

# Broncos' John Fox sees even bigger things from Von Miller in '13

Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
March 20, 2013

PHOENIX — In whatever becomes of Von Miller's career as a Broncos linebacker, he always will be the first player selected in the NFL draft during John Elway's and John Fox's tenure.

Miller is coming off a season in which he finished with 18½ sacks, 28 tackles for loss and six forced fumbles. Fox said Tuesday at the league meetings he sees far more to come for Miller.

"It's not fair to say, but I'm just telling you, I know the sky is the limit," Fox said. "I think the reason he improved — physically, he's the same cat — (but) mentally, it's being able to key and diagnose things quicker."

Fox pointed to Miller's interception return for a touchdown against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in December as the kind of play Miller made this past season that he likely would not have made as a rookie.

"He had a pick-six this year. He would haven't done that (as a rookie)," Fox said. "Those types of things—understanding coverages, understanding how offenses try to exploit him — all the things he's experienced, all of the sudden that great athletic ability is used even more."

**More on Welker.** A day after New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft went on the offensive about his team's negotiations with Wes Welker, the topic was the focus of plenty of conversation around the league meetings.

Welker's agent, Athletes First and specifically David Dunn, released a statement to NFL.com that characterized the Patriots' offer to Welker as "take it or leave it."

Kraft said Monday the Patriots offered Welker a two-year deal worth "\$10 million plus incentives." Welker signed a two-year, \$12 million deal with the Broncos that included a \$4 million signing bonus.

Kraft also added: "We, in fact, offered him a better deal."

Asked about it Tuesday, including Kraft's assessment that the Broncos had essentially signed Welker to a one-year deal because of the \$8 million salary-cap

hit that comes in 2014, Elway said he had no comment, adding, "Nothing other than we're excited to have Wes."

**Moving forward.** The Broncos have a long list of players working back from offseason surgeries, including left tackle Ryan Clady (shoulder), guard Chris Kuper (ankle), tackle Orlando Franklin (toe) and running back Knowshon Moreno (knee).

Fox said all of the players working with the Broncos' medical staff are on schedule, but offered a caveat.

"It's like when you ask about how did the surgery go, you say it was a successful surgery," Fox said. "You never say, 'Really, we had a tough day today. We weren't very good. We blew it in the fourth quarter.' Much like rehab, it's 'Oh, we're on schedule, coach.' Kind of like our (practice) fields — we're on schedule there too."

The Broncos are reconstructing their two grass fields at their Dove Valley complex, adding a heating system under both to prevent them from freezing during the season's colder months.

**Footnotes.** The NFL's owners voted Tuesday to eliminate peel-back blocks below the knees and put more restrictions on defenses in rushing on field-goal attempts and extra points. Defenses no longer can have more than six players on either side of the center and can't have players push other players into the blockers to create a gap. ... The owners are expected to vote to eliminate the so-called "tuck" rule Wednesday, which would turn some controversial plays that had been called incomplete passes by quarterbacks, into fumbles.

# John Elway, John Fox on Broncos' offseason -- so far

By Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
March 20, 2013

PHOENIX — As a coach who came through the ranks on the defensive side of the ball, Broncos coach John Fox knows the value of an edge rusher.

And given the Broncos' multiyear offer to Elvis Dumervil, Fox made it clear Tuesday he'd like to move on from the failed fax that killed Dumervil's contract last week and re-sign the defensive end.

"It's one of those things that just happens," Fox said. "Sometimes unfortunate things happen and now we'll move on. He's definitely in the mix. He's a player I've enjoyed coaching. He's done good things for our staff, defensively, our football team. He's definitely a guy who is in the mix for us, will be in the mix, should be in the mix. And we'll see where that takes us."

But the Dumervil drama is just one part of the Broncos' active offseason to this point, and Fox and executive vice president of football operations John Elway took some time Tuesday at the league meetings to address what's happened so far.

Elway vigorously refuted what has been almost a constant stream of media reports that the Broncos were one of the teams interested in acquiring New York Jets cornerback Darrelle Revis in a trade.

"He's under contract with the Jets, but we have no interest in (trading for) Darrelle Revis," Elway said.

Fox also said the Broncos had enough concern over the general health of their offensive line — four starters are coming off surgeries — to make signing guard Louis Vasquez a top priority in free agency. Vasquez, with a four-year deal, has received the biggest contract of any Broncos acquisition this offseason.

"Oh, definitely, that was one of the big reasons for the Louis Vasquez signing," Fox said. "We could've hoped that all those guys came back, but I'm not sure that would've been the smart thing to do. We should have great competition there. I don't think any of those guys will be afraid of the competition."

# Broncos coach John Fox aims to guide draft picks "to the 2nd contract"

By Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
March 20, 2013

Yes, Broncos coach John Fox only had to look around a nicely appointed ballroom in an Arizona hotel Tuesday morning to see the kind of turnover there is in his profession, to see the kind of "win now" pressure that hangs over the business.

His offensive and defensive coordinators from the 2011 season — Mike McCoy and Dennis Allen — were seated at their own tables as somebody else's head coach just two seasons after Fox arrived in Denver.

Yes, Fox knows free agency forces player movement and that the Broncos have been one of the league's marquee players in the annual March auction, having signed Peyton Manning and Wes Welker in back-to-back offseasons.

But in the end, when the Broncos build a roster that can compete for the Super Bowl, Fox said the draft still remains the key component, from both a salary-cap and depth-chart perspective.

"Any time you're developing players, that's why it's good to draft well, you develop your own," Fox said. "Hopefully you get a lot of your draft picks to the second contract because now they know the Bronco Way, they know what to expect on and off the field. You kind of get them in your culture and those are really your core guys ideally and that's what we're trying to develop."

