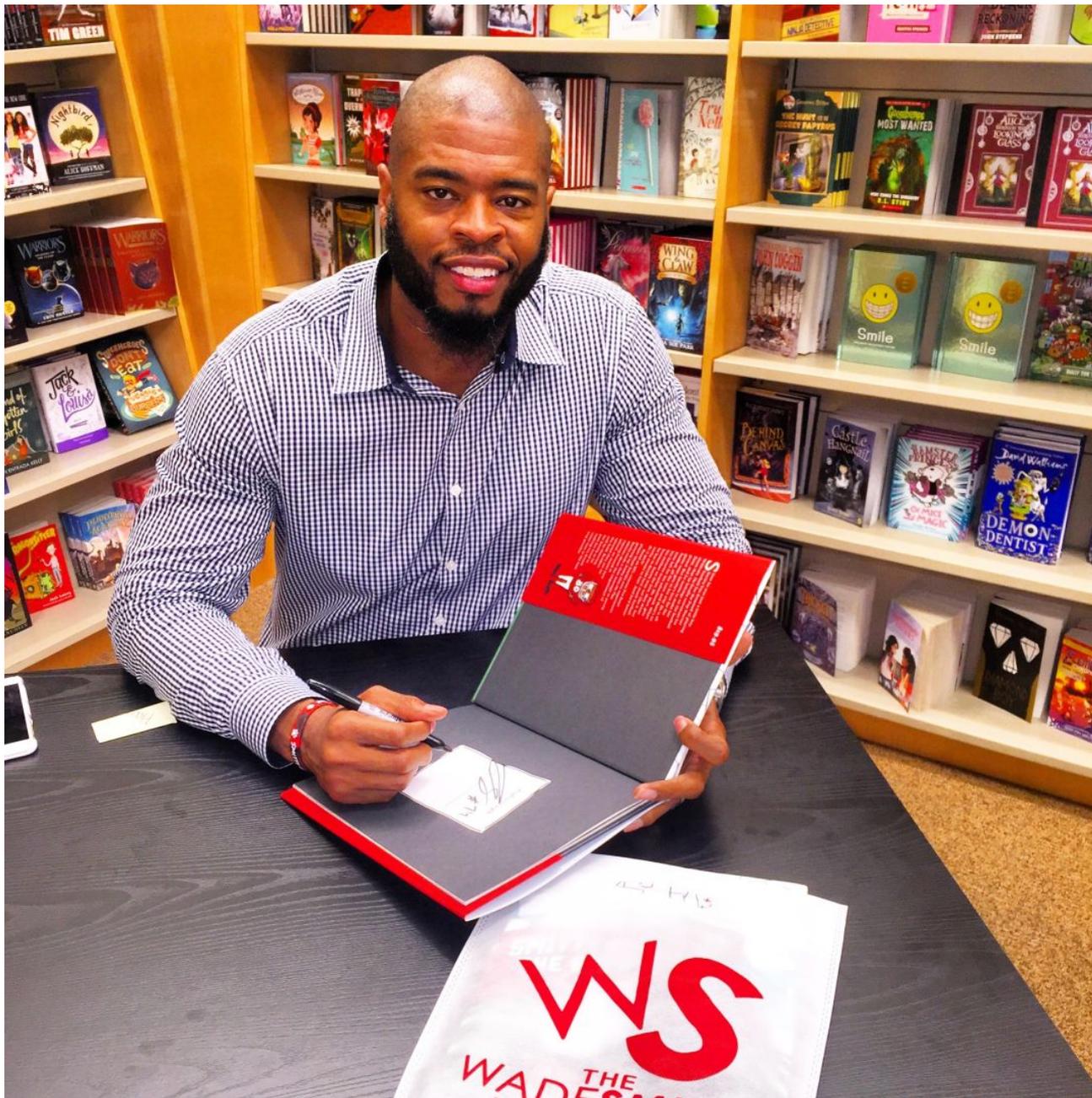


## Former Texans Player Wade Smith Tackles Children's Book



Wade Smith signing *Smitty Hits the Play Books* at Barnes & Noble in River Oaks early April.

Image: [Courtesy Jenar Hamdy](#)

NFL veteran Wade Smith spent 12 years on the field, playing for many teams like the Miami Dolphins, Houston Texans and New York Jets, but now he's traded in a football for a children's book. Who would have thought, right?

The former offensive lineman always wanted to become an author, and after teaming up with Houston sportswriter Jayme Lamm, the two created *Smitty Hits the Play Books*, which focuses on Smith's own childhood experience balancing school and football to promote the value of education to kids. "The story goes into how my mom, teachers and principal all held me accountable for doing poorly in school," says Smith. "I decided if I wanted excel in football,

I wanted to excel in school as well.”

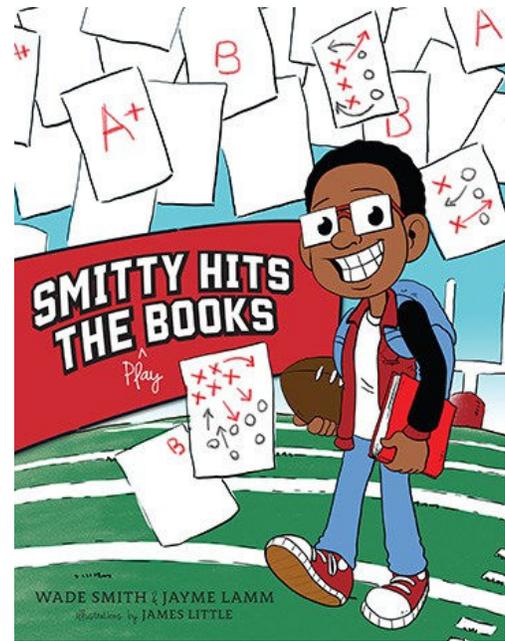
The character “Smitty,” which was a nickname given to him by his Dolphin’s position coach Tony Wise, is based on a seven-year-old version of Smith. The illustration was even created with real images of him when he was a child. “I took photos from when I was in second and fourth grade... The big glasses and hair cut is the same,” Smith laughs.

*Smitty Hits the Play Books* by Wade Smith

Image: [Courtesy Jenar Hamdy](#)

Although Smitty is an elementary school student in the book, Smith’s real life experience occurred while in seventh grade when he began to do poorly in school. After convincing his mother, who was afraid he was too small and would get injured in football, to let him join his school’s team, Smith admits that he received a 68 in his honors science class. “It didn’t count as passing or failing for sports, so there was not football for me and hit me like a ton of bricks,” says Smith. “This kind of goes into the book that I was trying to be too cool for my classes.”

A father to three daughters, Smith hopes *Smitty Hits the Play Books* will encourage both his own children and others to excel in their education and to handle challenging situations in a positive way. “There’s going to be adverse situations that will hit them, and I want [Smitty] to show they can overcome it in a fun way and a level that they understand,” says Smith. “Maybe they can connect with the experiences and help themselves or others.”



What’s next for Smitty? “Smitty helping a friend getting picked on or made fun of, and their self esteem not being high because of it, then he comes along to help his friends.”

*Smitty Hits the Play Books* is available for [pre-order](#) before its release date on August 1, with all proceeds going to The Wade Smith Foundation that provides support for community programs in childhood literacy and education, and the annual “Smitty Scholars” Scholarship program.

Smith will host an official book launch party at J. Blacks Feel Good Kitchen & Lounge in mid-May with the *Who’s Who* in Houston and former/current NFL players. Contact [Jenar@endicottpr.com](mailto:Jenar@endicottpr.com) to get on the guest list.