



News Release

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Super Bowl Cornerback Set to Mentor High School Athletes

Thomas Smith, Jr., a former NFL cornerback, is set to head up the Baltimore office of Athletic Scholarship Corporation; he will mentor young athletes and help them gain the attention of college recruiters while also teaching them the value of a strong work ethic.

Baltimore, MD (Aug. 12, 2015) – Thomas Smith, Jr. knows a thing or two about persistence and hard work.

The farm-born former NFL cornerback says his upbringing taught him the value of how hard work and patience can lead to great rewards.

“The farmer knows when he plants a seed, he doesn’t get a crop right away,” Smith said. “But in the right season or time, his hard work will be rewarded.”

That’s a message Smith is anxious to share with the student-athletes he’ll work with as the scouting director for Athletic Scholarship Corporation’s new Baltimore office.

Smith, who was picked 28th overall in the 1993 NFL draft, played cornerback for the Buffalo Bills, Chicago Bears and Indianapolis Colts. But Smith wasn’t a natural pick for the NFL: A small-town star, he wasn’t on the radar for college scouts.

“I wasn’t the best athlete on the field, but I had the persistence and the heart and I put in the time,” Smith said. He was a walk-on at the University of North Carolina, where he ended up securing himself a football scholarship and ultimately his spot on premier NFL teams.

“If you want it you have to take action. You have to be willing to fail, to succeed. It’s up to you. Nobody’s going to bring it to you on a silver platter. You’ve got to make it happen,” Smith said, alluding to the message he wants to share with high school athletes who have their eyes on college and pro careers.

Smith thinks ASC fills a void in the recruitment arena because it allows athletes like him – those perhaps from small towns or simply not on the radar of college recruiters – to get the same attention as the bigger-name high school athletes. And he can bring to the student-athletes some of his Southern work ethic.

“This puts them in the limelight and gives them exposure,” Smith says of ASC’s services. “I want to be a mentor to these athletes. It’s about life skills. It’s not just about the next four years, but the next 40. They have to learn to make good choices, because bad choices can hurt them for the rest of their lives.”

AJ Hodel, ASC’s CEO, said the new Baltimore office will help ASC serve athletes in the Eastern region more efficiently. And he can think of no person better to mentor the athletes than Smith.

“He has the knowledge and experience,” Hodel said of Smith’s athletic and business acumen. “He wasn’t a highly recruited guy; everything he’s gotten he’s earned.”

Smith, who Hodel describes as “operationally sound” and able to run the business side as well as the mentoring and recruitment end, will likely help the athletes understand that college and pro sports are businesses.

“He understands it’s a job. If you get injured or don’t play well, you get forgotten quickly,” Hodel said. “Aside from being a high-level pro athlete, (Smith) has a business mindset.”

About ASC:

Athletic Scholarship Corporation is an organization committed to efficiently showcasing the talents of high school student-athletes nationwide. The sports professionals and technology providers at ASC advise coaches and recruiters to help programs of all sizes find a well-rounded group of student-athletes. For more information, visit www.athleticscholarshipcorp.com.

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