

The Gut Check's QB Scouting Recap

Name: Troy Smith **Date:** 9/9/2006 **Opponent:** Texas

Overall Strengths: Smith has great arm strength and good mechanics. He delivers the ball accurately and on time with quick release. His pocket presence is impressive. He looks to throw first and slides very well in the pocket to find the passing lane. He can make all the throws to be a successful NFL quarterback. Because he plays in a spread offense, he doesn't have many opportunities to face double coverage, but he does a nice job of spreading the ball around. He can run the football if necessary and gain positive yardage. He's a leader and matured into a good role model on and off the field. I believe he has the potential to be a successful NFL starter. He has been compared to Drew Brees lately. I can see the comparisons, but he has a much stronger arm. I don't believe he's as accurate as Brees nor is his game as developed at the same point as Brees when the Purdue QB was a senior. He is demonstrating the ability to check out of a bad play into a good one but he's just starting to learn the game as a passer. Still, the Heisman winner has all the tools to help an NFL organization.

Overall Weaknesses: Smith doesn't possess the ideal height and he will hang onto the ball a little too long in the pocket. He still needs to refine his ability to make touch throws. He's not bad at it, but he still tends to gun the ball when not necessary. He stares down his receivers and plays in an offense that dictates the type of coverage that makes it easier to read the field without much manipulation of the secondary with his eyes. He won't gain a lot of yardage leaving the pocket. I haven't seen him effectively throw the ball from any position but a traditional delivery.

Accuracy: Smith's first pass attempt was a designed roll to the left. He did a nice job maintaining his ball position on the roll and quickly released the ball to Ted Ginn running a crossing route from left to right across the field. Ginn gained 50 yards on the play--40 on his own. Smith's first pass on OSU's second possession in the game was a roll to the right and a completion to Gonzalez out in the flat for a first down. Smith looks very accurate on short intermediate routes. He hits receivers in stride without them having to make a great adjustment. He slightly overthrew Gonzalez on a 1st down roll to the right, but the receiver made a diving catch for the first down. His first touchdown pass was thrown only where the WR could catch the pass and he did this while rolling to the right. He throws the ball so hard that he tends to miss high when he's off. Nice accurate throw on the corner route to Ginn for the score. Led him perfectly so he could catch it over the shoulder. The ball actually just landed in Ginn's arm--all he had to do was squeeze it to his body.

Arm Strength: Smith's 3rd down completion to Gonzalez with 7:40 left in the opening quarter was a great display of his arm strength. The ball flew out of his hand with excellent velocity and hit his receiver right out of the break. He throws balls on a rope with just a flick of the wrist and the velocity is deceiving because he makes it look simple. He threw a corner route to Gonzalez for a first down from the opposite hash and though it looked as if his throw had ease of motion like a warm up toss, the ball got to the WR quickly. The same can be said about his first TD on a roll to the right and zipped it to Gonzalez just past the pylon where only the WR could catch the pass. Smith overthrew Ginn in the 2nd QTR with 10:34 left--the pass traveled 60 yards in the air and Smith made it look like he was throwing the ball 20 yards. Good arm strength on the second score at the end of the half to Ginn. Threw this corner route from the opposite hash and had just the right amount of velocity and touch.

Delivery: Smith stands tall in the pocket and has excellent mechanics with his delivery. He has a quick release and the ball flies off his hand. He rarely throws anything other than a tight, hard spiral.

Decisions: With 13:08 in the 2nd QTR, Smith was deep in their own territory on 1st and 10 and made a change at the LOS from run to pass. He adjusted the play so he could take a 3-step drop and release the ball to his WR on the right side. The CB was playing 5 yards off the WR and Smith recognized the opportunity to gain some easy yards. In fact the WR gained a first down. Smith needs more practice looking off the safety. On a 2nd and 10 with 12:33 left in the 2nd QTR, Smith tried to hit Ginn on a skinny post, but starred him down and the safety was able to break up the pass. Smith made a nice check at the line of scrimmage when he recognized Ginn in man coverage at the end of the first half. He delivered a perfect pass to the corner for the score.

Ball Handling: Smith got blindsided by Brian Robison coming off the edge during OSU's first possession in the 3rd QTR. Smith did a great job holding onto the ball despite getting leveled.

Pocket Pocket Smith did a nice job running up the middle on 3rd and 3 after checking his first two reads and then sensing the backside pressure. Although he was brought down for a minimal gain, this play demonstrated his ability to sense the pass rush. Otherwise, the result would have been a sack and turnover. Smith maintains a good stance when he

Presence: slides in the pocket in any direction: left, right, or forward. He's always ready to throw the ball until he commits to run, which seems to be his last option after checking at least 2-3 receivers in his progression. Smith did a nice job with 12:30 left to avoid the pass rush and use a pump fake to buy time before sliding to his left. When no one was open he threw the ball away just before he took a hit. Smith reputedly sensed the backside pressure in the first half and either slide away to find a throwing lane or took off for some yards on the ground. The QB is willing to stand in the pocket to make a throw. Although the play was called back for holding, Smith hit his WR on a 20-yard dig route with the backside pressure coming at him within his line of sight. Smith converted a 3rd down with less than :30 in the half by gunning a pass down the hash to Gonzalez despite having pressure draped on him from the front side.

Scrambling Ability: I'm impressed with how Smith prefers to remain in the pocket and look for an open receiver rather than run the football. He hit Gonzalez for a 15-yard gain on a play where the pocket broke down but he found a lane to adjust and wound up completing an easy pass to his WR on the sideline.

Durability: No known issues.

Character: Smith had some well-documented violations that cost him time, but he worked hard to mature and grow from the situation.