

Denver Broncos right guard Chris Kuper looks like Peyton Manning's MVP

Mike Klis
The Denver Post
December 15, 2012

If Peyton Manning is the most valuable Bronco, Chris Kuper might be the Bronco most valuable to Manning's well being.

In the five games Kuper has been the Broncos' starting right guard, Manning has been sacked only twice. In the eight games Kuper missed because of forearm and ankle injuries, Manning has been sacked 17 times.

That doesn't mean Kuper's replacement, Manny Ramirez, is responsible for so many hits on Denver's quarterback. But it does speak to Kuper's role as the glue and leader of the Broncos' offensive line.

"I don't think it's one guy. I don't think it ever is," said coach John Fox. "There's a lot of guys involved in the pass protection from the quarterback to the wideouts, running backs. So I think that's really by chance."

Yes and no. Offensive lines don't work as five separate blockers but as five blockers who move and ward off defenders as one. Remove one piece from that line — especially a piece such as Kuper, who is the senior member of Denver's blocking unit — and there could be a domino effect.

Kuper has been around so long, he was a teammate of center Tom Nalen and left tackle Matt Lepsis. Kuper has the strength and instincts to help young right tackle Orlando Franklin and veteran center Dan Koppen, who has been with the Broncos for only three months.

Problem is, Kuper has been banged up all season. He missed the first five games because of a fractured left forearm and missed three more because of a left ankle injury that flared up last week before the game at Oakland. It's the ankle that was dislocated during the final game of last season.

For Sunday's game at Baltimore, Kuper is listed as questionable.

Focused on football. The NBA's Memphis Grizzlies played the Nuggets on Friday night at the Pepsi Center.

Manning, whose wife, Ashley, recently invested a minority stake in her hometown Grizzlies, didn't attend the game. At tipoff, he was already in Baltimore. The

Broncos left town Friday afternoon because Fox prefers to leave two days before a road game.

Asked about the Nuggets- Grizzlies game, Manning said: "No comment. Baltimore game."

Footnotes. Wesley Woodyard, the Broncos' leader in tackles by a wide margin (he has 97 and second-place Mike Adams has 68) even after missing last week's game at Oakland because of a sprained ankle, said he will play Sunday. Woodyard's primary task figures to be running down Ravens tailback Ray Rice. "Got to be ready to go sideline to sideline," Woodyard said. ... Indications are Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis won't play Sunday because of his torn triceps, but there's a decent chance that linebacker Terrell Suggs will return after missing last weekend's game because of a biceps injury.

Broncos-Ravens: Here's how Denver can grab a win Sunday in Baltimore

Jeff Legwold
The Denver Post
December 15, 2012

There are still plenty of mathematical combinations for the Broncos to get one of the AFC's top two seeds in the postseason, but their best chance comes with running the table by winning their last three games.

And in Sunday's game against the 9-4 Baltimore Ravens, who reside in first place in the AFC North, the Broncos have the opportunity to get over the biggest hurdle left on the schedule.

To get that win they will have to:

- **Be prepared for many helpings of Ray Rice in the Ravens' offense.** Rice may be fifth in the NFL in net yards from scrimmage, but the Ravens want to get him the ball even more often.

So much so, plenty of NFL personnel believe the Ravens fired offensive coordinator Cam Cameron, at least in part, because of play-calling that often featured extended stretches when Rice didn't get any touches.

Rice has had four games this season with 13 or fewer carries, and two with 10 or fewer. These are get-your-attention numbers for a team that spends so much time with two backs in the formation. The Ravens ran out of a two-back set 38 times against the Washington Redskins this past Sunday.

The Broncos will have to be stout in their base defense against a physical Ravens offensive front. Baltimore can line up with three starters in the offensive line who weigh at least 335 pounds.

The Ravens will throw out of a two-back set plenty as well, with Rice or fullback Vonta Leach lined up as a receiver in the slot to isolate at least one of them on an opposing linebacker.

If the Ravens control the clock, and the game, by handing the ball to Rice, the Broncos' chances of winning dip significantly.

- **Get to Joe Flacco and get the ball.** The strength of the Broncos' defense continues to be their pass rush.

Flacco will hold the ball because of his confidence, arm strength and desire to make a play down the field. He has a tendency to fumble, though, having done so eight times this season, including twice Sunday in the overtime loss to the Redskins.

The Broncos' Elvis Dumervil and Von Miller have combined to strip the ball from opposing quarterbacks on 10 sacks this season, with Dumervil having stripped the ball on six of his eight sacks.

The Broncos could use a little luck there. They are third in the NFL in forced fumbles with 17 but have recovered just six.

The Redskins had plenty of success getting to Flacco with extra rushers in the middle of the field, especially those who joined the rush after a slight delay.

The Broncos have seen the video and would seem likely to send Miller up the middle at times.

● **Finish drives.** The Ravens, despite their defensive deficiencies, have been the NFL's stingiest team inside their own 20-yard line. The Broncos are coming off a game at Oakland that would have been a walkaway rout had they simply finished more of their drives. Matt Prater kicked four field goals.

If guard Chris Kuper doesn't play — he is questionable with an injured ankle — the Ravens figure to be a little more aggressive in the pass rush when the Broncos have the goal line in sight.

It's a matchup game in the red zone. Broncos receivers have to win one-on-one matchups and go get the ball when they have the chance. The Ravens' secondary has been hit with plenty of injuries, so Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning should be able to find some room to work.

Broncos QB Brock Osweiler might see field in final two games of season

Jeff Legwold
The Denver Post
December 15, 2012

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

Q: Can you please discuss the lack of any playing time for Peyton Manning's backup at quarterback. If (Manning) goes down, the season is over. You can't learn much carrying a clipboard.

A: Roger, whether it's Peyton Manning, Tom Brady, Aaron Rodgers or Eli Manning we're talking about, every team with a franchise quarterback lives in the good fortune of having one as well as with the realization an injury to that franchise quarterback puts every goal for the season in jeopardy.

Right now behind those quarterbacks you have a rookie in Brock Osweiler, a second-year player in Ryan Mallett, a third-year player in Graham Harrell and an 11-year veteran in David Carr.

Mallett has thrown four regular-season passes in his time in the league so far, having completed one. Harrell, who has been both the Packers' No. 3 quarterback and on the team's practice squad, has thrown two career regular-season passes, completing one for 11 yards.

In his second quarterback life, after a physical pounding he took as the expansion Texans' starter, Carr has spent four of the last five seasons as the Giants' backup — with a 2010 season with the 49ers sandwiched in there.

He has attempted two passes this season, having completed one for four yards.

