

# Alabama vs. NFL: Tide's got no shot

Mark Kiszla  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

This score just in: Denver Broncos 55, Alabama 3.

The undefeated Crimson Tide rolls over every college team dumb enough to stand in its way, causing one rival coach to suggest Alabama could secede from the Southeastern Conference and win in the NFL.

That's crazy talk.

"Alabama would get crushed by anybody in this league," said 11-time Pro Bowl cornerback Champ Bailey, whose football roots are in the SEC. "No disrespect there. Great college team. Probably the best you'll see. Hey, they're not all NFL players on that Alabama roster. They've got a lot of them. But it's not enough to compete with the star players in the NFL."

The Broncos would beat Bama by seven touchdowns. Against an NFL schedule, the Tide would finish 0-16.

Gushing about the Tide like only an ol' ball coach can, Steve Spurrier of South Carolina recently told my buddy Dan Patrick: "Alabama, gosh, they look like they could beat a couple of NFL teams that I've watched on Sundays. I think a lot of the oddsmakers out there that usually know what's going on, I'd guess Alabama would be favored by a little bit."

Balderdash.

Spurrier has worked in the NFL, and couldn't cut it there. So he should know better.

Bailey believes Spurrier, or anybody else, who thinks Alabama could beat the Kansas City Chiefs must be joking.

"I know people aren't serious. If they had to put money on it, they wouldn't bet on Bama," Bailey said. "I would think the difference would be 30-plus points. Easy. Against any NFL team. I don't care who it is."

For the record, if Denver met Alabama on a neutral field, the Broncos would be favored by more than 40 points, according to Todd Fuhrman, a long-time former oddsmaker at Caesars Palace and current online analyst.

# Veteran cornerback Tracy Porter still unable to play for Broncos

Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
November 3, 2012

Tracy Porter has been dealing with a health issue NFL medical people don't deal with every day.

When last healthy, Porter was the Broncos' starting right cornerback. He will miss his third consecutive game Sunday at Cincinnati because of symptoms that led to the seizure he suffered in August.

"We're still regulating his medicine," said Broncos coach John Fox. "Not that it was a setback, but there was a little bit of an issue and we'll evaluate that moving forward. His safety is what's the utmost concern right now."

Porter, 26, didn't accompany the Broncos to Cincinnati on Friday.

It was during a defensive meeting in mid-August that Porter suffered his seizure. He said there is no history of seizures in his family.

Before the seizure, Porter said he had a rapid heartbeat and was lightheaded. He returned to make starts in Denver's first five regular-season games.

He was selected AFC defensive player of the week for his performance in the opener against Pittsburgh, but was burned twice on long touchdown passes by Houston in Week 3.

Porter made starts in the next two games and would have continued as the No. 1 right cornerback entering the Broncos' Monday night game at San Diego. But before the team flight, Porter started feeling a rapid heartbeat and lightheaded.

Team doctors didn't allow Porter to make the trip until he was further evaluated. He missed the San Diego game, rested during the bye week and returned to practice on a limited basis last week, but was deactivated again for the game against New Orleans.

Porter was put on medication this week, was cleared to participate in practice Wednesday and Thursday, but was absent Friday.

Homecoming for Wolfe. The schedule worked out nicely for rookie defensive lineman Derek Wolfe, with the Broncos traveling to Cincinnati on Friday.

When they have a road game, most NFL teams travel the day before the game. But Fox likes a two-night stay so his players can get acclimated to the time zone, weather and surroundings while also getting the necessary rest.

Wolfe will get to watch the Bearcats of Cincinnati, his alma mater, host Syracuse on Saturday afternoon.

Prater vs. Tate. A factor in Sunday's game could be the Broncos' kickoff coverage.

Matt Prater leads the NFL with 92.3 percent touchbacks on kickoffs at home, but he ranks only 21st with a 35.7 percent touchback rate on the road.

The Bengals have a good kickoff returner in Brandon Tate, who is averaging 25.7 yards per return.

Manning update. Peyton Manning is listed as "probable" on the Broncos' injury report. He has a bruised right thumb.

# Next year, a mile-high homecoming likely for Mike Shanahan

Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
November 3, 2012

Doesn't that coach on the visiting sideline look familiar? Tanned face, intense glare, dark hair. What's he doing on the visiting sideline at Sports Authority Field at Mile High?

Welcome to the future.

According to the 2012 NFL Record and Fact Book, the Broncos already know 14 of their 16 opponents in 2013.

The six games against AFC West opponents (Chargers, Chiefs and Raiders), you know about. Nondivision opponents coming to Denver next year: Jacksonville, Tennessee, Philadelphia and Washington. The Broncos also will host a still-to-be-determined team from the AFC South.

That means, providing this season doesn't go horribly wrong for the Washington Redskins, coach Mike Shanahan will return to Denver for the first time since he was fired after the 2008 season.

Shanahan was the Broncos' coach from 1995-2008, winning back-to-back Super Bowls in the 1997 and 1998 seasons.

The Broncos' nondivision road games next year: Houston, Indianapolis (hey, Peyton Manning, meet Andrew Luck), Dallas, the New York Giants (hey, Peyton Manning, meet Eli Manning) and an AFC East team to be determined.

Dates and times of all games are still to be determined.

# Here's how the Broncos can run the win streak to three games

Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
November 3, 2012

The theme has been clear all week in and around the Broncos' Dove Valley complex.

Two wins in a row are nice — the Broncos' current two-game winning streak is the team's first this season — but three wins in a row and beyond would be much better.

"It's been two good wins in a row," said quarterback Peyton Manning. "We're looking for consistency, we're not looking for two good games and then a lull."

And to avoid the lull in Cincinnati on Sunday, the Broncos will need to try doing the following.

- **Keep trouble away from Manning's doorstep.** The Broncos haven't surrendered a sack to a defense that predominantly plays a 4-3 defense this season — New Orleans and Oakland. The Bengals play a 4-3.

However, the Bengals also rush the passer better than the Saints and Raiders, especially in the middle of the field where defensive tackle Geno Atkins leads the team in sacks with seven.

Defensive ends Michael Johnson, who has six sacks this season, and Carlos Dunlap are active on the outside and often pull the extra blockers — tight ends and running backs — away from the middle of the field, so when Atkins breaks through he usually hits the quarterback.

And given Manning hit his right thumb on the helmet of a Saints defender rushing up the middle, that's exactly the kind of rush the Broncos can't allow.

The Bengals lead the AFC in sacks and are the only AFC team among the league's top five. And overall, they have 10 different players who have had at least one sack this season, so they will bring pressure from anywhere in the formation.

- **Lock down A.J. Green.** Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton led his team to the playoffs and went to the Pro Bowl as a rookie in 2011, so he certainly has the poise and savvy to adjust.

But at this point in his career, he still looks for Green when he shouldn't. Thirty percent of his pass attempts have gone Green's way this season. Green has been targeted almost 30 times more than any other Bengals player this season.

The two teams that held Dalton to less than 60 percent passing in a game this season also did the best job keeping the ball away from Green — the Ravens in the season opener and the Steelers in the Bengals' last game. The Broncos will likely use Champ Bailey plenty on Green, but Denver's defense will have to find a way to keep the ball away from tight end Jermaine Gresham as well.

Wesley Woodyard and Danny Trevathan will get plenty of opportunities to handle Gresham.

- **Keep the Bengals returners from breaking free.** The Broncos' special teams units, save for two first-quarter fumbles against the Chargers in San Diego, have played consistently this season.

They have not surrendered a punt return longer than 23 yards — they surrendered that one in the opener — and have not surrendered a kickoff return longer than 39 yards.

The Bengals have shown some pop in the return game. Adam Jones had an 81-yard punt return for a score this season and Brandon Tate has averaged 11.5 on his punt returns.

Tate and Jones have also split duties on kickoff returns and Tate had a 45-yarder earlier this season.

- **Keep the Bengals LBs busy.** Bengals middle linebacker Rey Maualuga and weakside linebacker Vontaze Burfict are big, physical players at 264 and 245 pounds, respectively, and are the team's leading tacklers.

They have roughed up some offenses in the run game, but the Broncos could find some room if they can isolate either of the two in pass coverage. The Broncos' tight ends and running backs should be a big part of the passing attack.