To that end, the Broncos have some of their "own" guys, their own draft picks who will be expected to move into more prominent roles. And since the Broncos have done the bulk of the work they're going to do in free agency in this first wave — pending Elvis Dumervil's decision — those expectations are a substantial part of their offseason plan.

After an hour-long sit-down with Fox on Tuesday morning, here are some of the players carrying the biggest expectations:

- **Nate Irving, Steven Johnson.** The two will get a chance to compete for the middle linebacker spot, despite the fact the Broncos signed Stewart Bradley to a one-year deal in free agency.

While Bradley has primarily played the middle in his career, Fox pointed out that Bradley has gameday experience at all three linebacker spots.

But as a former third-round pick — in 2010 — the Broncos believe the time is now for Irving to step forward.

As Fox put it: "We like Nate. We're expecting big things from him, and I think he knows that."

- **Ronnie Hillman.** As not only an underclassman in last year's draft, but also one of the youngest players on the draft board overall, Hillman found himself both physically adjusting to the NFL game while also in a no-huddle offense with complicated pass-protection schemes.

Fox said Hillman's weight dropped to "189 pounds" when the 2012 season ended and that he expects Hillman will be far more ready to contribute this time around.

"If Ronnie Hillman went to a place where they just called a play and ran it, his transition would have probably been quicker than (with a quarterback) that's probably going to call one in 10 plays and nine of them are going to be passes and they're exotic protections that are changed right there for a rookie to look at," Fox said. "Our style of offense didn't help him much. And I think it takes a year to develop a pro body. He needs to be bigger and stronger and needs a full year to develop and train what I call a pro body. I think that will only help him."

- **Julius Thomas.** Fox went to great lengths Tuesday to talk about how much he believed Thomas had progressed as the 2012 season wore on. Thomas has struggled to regain the momentum he had in training camp during his rookie season following an ankle injury on his first NFL reception.

Thomas had ankle surgery last offseason, so he was not a full participant in the team's minicamps and other offseason work. He then found himself unable to crack a crowded depth chart and was a gameday inactive all season.

But the Broncos still think highly of Thomas. Their depth chart is still crowded at the position, especially when catches overall for the position figure to go down some with Welker's arrival, but Fox said "a lot of people don't realize how much Julius Thomas has improved."

# Wes Welker signing by Broncos likely leads Brandon Stokley to the door

By Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
March 20, 2013

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

**Q:** Don't you think they should also keep Brandon Stokley? He isn't that expensive and could be the fourth wide receiver in a four-wide formation and provide backup for the other three wide receivers.

**A:** Adam, the Broncos were fortunate this past season Stokley had been one of the players who ran routes for Peyton Manning during Manning's workouts at Duke University last offseason.

Stokley showed enough in those practices — and Manning ran them like full-blown practices — that Duke coach David Cutcliffe, a long-time Manning friend and his former offensive coordinator at Tennessee, told Stokley he should give the NFL another go.

To that point Stokley has said many times he believed his career was over.

Manning told the Broncos shortly after he signed last March, they should give Stokley a look as well. The Broncos eventually signed him to a one-year, \$925,000 deal that didn't include a signing bonus.

And at age 36, Stokley went on to become a rather key piece of the Broncos offense with 45 receptions primarily as a slot receiver. This offseason, the Broncos went into free agency believing that slot receiver was a key part of their offensive plan, given how teams had defended them this past season, pushing the help in coverage to the outside, usually on Demaryius Thomas.

So, they pursued Wes Welker. And if you had asked personnel people in the league in recent seasons to rank the slot receivers, most would have said Welker and Stokley were the top two.

But Welker is five years younger with 672 receptions over the last six seasons — the league's highest total over that span — including five years with at least 111 catches. In the five full seasons that Tom Brady and Welker played together — Brady missed almost all of the 2008 season with a knee injury — Brady targeted Welker on a whopping 27 percent of his pass attempts.

Welker's signing also shows the Broncos are, as they did as the 2012 season wore on, going to use a three-wide set more and more. Down the stretch, the Broncos had just five offensive snaps against the Browns in December when they didn't have at least three wide receivers in the formation. And in the playoff loss to the Ravens, the Broncos were in a three-wide set for all but seven snaps.

Overall, the Broncos used three wide receivers on 64 percent of their offensive snaps — excluding penalty plays.

Stokley's representatives have had some contact with the Broncos this offseason. Stokley and Manning have played golf together, etc., but there is nothing in the works there in terms of a potential deal.

When asked Tuesday at the NFL meetings in Phoenix if he had spoken to Manning about the Welker signing, Broncos coach John Fox said:

"Yeah. Oh yeah, he's excited. It's tough for him a little bit because he's good buddies with 'Stoke' (Stokley), and Stoke did a real good job for us. It's back to those relationships — players build them, too. They've got good buddies. A lot of time moving in this league can be tough. That was the downside. But I think everybody is pretty excited."

That doesn't sound like a team ready to bring Stokley back.

The Broncos will eye the wide receivers in the draft as well. They are looking for more depth at the position. The issue for Stokley and their roster at the moment is he doesn't play special teams.

And any receiver who isn't among the team's top three is going to have some kind of special teams duties, whether it is as a returner or in coverage in the kicking game.

Matt Willis, for example, hasn't made the roster in the last two years because of what he can do in the offense, but rather because he's been a regular on special teams who could fill in on offense if needed. But if the Broncos get past the draft, including signing whatever undrafted rookies they want, and still believe they need some additional help, they could revisit things with Stokley.

But at the moment that doesn't look very likely.

# Elvis Dumervil remains "in the mix" for Broncos, says coach John Fox

By Jeff Legwold  
The Denver Post  
March 19, 2013

PHOENIX — Just days after the failed fax heard 'round the football world, Broncos coach John Fox said defensive end Elvis Dumervil is still "in the mix" to return to the team.