The Broncos selected Osweiler in the second round of last April's draft with the intention he would be their backup quarterback under Manning and that Manning would then help groom him to be a starter. Osweiler, at 21 (he turned 22 on Nov. 22), was the youngest quarterback on the draft board. So even if he backs up Manning for three, four or five years, the Broncos still see a player that will still Thus far this season he has played four snaps, with three of those coming in the Oct. 28 win over the Saints. There was a moment or two when it appeared Osweiler might get to play at least some in the Broncos' win in Oakland last week as the offense moved the ball up and down the field.

But the Broncos stalled on four of their scoring drives, kicking field goals instead of scoring touchdowns, so the Broncos' last possession of the game became one of keep-away to run out the clock rather than an opportunity for Osweiler to close out a rout.

If the Broncos' playoff fate is completely determined before either of their last two games of the regular season, it's a good bet Osweiler would see plenty of action in the regular-season finale against the Chiefs. Former Colts coach Tony Dungy routinely let Manning start the regular-season finale, even if the Colts' playoff fare had long been determined, but then would put in the backup after the first possession to finish out the game.

And the Broncos have tried to give him as much work as possible in practice despite the fact the regular season is more about preparing for the upcoming opponent rather than player development. But it's that way at every position.

But Osweiler's time in the classroom with Manning each day, watching video with Manning each day is irreplaceable and gives him the kind of developmental environment few young quarterbacks will ever have. Not only is Manning likely the best the league has ever seen at preparing for an opponent, but he's also secure in his standing in the profession.

There is no friction as there is at times when a starter fears a team has signed his future replacement. Manning wants to help the team's other quarterbacks — Osweiler and Caleb Hanie — and Manning consistently asked team officials during the free-agency period about what the Broncos' plan was on the depth chart at quarterback.

It's something that was important to him during his visits around the league.

So yes, Osweiler hasn't seen the field much. And yes, it is a significant step down in production and experience from Manning to Osweiler. The Broncos will still prepare Osweiler as much as they can and hope for the best.

Because that's what almost every team with a franchise quarterback is forced to do.

Broncos still hope to have Wesley Woodyard, Chris Kuper back in lineup

Jeff Legwold
The Denver Post
December 14, 2012

As the Broncos prepared to close out the week, they remain reasonably healthy, with a far shorter injury report leading up to Sunday's game in Baltimore than the Ravens have.

Linebacker Wesley Woodyard (ankle) and guard Chris Kuper (ankle) were on the field during the open period of Friday's practice. Both were limited in all of the week's practices, including Friday, and the Broncos formally listed them as questionable for Sunday's game.

Defensive end Robert Ayers was not on the field during the open period and was the only player on the team's 53-man roster who was not in drills as Friday's workout began.

Woodyard has said he expects to play in Baltimore and would be a key part of the Broncos defense against a Ravens passing game that features running back Ray Rice in the pass pattern so often.

For his part, Kuper is sorely missed when he's out of the lineup. Broncos coach John Fox said some scar tissue got knocked loose in Kuper's ankle in the days leading up to the Raiders game and he remains a question mark this week.

The Broncos have surrendered 19 sacks this season, and 17 of those have come in games Kuper did not play on offense. Kuper has missed seven games in all this season with forearm and ankle injuries and played only on special teams in another.

"I don't think it's one guy. I don't think it ever is," Fox said. "There are a lot of guys involved in pass protection from the quarterback, the wideouts, running backs, I think that's really by chance."

Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning was sacked three times against the Raiders and has been sacked eight times in the last four games, which follows a streak when he was sacked one time in four games combined.

The Broncos will depart for Baltimore on Friday afternoon and have a walk-through practice in the Baltimore area Saturday.

Denver Broncos' running game providing balance to Peyton Manning-led offense

Tom Kensler
The Denver Post
December 15, 2012

An offense with Peyton Manning taking snaps doesn't need to lead the NFL in rushing. But how much is good enough?

How efficient and productive must the running game become to keep opposing defenses honest and enable the Broncos to make a deep run in the playoffs?

"I think any quarterback will tell you that his best friend is a good running game," Manning said.

The 2006 Indianapolis Colts, who rode the throwing arm of Manning to a Super Bowl victory, had a 1,000-yard rusher in Joseph Addai (1,081). But even with a big season from Addai, the Colts ranked only 18th in rushing.

The Broncos (10-3) are in a similar position, ranking 20th in rushing (106.1) entering Sunday's game at Baltimore.

"If you look at the offenses that Peyton has been a part of over the years, they have always been able to run the ball," Ravens coach John Harbaugh said this week on a teleconference.

While the Broncos' running game won't be confused with the ground-churning attacks of San Francisco or Minnesota, Denver is 7-1 when rushing for 90 or more yards. Denver has averaged 113.2 yards rushing in its 10 victories, and just 82.3 in its three losses.

"We're practicing (the running game) hard and bringing it onto the field," Broncos tailback Knowshon Moreno said. "We want to stay balanced passing the ball and running the ball. That really helped us."

Moreno is averaging 91 yards rushing for three games since being thrust into the lineup after Willis McGahee suffered a knee injury Nov. 18 against San Diego.

"That keeps the defense guessing," Broncos coach John Fox said of the importance of a strong running game. "I think it's important that you be able to do both as an offense to be successful. We do our best every week — our staff, our players — to try to create that balance."

If Moreno approaches 100 yards rushing Sunday against the Ravens, the Broncos should be in good shape to extend their winning streak to nine games.

Denver defensive tackle Justin Bannan played four seasons (2006-09) on Baltimore defenses that were particularly stingy against the run.

"Stopping the run, first of all it has to be an attitude; it's a certain mentality," Bannan said of playing with Ray Lewis, Terrell Suggs, Haloti Ngata, Ed Reed and others. "But you also have to have the guys that are able to do that. The Ravens have had those guys."

Injuries and age seemingly have caught up to the Ravens, however. Baltimore has yielded 100 or more rushing yards in eight games this season and at least 150 yards on four occasions. Lewis hasn't played since injuring his triceps in the sixth game, against Dallas. Cornerback Lardarius Webb was lost to a knee injury against the Cowboys. Suggs and Ngata also have missed playing time. But the Broncos know the Ravens will make stuffing the running game a priority Sunday.

"At the end of the day, stopping the run is a simple truth with this game," Bannan said. "Every defense will tell you it starts and stops with stopping the run, and you go from there."