# **Broncos' Tracy Porter misses practice, unlikely to travel to Cincinnati**

Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
November 3, 2012

Just one day after he had participated fully in practice, Broncos cornerback Tracy Porter was not on the field for the open period of Friday's workout.

As a result, the Broncos are not expected to take Porter to Cincinnati, and he will miss a third consecutive game. He continues to work with the team's medical staff to enable him to return to the playing field. He offered this week: "The doctors are just trying to get the medication right."

Porter, who has not played in the last two games, had returned to practice Thursday and has said he felt "better" throughout the week. Porter suffered a seizure in August and then had experienced symptoms Oct. 14 similar to those he had suffered before he had the seizure — light headedness, dizziness and rapid heartbeat.

The Broncos did not take him to San Diego for their Oct. 15 game against the Chargers. He was then held out of the Saints game last Sunday.

Porter went through extensive examinations, and he said earlier this week doctors prescribed medication they believed would prevent future seizures.

Broncos coach John Fox is expected to update Porter's status following practice. The Broncos are expected to list him as "out" on the team's injury report.

The Broncos had all of their other players in practice.

# Broncos' Tracy Porter may have lost job, but he can still reclaim it

Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
November 3, 2012

*Today's question about the Broncos comes from Charles B. in Denver. To submit a question for consideration, send an e-mail to The Denver Post's Jeff Legwold.*

**Q:** How soon do you think Tracy Porter can get his job back in the defense? Or will he?

**A:** Charles, for the longest time as I was around NFL players and coaches, I routinely heard the basic premise that a player didn't lose his job because of injury.

It was just kind of passed along, like it was some odd fact from somebody's uncle passed down from one generation to the next. Then during training camp a few years ago, I simply asked Mike Shanahan if, in his experience, a player could lose his job because of injury.

His response that day:

"Of course. If the guy who comes in plays better, then a player lost his job because of injury. Nobody wants anybody to get hurt or have any difficulties, but if you face the players every day and tell them the best people are going to play each and every week, then the best people have to play each and every week or you haven't kept your word."

And looking back, I think that's always been the case, but that Shanahan was one of the few people willing to simply say it out loud. That's where Porter is right now.

Certainly the Broncos want him to receive the best medical care. They want to find out what the issue was and deal with it.

Porter suffered a seizure in August and then suffered similar symptoms last month, symptoms he had felt just before the seizure — light-headedness, dizziness and rapid heartbeat. So, the Broncos didn't take him on the trip to San Diego, and he missed the last two games.

On the field, however, things just keep moving along. And for the time being, until the Broncos show otherwise, he has lost his job.

Porter just returned to practice this week — he was listed as a full participant Thursday — but finds himself a backup now. The Broncos have used Chris Harris at

the right cornerback spot with Tony Carter coming in for the nickel and dime packages.

Porter had frustrated the coaches at times because he gambled a bit too often for their liking. He returned an interception for a touchdown in the season opener, but had surrendered some big plays since. So it was possible Harris would have seen playing time in Porter's place even if the medical issue had not cropped up.

The two are distinctly separate issues, however. Porter had a scary medical situation that needed time to get sorted out. And all of the reports to the contrary were journalistically irresponsible — or as Porter said, "That was people who didn't know what was going on."

But on the football side, the coaches liked what Harris and Carter did in his absence, so Harris and Carter will play moving forward.

As Porter said this week:

"I feel better than I did the previous couple weeks when I sat out. I'm starting to come back into my own, looking forward to being back out there, but coaches are going to make their decision and they feel comfortable with the guys they have out there. So, I just have to wait (for) my opportunity."

And asked how Harris and Carter have done in the last two games — wins over the Chargers and the Saints, and the two combined to create four turnovers against San Diego — defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio said:

"They did well ... they given us a little bit of a boost. (Carter) provides some of that sticky man that we like and Chris is the ultimate competitor out there."

It's difficult for Porter because he signed a one-year deal before the season and hoped a quality season on a playoff hopeful would launch him into the market as an unrestricted free agent at season's end. But he's an experienced, proven player who has made plays in big games.

That means if he continues to work in practice and regains his conditioning, the Broncos will likely find a way to use him. Del Rio has already shown if you're in uniform on defense, he'll get you in the game in some fashion.

Porter could also earn that right cornerback spot back if Harris falters. But if Porter competes each day, plays the position the way Del Rio wants it played and avoids the temptation to sulk, the Broncos will, and should, find a way to get him on the field.

After all, he did win the competition when it was open the first time.

# Ronnie Hillman clearly old enough to help Denver Broncos' run game

Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post  
November 3, 2012

It's not exactly a Karate Kid type of relationship between the old sage and young apprentice. But Broncos rookie running back Ronnie Hillman feels fortunate to be able to learn from 31-year-old Willis McGahee.

And Hillman can always have some fun by razzing the wily veteran and others in the locker room about their age. Of course, they will dish it right back to the young buck. Hillman didn't turn 21 until five days after the regular-season opener.

"They'll tease me about being so young," Hillman said. "I tease them back like, 'When I'm on my second contract, I'll be the same age as when you got into the league!'"

"They'll usually be quiet after that one," Hillman said with a laugh.

Oh, yeah?

"I'm faster than him," McGahee said. "I just tell him I'm faster than him. That's all I need to say."

McGahee is the NFL's second-oldest starting running back, ranking behind Buffalo's Fred Jackson, who is eight months older. Hillman, according to the NFL, is the league's youngest player.

More than a decade separates Hillman and McGahee, but Hillman has only admiration for the, um, old-timer who shows no signs of slowing. McGahee enters Sunday's game in Cincinnati at the top of his game. Last weekend against New Orleans, McGahee reached the 100-yard mark in rushing for the third time this season, with a season-best 122 yards.

McGahee now tops active NFL players for most career 100-yard games with 33. In career rushing yards for active players, McGahee (7,920) ranks third, behind St. Louis' Steven Jackson (9,496) and San Francisco's Frank Gore (8,226).

Hillman's pro career has just begun. But the 5-foot-10, 190-pounder had his first big game against the Saints, netting 86 yards on 14 carries, including a breakaway 31-yarder in the third quarter to help set up a Peyton Manning touchdown pass to Demaryius Thomas. Before that game, Hillman had no gain of longer than 12 yards.

"I kind of felt like a game like that would come," Hillman said. "I just had more opportunities. The linemen blocked well and the receivers blocked well downfield. It felt real good to get in the open field."

Hillman lost time during training camp with a hamstring issue and consequently was designated inactive for the first two regular-season games. He said he is feeling more comfortable with the offense.

"Ronnie had a great game, and that's what we look to," said wide receiver Eric Decker. "He has a lot of talent, but there is a learning curve. As a rookie, he's learning the (pass) protections and the different plays so can let his ability take over. We expect more of that as the season goes on."

Hillman said he can learn a lot from McGahee by watching his weekly preparation.

"He's 31 and still running around like he's 25," Hillman said. "I can learn just how to take care of your body and stay with it. You learn just how to be a pro."

Running backs have different styles and generally don't swap ideas about technique.

"He has to figure out that part on his own," McGahee said. "I can't tell him where to go. I can only help him learn what the reads are."

"I just keep pushing him. I tell him that it will happen for him. When I was young, I had guys helping me regardless of the situation. I didn't pick up what they were saying right away. But at the end of the day, it worked out."

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### **Ronnie Hillman game by game**

#### **Date.....Opponent.....No.....Yards....Avg.....Long**

Sept. 9.....vs. Pittsburgh.....Inactive.....

Sept. 17.....at Atlanta.....Inactive.....

Sept. 23.....vs. Houston.....2.....7.....3.5.....4

Sept. 30.....vs. Oakland.....10.....31.....3.1.....12

Oct. 7.....at New England.....3.....9.....3.0.....7

Oct. 15.....at San Diego.....2.....3.....1.5.....3

Oct. 29.....vs. New Orleans.....14.....86.....6.1.....31

# Shannon Sharpe sits down with Peyton Manning

Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

Hall of Fame tight end Shannon Sharpe was in the building late Thursday afternoon. He was interviewing Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning for his CBS NFL Today Show that will air prior to the Broncos-Bengals game Sunday.