Dumervil was released Friday after his signed, renegotiated contract did not arrive to the Broncos' Dove Valley complex before a 2 p.m. deadline. Dumervil is currently a free agent, and the Broncos have talked to both Dumervil and his new representative — CAA — about a potential deal to return.

The Pro Bowl defensive end was just one of many topics Fox covered in a 57-minute morning sit-down Tuesday at the NFL owners' meetings.

"At the end of the day, they waited and it didn't happen," Fox said of the failed renegotiation with Dumervil. "... It's one of those things that just happens, sometimes unfortunate things happen and now we'll move on.

"He's definitely in the mix. He's a player I know I've enjoyed coaching, he's done good things for our staff, defensively, our football team. He's definitely a guy who is in the mix for us, will be in the mix, should be in the mix. And we'll see where that takes us."

The Ravens are among the suitors for Dumervil, along with the Broncos, in a market where most of the big-money contracts have already been handed out.

Fox also addressed the Broncos' signing of wide receiver Wes Welker, saying he looked forward to a three-wide receiver set that included Welker, Demaryius Thomas and Eric Decker with Peyton Manning at quarterback.

"Having had to defend Wes for so many years, you learn to appreciate how tough a matchup he is," Fox said. "He's a tough matchup."

Fox also said newly signed guard Louis Vasquez was a "priority" for the team because the Broncos have four starting offensive linemen coming back from surgeries in some fashion.



Some of the Broncos' younger players, like center Philip Blake, linebacker Nate Irving, linebacker Steven Johnson and running back Ronnie Hillman, will be expected to play their way into increased roles this season.

Fox said he agreed with some potential rules changes to improve player safety, including a penalty and fines for players who use the crown of their helmets to strike an opponent, including running backs in the open field.

"The helmet is designed for protection, it's not a weapon," Fox said.

# Elvis Dumervil, Broncos negotiating; Ravens remain in picture

By Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
March 19, 2013

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — After stepping back to allow the fax fiasco to cool, the Broncos have returned to their pursuit of Elvis Dumervil.

"We've offered Elvis a contract," said John Elway, the Broncos' head of football operations. "We'd like to have Elvis back."

Elway would not get into details about the team's new proposal, but the expectation is it came in considerably less than the three-year, \$30 million contract that was offered, agreed to, but not executed Friday because the signed documents did not transfer in time to meet a 2 p.m. deadline.

When the deadline was missed, the Broncos released Dumervil to avoid guaranteeing his \$12 million salary in 2013. The team and Dumervil had agreed on a cut to \$8 million in 2013, but given the current free-agent market, the defensive end's new deal is expected to be reduced further.

There are other teams interested in Dumervil, including the Baltimore Ravens, so it may be a while before the Broncos get a resolution.

Another possible conflict is Dumervil's new agent, Tom Condon, also represents Dwight Freeney, who is included in the Broncos' backup plans. John Abraham is another possibility if the Broncos can't work out a deal with Dumervil.

# Broncos offer Elvis Dumervil contract

ESPN.com

March 19, 2013

After the fax faux pas and denied appeals, the Denver Broncos and free agent Elvis Dumervil may be close to a reconciliation.

"We've offered Elvis a contract," Broncos team president John Elway said Tuesday. "We'd like to have Elvis back."

Elway did not delve into specifics of the offer.

Dumervil and the Broncos agreed upon a restructured contract that would have paid him \$8 million in 2013. However, Dumervil's agent did not get the paperwork faxed to the team until seven minutes after the NFL deadline on Friday. The Broncos were forced to cut Dumervil because they would have had to pay him \$12 million in 2013 otherwise.

Dumervil fired agent Marty Magid on Saturday. The Broncos are open to re-signing Dumervil and he reportedly wants to return. But there are salary-cap issues at play. Baltimore and Pittsburgh also have reportedly expressed interest in the 29-year-old pass-rusher.

Dumervil signed a six-year, \$61.5 million contract in 2010 when Josh McDaniels was coaching the team and before Elway joined the Denver front office.

Dumervil had 11 sacks last season, second on the team behind Von Miller. Dumervil led the league with 17 sacks in 2009.

# Fox: Dumervil still in Denver 'mix'

By Bill Williamson

ESPN.com

March 19, 2013

Denver Broncos coach John Fox said the team is open to bringing back pass-rusher Elvis Dumervil after the fax machine fiasco last week.

But Fox, speaking at the NFL owners meeting in Phoenix on Tuesday, didn't make any promises that it will happen.

"He's definitely in the mix," Fox said in remarks distributed by the team. "He's definitely a player that I've enjoyed coaching. He's done good things for our staff, defensively and as a football team as a defensive captain. The kid made a lot of big plays for us this year and last. He's definitely a guy that is in the mix for us and will be in the mix, should be in the mix, and we'll see where that takes us."

Ultimately, it will come down to what Dumervil wants to do and who will be able to pay him the most money. Baltimore and Pittsburgh are also interested in Dumervil. Fox says he thinks the rest of the team understands the issue involved.

"I concern myself with everything," Fox said. "The locker room is a huge one because you're dealing with players. I think our guys understand that there are two sides to football. There is football and that's preparing and watching tape and all the things necessary to put a winning product out there. And then they understand that it is a business. I don't know that business is my favorite part or anybody else's favorite part, but it's that part of football and it usually occurs in the offseason. They understand that and I think guys separate it."

**UPDATE:** The Broncos have offered Dumervil contract and are awaiting further talks.

In other topics:

Fox is excited about the acquisition of slot receiver Wes Welker because of the matchup problems it is going to create. "I think I mentioned this when we signed Wes," Fox said. "This game is about matchups, and depending on what matchups you get defensively. ... One of the reasons we went a lot of what we call 12-personnel was if they go to nickel or put a DB in to cover one of those tight ends, [then] all of a sudden they've gotten smaller so there are some advantages there in the run game. Everybody does this. Now, if they sub base, then it's a matchup you

like in the passing game. You do the same thing with the three-wide sets -- we call it 11-personnel. What do they have against you? How are they going to match up defensively? A lot of it is how the defense matches up. Having had to defend Wes for so many years, you learn to appreciate how tough a matchup he is. It's hard to have one guy cover him."