Running on the Ravens

A look at the highs and lows of the Ravens' defense against the run this season:

THE GOOD

Date, Opp. — Yards allowed

Sept. 27, Cleveland — 43

Nov. 11, Oakland — 72

Sept. 23, New England — 77

THE BAD

Oct. 14, Dallas — 227

Oct. 7, at Kansas City — 214

Oct. 21, at Houston — 181

Source: Baltimore Ravens

Peyton Manning is new voice on Denver International Airport trains

Jeremy P. Meyer
The Denver Post
December 14, 2012

Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning is known for calling audibles on the line of scrimmage but now he will be known for being the voice on the train.

Denver International Airport Friday announced Manning will be the new voice in the train cars passing through the airport this holiday season, starting Friday and ending Jan. 2.

Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, whose voice normally greets DIA travelers, offered up Manning as quick substitute.

"For the holidays, I am handing off this very important duty of greeting visitors to our great city to someone known for the best audibles in the business," Hancock said. "Peyton Manning earned this call by going long in his efforts to take the Broncos to another AFC West championship.

We'll be cheering on him and the team as they drive toward another Super Bowl!"

Manning's southern drawl is heard over a piano playing "Jingle Bells."

"Welcome to the Mile High City," Manning says.

Denver International Airport is the 11th-busiest airport in the world and the fifth-busiest airport in the United States.

With more than 50 million passengers traveling through the airport each year, DIA is one of the busiest airline hubs in the world's largest aviation market.

Broncos bring Manning to Baltimore this time

Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
December 14, 2012

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — The last time the Denver Broncos won a game in Baltimore, a baby-faced John Elway was making his second NFL start and producing his first career fourth-quarter comeback.

That was way back in 1983, before the Colts left for Indianapolis. The Broncos are 0-5 in Baltimore since the Ravens entered the league in 1996.

Champ Bailey doesn't care. He has Peyton Manning on his side this time.

Manning is 8-0 against the Ravens since 2002 with half of those wins coming in Charm City, where the Broncos (10-3) will face the Ravens (9-4) Sunday in the marquee matchup of a weekend brimming with big games.

Bailey puts no stock whatsoever in Denver's dismal record in Baltimore that includes a 30-7 loss in 2009 and a 31-17 defeat a year later.

"We don't have quite the same roster we had the last two times we've been up there," Bailey said. "Hopefully that makes a difference."

The biggest change, of course, is Manning, dubbed "Raven Killer" by his teammate Justin Bannan, who lost five times to him as a member of the Ravens from 2006-09, with three of those losses coming in Baltimore.

Loathe to accept accolades or to compare this season or this team to any other, Manning doesn't want to hear about all the wins he's engineered in Baltimore.

"It's kind of like I never like it when somebody says I lost four straight. I don't agree when you say I won eight straight," Manning said. "Those are team wins and different teams, different players playing in those games. I really can't speak much to the past. All I can speak to is this year, and it's been such a different year for me — different team and what not."

Even taking into account the combined .356 winning percentage of their opponents during their eight-game winning streak, the Broncos are the hottest team in the NFL right now, and they're breathing down the necks of both the Texans and Patriots — two teams they lost to early on — for one of two AFC playoff byes.

This is a chance to show everyone, including themselves, that they're truly on a championship course, and what better barometer than Baltimore?

"This is one of the playoff type situations, so it's a great challenge ahead of us to see what we're all about," Broncos pass-rusher Elvis Dumervil said.

Although Baltimore coach John Harbaugh fired offensive coordinator Cam Cameron this week and replaced him with Jim Caldwell, the Ravens' two-game losing streak — their first since 2009 — can be attributed largely to a depleted defense that's missing much of its star power.

Ray Lewis (triceps) and Terrell Suggs (biceps) have yet to play a game together this season, although both practiced this week, and Lardarius Webb is on IR with a torn ACL.

"You know, they're not all gone," said Broncos slot receiver Brandon Stokley, another former Raven. "They've still got Ed Reed back there in the secondary. So, no matter who's in there, you play Baltimore in Baltimore, it's going to be a tough, hard-fought game."

The Broncos are preparing as though the injury-ravaged Ravens will have Lewis, their emotional leader, back on the field Sunday.

"He's very intense and there's definitely a difference whenever I was there and he was at practice and then when he wasn't at practice," Stokley said. "He reminds me of Peyton, how Peyton is, he just raises everybody's level of play up when he's around. The work that they put in, the attention to detail that they have, guys see that and guys know if these guys, as good as they are, are putting in that much work and attention to detail, then I have to do that, too."

The Broncos, who last lost on Oct. 7 in New England, have quickly acclimated themselves to their own excitable leader in Manning.

"I'm glad he's on my team," Bannan said. "I've played that guy a few times, a couple of times in the playoffs, and a guy like Peyton Manning, the pressure it puts on defensive coaches, when you're putting that game plan in on Wednesday and you're getting ready to play this guy, you wouldn't believe the pressure and intensity the defensive coordinator feels to figure out what this guy's doing."

"These guys would watch hours and hours and hours of film on him just to find something. I think he's one of the few guys where it's damn near impossible to find something on him that you can key on, he switches things up so well."

The Ravens' switch in offensive coordinators threw a wrinkle into the Broncos' preparation, but they're not expecting wholesale changes with Caldwell calling an NFL game for the first time in his career.

"I don't think they'll venture too far away," Broncos coach John Fox said. "Possibly there will be a little more no-huddle."

Manning spent a decade in Indy under the tutelage of Caldwell, who was in his first year as Baltimore's quarterbacks coach before taking the reins of the Ravens offense on Monday.

"Jim Caldwell had a tremendous influence on me," Manning said. "He was very organized, very detail-oriented, which, I'm a fan of that philosophy. He and I got into a good routine in meetings and on the practice field every day for the time we were together, when he was my quarterbacks coach, and I really thought he took my game to another level. He's also been a tremendous friend and mentor to me. I miss being around him every day, and I miss his friendship."

Final Word: AFC West

Bill Williamson
ESPN.com
December 14, 2012

Five nuggets of knowledge about Week 15:

Manning and Broncos have had different Ravens results: Peyton Manning was great against the Ravens in his career while with the Colts. The Denver Broncos, his new team, have not been great against the Ravens in Baltimore. Including the playoffs, Manning is 8-2 with 19 touchdowns and eight interceptions against the Ravens, and he has won eight straight games against them. Denver, on the other hand, is 0-5 at Baltimore, including the postseason. Something has to give. The Broncos will feel good about their chances of getting their first win against the Ravens on the road if the game is close in the second half. Manning has been masterful in the second half of games. According to ESPN Stats & Information, Manning has 19 touchdowns in the second half of games this season. In the fourth quarter, Manning has thrown nine touchdown passes with no interceptions.

