

## Conversations

with *Suzanne Smith*

Producer/Director  
CBS Sports



*"I'm fortunate, so I try to share my positive attitude. It's the "underdog" that inspires me and as a "trailblazer" I hope to open doors for anyone willing to step through,"* says Smith who is the only woman, for any network, either producing or directing the NFL. She also serves as Coordinating Producer and Director of WE NEED TO TALK, the first-ever nationally televised all-female sports show, airing on CBS Sports Network.

**Career breakthrough moment:** *"I've had the opportunity to have many jobs at CBS, I think along the way in every area I've learned something that brought me to the next level. I remember very clearly the first time I ever directed an NFL game. Maybe that's where you get over where you feel like 'you can do this' and you belong. It ended up being a very exciting game, successful for me and for the network."*

**On being recognized as a trailblazer:** *"I have been called a pioneer and a trailblazer, and I immediately backed up from that and said, 'No, no, no save that for Lesley Visser and Billy Jean King.' And since then, I've had the opportunity to be around a lot of people, especially young women who have talked to me and sent me emails, and I am finally realizing or have come to terms with 'Yes, I have made a difference. Yes, I can continue to make a difference.' While for me it's a little overwhelming, I have come the realization I do need to own it, take responsibility for that and with people...I'm owning it now."*

**What do you like/dislike about the industry:** *"... on the show "We Need to Talk" (I like) the camaraderie with the people on this show, it is unlike anything I have ever dealt with in my career... I'm very fortunate, that if I had to write a job description of my ideal job, it pretty much would be exactly what I'm doing right now. I'm so fortunate to have a good life and a good career ... there is nothing that I dislike."*

**Overcoming challenges in a male-dominated industry:** *"One of the things I say when people do ask me about the struggles, for me the passion always outweighs the struggles. And you continue to forge on. Is it easy? No! Have I had it easy sometimes, of course. Especially early in my career it wasn't easy. ... An expression I've used: If it was easy, anybody can do it."*

**Being involved with WISE since the early years:** *"WISE is a great organization. They have done great things for a lot of people, not just for young people, but also for people at a higher level. We often talk about mentoring, but executives need friends and relationships also along the way. I think WISE is an organization that is all-inclusive of everybody."*