# NFL Power Rankings: AFC West style

By Bill Williamson

ESPN.com

March 19, 2013

## Denver Broncos

**Rank:** 3

**Comment:** The Broncos are clearly trying to load up for a Super Bowl run.

## San Diego Chargers

**Rank:** 23

**Comment:** The Chargers did well in the hiring season. This is a franchise that is undergoing major change.

## Kansas City Chiefs

**Rank:** 24

**Comment:** It's difficult to get too excited about a 2-14 team, but the Chiefs look primed to make a nice jump.

## Oakland Raiders

**Rank:** 30

**Comment:** The Raiders are starting over and it's going to make some time

Fox hinted that free-agent pickup Stewart Bradley may have an edge to be the starting middle linebacker over third-year player Nate Irving. "Sometimes it's not really fair," Fox said. "You get a guy that's been doing it for 10 years and try to measure him up against a guy that's been doing it for two. No offense, but it's a little bit of an advantage for the guy that's been doing it for 10, in all honesty. And I don't care what position it is, the more you do it the better you get, hopefully. So if everything's equal, that experience helps. But we like Nate. We're expecting big things from him, and I think he knows that."

# Attorney: Elvis Dumervil's former agent wants NFLPA to examine contract snafu with Broncos

Jason Cole  
Yahoo Sports  
March 19, 2013

Agent Marty Magid is defending his conduct last week in representing former client Elvis Dumervil, saying that his email agreement to accept a contract offer from the Denver Broncos was sufficient under the rules of the NFL's collective bargaining agreement.

Attorney David Cornwell said Tuesday that he has contacted the NFL Players Association to discuss the matter, hoping that the union will examine the case on behalf of both Magid and possibly Dumervil, who's now a free agent.

Although it's highly unlikely that Dumervil's agreement with Denver will be reinstated, the Broncos might be held liable if Dumervil fails to get at least \$8 million guaranteed in his next contract. That was the amount the Broncos had agreed to pay Dumervil this season as part of a restructured three-year contract.

Cornwell pointed to Article 4, Section 5a of the CBA. The clause indicates that a team and player need only have an "agreement" on a contract. The section does not specify that the agreement has to be signed.

"Any agreement between any player and any Club concerning terms and conditions of employment shall be set forth in writing in a Player Contract as soon as practicable. Each Club shall provide to the NFL a copy of each such Player Contract within two days of the execution of such contract by the player and the Club," the section of the CBA reads.

By Cornwell's reading of the clause, the team and the player had an agreement when Magid emailed Denver at 3:24 p.m. ET Friday.

"At that point, the club could have notified [the] league that they had a new deal," Cornwell wrote in a text message. "They sent standard player contract that had inaccurate guarantee language and sent correct language at 3:40 [p.m.]."

From there, the situation unraveled to the point that when the Broncos didn't have an executed contract faxed over by the 4 p.m. ET deadline, they felt compelled to

cut Dumervil rather than risk triggering a \$12 million guarantee in the original contract.

Denver vice president of football operations John Elway declined to comment on the situation. A team source said the Broncos did check with the NFL on Friday after Magid had emailed the team to make sure they were following proper procedure before ultimately terminating the contract.

The issue is important on multiple levels. First, Magid is hoping to maintain his standing as a certified agent with the NFLPA. Second, any legal claims by Dumervil if he is unable to get \$8 million this season would possibly be directed at the Broncos or the NFL rather than Magid, who has been fired by Dumervil.

There is also some concern that the estate of the late agent Gary Wichard could pursue legal action in the Dumervil case. Because Wichard, who died in 2011, negotiated Dumervil's original deal, his estate (and not Magid) may be entitled to the standard 3 percent commission from the contract. In this case, that would have been \$240,000. A person close to Wichard's family said Monday that Wichard's estate would likely look into the matter.

Dumervil has subsequently hired agent Tom Condon, who has petitioned the league to have the restructured deal reinstated. Dumervil has a strong desire to stay with Denver.

Cornwell indicated it's questionable whether Dumervil would be able to get compensation from the Broncos or the league. However, Cornwell's concern is Magid, who he said "acted reasonably under the circumstances."



# Robert Kraft, Wes Welker's agents differ on split

By Albert Breer

NFL.com

March 19, 2013

Wes Welker's agents have fired back against Patriots owner Robert Kraft, countering comments Kraft made at the NFL Annual Meeting on Monday.

In an email to NFL.com, Athletes First characterized the club's lone offer to the receiver as being a "take-it-or-leave-it offer."

The statement explained that "When we asked if there was room for structural changes, we were told no. We made a counter-offer for the same term and same maximum dollar amount and it was rejected. We inquired if any of the offer's components were negotiable and were told no. This refusal to actually negotiate made it easy to reject the Patriots' offer."

Welker signed a two-year, \$12 million deal with the Broncos on Wednesday.

Kraft went on the offensive on Monday, providing detail and insight into the negotiations with Welker far beyond the level to which the Patriots would normally go publicly. The owner said he wished the Patriots had done a deal with Welker after franchising him at \$9.5 million last year.

"In retrospect, I wish we could have wrapped that into an arrangement where it was part of a longer-term deal," Kraft said. "But I really believe in this case, his agents misrepresented, in their mind, what his market value was. When you come right down to the bottom line, he accepted a deal in Denver that is less money than what we offered him."