Chargers miss Tolbert: The Chargers' running game is struggling. San Diego hasn't had a 100-yard rusher this season, and the run game has been particularly flat in recent weeks. Ryan Mathews has been just so-so, and there is a need for a back who can get tough yards. The Chargers miss Mike Tolbert and will face him Sunday. He left San Diego in free agency for Carolina but hasn't helped the Panthers much, with 90 yards rushing on 30 carries as well as 24 catches. Tolbert was a big part of the Chargers' offense in recent seasons. He was always there for tough yards and timely catches, and he was a special-teams star. Not signing Tolbert goes down as one of the team's bigger recent miscues.

Oakland's draft status will be watched closely: The Raiders, at 3-10, are on pace for the No. 3 pick. But they can end up anywhere in the top 10. The Raiders' three final games are at home against Kansas City on Sunday, at Carolina and then at San Diego. The Chiefs are on pace for the No. 1 pick, Carolina the No. 5 pick and the Chargers the No. 9 pick. Thus, each Oakland game will have an impact, directly and in tiebreakers, on determining the top 10 picks.

Chiefs are lousy in divisional games: The Chiefs hope their AFC West luck changes Sunday at Oakland. The 2-11 Chiefs are 0-4 against AFC West opponents, and the games have not been close. Heading into Week 14, the Chiefs had the worst division-game point differential in the NFL in being outscored by 53 points. However, the Cardinals let the Chiefs off the hook by taking a 58-0 drubbing at Seattle. The Cardinals are 1-4 in NFC West games and have been outscored by 103 points in division games. The Chiefs certainly don't want to overtake the Cardinals in that category this week.

Broncos, Ravens going in different directions: Denver, which is 10-3 and on pace for the No. 3 seed in the AFC playoffs, has won eight straight games, which is the current longest win streak in the NFL. Baltimore saw its 15-game home win streak snapped against Pittsburgh in Week 13. The Ravens haven't lost two straight at home since 2007.

5 non-QB MVP candidates, John Elway talks Peyton Manning's value

Will Brinson
CBSSports.com
December 14, 2012

The MVP is the highest-possible honor awarded to anyone in the NFL. Unfortunately, it's devolved from the "most valuable player" to the "most valuable quarterback on the team with the most wins."

This isn't necessarily a bad thing. There are often some pretty phenomenal quarterback performances from quarterbacks in the NFL each year and we're seeing a pair of them from the Patriots Tom Brady and the Broncos Peyton Manning, two guys routinely on the list of worthy MVP candidates over the last decade or so.

But since 1990, just six non-quarterbacks have won the MVP, with Barry Sanders also tying Brett Favre in 1997. So when Sportsbook.ag released MVP odds this week, it wasn't surprising at all to see Adrian Peterson -- a man with a reasonable shot at breaking Eric Dickerson's single-season rushing record -- listed far behind the quarterbacks. Manning is the favorite at 2-7 odds, Tom Brady is listed at 5-2, Matt Ryan is 6-1 and then Peterson checks in at 8-1.

The argument for quarterbacks sounds sensible: take Manning or Brady off their respective teams and what happens? Obviously a two-win season ... right? Not exactly; Matt Cassel filled in for Brady on the Patriots in 2008 (in between Brady MVP awards) and won 11 games. Manning missed 2011 and the Colts stunk, but they're right back in the playoffs with Andrew Luck.

Few people have a better first-hand understanding of what it means to have a team with -- and without -- Manning than Broncos VP of Operations (and 1987 NFL MVP) John Elway, who brought Peyton to Denver this offseason.

When I spoke with Elway, who's working with Dove as part of their "Journey to Comfort" campaign, he wholeheartedly stumped for Manning as the MVP this season, pointing out that Peyton changed the culture in Denver while producing one of the most dominant seasons of his career.

"You know, there's no question [he deserves MVP consideration] if you look at Peyton's numbers this year, I think he leads the league in passing yards," Elway said after laughing if could objectively analyze at the MVP race. "And I think we've won eight in a row now, so there's no question. Obviously I can't be objective but from the outside, I think you have to look at what he's done, not just on the field but off the field as well in bringing everyone together. And we talked about that mentality of 'We're now competing for Super Bowls' it just makes it that much better for everyone else."

But is Peyton definitely more deserving of the award than, say, Adrian Peterson during a 2,000-yard rushing season? Or Calvin Johnson if he breaks Jerry Rice's record?

The inherent problem is that "MVP" doesn't tell the whole story when it comes to the award because, simply based on the impact they have on the game, quarterbacks are inherently more valuable, something Elway echoed when asked about other big seasons from non-quarterbacks around the NFL in 2012.

"It depends on how you're looking at it. I'm not sure it's *named* right," Elway said. "It should be 'Player of the Year,' not 'MVP.' If you're strictly talking MVP, obviously the quarterback is the guy who touches the ball every single down. So the quarterback is automatically more valuable. The importance of the quarterback is so important in the game. So if you don't have 'that guy,' it's very difficult for you to compete. So that's what I'm saying -- it's different if you're talking about Player of the Year and you're talking about Johnson and Peterson up in Minnesota and Peyton's in that conversation and now you're looking at who's having the best year.

"But if you're really truly talking about an MVP, I don't think anyone can beat a Peyton Manning because of the value he brings to the table. And that's what you're talking about is most valuable, and sitting at 10-3, there's a lot of value there."

He's right: Denver has Baltimore, Cleveland and Kansas City on the schedule to close out the season. If they finish with 13 wins -- not that unlikely with the way they've played this year and the quality of opponent -- it's quite an indication of how much Manning is worth. The Broncos won eight games in 2011, but it required a number miraculous finishes and a Chargers/Raiders/Chiefs collapse to pull off.

And unlike baseball, we don't have a true way to determine exactly how many wins a single football player is worth.

What happens if you take All Day away from the Vikings this year? Manning could take the Broncos to a 13-win team this season, but that doesn't necessarily mean he's "worth five wins." Gauging Peterson's value is even more difficult: this is a seven-win Vikings team with a quarterback who's averaging 184.3 yards per game and six yards per attempt. They won two games last year and Peterson played in 12 of them. The Minnesota passing game ceased to exist when Percy Harvin went down. Have they been dominant at any point in time? Not really, no. But the one-legged man has carried them throughout this year, averaging an impossible 165 yards per game over the past four games.

We can't just imagine what the Patriots would look like without Brady or the Vikings without Peterson. Presumably both teams would do a decent job of filling their position and, presumably, it wouldn't involve Ryan Lindley or Beanie Wells.