"He was great," Sharpe said. "I don't want to give away the interview but I think people will want to watch it."

# **Mike Shanahan's Redskins to play Broncos in Denver in 2013; Peyton to play Eli in N.J.**

Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

According to the 2012 NFL Record and Fact Book, the Broncos already know 14 of their 16 opponents in 2013.

The six games against AFC West opponents (Chargers, Chiefs, Raiders) you know about it.

Non-divisional opponents coming to Denver next year: Jacksonville, Tennessee, Philadelphia and Washington. The Broncos will also host a still-to-be-determined team from the AFC South. That means providing this season doesn't go horribly wrong for the Washington Redskins, their coach Mike Shanahan will return to Denver for the first time since he was fired following the 2008 season.

Shanahan was the Broncos head coach from 1995-2008, winning back-to-back Super Bowls in 1997-98.

The Broncos' non-divisional road games next year: Houston, Indianapolis (Hey, Peyton. Meet, Andrew Luck.), Dallas, the New York Giants (Hey, Peyton. Meet Eli.) and an AFC East team to be determined.

# **Derek Wolfe to attend Cincinnati-Syracuse game Saturday**

Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

The schedule worked out nicely for Broncos defensive lineman Derek Wolfe. The Broncos fly into Cincinnati today even though their game against the Bengals isn't till Sunday.

The Fox Plan will enable Wolfe to watch his alma mater, the Cincinnati Bearcats play Syracuse at Nippert Stadium. Kickoff is noon, 10 a.m. MDT. Wolfe was drafted out of Cincinnati this year by the Broncos in the second round. He is a rookie starter.

The Fox Plan? Most NFL teams fly in the day before a game. Broncos coach John Fox likes to make it a two-night stay so the players can get acclimated to the time zone, weather, new surroundings while also getting the necessary rest.

# Herm Edwards said Peyton Manning has regained form nicely

Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

Herm Edwards faced Peyton Manning three times as Jets head coach, including one playoff game. He faced Manning twice as Chiefs head coach, including one playoff game.

And now, in his capacity as an analyst for ESPN, he has spent a great deal of time watching what Manning has done for the Broncos in the quarterback's return to the field after missing the 2011 season because of neck surgeries. And his verdict on Manning?

"He's getting back to where he was," Edwards said. "Is he the same guy, well no, nobody's the same guy after they play that long. But I think what has happened is it's all about being on the same page as Peyton Manning," Edwards said. "He will throw you open, you've just got to be in the right spot. If you get in the right spot, he'll lead you to the window."

Edwards said what he's seen of late, including in Manning's current run of four consecutive 300-yard games, is an increasing understanding from the Broncos receivers in how Manning likes to do things and an increasing trust from Manning in the receivers.

"I think the receivers will learn he'll protect you," Edwards said. "He won't hang you out there. If you're going across the middle and the ball is low they'll know the reason it's low is he's keeping you away from the linebacker. He doesn't want you to get hit. They've got to trust Peyton Manning, be where they're supposed to be, and it takes receivers a while to understand that. (Manning is) that kind of guy, people lost sight of that, why they're elite, they throw guys open, but they also protect them. You get that trust factor and they're getting that and that's when big things happen."

# **Broncos appear to be handling the hype from recent success**

Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

In talking to Broncos players this week, I get the feeling they are not getting caught up in all the hype that has some already penciling them in as one of the AFC's favorites to reach the Super Bowl, perhaps THE favorite.

"You've got to take it one game at a time," Broncos wide receiver Eric Decker said, "because in this league, any given team, any given Sunday, anything can happen.

"You've got to show up and play if you want to have a chance. All the conversation (about the Broncos being projected to go deep in the playoffs), I think, is for the media. It's better for the fans, the excitement level.

"(But) we know in the locker room we have a job to do. We've got to be professional about it and that's coming to work every day as sharp as a knife and getting ready for every Sunday."

# **Broncos rookie Ronnie Hillman is NFL's youngest**

Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post  
November 2, 2012

According to the NFL, Broncos rookie running back Ronnie Hillman is the youngest player in the league. Hillman, a third-round draft pick from San Diego State, turned 21 five days after the regular-season opener.

Hillman (5-foot-10, 190 pounds) enters Sunday's game at Cincinnati coming off his best game as a pro. He rushed 14 times for 86 yards in the blowout win last weekend over New Orleans.

"Being the youngest guy in the league is something to brag about," Hillman said this week. "But you can't use that as an excuse. They expect me to play like a 25-year-old vet. I've got to know what to do and how to do it."

I will have a feature on Hillman, and what he learns from 31-year-old Willis McGahee, in Saturday's Denver Post and on [denverpost.com](http://denverpost.com).

# Brandon Stokley cringes a bit at miracle catch

Arnie Stapleton  
Associated Press  
November 2, 2012

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Cincinnati Bengals coach Marvin Lewis isn't the only one haunted by the "Immaculate Deflection."

So is Brandon Stokley, the wide receiver who caught the batted ball and raced 87 yards for the score with 11 seconds left, giving Denver an improbable 12-7 win at Cincinnati in the 2009 opener.

Lewis, whose Bengals (3-4) host the Broncos (4-3) Sunday, said, "Brandon runs through my mind all the time." Stokley said he, too, has bad dreams about that play in which he cradled cornerback Leon Hall's deflection at midfield and outraced linebacker Dhani Jones into the end zone.

It was the longest winning play from scrimmage in the final minute of a game in NFL history.

When Jones started to pull up, Stokley had the presence of mind to tick an extra four seconds off the clock by veering right and running parallel to the goal line for several strides before stepping into the end zone.

Although Stokley was lauded as a heady veteran for the savvy move, he admitted this week that he'd do things differently today.

"I just kind of saw that nobody was behind me chasing me. I saw a guy kind of give up on it. I knew there wasn't a lot of time left, so I thought why not try to run some time off?" Stokley said. "And then the next day, I kind of started having nightmares about it: What if I'd have gotten caught? What if I had fumbled? What if somebody would have hit me? I think next time I'll probably just get in the end zone."

The "Immaculate Deflection," as it was immediately dubbed, sparked the Broncos to a 6-0 start that season.

"Well, we got lucky, plain and simple," Champ Bailey said of that outlandish touchdown, which came after the Bengals had gone up 7-6 on Cedric Benson's 1-yard TD run with 38 seconds left. "Stokley, he's a crafty vet. He just made a play. He was in the right place at the right time."

If his eyes had deceived him, however, or he flubbed the football somehow before scoring, Stokley would have been more like Leon Lett and not like Don Beebe, the

protagonists in the famous Super Bowl play in which the Buffalo Bills wide receiver knocked away the ball from the Dallas Cowboys lineman as he prematurely celebrated a touchdown return two decades ago.

"I just thought it was kind of smart to waste some time," Stokley said. "But crazy things happen."

Stokley saved the ball and gloves, which he has in his home office in Castle Rock, Colo., along with a couple of photos of him and his teammates celebrating the implausible touchdown.

All winter, that might as well have been a shrine to Stokley's career, which he figured was over after a thigh injury led to his release from the New York Giants after two games and just one catch last season.

Peyton Manning changed all that this spring.

The four-time MVP was preparing for his comeback after missing all of last season with a nerve injury in his neck and he needed some targets to throw to as he worked his way back.

He dialed up Austin Collie, Dallas Clark and Stokley, whom he played with in Indy from 2003-06, and invited them to his workouts at Duke University, where he was throwing under the tutelage of his college offensive coordinator, Blue Devils coach David Cutcliffe.

Manning promised them Duke-North Carolina tickets, but only if they worked out all three days with him.

"Easy sell. I mean, Duke-Carolina is a bucket-list thing for a lot of them," Manning said. "But that was the deal: It was all three days. It wasn't half a day here, or I can't go Friday, it was, you had to throw Thursday, Friday and Saturday for tickets to the Saturday night game."

Stokley began the three-day workout with no idea how he'd hold up and ended it thinking he might just have a 14th NFL season left in him.

