

Photos by Shawn Cone



Braden Smith is a 6-foot-6, 294-pound lineman who is one of the most highly recruited football players in the country.

## 2014 BFS High School Male Athlete of the Year

Braden Smith is this year's winner of our most prestigious award

**B**raden Smith is a wanted man. He is wanted by Alabama, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Michigan, Texas A&M, Kansas – as of this writing he's had 25 confirmed offers, but it's safe to say that most of the major football powerhouses want Smith



on their football teams. In fact, he is ranked by Rivals.com as the fifth-highest-rated offensive tackle in the country and seventh by ESPN. Smith made such an impression on BFS that

he is being honored as the 2014 BFS High School Male Athlete of the Year.

Smith is a senior at South High School in Olathe, a suburb of Kansas City. He is the second child of Jane and Dave Smith, both of whom are tall and have passed down that asset to their kids. Dave played football and track at Kansas, and his father before him played football at Texas Tech. Smith's sister, Megan, a junior at TCU, is one of the top throwers in the country. She has career bests of 16.47 meters in the shot put, 51.16 in the discus, 46.36 in the hammer and 15.72 in the weight throw. In fact, Smith says Megan, who was a state champion in high school, inspired

him to start throwing. The result is that Smith has dominated high school throwing in Kansas, last year winning the 6A state championship in both the shot put and discus in state. His best throws include 18.1 meters in the shot and 57 meters in the discus.

BFS learned about Smith through Jeff Gourley, head football coach of the South High Falcons. When Gourley first saw Smith in the freshman lineup, he thought that the impressively tall Smith was one of the players' fathers. Says Gourley, "Braden Smith is not an ordinary person. His strength for his age – for any age – is phenomenal. The reason I contacted BFS is simple. Braden may be the strongest, most flexible big man since Stefan Fernholm" [a former track athlete and BFS clinician who died in 1997]. How strong? Let's look at the numbers.

At 6-foot-6, Smith weighs 294 pounds. He can bench press 545 pounds, clean 330 pounds and parallel squat 595 pounds – although Gourley doesn't push 1-rep maxes on the squat for Smith, preferring him to do reps in the 550-pound range. "Braden has only missed one workout in his entire high school athletic career, and that was when he, his dad, one of my coaches and I went to visit the University of Alabama," says Gourley.

Gourley says Smith is incredibly flexible for his size, a quality he has worked on continuously, and is explosive. How explosive? Consider that Smith has a horizontal jump of 9 feet 10 inches and a 37-inch vertical jump – again, we're talking about a 294-pound athlete. As for the areas of conditioning Smith needs to improve, Gourley says that Smith spent a considerable amount of time during the summer working on his footwork with ladder drills and has improved

tremendously in this area. Adds Gourley, “Braden is a tremendous team player, refusing trips to different colleges because all he was concerned

about was playing football at South. That’s the kind of young man he is, putting his own agenda on hold for the good of the team.”

In addition to training at home, Smith continues to train at school using the BFS-inspired workouts designed by Gourley. Although this



year the Falcons missed the playoffs despite a winning season, Smith was on the 2011 team that won the

school's first-ever state championship. He is also the defending state champion in the shot put and discus, and is

working hard to defend those titles this season.

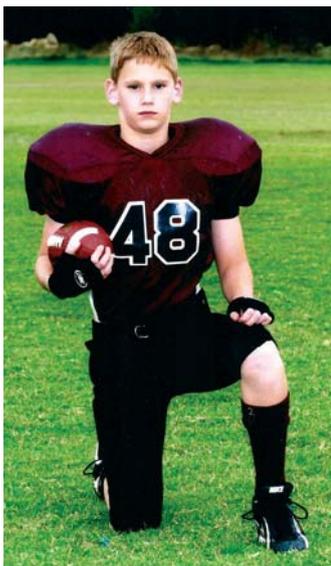
With such a bright future ahead – a college scholarship and also the ability to play on Sundays – Smith could easily have become distracted from his studies. But that hasn't happened. Academics are a priority for Smith, who maintains a 3.90 GPA, and Gourley says Smith has no problem skipping big social events to finish his homework. Besides athletics, Smith's passions include gardening; among his current crops are watermelons, pumpkins and cantaloupe.

This talented young athlete is focused, grounded and headed for a great future. Coach Gourley says he's proud to be part of his success. Likewise, BFS believes we have made a solid choice in selecting Braden Smith as our 2014 BFS Male High School Athlete of the Year. 