So let's take a list of running backs in the NFL with at least 50 carries this season and plug in a couple of names for Peterson. We get 64 running backs, with the "average" back in terms of yardage gained this season being Alex Green. He's

below guys like Bryce Brown but above guys like Mark Ingram and Donald Brown. Five times this season, the Vikings have more rushing yards than passing yards. You give Ponder and the Vikings one of those guys and they win, at best, two games this year.

On the other hand, let's take all the quarterbacks with 50 passing attempts this season. We get a list of 42 quarterbacks, with Ryan Tannehill checking in at the "average." Below Tannehill are Jay Cutler, Ben Roethlisberger and Russell Wilson. Robert Griffin III is 18th.

I don't want to ask whether you'd rather have Brady/Green versus Cutler/Peterson, because most people will scoff and say the Patriots win with below-average backs. But that's looking at things in the wrong way. It's assuming you have Bill Belichick and all that comes along with New England, not to mention an offensive line that doesn't routinely put Cutler's life at risk.

That's not a luxury you'd have building a team; but if you're going from scratch and want to maximize talent, it's not as big a lock. Additionally, think about how far Peterson's performing against the base level of competition right now, not to mention historically.

There's a fun meme about Greg Jennings putting the team on his back -- that's literally what AP's done, and he's done it on a reconstructed leg.

He won't win MVP, and there's no chance that any of the guys below will either. I agree with Elway (and many other people) that quarterbacks are more *valuable* to teams in the NFL. But the following five guys deserve MVP consideration, even if they don't play quarterback for a team with a pile of wins.

5. Calvin Johnson, WR, Lions

If you want to extend the "what would the Lions be doing with an average receiver in place of Megatron" argument, well, don't bother. Because an average receiver is human, unlike Calvin Johnson, a cyborg sent to Earth in order to destroy receiving records.

Johnson needs 303 yards to break Jerry Rice's single-season receiving record of 1,848 yards that he set in 1995. And Johnson is gunning for it too.

"It's definitely something that I take joy in that my teammates are right behind me on this thing," Johnson said. "They want me to get it as much as I want to get it."

Johnson might break Rice's record and that could garner him Offensive Player of the Year consideration, but he won't *sniff* MVP because the Lions won't finish better than 4-9. (And with five-straight losses heading into Week 15, that would be impressive.)

4. Von Miller, LB, Broncos

I asked Elway about Miller as well and, obviously, the Broncos VP was effusive in his praise of the potential Defensive Player of the Year.

"He's been unbelievable. It's a real credit to him to be able to bounce back -- he was Defensive Rookie of the Year last year -- but broke one hand last year so he played the second half of the season with one hand and he still won Rookie of the Year," Elway said. "And to come back and have the year he's having -- he's just so disruptive, not only with the sacks but with his tackles for a loss. He's got an interception for a touchdown and he just plays with great intensity.

"He's just a guy who brings that special thing on the defensive side of the ball for us that you can't coach and very, very few people have and that's the athleticism that he's able to take to the field."

Elway also pointed out how "much more well-rounded" Miller's game become in his second year -- the bespectacled linebacker is dropping into coverage more often, disrupting the run game, spying on running quarterbacks like Cam Newton, piling up sacks and just generally destroying defenses.

Manning is the big difference on the Broncos, but Miller's contributions on the defensive end shouldn't be ignored either.

3. Aldon Smith, DE, 49ers

Do you know how many sacks Smith has coming into Week 15? Because you might think it's a lot, but it's actually 19.5. That's not "a lot." That's "on pace to shatter the single-season record."

In fact, Smith has the ninth-most sacks in a single season in NFL history *right now*. He needs just three more sacks to tie the record set by Michael Strahan in 2001 and he gets to play the Cardinals one more time. The last time out against Arizona, Smith recorded two sacks and he picked up another against the Seahawks the first time the 49ers matched up against Seattle. Smith will get a shot at Russell Wilson again in Week 16 after trying to take down Tom Brady on Sunday night this week.

It's easy to dismiss records like passing yards and receiving yards as a byproduct of a league that's pass-happy. *Maybe* you could make the case that more dropbacks equate to more sacks. But it's irrelevant -- Smith's having a major impact on one of the best defenses in the NFL and making life hell on quarterbacks right now.

2. J.J. Watt, DE, Texans

You could say that Watt's "slowed down" since the midseason hype propelled him to be our clear-cut choice for Defensive Player of the Year at the halfway mark. But

that's not really true: Watt has six sacks in his last four games, despite being shutout against the Patriots on Monday night in Week 14.

He's an absolute defensive playmaker from the 3-4 defensive-end position, where players aren't supposed to make plays like he does. Watt has 15 pass deflections, two forced fumbles, 16.5 sacks and two fumble recoveries.

The Wisconsin product's become a force in every facet of the game, and is only left out of the MVP discussion because of what side of the ball he plays on. Oh, and he started off too hot, so people aren't enamored with discussing what he's doing right now. Smith and Miller coming on strong at different points in the year don't exactly help him out publicly either.

But with two games against a porous Colts offensive line and a quarterback in Andrew Luck who likes to hold the ball for a long time, don't sleep on Watt making a run at Strahan's record either.

1. Adrian Peterson, RB, Vikings

I've already talked enough about Peterson, but what happens if AP manages to break Dickerson's record and the Vikings get into the playoffs at either 9-7 or 10-6? It's not a likely scenario at all, but if it happens, it means that Peterson put the team on his back and carried them into the postseason.

And that's the very definition of valuable.

Broncos Game Preview vs. Ravens: Analysis, prediction, TV info

Andrew Mason
CBSSports.com
December 14, 2012

Broncos at Ravens -- Week 15

Where: M&T Bank Stadium, Baltimore (grass, outdoors)

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

Spread: Broncos by 3

Forecast: Mostly cloudy, chance of light rain, 48-52 degrees.

Records: Broncos (10-3; AFC West 5-0); Raiders (9-4; AFC North 4-1)

Past results: Two most recent meetings -- Oct. 10, 2010: Ravens 31, Broncos 17; Nov. 1, 2009: Ravens 30, Broncos 7. **Series record:** Ravens lead 5-3.

What matters: The Broncos have clinched the AFC West title and the playoff spot that goes with it. The Ravens have yet to seal anything and appear to be on the ropes after losing their last two games, each by a field goal, and saw offensive coordinator Cam Cameron fired -- an unusual step for a team on the cusp of clinching its fifth-consecutive postseason appearance and sixth in seven seasons.

Broncos QB Peyton Manning knows new Baltimore offensive coordinator Jim Caldwell as few others do from their time together in Indianapolis. Caldwell was Manning's quarterbacks coach from 2002-08 and then his head coach the following three seasons. But even Manning doesn't know how Caldwell will call Sunday's game because the play-calling in Indianapolis was handled by Tom Moore and eventually Clyde Christensen. What the Broncos do foresee is more no-huddle looks from the Ravens, but as CB Champ Bailey said Thursday, "You don't know what to expect."