"I hadn't run in 3½ months really. So, I didn't know how my quad was going to do, how I was going to feel," Stokley said. "So, I definitely wasn't running full speed that first day because that was a big perk for me. I'm a big Duke basketball fan and so to be able to go to that game was something special."

The last thing he wanted was to pull a hammy or tweak his damaged thigh and find himself on a flight home before ever getting inside Cameron Indoor Stadium. But after that first day, he felt fine and then he really turned it loose.

"I guess rest was better than rehab," said Stokley, who had abandoned his rehabilitation just before Christmas after seeing no progress.

Stokley said he felt so good after that weekend — Duke's 88-70 loss to North Carolina notwithstanding — that he began to contemplate his own comeback.

And yet, he had gnawing doubts: "Was it just the competitor in me thinking I could still do it when I really can't?" he wondered.

And who would want him anyway? "You don't get a lot of people wanting a 36-year-old receiver that played in two games the year before," he reasoned.

After signing with the Broncos, however, Manning went to bat for his buddy.

"I talked to Denver — well, I showed them some film — I said, 'You ought to consider bringing him in and working him out, at least,'" Manning recalled.

Stokley impressed the Broncos, too, and they signed him to a one-year deal.

The "Slot Machine" is paying off once again. Stokley has 21 catches for 235 yards and three touchdowns, and along with former Colts tight end Jacob Tamme, has helped bring along Manning's other targets in Denver.

"I'm certainly glad he's here," Manning said. "He's been a big part of our team this year."

They actually owe each other a debt of gratitude.

"I know if he wasn't here, I probably wouldn't have gotten the opportunity to be here," Stokley said. "He's done a lot for my career in Indy and to give me the opportunity to play here."

Another case of being in the right place at the right time, just like he was on that sunny day in Cincinnati four years ago.

# Tracy Porter still not ready to return

Bill Williamson  
ESPN.com  
November 2, 2012

Cornerback Tracy Porter will miss his third straight game as the Denver Broncos figure out how to best regulate his treatment as he deals with his post-seizure career.

Porter missed practice Friday after he fully participated Thursday in preparation for Sunday's game at Cincinnati. He had a seizure in August and dealt with some symptoms in October.

"We're still regulating the medication," coach John Fox said of Porter missing practice Friday and Sunday's game. "Not that it was a setback, but there was a little bit of an issue, and we'll evaluate that moving forward. His safety is what's the utmost concern right now."

Chris Harris will continue to start for Porter. Harris has been outstanding as Porter's replacement.

In other AFC West news:

Oakland linebacker Rolando McClain (toe) and running back Taiwan Jones (knee) are questionable to play Sunday against Tampa Bay. McClain will be a game-time decision. The San Francisco Chronicle wonders if linebacker Aaron Curry will be shelved for the year?

Lots of AFC West love from ESPN experts' picks this week.

# Final Word: AFC West

Bill Williamson  
ESPN.com  
November 2, 2012

*Five nuggets of knowledge about Week 9:*

**Peyton Manning's arm strength is fine:** This makes you wonder how much pain Manning, who leads the Broncos to Cincinnati this week, was in during the 2010 season. He missed all of 2011 with a neck injury that led to four surgeries. In 2010, his final season with the Colts, Manning completed 27.6 percent of his throws longer than 20 yards, according to ESPN Stats & Information. In his first seven games this season, Manning is completing 51.9 percent of such throws. His accuracy is clearly better on deep throws post-surgery.

**Scoring when it counts:** Oakland has been terrific in the final two minutes of the first half. The Raiders -- who host Tampa Bay on Sunday -- have scored in the final two minutes of the first half in every game this season, notching three touchdowns and four field goals. Even more impressive, five of the scores have come with 49 or fewer seconds remaining.

**Automatic from 40:** If kicker Sebastian Janikowski lines up for a field goal attempt from 40 yards or shorter Sunday, just book three points for Oakland. Seabass is going to make it. He has made 43 consecutive field goals from inside 40 yards dating back to September 2010. Janikowski is 18-of-19 on field goal attempts this season. His only miss was a 64-yarder at the end of regulation against Jacksonville, a game Oakland won in overtime on a Janikowski field goal.

**Denver goes tight end heavy:** The Broncos had great success using multiple-tight end sets against New Orleans. I'd imagine they will try the same at Cincinnati on Sunday. According to ESPN Stats & Information, Manning was 16-of-20 for 252 yards and two touchdowns with two or more tight ends against the Saints. It was the most he'd played using multiple tight ends since 2008.

**Broncos' schedule easing:** Going in the season, the Broncos had the second-toughest schedule in the NFL. Now, the meat of the schedule is behind Denver, which leads the AFC West at 4-3. The Broncos' remaining opponents have a combined record of 22-42 -- giving Denver the easiest remaining schedule in the league.

# Broncos rule CB Tracy Porter out for Sunday

Andrew Mason  
CBSsports.com  
November 2, 2012

Denver Broncos CB Tracy Porter will miss a third consecutive game because of symptoms that in August were a precursor to a seizure.

Porter did not practice Friday after fully participating in Thursday's on-field session. That was his first full practice since Oct. 13, one day before he was forced off the trip to San Diego because of light-headedness and a rapid heartbeat, both of which were preludes to a seizure he suffered in August.

The fifth-year veteran hasn't had a seizure since then, but he went through a battery of tests to determine the possible cause. After having serious diagnoses such as a vascular event or tumors ruled out, Porter went on medication to relieve the symptoms, without knowing the exact cause.

"We're still regulating the medication," Broncos coach John Fox said. "Not that it was a setback, but there was a little bit of an issue, and we'll evaluate that moving forward. His safety is what's the utmost concern right now."

# Broncos Game Preview vs. Bengals: Analysis, prediction, TV info

Andrew Mason  
CBSSports.com  
November 2, 2012

Broncos at Bengals -- Week 9

Where: Paul Brown Stadium, Cincinnati (turf, outdoors)

When: Sunday, 1 p.m. EST (CBS)

Spread: Broncos by 4

Forecast: Mostly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of rain; 46-49 degrees

2012 records: Broncos (4-3); Bengals (3-4)

Past results: Two most recent meetings -- Sept. 18, 2011: Broncos 24, Bengals 22; Sept. 13, 2009: Broncos 12, Bengals 7. Series record: Broncos hold an 18-8 edge.

What matters: It feels like the Broncos have a commanding lead in the AFC West, but the truth is that they're only a half-game up on the San Diego Chargers, who might have saved their season with a 31-13 win Thursday against Kansas City. Denver's eight opponents in the second half of the season are a combined 20-40 right now. The Chargers have a tougher second-half slate -- but not too tough. Their next eight foes are a collective 26-33.

Overconfidence and a perception that the tough part of the schedule is behind the Broncos is only their second most dangerous enemy, ranking behind their continued propensity for fumbling. RBs Willis McGahee and Ronnie Hillman each fumbled last week. Hillman's bobble was harmless, as the ball skipped out of bounds; that was the first fumble the Broncos didn't lose all season. Nevertheless, Denver's 11 fumbles are a concern, and their 10 lost fumbles is second-worst in the league, only ahead of the calamitous Chiefs (15 lost fumbles).

Who matters: Denver's offensive line hasn't allowed a sack the last two games -- which, not coincidentally, is the only stretch of the season it's played with RG Chris Kuper, who missed Weeks 1-5 with a fractured left forearm. However, not everything is perfect; a missed protection by LG Zane Beadles and C Dan Koppen (who slipped on the play) led to a pressure on QB Peyton Manning from New Orleans DL Martez Wilson and S Roman Harper last week; Manning banged his right thumb on Wilson's helmet and was fortunate to emerge with damage to his thumbnail.

"Any time the quarterback gets hit, you think about things," offensive coordinator Mike McCoy said. "He's tough; he hung in there and made a hell of a throw. Unfortunately, we had a breakdown on protection, which we have to eliminate."

No one in the AFC has been better at exploiting protection breakdowns than the Bengals, who have 23 sacks this season, including seven by DT Geno Atkins. Denver's offensive line was exploited in the middle early in the season before Koppen replaced an injured J.D. Walton and Kuper returned, but he offers the sternest test they've faced since entering the lineup.

