

# WAKE'S SMITH CHATS WITH ANTHONY

Wake Forest redshirt senior cornerback Alphonso Smith is probably the most humble superstar I've ever met.

He's definitely one of the best defensive backs in college football this year. But he works as if he's got something to prove each game, and doesn't say much about himself — despite his flamboyant style of play on the football field. Halloween was last week, but Alphonso seemingly plays the part of Clark Kent everyday. That is until he puts his cape on before games on Saturdays.

I say that because he's so chill and unassuming off the field. I caught up with my favorite college defensive back earlier this week to talk about his new school record for interceptions, the NFL Draft, Allen Iverson being traded, the Texas Longhorn DBs and a few other things.

Take a look at some of the other things A. Smith and I rapped about during a fun interview earlier this week.

**Anthony:** What's up, A?

**Alphonso:** What's up?

**Anthony:** (Smiles.)

Hey, big game on Saturday. Two picks. The last one sealed the victory. What are your thoughts after having a game like that, man?

**Alphonso:** (Smiles.) It's just refreshing because that was kind of a make or break game (against Duke). You know. We needed that win in the worst way. It was great to come out on the winning end. Ya know.

**Anthony:** No doubt.

**Alphonso:** (Smiles.) We have to put that win behind us now, though.

**Anthony:** OK. (Smiles.)

Hey, I have new adjective to describe your play on the field.

**Alphonso:** Oh yeah.

**Anthony:** What's that?

**Alphonso:** I'm going to start calling you Swag-Tastic.

**Anthony:** (Laughs.)

That's hot. I like that.

**Anthony:** (Laughs.)

You've got the most swag out of any guy in college football right now.

**Alphonso:** (Smiles.)

That's hot. I mean, I'm just going out there to have fun. I try to relish the moment that God has blessed me with. Every chance I get I'm gonna have fun. I only have an hour to play football each week.

**Anthony:** How does it feel to be the university's all-time leader in interceptions?

**Alphonso:** It feels great. After the game, I said that I had to call E. King (Eric King) while I was on the Stan Cotton Show. It feels great. It's a great accomplishment. I'm very thankful of coach Grobe, Dean Hood, Brad Lambert, coach Billings, my parents and God. I'm very appreciative of the opportunity they gave me.

**Anthony:** What goes through your mind before each passing play? I mean, are you thinking, "They better not throw it my way. I'm gonna pick this or I gotta get a pick." I mean, what are you thinking out there?

**Alphonso:** (Laughs.) Uh, what's going through my mind is: "If they throw it this way I'm gonna make a play." What's really going through my mind is trying to be the best player that I can be.

If I have an opportunity to make a play then I'll make it. I didn't do that during the Miami week. And, I was real upset with myself. I came back in practice to work on my catching. I just think about having fun, and doing me.

**Anthony:** Are you the best defensive back in college football this year?

**Alphonso:** No, I'm not.

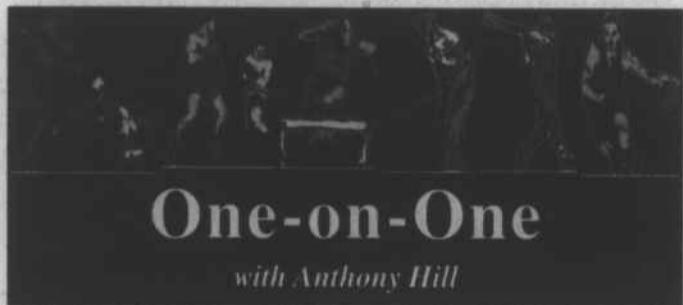
**Anthony:** What?

**Alphonso:** I'm not. There's 100 defensive backs better than me. But I am the best receiver on defense, though. Defensive backs are the guys that just play



Wake redshirt senior cornerback Alphonso Smith became the school's all-time interception leader after finishing with two picks over the weekend.

Photo by Charlie Pfaff



Smith

defense. I make plays.

**Anthony:** (Both laugh.) I like that. How many picks have you taken to the house?

**Alphonso:** I don't know. Maybe four.

**Anthony:** Have you looked at any of the mock NFL Drafts to see where you might go?

**Alphonso:** Uh, no. I don't pay attention to that. I'm just thinking about my senior season. You can't get drafted if you don't have a good senior season. Everything else will take care of itself.

**Anthony:** Well, how has your senior season been going for you?

**Alphonso:** It's been all right. It hasn't been as good as I anticipated. I anticipated an undefeated season right now. I set my goals pretty high in the off season. The entire team set high goals. We still have four more games. So, we still have a chance at having a great season.

**Anthony:** Definitely. The ACC race is so close. Do you look at what other teams need to do before each game to put you guys in a better position, or do you simply worry about Wake?

**Alphonso:** I just think about that game. Like, once you start thinking about other things you lose your focus. Coach Grobe always tells us that we can only worry about us.

For instance, going into this game on Saturday I'm not worried about what Florida State or Maryland does. I'm only worried about what Wake Forest does.

**Anthony:** OK. What else is going on with you?

**Alphonso:** Um, just

school and football. I just did pretty good on a test. (Smiles.) I also just got an extension on a paper. I'm pretty happy about that. As you can probably tell, I'm all jittery.

**Anthony:** (Smiles.) Have you watched any SportsCenter today?

**Alphonso:** Uh, no. I have not. What's new?

**Anthony:** Allen Iverson is getting traded to the Detroit Pistons for Chauncy Billups and two other players.

**Alphonso:** (Laughs.)

Yeah right.

**Anthony:** I'm serious.

**Alphonso:** Wow. I missed that. I've been doing work all day. I woke up at 7 a.m. for meetings. I've been in the Miller Center all day.

**Anthony:** What are some of the nicknames guys on the team call you?

**Alphonso:** Zoe. Zoepound. No more Prime Time. They couldn't call me that anymore because there's too many people adopting that name. So I did away with that.

**Anthony:** OK. If you could go head-up with anyone in college football who would it be?

**Alphonso:** (Michael) Crabtree. I'd love to go against him.

**Anthony:** That would be nice. Did you watch him in the last play of that Texas Tech/Texas game?

**Alphonso:** Yup. I did see that.

**Anthony:** Could you believe that? What were those Texas DBs thinking?

**Alphonso:** (Laughs.) That was crazy. I don't know.

**Anthony:** Let me go back to the Navy loss. Did it kind of feel like the season was going downhill after losing to them?

**Alphonso:** No. Coming into the season we knew they were gonna be tough. A.C. (Aaron Curry) made the comment that this was going to be our toughest game. He pointed at Navy and everyone was like, "What?" He said if we lose one it's gonna be that one. He was telling us not to take them lightly all week. (Smiles.) I mean, he was right. We still think about that game.

**Anthony:** If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

**Alphonso:** I'd probably make myself about 6-8 so I could play basketball instead.

**Anthony:** (Both laugh.) OK. Let's finish with free association. You know what that is.

**Alphonso:** (Smiles.) Right.

**Anthony:** Chip Vaughn.

**Alphonso:** Beast.

**Anthony:** Wake Forest.

**Alphonso:** Greatest opportunity I've ever had in my life.

**Anthony:** Alphonso Smith.

**Alphonso:** (Giggles.)

Swag-Tastic.

**Anthony:** (Smiles.)

Number two.

**Alphonso:** Deion.

**Anthony:** Winston-Salem.

**Alphonso:** Tre-4.

**Anthony:** Florida Boy.

**Alphonso:** (Smiles.)

Swag.

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