History works for and against the Broncos. They're 0-5 all-time against the Ravens in Baltimore, including a 2000 wild-card loss, and haven't come within 10 points of them in any games there. But Manning has won eight consecutive games over the Ravens, including four in Baltimore, and has been so dominant at their expense that former Ravens DT Justin Bannan -- now a Bronco -- said that in the locker room, Manning was dubbed "The Baltimore Killer."

Who matters: RB Knowshon Moreno has found a rhythm since becoming the Broncos' starter in the wake of Willis McGahee's knee injury and had his first 100-

yard game in two years last week at Oakland. Moreno's emergence followed two days of practice in which the Broncos re-emphasized the running game, a focus that should continue this weekend as the Broncos try to find the offensive balance that they lacked through much of the season.

"It keeps the defense guessing," Broncos coach John Fox said. "We do our best every week to try to create that balance."

Bailey has usually been matched up in one-on-one coverage against the opponent's top receiver, so that would likely place him against Ravens WR Anquan Boldin. Bailey has allowed just one touchdown this season, but Boldin is different than most receivers he'll face.

"He's actually like a running back out there but with receiver skills, and it's crazy, because he creates some matchup problems because he'll push you around. He'll do whatever it takes to get open," Bailey said.

Key matchup: Broncos DE/LB Von Miller and DE Elvis Dumervil vs. Ravens OTs Michael Oher and Kelechi Osemele. The Broncos' clearest path to defusing the Ravens' offense is to knock QB Joe Flacco off his rhythm, and few teams have been better at doing that to opposing quarterbacks than the Broncos. Flacco has proven susceptible to pressure, and the Ravens are 1-3 when he's been held to a quarterback rating under 75.0.

Miller has been a terror throughout the season and in recent weeks has been virtually unstoppable. He has 10 sacks and five forced fumbles in his last six games, and has at least one sack in each of those games. But they'd like to get Dumervil more involved, and although he has two quarterback hits in the last three games, he hasn't had a sack since a strip-sack-fumble of San Diego QB Philip Rivers on Nov. 18.

Injuries of note: Broncos LB Wesley Woodyard is questionable after practicing all week on a limited basis. He missed the Dec. 6 game at Oakland because of a sprained right ankle, but when asked this week about his status, declared, "I'm playing." ... RG Chris Kuper is questionable with a bothersome left ankle, which he sprained it Nov. 4 at Cincinnati but returned two weeks later. But the scar tissue in the ankle became too painful for him to play at Oakland. The ankle is the same one that was fractured and suffered torn ligaments Jan. 1.

Inside stuff: The Broncos forged their best regular season since 2005 in spite of being on a pace for a franchise-worst ratio of fumble recovery. Denver has recovered 29.7 percent of the fumbles this year (11 of 37), the lowest percentage in the league. It's 4.4 percent below the previous club-record low (34.1 percent), established in the strike-shortened 1982 season. Over the Broncos' 53-season history, they've recovered 50.3 percent of the 2,920 fumbles.

Connections: RB Willis McGahee, who is on injured reserve, played in Baltimore from 2007-10. ... DT Justin Bannan played four seasons (2006-09) in Baltimore. ...

WR Matt Willis was on the Ravens' 53-man roster in 2007 and their practice squad a year later. ... S Jim Leonhard played with the Ravens in 2008. ... WR Brandon Stokley broke into the league with Baltimore (1999-2002) and scored the Ravens' first touchdown in Super Bowl XXXV. ... Broncos defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio was Baltimore's linebackers coach from 1999-2001. ... Ravens inside LBs coach Don "Wink" Martindale was the Broncos' defensive coordinator in 2010. ... Ravens DT Ryan McBean, currently on injured reserve, played the 2009-11 seasons for the Broncos.

Stat you should know: Flacco has been sacked once every 15.4 pass plays. Denver has sacked opposing quarterbacks once every 13.0 pass plays.

Record watch: Miller is a sack from tying the Broncos' franchise record of 17, set by Dumervil in 2009, and needs a forced fumble to break Dennis Smith's franchise record for forced fumbles in a season (six, 1989). ... Manning needs 188 yards to extend his NFL record of 4,000-yard passing seasons to 12.

Looking ahead: The Broncos close the regular season with a homestand against Cleveland and Kansas City. Barring something calamitous in Baltimore, they will be heavy favorites in both games. But even if the Broncos win out, they can't get a playoff bye unless the Patriots lose at least once or the Texans lose at least twice.

Prediction: Broncos 31, Ravens 27.

The Art of the Strip-Sack

Stuart Zaas
DenverBroncos.com
December 14, 2012

The Broncos have forced 11 strip-sacks on the season, and are 7-1 in those games.

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- Eleven times this season, opposing quarterbacks have dropped back to pass, only to wind up on the ground with the football bouncing on the turf next to them.

Strip-sacks have been the Broncos' specialty this season, led by the pass-rushing force of Von Miller and Elvis Dumervil, who have combined for 10 of the game-changing plays this season.

'A NOSE FOR THE BALL'

When a defensive player breaks into the backfield, his main objective is to get the quarterback down for a sack.

The Broncos have made it a point to go a step further and work to force a turnover as well.

"There was a point when I would just try to bring the guy down," said Dumervil, who leads the club with six strip-sacks this season. "But it's double impact when you get that ball out."

Dumervil's teammates on the defensive line know how hard it is to get a sack, let alone to also knock the ball out.

"He is one of the best at it," defensive tackle Mitch Unrein said. "I had one opportunity this year against Tampa, coming around, and I didn't even think about it. That's something that he does all the time. It's pretty impressive. To be that conscious of knowing where the quarterback is holding the ball and just to go for the ball, because that's a way bigger play than getting just a sack."

Miller is emerging as just as big of a threat to jar the ball loose from quarterbacks in recent weeks. He ranks second on the club with four strip-sacks, all of which have come in the past four games.

It's a skill that Miller has credited Dumervil with helping him hone.

"It just has to be cerebral," Miller said. "It's muscle memory. Every time Elvis gets there, he is going after the ball. That's what makes him so good. It's cerebral with him. He doesn't really have to think about it. It just happens."

Ripping the ball loose from a quarterback's grip takes focus and self-control that not many players have when they're running full-steam at the opposing signal caller.

Just to get an opportunity at a sack often requires them to beat multiple offensive linemen, possibly a running back kept in the backfield for protection and the quarterback himself.