Key matchup: The one-on-one duel between Broncos CB Champ Bailey and Bengals WR A.J. Green could end up deciding the contest. Broncos defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio has moved Bailey around to shadow the opponent's top receiver most of the last four-and-a-half games, and Bailey has flourished. He hasn't permitted a catch longer than 25 yards this year and hasn't allowed a touchdown since Week 13 of last season, a streak of 13 consecutive games, including playoffs. Bailey's streak of not allowing a score will be tested by Green, who has at least one touchdown in six consecutive games.

"If I'm betting, I'm betting on (Bailey) -- if I was a betting man. Eleven Pro Bowls," said Broncos S Mike Adams. "I'll take my guy any day, no matter what receiver's out there."

But defending Green is a team effort. Cincinnati will try to force Bailey out of the play at all costs and set up matches with other cornerbacks -- particularly Tony Carter, who enters when the Broncos go into nickel packages. Carter is the Broncos' fastest defender but is also seven inches shorter and 32 pounds lighter than Green.

Injury of note: CB Tracy Porter was ruled out after not practicing Friday. Porter continues to struggle with symptoms, including dizziness that were a precursor to a seizure in August. He practiced on a limited basis Wednesday and worked through the full practice Thursday, which was his only full work since Oct. 13.

Inside stuff: Last week's balanced offensive performance -- 225 rushing yards on 42 carries; 305 passing yards on 30 attempts -- was more like what the Broncos wanted all along than the air-centric tactics they'd used most of the season, when they repeatedly fell behind in the first three quarters, usually by multiple scores. That balance also set up the Broncos for their longest gain against the Saints -- a 41-yard play-action pass from Manning to Demaryius Thomas that was preceded by four McGahee runs. If the Broncos can establish the run again early, they'll defuse the Bengals' pass rush, giving Manning more than enough time to execute play-action and wait for late-opening receivers downfield. That will also make the Broncos' offense nearly impossible to effectively stop, since their passing game flourished even when the offense was one-dimensional in losses to Houston and New England and the comeback win at San Diego.

Connections: Bengals TE Richard Quinn was released last year after spending two seasons (2009-10) with the Broncos. He was the last third of a disastrous class of

2009 second-round picks (Alphonso Smith and Darcel McBath were the others), none of whom is still with the team ... Broncos WR Andre Caldwell was a Bengal for four seasons (2008-11) ... Broncos DE/DT Derek Wolfe played at the University of Cincinnati from 2008-11 ... Broncos C Dan Koppen was a teammate of Bengals RB BenJarvus Green-Ellis in New England from 2008-11 ... Broncos LB Keith Brooking and Bengals CB Terence Newman were teammates in Dallas from 2009-11.

Stat you should know: The Broncos are 1-10 in their last 11 trips to the Eastern time zone, including two losses earlier this season at Atlanta and New England.

Record watch: If Manning throws for over 300 yards and three touchdown passes and completes at least 70 percent of his passes, he will extend his league-record streak of games reaching those milestones to five. No one else has ever done that more than twice in a row.

Looking ahead: November offers a chance for the Broncos to put .500 far behind them if they win Sunday at Cincinnati. Two of their following three games are against teams with just one win -- Week 10 at Carolina (1-6) and Week 12 at Kansas City (1-7). They sandwich a Nov. 18 game against San Diego that could allow the Broncos to practically lock down the division crown.

Prediction: Broncos 31, Bengals 16.

# Ban about to end, Broncos LB D.J. Williams still bitter

Lindsay H. Jones  
USA Today  
November 3, 2012

LONE TREE, Colo. – In his two-months-long forced absence from football, D.J. Williams has grown remorseful about his off-field errors, bored without the structure of practice and games, and bitter at the NFL.

More than anything, the Broncos' veteran linebacker – a former first-round draft pick and one of the two longest-tenured players on the team -- is just ready to return to the teammates that he knows he let down over the past several months -- teammates who have risen to first place in the AFC West without him.

**BRONCOS CB SIDELINED: Seizures keep Porter out**

"I felt that the story of D.J. Williams had made a huge wrong turn. It was snowballing, and everything about it was negative," Williams said. "I'm just excited that my team is doing great, and I can't wait to get out there and help them."

Williams is about to serve the final week of his nine-game suspension, punishment handed down by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell for two violations of the NFL personal conduct policy.

The first six games of his ban were the result of a violation of the banned substance policy (the NFL said Williams submitted a "non-human" urine sample in August 2011), and three more games were added after Williams was convicted of driving while ability impaired in August, his second such offense while in the NFL.

**WEEK 9 PICKS: Broncos or Bengals?**

Williams is eligible to fully rejoin the Broncos on Nov. 12, the day after Denver's game at Carolina. He said when he returns, Broncos fans will see a different player.

"I'm bigger, stronger and faster, and my attitude is a lot different. I've got a lot of anger inside, you know what I mean?" Williams said. "Some good, some bad, but I think I play the perfect sport to be angry at somebody. You get to let it out, get the frustration out."

That anger, Williams said in an exclusive interview with USA TODAY Sports Friday, is directed internally for the bad choices he made, and externally at the people who have taken shots at him in traditional and social media.

He is also angry at the NFL, he says, for botching a routine drug test.

In the hour-long interview, Williams accepted responsibility for some of the reasons he ended up in the NFL doghouse, while also defending his decision to file a lawsuit against the league for what he believes was an improper drug testing procedure.

A Denver court and an appeals court refused to hear Williams' case, and he is continuing to appeal. Williams said he turned down an offer for a three-game suspension instead of six because he didn't want to admit to doing something wrong, nor implicate anyone else.

"I thought I was dealt an unfair deal," Williams said.

Williams said he has never used steroids or other performance enhancing drug, and that over the past four years, because of his two drunken driving arrests, he was under scrutiny by the league. In that time, Williams said he had never once tested positive.

He said his physical attributes come from genetics, not a needle, and he is angry that anyone would suggest otherwise.

"There's a lot of bitterness about it. For the rest of my career, I'll have an asterisk beside my name, saying that I used performance enhancers or steroids or whatever," Williams said. "People forget that when I was 16, I was 6-2, 225. I went to (the University of) Miami at 233 (pounds). My dad is huge, my mom competes in fitness and body competition – that's the genetics that I have gotten passed on. It sucks because I'll always be questioned on my ability and what I do as if I did steroids."

Williams would not comment further on the alleged nature of the urine sample.

His punishment for the drunken-driving conviction, stemming from his arrest in November 2010, will continue after the season. He will serve 30 days of in-house arrest, during which he'll be required to wear an ankle monitor. He also will serve two years' probation, perform more than 50 hours of community service and have his sobriety monitored.

The drinking and driving "was a mistake," he said, "and I shouldn't have done it. It was very dumb."

And now that his back-to-back suspensions are nearly over, Williams is hoping he can focus on football again. He was allowed to return to team headquarters two weeks ago and resume meetings with coaches and teammates and workouts with strength coaches, though he is still barred from practices and games.

Still, there are no guarantees about Williams' future with the Broncos when his suspension ends. He is in the second-to-last year of a contract that will pay him \$6

million next year, and he realizes that with off-the-field baggage and one of the biggest contracts on the team, he is by no means safe, especially now that other linebackers have played well in his absence.

To reclaim his spot, he has returned to Denver fitter than he's been at any point in his NFL career, he said, thanks to six weeks of training at the University of Miami during the first portion of his suspension. He's eager to restart "football" training – full-contact practice in pads, and doing the football-specific movements he can't recreate in the weight room, and he is confident that the talent that once made him the nation's top prep recruit and a first-round draft pick will return, at age 30.

In eight seasons, all with the Broncos, Williams started 114 games. He has 20.5 career sacks, two interceptions, 12 forced fumbles and seven fumble recoveries. His career-high in tackles came in 2007, when he had 106.

"My role will be whatever they give me, but I know that whenever I get on the field, my talent will speak for itself," Williams said. "I know that even if, say, they want to give me 15 plays a game, whether it's defense or special teams, I feel that within a matter of time, it'll be 'He's performing. He's producing. Fifteen isn't enough.'

"Why would you want to keep someone off the field that's playing and producing?"