With a 37-inch vertical jump, 545-pound bench press and 330-pound power clean, Smith is the strongest athlete ever to win the BFS High School Male Athlete of the Year award.



Photos courtesy Jane Smith.



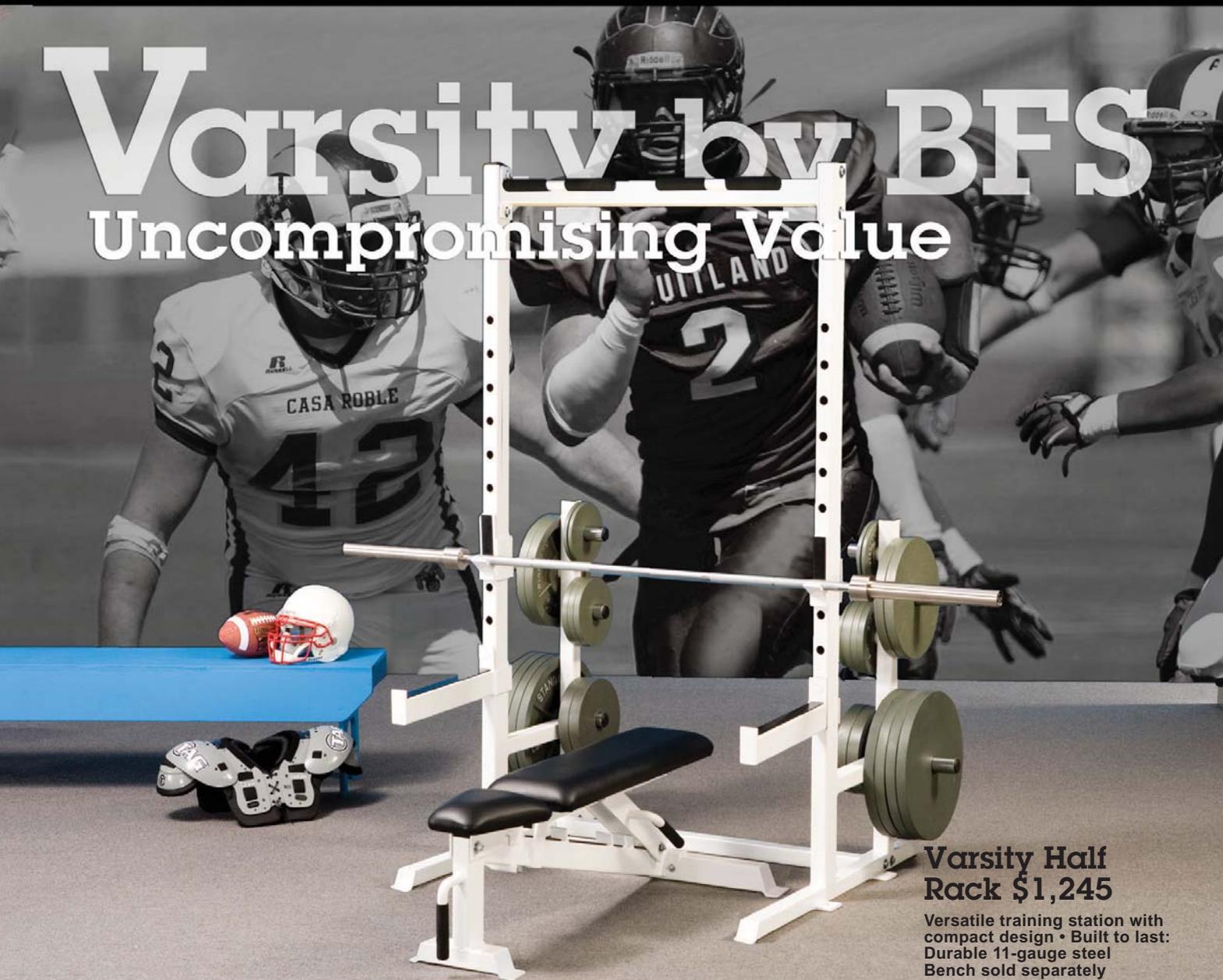
Siblings Megan Smith and Braden Smith



Smith's passion has always been football, but he is a multi-sport athlete and is the defending Kansas 6A state champion in the shot put and discus. He was inspired to take up track and field by his sister Megan, who attends TCU and is one of the best throwers in the country.

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