According to a source with intimate knowledge of Welker's position, the receiver's camp had pursued an offer from the Patriots over the days and weeks leading up to free agency, but didn't get one until hours before he hit the market last Tuesday at 4 p.m., leaving little room for further negotiation. In the meantime, the source said, Welker's camp sent the Patriots one proposal on March 7, five days before the start of free agency, and a second one that weekend.

The Patriots' final offer was two years for \$10 million. Incentives could have pushed the deal to \$16 million. The offer to Welker included \$1 million incentives for making All-Pro each year, \$1 million incentives for 1,500 yards receiving each year, \$1 million for being a Pro Bowl starter in 2014 and \$1 million for 1,300 yards in

2014. According to the source, Welker's camp then suggested something in the range of the two-year, \$14 million that the Titans offered the receiver, with incentives to push it to \$16 million.

A Patriots source said that the incentives in that counterproposal were \$500,000 triggers in 2014 for 70, 80 and 90 catches, and a Pro Bowl berth, and that the \$14 million was to be fully guaranteed. The team source said one earlier proposal from the player's side was for \$18.5 million over two years, with a \$15 million signing bonus.

The source on Welker's side disputes that the \$14 million was to be fully guaranteed and said the triggers were set higher than 70, 80 and 90 catches for 2014, while acknowledging the Pro Bowl trigger. Additionally, the source denied the existence of the two-year, \$18.5 million proposal, saying that those numbers were part of a longer-term concept that the sides had discussed.

The negotiation was handled chiefly by Nick Caserio and the Patriots football operations staff on the club side, and David Dunn and Brian Murphy on the player's side.

From the perspective of Welker's camp, communication on the negotiation was handled with the football operations staff, and not on the ownership level until the very end. But Kraft, at least outwardly, seemed deeply involved with the situation. The owner repeatedly said Monday that Welker was the Patriots' first choice, and that Danny Amendola -- who signed a five-year deal with the club last week -- was the team's backup plan.

"We wanted him, and we were willing to pay him slightly above what we believed his market value to be, and in fact, what it is," said Kraft. "We in fact did it. If you look at what he accepted, and what was out there. The unfortunate part, the agent is playing poker with us, we have to decide. Are we going to be left completely naked here? Or do we go out and do the best job we can do to fill that position with the information we have available to us? And that's what we did. Time will tell what was right."

### **Brooks: Two of a kind**

The Patriots' offer last July to Welker was for five years and included a \$15 million signing bonus, while Welker's side proposed a shorter-term deal with similar up-front money. In the end, those talks broke down over control on the back end of the contract. The \$15 million bonus became a continued sticking point.

That context is important, because, according to the source, Welker felt like the deal offered last summer was better than last week's offer, which illustrates how history played into this particular situation. Welker's own sense that he was being

phased out of the offense early in the 2012 season played into his reluctance to accept an incentive-laden contract. The fact that he responded with 118 catches made it difficult to accept a lesser offer.

Athletes First's statement said that, "Mr. Kraft is an exceptional NFL owner with a track record of not only fielding championship teams, but also helping make the National Football League the tremendous league that it is today. It is a league that absolutely sparks passion amongst its fan base and that passion was evident yesterday from the lifelong Patriots fan Mr. Kraft. Once the frustrations settle down, however, we hope both sides will focus not upon what went wrong, but instead everything Wes did right on-and-off the field during his time with the Patriots."

Kraft offered similar sentiments on Monday.

"Welker leaving -- no one wanted it," he said. "Everyone in the Patriots wanted him to be with us. He's just so unique and so special. We wish him well, except when he plays us. I guess we'll have pretty good ratings in that game."

# Welker's agents: Kraft's version untrue

The Sports Xchange

March 19, 2013

Wes Welker's representatives disagreed Tuesday with New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft's version of the discussions that sent the popular receiver to the Denver Broncos.

The statement from Athletes First, released to NFL.com, said they received one "take it or leave it" offer that left no other choice except the free agency route, and that eventually led to the Broncos deal.

"Specifically, both sides are clear that the Patriots made one offer to Wes Welker since the prior negotiations ended in July 2012," the statement read. "Both sides also agree that this two-year offer came just hours before the start of free agency despite discussions that began at the NFL combine. Moreover, this lone offer was presented as a 'take it or leave it offer.' When we asked if there was room for structural changes, we were told no. We made a counter offer for the same term and same maximum dollar amount as their offer and it was rejected. We inquired if any of the offer's components were negotiable and were told no. This refusal to actually negotiate made it easy to reject the Patriots offer. Nevertheless, when we received the Denver Broncos' offer, Wes personally talked to Mr. Kraft to give the Patriots the opportunity to match it. The Patriots rejected this opportunity and Wes signed with the Denver Broncos."

On Monday, Kraft told reporters at the NFL's annual meetings in Phoenix that Welker's agents, David

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Dunn and Brian Murphy of Athletes First, misread the market. He said Welker signed with Denver for less guaranteed money, and by the time Welker gave New England a chance to beat the deal, the team had already moved forward with Danny Amendola.

"Wes Welker, just to be very clear, was our first choice to be with the team," Kraft said Monday. "When free agency came, and his agents kept on insisting on a very high number that was beyond our number, we had to go work alternatives."

Welker signed a two-year, \$12 million contract with the Broncos on March 13. Kraft said the team's final proposal was two years at \$10 million, with incentives that could have brought it to \$16 million. He added that if Welker had approached the

team sooner with a proposal that was essentially what the Broncos offered, the team would've closed that gap "in a second."

Athletes First disagreed.

"Despite Mr. Kraft's impression to the contrary, the Patriots representatives who participated in these phone calls never indicated that the team 'would have even gone up' on their offer, or that these discussions occurred 'before we thought we were going into free agency,'" the statement read. "Instead, the Patriots made it abundantly clear that their one offer was non-negotiable. Athletes First has no issue with this approach and casts no blame on either side for a deal not being consummated. However, we believe it is important that the negotiations are accurately portrayed in the media."