"(Dumervil) has a nose for the ball," Unrein said. "You have to almost control your emotions when you're getting close to the quarterback like that, and you have to have the awareness to know where the quarterback is holding the ball and go for it."

LIKE BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

The strip-sacking skill didn't just come overnight.

Dumervil said it is something that he has worked at since his college career at Louisville.

"You just have to make a conscious effort every time – even in practice," the seventh-year defensive end said. "That's one thing I learned in college."

Throughout OTAs, minicamps, training camp and even into the season, Broncos defensive players go through a practice drill where they come around the edge and swipe at a rubber football attached to the arm of a tackling pad.

"You have to practice it and practice it," Dumervil said. "You can't hit our quarterback but you can practice swinging that arm, hitting an imaginary quarterback."

Every defensive player practices that skill, not just the defensive linemen.

The practice-field simulation has transferred to gameday, where every player – whether it be a lineman, linebacker or even a blitzing defensive back – has it engrained in their mind to go after both the sack and the strip.

"I think there is an emphasis placed on it every day in practice," Defensive Line Coach Jay Rodgers said. "We do drills and we practice that. I think what you have to do is put them in a position that they know what to do every time they get that opportunity."

Defensive tackle Justin Bannan is in his 11th season in the league and knows just how rare Dumervil's combination of physical and mental control is.

"It's extremely hard to do," Bannan said. "He knows how to operate his body, which is great, and it's great at his position. He has crafted it over the years. It's not

something that just comes over night. It comes down to timing. He understands when it gets to a certain point, when to rip that ball out. He has a great knack for that."

As with most aspects of football, players rely on instinct when the ball is snapped.

For Dumervil, finding the ball as he closes in on quarterbacks is second nature.

"Once you get the feel of it, it slows down," Dumervil said. "It's to the point when I get to the quarterback, it's like when I wake up and brush my teeth. I go for that ball."

'GAME-WRECKERS'

The Broncos' propensity for knocking the ball loose in the backfield has garnered the attention of opposing teams in recent weeks.

"They get their hands on the ball," Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco said. "They have a good knack for doing it ... We're definitely going to have to be aware of it."

This week, avoiding a strip-sack has been a point of emphasis for Flacco and the Ravens, who have surrendered a strip-sack in each of their four losses this year.

Opposing defenses have strip-sacked Flacco in each of the team's past three games.

"Well, turnovers hurt us," Flacco said. "Anytime you lose the ball in the pocket, you look at yourself and see what you have to do. Those guys made good plays, but you have to hold onto the ball."

Baltimore is 8-0 this season when Flacco is not strip-sacked, 1-4 when he is.

Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh has watched the Broncos on tape and knows how dangerous their pass-rush duo is, especially as of late.

"They have game-wreckers on both ends," Harbaugh said. "(Miller) and Elvis are just great players off the edge, run and pass. They can turn the game around at any point in time and you have to know where they're at and what they're doing at all times."

'ONE OF THE BIGGEST PLAYS IN FOOTBALL'

After not registering a single sack-fumble in the first three weeks of the season, Denver has averaged one per game since Week 4. Not coincidentally, the Broncos are 8-1 since then.

"Guys who get sacks are different than guys are getting forced fumble sacks," Dumervil said. "It's big. It's huge. Von is learning that as well and doing a great job with it. Week in and week out, we both try to get the ball out. If we can both create sacked forced fumbles, it just helps the team."

Of the team's 11 strip-sacks, the Broncos have recovered four of the loose balls. One was returned for a touchdown, two resulted in touchdowns on the subsequent possession and one allowed the team to take a knee to end the game.

"Every time you get to the quarterback, you want to make a point to not only just bring him down, but maybe force a fumble, get a turnover and a short field for the offense, allow the offense to score points," Dumervil said. "It just helps the game. That's what I try to accomplish."

Even when Denver hasn't recovered the fumble, four have come on third or fourth down to end a drive.

"I think the sack, caused fumble and the defense recovering the ball is probably one of the biggest plays in football," Miller said.

Sam Davis contributed to this report

Broncos at Ravens: What to Watch For

Sam Davis
DenverBroncos.com
December 14, 2012

The Broncos head to Baltimore in search of their ninth straight win.

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- The Broncos travel to Baltimore in search of their ninth straight win, which would tie for the third-longest streak in franchise history. Below is a gathering of notes and numbers concerning Sunday's AFC clash.

SERIES HISTORY

The Broncos and Ravens have faced off nine times in NFL history, including one playoff contest. Denver is 3-6 in the series.

Both teams have held down home field advantage, as Denver is 3-1 when hosting the Ravens and Baltimore is 5-0 at home against the Broncos, with the lone playoff victory coming in the AFC Wild Card Round in 2000.

Most recently, the Ravens defeated the Broncos 31-17 in October of 2010 in Baltimore.

BRONCOS PLAYERS VS. BALTIMORE

Cornerback Champ Bailey owns two interceptions, seven passes defended and a forced fumble in his five career games against Baltimore.

Quarterback Peyton Manning has won his last eight games against Baltimore, including two playoff victories. He has thrown for three or more touchdowns three times on the Ravens and has a quarterback rating of 103.8 in his career against the club.

Tight end Jacob Tamme made one catch in his last game against the Ravens. It was for a 13-yard touchdown.

Linebacker D.J. Williams has recorded double-digit tackling performances in each of his last two trips to Baltimore, totaling 26 tackles.

NOTEWORTHY NUMBERS

The Broncos enter Week 15 ranked fourth in both total offense and total defense, making them the only NFL club in the top five in each category.

The Broncos rank in the top 10 in three major offensive categories: yards per game (390.1, 4th), yards per play (5.9, 7th) and points per game (28.8, 2rd). The Ravens are 18th (344.4), 16th (5.5) and ninth (25.5) in those same categories.

The Ravens have out-rushed the Broncos by a narrow margin, averaging 108.8 yards per game on the ground to Denver's 106.1.

The Broncos' 284 passing yards per game are nearly 30 yards greater than Baltimore's average of 235.5.

Denver has allowed 19 sacks on the year, the third-lowest total in the league. The Ravens have allowed 31 sacks. Only nine teams in the league have given up more than 31 sacks.

The Broncos offense is fifth in the league in third-down conversion percentage, moving the chains on 44.1% of third downs.

The Ravens are sixth in the league in red zone offense, finding the end zone on 59 percent of their trips inside their opponents' 20-yard line.

Defensively, Denver ranks in the top four in three major categories: yards per game (309.4, 4th), yards per play (4.8, 3rd) and points per game (19.8, 4th).

