

### Smith, Johnson and Smith Switched, But...

# They Learned New Spots Quickly

By DON MCKEE  
Assistant Sports Editor

People who watch Penn State football never tire of noting that the Lions have a lot of fine players who are no longer in their original positions. Last season the talk centered on the number of former quarterbacks who helped the Lions roll to an 8-2 record and the Gator Bowl.

This season a new bunch of position switches has come to prominence, along with the men who are out of position.

Penn State's defensive secondary has made seven interceptions this season, four of them in the shutout win at Boston College. The secondary has helped make the Lions' defense one of the best in the country. But, strange as it may seem, none of the three men in the defensive backfield is in his original position, and only one had played there before last spring.

For one of the newest Lion stars, football wasn't even his first sport. Mike Smith is one of the rare players who can move into a starting spot with an established team in his sophomore year. But Smith didn't always want to play football.

**No Desire**  
"When I was in high school," Smith said with a grin, "I didn't even want to go out for the team. I only did because my father made me. I only wanted to play baseball."

Smith's father is probably Lebanon Catholic High's favorite parent now, since his son put the school on the football map. Lebanon Catholic won the Tri-County Conference title when Mike was a soph and junior and tied for second the following fall.

Lebanon Catholic's failure to win the title his senior year wasn't Smith's fault. Running from the quarterback slot, he tallied 26 touchdowns to lead the state in scoring.

That performance earned Smith over 50 scholarship offers from colleges wanting his talents as a running back. He chose Penn State — and wound up on defense.

"I did play defense in high school," Smith said, "and I got three interceptions in the Big 33 game, but they didn't switch me there 'til last spring.

"Coach Paterno explained that with Charlie Pittman and Bob Campbell it would be pretty hard to break into the backfield, and I'd just be wasted on offense."

Smith didn't find the switch too hard. "I did need Spring ball, though," he said. "I won't be coming to spring practice this year. I'll be playing baseball."

When Smith graduated from high school the Pittsburgh Pirates tried to sign him to a baseball contract. Happily, Penn State won out, but going from shortstop to defensive halfback is as big a switch as you can make.

Despite the name similarities, Neal Smith is a much different case from Mike. It's practically a cliché by now that he didn't get a scholarship to Penn State and that he went out for football anyway.

"I just went out to see if I could make it," Smith said. "I was just out there for the varsity to practice on, but I did pretty well and they decided to give me a shot."

Penn State's starting safety played tight end and linebacker as a 150-pounder in high school and was at those spots during his freshman year.

"I was too small for a linebacker," Smith said. "They tried me at split end for a while but that didn't work out. In the spring of my freshman year I was changed to defensive halfback." He played there last year, starting on occasion.

Now a 5-11, 180-pound junior, Smith credits Tim Montgomery, an All-East selection at safety last year, with helping him make the change.

"My first spring I was at halfback," Smith said. "Tim was a safety and he called all the plays. Now I have to make them and I sort of patterned myself after him. He was out to some practices last spring too, and he helped me then."

Montgomery's tutelage and Smith's dedication have turned him into a fine safety. Oh yeah, he has that scholarship now.

#### Only Right

Since Smith and Johnson are the two most common names in the United States, it's only right to include a Johnson with the two Smiths. Paul Johnson doesn't have

the same name, but otherwise, he fits into the defensive backfield perfectly.

Like Mike Smith, Johnson was a great running back in high school. He was a three-time All Stater at Cazenovia, N.Y., and in his senior year was an All-American. In 21 games through his junior and senior years, Johnson scored 50 touchdowns.

Last season it looked like Johnson would be a great back at Penn State. He broke into the lineup as a soph, playing wingback, and scored the Lions' longest touchdown of the year, an 80-yarder at Maryland.

Then Paterno decided to shuffle the lineup before the Gator Bowl. "They thought I might be able to cover some of Florida State's backs," Johnson said, "so I was moved to defensive halfback."

That one-game apprenticeship acquainted Johnson with the position, but it wasn't until this spring that he really got the feel of it.

"I had to learn to run backward and sideways," Johnson said. "I hadn't had to do that at running back."

Johnson learned another thing at spring ball. "The biggest difference between offense and defense, and I didn't notice it until spring," Johnson said, "is that there's more pressure on the defense. If you make a mistake back there it can really be costly."

So far, Johnson has played without any costly errors.

While all three players have different attitudes to playing in the defensive secondary, they agree on one thing—they can't do it alone.

"Without the line, we'd really be in trouble," Mike Smith said.

"The line helps us a great deal," Johnson said. "If the quarterback has to throw the ball sooner, he may throw a little high and that gives us a chance."

"If the line doesn't get the passer," Neal Smith said, "somebody's going to get open."

Even with the tremendous rush State's line puts on a quarterback, receivers still get free. Then it's up to the guys with the common names—and they usually make the uncommon, extraordinary plays.



MIKE SMITH  
... liked baseball



PAUL JOHNSON  
... found new pressure



NEAL SMITH  
... wanted to play

## Kwalick Picked On East Team

Ted Kwalick became the fifth Penn State football player named to the weekly All-East team, when he was picked yesterday for his play at Boston College.

Kwalick caught five passes for 75 yards and one touchdown, leading State to a 29-0 victory.

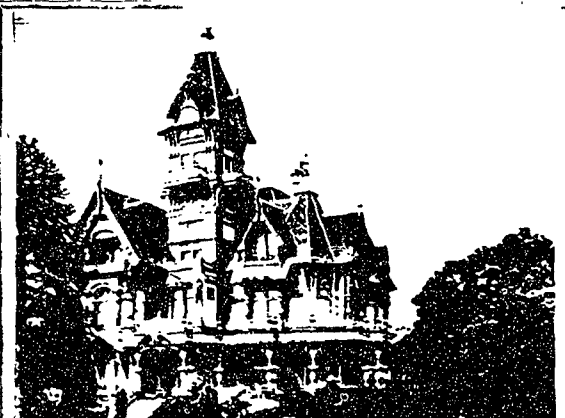
Other Lions named to the All-East squad this year are Dennis Onkotz, Jim Kates, Charlie Pittman and Mike Reid.

Also nominated for All-East honors were Pittman, Paul Johnson and Jack Ham.

Pittman carried 16 times for 89 yards, Johnson made two pass interceptions for 39 yards and Ham blocked a punt.

Meanwhile, guard Bob Holuba will miss the Army game because of a back injury suffered at Boston College last Saturday.

Holuba alternated at starting left guard with Tom Jackson. Both were used to bring in plays from the bench. Holuba is a sophomore.



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## La Salle Put on Probation

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The National Collegiate Athletic Association placed the basketball teams of La Salle College, Florida State University and St. Bonaventure on probation yesterday for NCAA rules violations.

Arthur J. Bergstrom of Kansas City, assistant executive director of the NCAA Council, said the teams may not play in post season games while on probation.

La Salle of Philadelphia was put on probation for two years, Florida State and St. Bonaventure for one year each.

La Salle was penalized, Bergstrom said, for improperly terminating athletic scholarships for a threat to terminate scholarships for poor performances and for permitting the freshman coach to make token cash payments to players for outstanding performances.

Bergstrom said in six cases athletes working off campus were paid for hours they did not work.

"The income from this outside source, when coupled with institutional financial assistance, exceeded the student-athletes' normal educational expenses," Bergstrom said.

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