# Marty Magid hires lawyer

By Chris Mortensen

ESPN.com

March 19, 2013

The agent fired by Elvis Dumervil after a failed contract execution that led to the Denver Broncos' releasing their Pro Bowl defensive end Friday has retained David Cornwell as an attorney.

Cornwell confirmed Tuesday at the NFL owners meetings that he is now representing the agent, Marty Magid, most likely as a preemptive move in the event Magid should face any future litigation or be subject to discipline by the National Football League Players Association.

Cornwell has represented numerous NFL clients in both litigation and grievance procedures.

Dumervil was released by the Broncos shortly before the 4 p.m. ET deadline Friday when his restructured contract that would have reduced his 2013 salary from \$12 million to \$8 million arrived via fax seven minutes late.

Cornwell produced a time-stamped email Tuesday from Magid to the Broncos' chief negotiator, Mike Sullivan, that notified the team 36 minutes before the deadline that Dumervil was accepting the \$4 million pay cut. But as Magid and Sullivan tweaked some rewritten language that pertained to the second year of the contract, time drew uncomfortably tight with the deadline as Dumervil waited at an office in Miami for the document to arrive so he could sign and fax it to the Broncos.

Though Dumervil says he faxed the signed contract ahead of the 4 p.m. ET deadline, it failed to arrive until several minutes later and the Broncos felt compelled to terminate the deal. Consequently, Dumervil is a free agent and the Broncos were forced to take a \$4.8 million salary-cap acceleration that has complicated current negotiations between the two sides.

Dumervil fired Magid on Saturday and hired Tom Condon as his new agent, who is talking to at least three teams, including the Broncos and Ravens and reportedly the Steelers.

On Tuesday, Broncos executive vice president of football operations John Elway said the team had extended a new contract offer to Dumervil but did not discuss specifics.

The NFLPA has said it is reviewing the matter. The NFL Management Council rejected the Broncos' request to reconsider the termination of Dumervil's contract under the circumstances.

# Elvis Dumervil's former agent hires attorney

Sports Illustrated.com

March 20, 2013

While free-agent Elvis Dumervil is being courted by the several teams, the agent he fired after failing to submit contract paperwork to the league regarding an execution has hired an attorney, reports ESPN.com.

Marty Magid hired David Cornwell, who has represented players and agents in the past. The report says Magid hired Cornwell just in case he should face any future litigation or be subject to discipline by the NFL Players Association.

The Denver Broncos released Dumervil shortly before the 4 p.m. ET deadline last Friday when his contract reducing his salary to \$8 million from \$12 million arrived via fax seven minutes late. Magid was fired the next day.

Cornwell confirmed Tuesday at the NFL owners meetings that he is now representing the agent, Marty Magid, most likely as a preemptive move in the event Magid should face any future litigation or be subject to discipline by the NFL Players Association.

Dumervil hired Tom Condon as his new agent and Broncos team president John Elway said the team had extended a new contract offer to Dumervil.



# Agent's Take: Fixing the Elvis Dumervil fiasco

By Joel Corry  
CBSSports.com  
March 19, 2013

The Denver Broncos released Elvis Dumervil to prevent his \$12 million 2013 base salary from becoming fully guaranteed on March 16, the fifth day of the league year, because the paperwork for his renegotiated contract wasn't received on Friday before the NFL's 4 p.m. ET deadline to terminate a player's contract.

According to Mike Klis of The Denver Post, Dumervil and the Broncos had verbally agreed to a three-year, \$30 million contract. Here is how that contract would've been broken down:

- **2013:** Dumervil's \$12 million salary decreased to \$8 million. Denver was gaining \$4 million in salary cap room with Dumervil's 2013 cap number dropping from \$13.623 million to \$9.623 million.
- **2014:** His 2014 salary increased from \$10 million to \$10.5 million, with \$3.5 million guaranteed for injury.
- **2015:** In 2015, Dumervil would have received \$11.5 million instead of \$8,193,335. His 2014 and 2015 cap numbers were \$12.123 million and \$13.123 million in the revised deal.

The Broncos have a \$4.869 million cap charge after releasing Dumervil because \$3.246 million of bonus proration from his 2014 and 2015 contract years accelerated into Denver's 2013 cap. The roster move creates \$8.754 million of cap room for the Broncos.

Dumervil fired agent Marty Magid over the contract fiasco. He has hired Creative Artist Agency's Tom Condon and Ben Dogra, who also represent free-agent defensive ends Dwight Freeney and Osi Umenyiora, as well as Peyton Manning. Magid waived the five-day waiting period required by NFLPA regulations when players switch agents so Dumervil's new agents can immediately negotiate with clubs on his behalf.

Dumervil has indicated he wants to return to the Broncos, according to USA Today's Mike Garafolo. The Broncos haven't ruled out re-signing Dumervil once the emotions from the botched deal have settled down.

Although several teams reportedly have expressed interest in Dumervil -- including the Baltimore Ravens, New England Patriots, Pittsburgh Steelers and Tennessee Titans -- the top of the free-agent pass rusher market has already been established in the \$7.5 million to \$8 million range. Paul Kruger signed a five-year, \$40.5 million deal (including \$20 million guaranteed) with the Cleveland Browns. Cliff Avril also signed a two-year deal with the Seattle Seahawks worth \$13 million with an additional \$2.1 million of escalators and incentives.

John Abraham, Freeney and Umenyiora are the best defensive ends available on the open market. Each of these players is in his 30s and past his prime. Manning reportedly would welcome a reunion with his former Indianapolis Colts teammate, Freeney.