# Seizures keep Broncos' DB Tracy Porter sidelined

Lindsay H. Jones  
USA Today  
November 2, 2012

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- The Broncos will be without right cornerback Tracy Porter as they travel to Cincinnati, as Porter and team doctors continue to try to find the right medication to treat the symptoms of a seizure.

Porter, who signed a one-year free agent contract in March, suffered a seizure in August and felt similar symptoms return on Oct. 14. He has missed the two games since. Though he was cleared to return to practice earlier this week, Porter was absent on Friday after experiencing what head coach John Fox described as "a little bit of an issue" relating to the medication.

Even if Porter had been allowed to travel and play, it was unlikely he was going to get back his job as the Broncos' starting right cornerback. His replacement, second-year player Chris Harris, and new nickel corner Tony Carter, both played well in the Broncos' last two games, both wins. Porter, who earned defensive player of the week honors in Week 1, struggled in other games in September, particularly against the Houston Texans on Sept. 23.

"They've done a nice job responding and giving us a little bit of a boost," defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio said of Harris and Carter. "They've been active. [Carter] provides some of the sticky man [coverage] that we like and Chris is the ultimate competitor out there."

Lineup changes are nothing new for the Broncos defense, a unit that has shown steady improvement since early September despite making several significant swaps because of injury or performance. Denver ranks No. 8 in total defense and pass defense.

Starting defensive tackle Ty Warren has been out since re-tearing his triceps early in the Broncos' opener. Middle linebacker Joe Mays was benched in favor of veteran Keith Brooking. And now the Broncos are relying on two unproven cornerbacks to line up opposite Champ Bailey.

The Broncos will face a major question, though a good one, at linebacker when veteran D.J. Williams – an eight-year starter and former team captain – returns from his nine-game suspension for multiple violations of the NFL conduct policy. Williams' replacement at weakside linebacker, Wesley Woodyard, is coming off the best game of his career – with 13 tackles, a sack, an interception and a forced fumble against New Orleans.

"We're in kind of a groove now," said defensive tackle Justin Bannan. "There's definitely good camaraderie on the defense, good chemistry, and we've just got to build on that."

# Brandon Stokley lost sleep over 'Immaculate' moment

Dan Hanzus  
NFL.com  
November 2, 2012

The Denver Broncos and Cincinnati Bengals aren't known for their rich history together, but there was *that play* in the 2009 season opener.

We're referring to "The Immaculate Deflection" -- Brandon Stokley's miracle 87-yard touchdown reception to seal a stunning Broncos victory at Paul Brown Stadium. Stokley's good fortune on the throw by Kyle Orton was memorable. But it's the image of Stokley running parallel along the goal line to tick precious seconds off the clock that's seared into the minds of Bengals fans.

Bengals coach Marvin Lewis still has painful memories of the unlikely 12-7 loss. Surprisingly, Stokley does, too.

"I just kind of saw that nobody was behind me chasing me," Stokley told The Associated Press as the Broncos prepare to meet the Bengals on Sunday. "I saw a guy kind of give up on it. I knew there wasn't a lot of time left, so I thought why not try to run some time off?"

"And then the next day, I kind of started having nightmares about it: 'What if I'd have gotten caught? What if I had fumbled? What if somebody would have hit me?' I think next time I'll probably just get in the end zone."

The win propelled the Broncos to a 6-0 start, though they later missed the playoffs. The Bengals went on to win the AFC North but were bounced out in the first round of the postseason by the New York Jets.

It turned out to be a blip on the radar for both teams. But a memorable blip at that.

# **Broncos' Porter still dealing with illness**

The Sports Xchange  
November 2, 2012

Denver Broncos cornerback Tracy Porter was listed as doubtful for Sunday's game at the Cincinnati Bengals.

Porter had symptoms last month that matched those that preceded a seizure he suffered in August, and hasn't yet been cleared to play in a game.

"We're still regulating the medication. Not that it was a setback, but there was a little bit of an issue, and we'll evaluate that moving forward," said Broncos head coach John Fox. "His safety is what's the utmost concern right now."

Fox said he wasn't sure if Porter would travel with the team.

If he doesn't play, Chris Harris and Tony Carter would likely help fill his void again.

# D.J. WILLIAMS SPEAKS OUT

The Broncos' troubled linebacker opens up for the first time in years

Chris Bianchi  
Mile High Sports  
November 2, 2012

Criminal. Thug. Cheater. Liar. Overall bad guy. Those are just some of the less-than-flattering words used to describe Broncos linebacker D.J. Williams in recent months.

This morning, Williams is only 10 days away from returning from a nine-game (combined) suspension for a failed drug test and a DWAI conviction stemming from a November 2010 arrest. Williams, a 2004 first-round pick who's led the Broncos in tackles in five of his eight seasons coming into 2012, may be considered a success on the field, but his all-too consistent off-field troubles have sparked controversy at best, hatred at worst and down-the-center disappointment for most.

Part of the harsh judgment comes from several questionable actions, but Williams is also notoriously difficult to deal with for the media. Reporters looking for a quote from the now-30-year-old University of Miami product are always turned down, some politely and most rather bluntly. And Williams' disconnect with the media has unquestionably helped shape a strongly negative perception of the talented-yet-troubled linebacker.

Starting with his first DUI conviction in September 2005, a second DUI arrest in November 2010 (lowered to a DWAI in an August conviction), and wrapping up with two failed drug tests in 2011 and the subsequent nine-game suspension that he's currently serving, the 17th overall pick in the 2004 draft is in the doghouse of many Broncos fans for a number of transgressions. And his previous media silence only appears to have alienated him further.

But on Thursday night, Williams opened up publicly with the media for the first time in more than two years, talking about his troubled past, his uncertain future and how he's dealing with the present.

"It's hard to open up to people that you don't know," Williams exclusively told Mile High Sports from his kitchen table, appearing relaxed and speaking far beyond the allotted half-hour scheduled interview. "That's not me. That's not my personality. I don't talk to people I don't know genuinely."

Williams spoke candidly on a smorgasbord of topics for nearly a full hour on Thursday, discussing everything from his heavily criticized social media antics to his desire to retire as a Bronco and his "Dyme Lyfe" lifestyle.

On social media - often the source of several of Williams' headaches over the years - and Dyme Lyfe, which is closely related to his Twitter account (@DJWilliam55), Williams was particularly candid.

If you were to glance at his Twitter account, you'd find frequent references to Dyme Lyfe and retweets, or mentions, from various fans wearing t-shirts and other clothing sporting the two words that have taken on a life of their own. Despite little mention of the exact definition of what exactly it means, the "Dyme Lyfe" has gradually developed a negative connotation among some fans and the media.

Williams helped spearhead the Dyme Lyfe movement two years ago with then-Broncos teammates Ronald Fields and Marcus Thomas as a means to positively get through a difficult 4-12 season in 2012. Holding up a pinky, ring and middle finger and using the same hand's thumb and index fingers to form a circle, most outsiders might interpret the hand gesture as an "okay" sign. However, many critics have taken it as either a gang symbol or a reference to smoking marijuana, a claim Williams vehemently denies. Instead, he said it was simply a way for the three teammates to stay positive.

"It has nothing to do with anything negative," Williams said. "It has nothing to do with smoking marijuana. We have a creed. It's a select few who focus on bonding, and building relationships with each other and indulging in the finer things in life, and never, I repeat, never, press for attention or accept it. That's what 'Dyme Lyfe' means; it's almost like paying something forward. It's not treating somebody like you'd treat yourself; it's far beyond that."

But Williams' prolonged silence about the subject helped allow the stories and rumors about the Dyme Lyfe's true origin to circulate. And like a bad game of telephone, stories tend to get worse over time.

His Twitter-related problems don't end there, however. When Williams tweeted that he was going out to party after the Broncos lost an October 2010 game to the 49ers in London, he was vilified on Twitter. He took exception to the criticism.