Baltimore ranks 25th in run defense, allowing 128.3 rushing yards per game, and 10th in pass defense, surrendering 246.3 yards per game.

Denver ranks sixth in run defense, allowing 93.7 rushing yards per game, and seventh in pass defense, giving up 215.7 yards through the air.

The Ravens have the best red zone defense in the league. Opponents score on only 40 percent of their trips inside the Baltimore 20-yard line.

Each defense is in the top half of the league in takeaways. Denver is tied for 15th with 21, while Baltimore is tied for seventh with 25.

ANY-MINUTE MILESTONES

A win in Baltimore would be the team's ninth straight, tying for the third-longest winning streak in Broncos history.

With 34 interceptions as a Bronco, cornerback Champ Bailey needs one more to pass Tyrone Braxton for sole possession of fourth place in franchise history.

Cornerback Omar Bolden is one special-teams tackle shy of becoming the 13th Broncos rookie since 1994 to record at least 10 special-teams stops.

With eight touchdown receptions on the year, wide receiver Eric Decker is one shy of setting a new career high.

Defensive end Elvis Dumervil and linebacker Von Miller can each pass Dennis Smith for the most fumbles forced by a Bronco in a single season since the statistic was tracked beginning in 1984. They have six forced fumbles a piece.

Miller needs one sack to tie Dumervil for the most single-season sacks in franchise history.

Wide receiver Trindon Holliday needs one return touchdown to become the third player in Broncos history with at least three special-teams return scores in a single season.

Tight end Joel Dreessen is two receptions shy of matching a career high of 36.

Linebacker Wesley Woodyard needs three tackles to reach the century mark for the first time in his five-year career.

BACK TO B-MORE

Defensive tackle Justin Bannan played 63 games and made 19 starts for Baltimore in his four seasons with the club from 2006-2009.

Wide receiver Matthew Willis spent the 2007 season on the Ravens' active roster and also spent time on the team's practice squad in 2008.

Safety Jim Leonhard spent the 2008 season as a Raven, recording 85 tackles, one sack and a pick-six.

Wide receiver Brandon Stokley played four years for the Ravens from 1999-2002. He was a member of the club's Super Bowl XXXV championship team.

Defensive Coordinator Jack Del Rio coached Baltimore's linebackers for three years from 1999-2001 and won a title with the club in 2000.

Ravens Week: Friday Injury Report

Sam Davis
 DenverBroncos.com
 December 14, 2012

Below are the injury reports and game statuses for the Broncos and Ravens after Friday's practices.

DENVER BRONCOS

PLAYER	INJURY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	GAME STATUS
G Chris Kuper	Anke	Limited	Limited	Limited	Questionable
LB Wesley	Ankle	Limited	Limited	Limited	Questionable
Woodayrd	Knee	Full	Full	Full	Probable
WR Trindon	Shoulder	Full	Full	Full	Probable
Holliday	Knee	Full	Full	Full	Probable
WR Demaryius	Non-Injury	-	-	DNP	Probable
Thomas	Related				-
WR Matthew Willis					
DE Robert Ayers					

BALTIMORE RAVENS

PLAYER	INJURY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	GAME STATUS
LB Jameel McClain	Neck	Out	Out	Out	Out
LB Dannell Ellerbe	Ankle	DNP	Limited	Limited	Questionable
DT Arthur Jones	Shoulder	DNP	Limited	Limited	Questionable
FB Vonta Leach	Ankle	DNP	DNP	Limited	Questionable
DE Pernell McPhee	Thigh	DNP	DNP	Limited	Questionable
S Bernard Pollard	Chest	DNP	DNP	DNP	Questionable
G Marshal Yanda	Ankle	DNP	DNP	DNP	Questionable
TE Ed Dickson	Knee	Limited	Limited	Limited	Doubtful
RB Bernard Pierce	Back	Limited	Limited	Limited	Probable
RB Ray Rice	Hip	Limited	Limited	Limited	Probable
LB Terrell Suggs	Biceps	Limited	Full	Full	Questionable
CB Chykie Brown	Knee	-	Full	Full	Probable
WR Jacoby Jones	Ankle	Full	Full	Full	Probable
S Ed Reed	Shoulder	Full	Full	Full	Probable
CB Jimmy Smith	Abdomen	Full	Full	Full	Questionable
WR Deonte	Thigh	Full	Full	Full	Probable
Thompson	Thigh	Full	Full	Full	Probable
WR LaQuan Williams					

One Play at a Time

Von Miller
DenverBroncos.com
December 14, 2012

We've had a great streak so far, and we're hoping to extend it another game this weekend in Baltimore.

We just have to go out there and keep doing what we've been doing.

I've heard how tough of a place Baltimore is to play for the Broncos — and all teams — historically. We have a different team this year and if we just keep taking it one play at a time, I know what we can do.

We've all heard about how Ray Lewis might be back this weekend. He's a player that I've looked up to and I think it'd be great just to see him and watch him compete. I just hope our defense can play a little bit better than theirs and we can edge them out.

Ray Rice is a tough test for us out of the backfield. He's compact and has great vision. He is quick, fast and strong. He has all the qualities of a great running back.

We have to take it one play at a time and play the type of football that we know how to play and we can get it done.

-Gig em!

Cheerleaders Reflect on Woodyard's Toy Drive

Cheerleaders
DenverBroncos.com
December 14, 2012

Hi Broncos Country!

I hope you are all enjoying the holiday season so far. Despite the recent cold weather, this is most definitely my favorite time of the year!

My name is Kara and this is my second year as a DBC. This season has been so exciting and full of amazing memories so far. This past Monday night added to these memories as I was able to share being a part of an incredible cause with a few of my teammates. Wesley Woodyard hosted the Third Annual 16Ways Foundation's Toy Drive. The event aimed to collect as many toys as possible that will be given to children that otherwise would not receive gifts on Christmas.

My teammate Lauren and I started off the evening by gathering the gifts that people were bringing in and placing them around the tree. It was amazing to see the overwhelming amount of support and generosity that people had in providing the toys. After about 15 minutes of organizing the gifts, one of the volunteers told me that the amount of toys was already double what was donated last year. Although I was not at the drive last year, this did not surprise me, as every time Lauren and I turned around, more and more people were coming in and handing us toys.

This is one of the very reasons why I love this time of the year so much. To experience and see the generosity that our community has is such a privilege and unbelievably humbling. It is a reminder of how gracious the Broncos fan base is, and I sincerely believe that Denver has the best fans in the NFL. Not only are you all so loyal to the team, but you continue to show your generosity and commitment to making Denver such a great place. I wish you all a safe and joyful holiday season! Go Broncos!

Kara