I would seek the following contract from the Broncos if representing Dumervil:

Year	Roster Base Salary	Signing Bonus	Previous Contract	Signing Bonus Proration	Salary Cap Number
2013	\$875,000		\$4,869,000	\$2,375,000	\$8,119,000
2014	\$7,500,000	\$3,000,000		\$2,375,000	\$12,875,000
2015	\$11,500,000			\$2,375,000	\$13,875,000

\$3.5 million of base salary is fully guaranteed.

Roster bonus is payable on the fifth day of the 2014 league year.

Dumervil receives the same \$8 million in 2013 as before, except it's in a \$7.125 million signing bonus, which is prorated or spread out evenly on the cap during the three years of the deal, and an \$875,000 base salary. The signing bonus can't be more than \$7.16 million because Dumervil's league-minimum base salary is \$840,000. In 2014, \$3.5 million is fully guaranteed, which is something the Broncos wouldn't agree to with Magid.

Of his 2014 compensation, \$3 million is in a fifth-day-of-the-league roster bonus. That bonus provides Dumervil additional protection by ensuring he becomes a free agent before the market dries up if Denver is willing to part way with him despite the guarantee. It is the same amount as Wes Welker's 2014 roster bonus and payable on the same league day as the roster bonuses in Champ Bailey's contract.

Dumervil's 2013 cap charge under the above deal is \$3.25 million. His total 2013 cap charge, including the \$4.869 million associated from releasing him, is \$8.119 million. Denver's overall 2013 cap number relating to Dumervil is \$1.504 million

lower than in the deal negotiated by his former agent. Dumervil's 2014 and 2015 cap numbers are each \$752,000 more than were in that deal.

Dumervil's 2013 cap number **could be even lower by including up to two voidable years** covering the 2016 and 2017 seasons since a signing bonus can be prorated over the life of the contract for a maximum of five years. For example, Dumervil's total 2013 cap number with two contract years that void five days after the 2015 season's Super Bowl is \$7.169 million. Denver's cap savings over Magid's deal is \$2.454 million because the signing bonus proration drops from \$2.375 million to \$1.425 million in each year when it is spread over five years as opposed to the three years in the above chart. There's also a \$2.85 million cap charge for the Broncos in 2016 after the deal voids because of the proration from the 2016 and 2017 contract years.

Once both sides assess their respective alternatives, reaching an agreement on a new deal might be the best option.

# Elway 'Hopeful' to Bring Dumervil Back

Gray Caldwell

DenverBroncos.com

March 19, 2013

**ENGLEWOOD, Colo.** -- Elvis Dumervil's days as a Bronco might not be over just yet.

"We'd love to have Elvis back," Executive Vice President of Football Operations John Elway said Tuesday at the NFL owners meetings. "We've made an offer to Elvis, so we'll see how it progresses."

Elway said the "dust had to settle" after last Friday's events, when Dumervil and the team agreed on a restructured contract, but paperwork wasn't submitted to the NFL before a strict 2 p.m. MDT deadline. The team was forced to release the seventh-year veteran, and Elway said the most frustrating part of the entire ordeal was that a decision wasn't made earlier.

Since then, Dumervil has been a free agent, part of a class of pass-rushers that includes Dwight Freeney, Richard Seymour, John Abraham and Osi Umenyiora.

"With him being a free agent now, I'm sure he wants to see what's out there," Elway said. "But hopefully we can put everything back together and have Elvis back in a Broncos uniform."

Head Coach John Fox made it known earlier in the day that Dumervil is "a guy we obviously like," but said that while it might not be his favorite part of the game, he recognizes that the NFL is also a business.

The team has "regrouped" from last Friday and is looking at all its options, the first of which is bringing back Dumervil.

"He's definitely a player that I've enjoyed coaching," Fox said. "He's done good things for our staff, defensively and as a football team as a defensive captain. The kid made a lot of big plays for us this year and last. He's definitely a guy that is in the mix for us and will be in the mix, should be in the mix, and we'll see where that takes us."

It could mean the franchise's seventh-leading sack artist -- with 63.5 career quarterback takedowns -- is back in orange and blue for the 2013 season.

"We're hopeful that we can get something done with him," Elway said.

# Fox Talks Position Battles, Miller's Potential

Gray Caldwell  
DenverBroncos.com  
March 19, 2013

**ENGLEWOOD, Colo.** -- The Broncos' offensive line has seen healthier days.

Center J.D. Walton was placed on injured reserve early in the 2012 season with an ankle injury. The player to his right, guard Chris Kuper, played in just seven regular-season games due to forearm and ankle injuries, and underwent offseason surgery. Add the fact that both starting tackles -- Ryan Clady and Orlando Franklin -- also underwent offseason procedures, and it becomes clear why the Broncos targeted an offensive lineman in free agency.

"That was one of the big reasons for the Louis Vasquez signing," Head Coach John Fox said Tuesday at the owners meetings. "We could've hoped that all those guys came back, but I'm not sure that would've been the smart thing to do."

Vasquez, a guard, joins last year's starters Kuper and Zane Beadles -- who is healthy this offseason -- at the position. But Fox said he doesn't expect that to rattle either of the incumbent starters.

"We should have great competition there," Fox said. "I don't think any of those guys will be afraid of the competition. I'm just very hopeful that 'Kup' comes back healthy."

Fox credited Executive Vice President of Football Operations John Elway for bringing in a player who has started all 54 games he has played in four NFL seasons.

"We were real excited to get Louis," he said. "He'll give us a guy that battles and is capable of starting."

## **'THE SKY IS THE LIMIT'**

As a rookie, linebacker Von Miller tied for the most sacks by a rookie in Broncos history and took home NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year honors.

A tough act to follow for anyone -- but Miller took his game to a different level in 2012.

He became the first Bronco to earn Pro Bowl selections in each of his first two seasons after he set a franchise record with 18.5 sacks, finishing in the top five in

the league in sacks, quarterback knockdowns, quarterback hurries, tackles for loss, run stuff and forced fumbles.