"Fans don't understand. You're mad, you had a five-dollar wager on it, you're probably going to get teased by your friends, your work colleagues," Williams said with a hint of anger in his voice. "(But) when we lose games, guys lose jobs, livelihoods; guys who are married who have wives and kids. We're talking about multi-millions (of) dollars being lost. So for someone to think that someone who lost a game is not upset is foolish. Just because their actions after a game are different than some other people is foolish. We have a saying in the locker room, 'Hold on to this one for the day and get it over with, and get ready for the next one.' Just because a guy goes straight home after a win or loss doesn't mean that he cared about something more than me. And I know the perception of it, but guys release and get rid of stress in different ways."

Williams' public reputation perhaps reached its all-time low in June, when the Sacramento native tweeted a picture of the Broncos' playbook on Twitter, igniting a

firestorm of criticism from both fans and media, who barked at Williams for revealing preciously-held secrets of the Broncos' playbook. But Williams - who had just been asked to switch positions for at least the fifth time in his eight-year career - said he was just trying to show fans that he was hard at work.

"My coach tells me, 'Hey, we're changing your position; you've got to learn a new position over the weekend and you're basically going to compete against somebody who's been doing it for two, three months. And you're fighting for a job,'" Williams said. "So, I woke up on my day off at nine in the morning, because I always like to write things down. I went and I got flash cards. So what I did was I took every defensive call. I wrote the call down. I wrote where I set in the front. I wrote where I (lined up). I wrote what I'm doing. I wrote what everybody else is doing. I wrote every check if they go to empty.

"So I had those cards, I had 50 or 60 cards. I look on the card, the actual card that I put on the thing was (a play call). I would see how many I could get without looking at the back. And so while I was doing that, because it just was after Memorial (Day) weekend (June 8 was the day of the tweet), I went to Vegas and I had a great time, and I took pictures with my friends. Just like hundreds of other NFL players did the same thing. So I was like, 'I'm going to show people, do something for the fans to connect and show them.' Because they didn't know."

In addition, the tweeted plays (which came on a panel of six cards) were, what Williams described them as, mainstream plays that weren't, or aren't, secrets across the NFL.

"Every defense has this call (the one that he tweeted). Every offensive player knows it," said Williams, who said he received numerous calls of support from teammates after the incident. "It would have been the equivalent of a basketball player posting the pick and roll.

"None of my teammates thought that I did anything wrong. A guy wrote a report talking about treason. Treason? That's turning on your government. People get killed for treason. You get life in jail for treason. (I posted) one call, of one defense - out of 50 defenses - without our checks, without any of our conversations. So, no team could ever use that. No team could ever use that."

Poor judgment - and not an underlying desire to conspire against or harm his own team, as many took it - were the real motifs behind Williams' tweet.

And speaking of blunders, Williams admitted his 2010 DWAI conviction was a mistake.

"I served my punishment - sitting out nine games. You know what I mean? I'm losing \$3 million. That's what people don't understand. Is that not enough punishment? But like I said, let my coaches, let the Denver Broncos punish me. You're not in the locker room. You don't know. Even with all my situations, nobody knows that absolute, deep truth about it. Like I said, wrong is wrong, and I did

wrong things - but if they really knew the foundation of them, I think they would look at them in a different light."

This didn't - or doesn't - solve the issue of the linebacker's harsh public perception, but it's certainly a start for a shy player who prefers to keep to himself.

It was simply impossible not to walk out of the 52-minute encounter with the troubled linebacker having anything but a distinct feeling that the 30-year-old was misunderstood - partially by his own doing, undoubtedly, but also by a public perception that Williams intentionally chooses not to battle. Williams was genuine - an occasional curse word served as the perfect periodic reminder that he was speaking from the heart - and although he made it clear he plans to work his way back into a more favorable public perception, it won't come quickly.

"This was a first step; I said I'd take baby steps to see how it goes," Williams finished, before taking off to a team dinner. "But it's just difficult because it's not my natural personality. I don't need to be taught how to do interviews. I've been doing interviews since I was 13 - about me. Anybody you can think of - *Sports Illustrated*, *USA Today* - I've been doing it my whole life. It's just that, I just think of myself as a normal person. I think nobody cares about my story."

But the truth is, people do care. And Williams' natural personality is appealing. He doesn't like to talk about his numerous charitable contributions (he donates turkeys every Thanksgiving, pays for uniforms for local sports teams and sponsors kids to take part in sports camps), claiming other athletes do it simply for the attention. Fair enough.

Now the real question is, who will D.J. Williams be? The guy who was open, honest and transparent with me for nearly an hour. Or will he be the player whose silence has allowed imaginations and perceptions to spin violently out of control for nearly a decade, portraying Williams to be the monster he - based on our lengthy conversation - doesn't appear to be?

The real answer is, it's up to D.J.

# Irving's missed year at State taught him patience for NFL

Chris Saunders  
NC State Alumni Association  
November 2, 2012

Nate Irving has three numbers tattooed on his left forearm. They read "06-28-09" and serve as a reminder of the automobile accident three years ago that forced him to sit out a year of football at NC State. But, Irving says, the accident helped him learn humility and patience. And that has helped prepare him for life in the NFL.

Irving was a third-round pick by the Denver Broncos in the 2011 draft after an All-ACC career for the Wolfpack. But Irving, a linebacker, played primarily on special teams during his rookie year. Irving knew he had to be patient to learn the pro game.

"Sitting out last year and just doing special teams helped me get adjusted to the speed and physicality of the NFL," he says. "You're going up against guys who are elite at their positions. You have to be very good and smart at what you're doing."

The Broncos hired a new defensive coordinator, Jack Del Rio, for this season, and his defensive scheme is conducive to Irving's game at the middle linebacker position. Irving credits Del Rio's system with him getting more playing time. It has also helped Irving make a greater impact on the field, like when he had three tackles during a Monday Night Football game on Oct. 15.

"I think it's what Coach Del Rio and the coaching staff has done," he says. "I'm able to be physical. I like playing on the line of scrimmage."

Irving says the new system also allows him to improve on his weaknesses, like defending against the pass.

What aids in that improvement is the patience the numbers tattooed on Irving's forearm evoke. Sitting out the 2009 year at NC State while he recovered from the accident armed him with that virtue, which, in turn, allowed him to accept studying the game for a year last season and become prepared to make an impact this season.

"I'm happy that things happened the way they did," he says. "It taught me about NFL football. It helped me study NFL teams and what to look for."

# NFL Honors Military With 'Salute to Service'

Stuart Zaas  
DenverBroncos.com  
November 2, 2012

The National Football League will continue its long history of honoring veterans and active-duty members of the military with its annual Salute to Service campaign. For every point scored during the NFL's 32 designated Salute to Service games, the league will donate \$100 to each of its three core, military non-profit partners – Pat Tillman Foundation, USO and the Wounded Warrior Project.

The Salute to Service campaign, which began during last night's Chiefs-Chargers game on NFL Network, is designed to unify and elevate the extensive military appreciation work of the NFL and its clubs. Throughout November, teams will designate one home game to honor the military. Denver's contest vs. San Diego on Sunday, Nov. 18 is the team's dedicated Salute to Service game.

During these games, teams will display a number of Salute to Service-branded elements in stadiums, with the majority in and around the end zone in order to highlight the league's new donation program tied to scoring. Branded elements include goal post wraps, pylons with camouflage ribbon decals, wall banners and the words Salute to Service written in the back of the end zone.

Denver's game vs. San Diego is sponsored by USAA and OtterBox and is dedicated to our all of veterans and our U.S. Armed Forces serving throughout the world. Representatives from the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard and Wounded Warrior Heroes from Fort Carson will be recognized during a special halftime ceremony. Several other military guests will be honored throughout the game during coin toss, player introductions, Broncos Country Heroes Recognition and Salute to Service Recognition.

Additional on field elements featuring camouflage include ribbon lapel pins, Gatorade towels, Nike and Under Armour gloves for players, captain's patches and camouflage ribbon footballs used during every play. Game used items will be collected following Salute to Service games and auctioned on NFL Auction, with 100% of net proceeds donated to the league's three core military non profit partners. The game coins that will be used for the opening toss of the Broncos game against the Chargers are pictured above.

In addition, The NFL and USAA, the NFL's Official Military Appreciation Sponsor, are continuing their annual Salute to Service Award, which recognizes NFL players, alumni, coaches, owners, executives and front office staff who demonstrate an exemplary commitment to honoring and supporting the military community.

