knowing that the Seattle coaches are game planning against you?**

STEVE SMITH: It's good. It's funny, because the guy who's taking over for **Ray Rhodes** is **John Marshall**, who was here when I was a rookie, so it's very interesting. It's going to be exciting to see him, he's a very good coach. But I never really got to go against his defense, because I was playing special teams. So it will be interesting.

**Q. What do you expect they're going to do to try to stop you?**

STEVE SMITH: I don't know. I think really they're just going to play their football and try to limit the times I touch the ball. I have to be patient and understand that. And really not get wrapped up in it or what balls I'm not getting or what I'm not -- when I'm getting open, I'm not doing this. I think time will tell and time will -- time will allow me to do what I can do.

**Q. Are you proud this season of the success you've had that the teams haven't been able to take you away?**

STEVE SMITH: They have. There's times when I've played games, I've had two or three catches for 30 yards. So I've seen both sides of

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the fence, so I anticipate it and I just have to deal with it.

**Q. I read where *Seahawks* might be well advised not to push your buttons pregame. Is too much made of that a little bit?**

STEVE SMITH: There's not, not at all.

**Q. How much have you worked with care I coal berth, either giving him playoff advice or being a little more senior in the League?**

STEVE SMITH: You can't. Everybody has to really soak it in their own way. You can tell guys how this is going to happen, how that is going to happen. But I think in this stage in the game the NFC Championship game speaks for itself. We've got four teams left. I mean really you can't prepare somebody for this, you've got to really let them find out on their own, but let them know that you've got to come to play, because there's no next week.

**Q. Is that an advantage, that you were able to soak in atmosphere that so many of you guys were able to soak in the atmosphere of this two years ago, where Seattle hasn't really been this far along?**

STEVE SMITH: Nope. Just because that's the whole -- that's the whole reason why you play. You play for these games. So you get what you wish for. So you can't -- there's no advantage. Every year, different people are involved, so you can't prepare for it. You can't warn somebody.

**Q. How have you changed?**

STEVE SMITH: I've grown up. I've grown up. I bought a suit or two, you know.

**Q. If you're lucky enough to score what are you going to do in the end zone?**

STEVE SMITH: I don't know, really. We talked about that, if you focus on what will happen when you do score, you're going to miss the opportunity to score. So just work on trying to do the things that's necessary to get in the end zone and have my team win.

**Q. Jake and coach were saying you guys thrive on being booed when you're out on the road. Can you talk to that, and what it feels like, and how you guys do as a team? Thrive on that?**

STEVE SMITH: It's pretty interesting, especially for me, I go in there and they tell me, "**Smith**, you suck," all kinds of things. So I just look at them and say, you're right, I do. I was told

all the way to the end of the zero zero when we beat Chicago. So you enjoy it because those guys know what you're capable of doing, and they're trying to get at your game. You look at that and smile at them and really just take it in. And just with the noise and all that stuff, me and Jake, we're used to talking with our hands, and we're used to looks. So the noise isn't really going to be a big factor. I think it's football and we're prepared for it.

**Q. How much of what you went through last year has carried over? How much does that fuel you after what you went through?**

STEVE SMITH: It fuels me a lot. I think everything I've been through from getting to this point today and to college, during college, high school, it fuels me every day. They've been doing articles on me of just how I went back home and stuff like that and just reading some of that. I'm not reading it because of I like to read about myself. But I read about it really just reminds me where I come from and all the mistakes I've made, but also the misfortune that happened in the past and the great fortunes I have now, which would be my family and just able to not be on a bus and not working minimum wage anymore, just those things that I'm very grateful for and blessed to have, but not willing to give up, just work harder to do better.

**Q. Now until the game, will there be any time where you won't be thinking about football? Do you take a mental break at all and do a cross word puzzle or is it all game?**

STEVE SMITH: Once I leave here I've got to pick up my son from school, stuff like that. My wife is sick, so I'm kind of happy I'm going to Seattle a little bit (laughter.) But, you know, once I leave here football is here. And then when I get home I've got to do the honey do's, and all those other things.

**Q. Talk a little bit more about what you and Jake do to motivate and push each other, and the what the dynamic of your relationship is?**

STEVE SMITH: He does stuff, you know, say if I drop the ball in practice, he'll say something, that he knows it irritates me, because I don't like dropping balls. He was talking about it yesterday or if I make a mistake or if I point out him making a mistake, he'll try to use that, oh, yeah, you're right, you're absolutely right. Just try to get under my skin. And I know he does a good job of doing that. He knows if I make a mistake in

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practice I work twice as hard, just to write it in my play book to not make that mistake again.

**Q. Does that make you both better players?**

STEVE SMITH: It makes us both better players, because I'm thinking about the route, when I get in practice, I need to keep this way, or if I don't, an incomplete reception or intercepted pass or something like that.