When all 32 teams take the field during the Salute to Service campaign, branches of the U.S. military will be represented on their helmets. Conceived by USAA, a new initiative will enable NFL teams to deepen their connection to the military community by identifying local military units from each branch of service to honor on game day. Teams will wear helmet decals honoring military branches with their insignia (Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy), and the stories of connection between clubs and local units will be highlighted throughout the Salute to Service campaign in broadcast and online.

Here is a look at the decal on cornerback Champ Bailey's helmet:

(Picture)

USAA will work with several teams during Veterans Day weekend to honor the men and women who have served and are serving in the U.S. military. Fans in select stadiums will participate in in-stadium card stunts to thank the military for their service. In addition, USAA and the NFL will hand out team-branded wristbands to fans at select games on November 18.

All fans will be able to visit [www.millionfansalute.com](http://www.millionfansalute.com) to download photos to share with and thank veterans and service members. In addition, fans can create a digital salute honoring past and present members of the U.S. military on behalf of their favorite NFL team through November 26, 2012. The three cities with the most salutes will earn rewards for their local military community from USAA.

In 2010, the NFL and Pat Tillman Foundation established the NFL-Tillman Military Scholar award to annually honor an individual who exemplifies Pat's enduring legacy of service. The scholarship is part of the Tillman Military Scholars program established by the Pat Tillman Foundation to support educational opportunities for veterans and active service members and their spouses.

The Tillman Military Scholars program covers direct study-related expenses such as tuition and books, as well as other basic needs such as housing and childcare. As a result of fundraising from this year's Salute to Service campaign, the NFL's annual support of the Tillman Military Scholars program will continue to grow and help young men and women to pursue their degree program of choice.

Additional Salute to Service moments will include recognition of all military personnel in attendance, on field ceremonies honoring service men and women and special pregame national Anthem renditions performed by military bands and choirs.

The NFL continues to offer its NFL Game Pass service free of charge at USO Centers for military members stationed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Germany, Italy, Korea and Japan. At the USO facility in each of these locations, service members can watch every NFL game live and online in its entirety. NFL Game Pass service also is offered free of charge at US Embassies.

Fans can find out more about the NFL's commitment to the military and veterans by visiting [www.nfl.com/salute](http://www.nfl.com/salute). In addition, on the NFL's Facebook page, fans can submit their photos in support of our military to be a part of the Salute to Service mosaic or give a virtual gift using the Salute to Service gifting app.

# **Broncos Quarterback Club Dinner to Support Food Bank of the Rockies**

Stuart Zaas  
DenverBroncos.com  
November 2, 2012

The Denver Broncos Quarterback Club will be holding a dinner to support the Food Bank of the Rockies on Monday, Nov. 12.

Frank Robinson and Lee-Lo Lang, former cornerbacks who played together on the Broncos from 1992-93 will serve as guest speakers at the event.

Lang played 54 games for the Broncos from 1990-93 and totaled 135 tackles, five interceptions and one sack. Robinson appeared in 28 games for Denver from 1992-93 and made 47 tackles with one interception with the club.

The Quarterback Club dinner includes a buffet and cash bar for \$20 per person. To RSVP, call 303-948-2363 by 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 9. The club will also collect non-perishable food donations on behalf of the Food Bank of the Rockies at the event.

Previous guests at meetings this year have included Broncos President Joe Ellis, who spent an hour-and-a-half answering questions from the club, and Pro Football Hall-of-Famer Floyd Little.

The Denver Broncos Quarterback Club was founded by Charlie Goldberg and was incorporated in 1964. The club's initial purpose was to create excitement and gain support for the fledgling AFL franchise. Their purpose has evolved over the years to support children from disadvantaged situations. The club also serves as a place for fellow Broncos fans to share their enthusiasm and support of the team, to meet players and coaches and generally have a great time while doing some good in the community.

For more information, visit [www.denverbroncosqbclub.com](http://www.denverbroncosqbclub.com), or follow the club on Facebook and Twitter.

# Bengals Week: Friday Injury Report

Sam Davis  
DenverBroncos.com  
November 2, 2012

Below are the injury reports for Denver and Cincinnati after Friday's practices.

## DENVER BRONCOS

<b>PLAYER</b>	<b>INJURY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>GAME STATUS</b>
CB Tracy Porter	Illness	LIMITED	FULL	DNP	OUT
S Mike Adams	Knee	FULL	FULL	FULL	PROBABLE
G Chris Kuper	Forearm	FULL	FULL	FULL	PROBABLE
TE Jacob Tamme	Hip	FULL	FULL	FULL	PROBABLE
QB Peyton Manning	Right Thumb	FULL	FULL	FULL	PROBABLE

## CINCINNATI BENGALS

<b>PLAYER</b>	<b>INJURY</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>GAME STATUS</b>
WR Andrew Hawkins	Knee	-	-	FULL	PROBABLE
WR Marvin Jones	Knee	DNP	DNP	DNP	OUT
LB Dontay Moch	Illness	DNP	DNP	DNP	OUT
HB Brian Leonhard	Ribs	LIMITED	FULL	FULL	PROBABLE
C Jeff Faine	Hamstring	FULL	FULL	FULL	PROBABLE

# Broncos vs. Saints: Participation Breakdown

Sam Davis  
 DenverBroncos.com  
 November 2, 2012

## Playtime Percentage

A breakdown of Broncos' players participation in Sunday night's Week 8 victory against New Orleans

<b>PLAYER</b>	<b>OFFENSIVE PLAYS</b>	<b>DEFENSIVE PLAYS</b>	<b>SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYS</b>
G Z. Beadles	74 (100%)	-	6 (20%)
T O. Franklin	74 (100%)	-	6 (20%)
C D. Koppen	74 (100%)	-	-
G C. Kuper	71 (96%)	-	6 (20%)
T R. Clady	71 (96%)	-	6 (20%)
QB P. Manning	71 (96%)	-	-
WR E. Decker	71 (96%)	-	-
TE J. Dreessen	68 (92%)	-	1 (3%)
WR D. Thomas	67 (91%)	-	9 (30%)
RB W. McGahee	62 (84%)	-	1 (3%)
TE V. Green	43 (58%)	-	-
RB R. Hillman	34 (46%)	-	22 (73%)
WR B. Stokley	27 (36%)	-	-
TE J. Tammie	26 (35%)	-	-
WR M. Willis	25 (34%)	-	3 (10%)
FB C. Gronkowski	10 (14%)	-	21 (70%)
RB L. Ball	4 (5%)	-	21 (70%)
T C. Clark	3 (4%)	-	21 (70%)
G M. Ramirez	3 (4%)	-	6 (20%)
QB B. Osweiler	3 (4%)	-	6 (20%)
DT M. Unrein	1 (1%)	21 (34%)	-
LB W. Woodyard	-	61 (100%)	4 (13%)
S M. Adams	-	61 (100%)	8 (27%)
CB C. Harris	-	61 (100%)	3 (10%)
DE E. Dumervil	-	61 (100%)	1 (3%)
DE D. Wolfe	-	57 (93%)	-
LB V. Miller	-	56 (92%)	1 (3%)
S R. Moore	-	56 (92%)	-
CB C. Bailey	-	52 (85%)	-
CB T. Carter	-	47 (77%)	1 (3%)
LB D. Trevathan	-	39 (64%)	16 (53%)
DT J. Bannan	-	26 (43%)	12 (40%)
		25 (41%)	2 (7%)

DT K. Vickerson	-	25 (41%)	-
S J. Leonhard	-	22 (36%)	9 (30%)
LB K. Brooking	-	22 (36%)	-
DE R. Ayers	-	18 (30%)	2 (7%)
CB O. Bolden	-	14 (23%)	22 (73%)
LB N. Irving	-	6 (10%)	24 (80%)
DE M. Jackson	-	2 (3%)	-
S D. Bruton	-	-	24 (80%)
LB J. Mays	-	-	15 (50%)
K M. Prater	-	-	12 (40%)
P B. Colquitt	-	-	11 (37%)
LS A. Brewer	-	-	11 (37%)
WR A. Caldwell	-	-	8 (27%)
WR T. Holliday	-	-	7 (23%)