"He improved from year one to year two, and he had a great rookie year," Fox said. "I think the reason he improved—physically, he's the same cat—[but] mentally, he's being able to key and diagnose things quicker."

Fox pointed to Miller's first career pick-six as an example of how much better the linebacker understood coverages and how offenses tried to attack him in his second season. The head coach maintained that Miller's experiences will only help to make him even better.

"It's not fair to say, but I'm just telling you, I know the sky is the limit," he said.

### **POSITION BATTLE BREWING**

At the NFL Scouting Combine, Elway and Fox expressed confidence that third-year linebacker Nate Irving would step up in a competition to be the team's starting middle linebacker next season.

Since then, that confidence hasn't wavered -- but the team has also added a seventh-year veteran at the position.

Stewart Bradley comes in with plenty of NFL experience, including two years as a starting middle linebacker with the Philadelphia Eagles.

"I don't care what position it is, the more you do it the better you get, hopefully," Fox said. "So if everything's equal, that experience helps. But we like Nate. We're expecting big things from him, and I think he knows that."

Irving, originally drafted in the third round of the 2011 NFL Draft, notched the first defensive tackles of his career last season, but most of his contributions have come on special teams. He played in 15 games in his sophomore campaign, and Fox said he saw growth from the young defender.

"Time will tell," Fox said. "He's done everything, he's worked hard and I think he improved his second year over his first year. So this will be a very important year for him."

### **QUOTABLE**

"I watched a guy on my team take two (returns) to the house and nobody even remembers it. And it's never been done before (in the postseason). Jacoby Jones, who is going on Dancing with the Stars -- that could have been Trindon Holliday."  
-Head Coach John Fox, on a great performance getting lost in a loss

# New NFL Rules Proposed

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

March 19, 2013

**ENGLEWOOD, Colo.** – The NFL Competition Committee proposed a series of rule changes at the owners meetings in Scottsdale, Ariz. on Monday.

Below is a listing of the committee's proposals:

## **Initiating Contact with Crown of Helmet Illegal**

In an effort to continue expanding player-safety initiatives, the competition committee has proposed making it illegal for any player – offensive or defensive – to create contact using the crown of his helmet.

This rule would be in place outside of the tackle box, which runs tackle-to-tackle along the line of scrimmage and three yards down field.

"Basically, the best way to phrase this is we're bringing the shoulder back in the game," said St. Louis Rams Head Coach Jeff Fisher, who is a member of the competition committee. "We all know the helmet is a protective device; it's not designed to be used like it's being used as of late and we want to protect our players, specifically out in space."

Regardless of whether the offensive or defensive player breaks that rule, it would result in a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

Like other player-safety penalties, these types of hits would be subject to additional discipline from the league office.

## **Tuck Rule Rescinded**

The committee has proposed eliminating the "tuck rule" that famously benefited the New England Patriots in their Divisional Round win over the Oakland Raiders in 2002.

Under the proposed change, if a quarterback loses control of the ball while bringing it back into his body, the ruling would be a fumble.

The change simplifies a complicated rule that is often difficult to see even on instant replay.

If the quarterback's arm is going forward and the ball comes loose, it is an incomplete pass. Otherwise, it's a fumble.

"As soon as the passer attempts bring the ball back to his body or actually tuck it back to his body, if it comes out it's a fumble," Fisher said. "Officials are getting it right and we all think it's a fumble, so now let it be a fumble."

### **Tight End Jersey Numbers Expanded**

Currently tight ends are limited to numbers 80-89. The new proposal would also allow players at that position to wear numbers 40-49.

"We have a lot of tight ends and H-backs now that are starting to wear 40 numbers, and currently in the rule book it doesn't permit them to," Fisher said. "So we're going to allow tight ends, H-backs and fullbacks to wear the 40 numbers."

### **Instant Replay Challenge Penalty Changed**

Under the new proposal, when a coach throws the challenge flag in a situation that is automatically reviewed, that team would be charged with a timeout – not a penalty. The only time the team would receive a penalty for that would be if it was out of timeouts or challenges, or threw the challenge flag in the final two minutes of the half when all reviews come from the replay booth.

"That's the Thanksgiving Day game, the Detroit play," NFL Vice President of Officiating Dean Blandino said. "Coach (Jim) Schwartz threw the flag when it was an automatic review by the replay official. So take that same play in 2013, the play still gets reviewed but Detroit is charged a timeout. If they don't have a timeout, then it's a 15-yard penalty."

Even if a team is penalized, the play would still be reviewed.

### **Peel-Back Blocks Below the Waist Eliminated**

To avoid repeats of the play that injured Texans linebacker Brian Cushing, the committee has proposed making it illegal for an offensive player to block low on "peel-back" blocks.

"The peel-back block is an act usually by an offensive player that's going to go downfield and move down the line of scrimmage and then turn back towards his own endline and then block low," Fisher said. "What we're proposing now is that under no circumstances will you be permitted to block low below the waist when you're blocking back towards your own endline."

Previously, those types of blocks were allowed as long as the block occurred inside the tackle box.

### **Special Teams Player-Safety Proposal**



As an added protection to blockers on field goal or extra-point attempts, the committee has proposed limiting how the defense can line up and rush.

Under the proposed rule change, teams could have no more than six players lined up on either side of the snapper.

“Because we clean up the A gaps with the snapper, he gets protection, you only have four gaps and that includes the outside gap,” Fisher said. “They were creating situations where you were getting four and five guys on two, or three guys on one. When the protection teams’ legs typically are interlocked – their feet are – they have no way to protect themselves.”

Rushers will no longer be allowed to go low in another effort to protect the legs of the blockers.

Additionally, players will not be allowed to line up directly across from the snapper.

“He becomes a defenseless player,” Blandino said. “So when he’s in the process of snapping the football he becomes a defenseless player like a receiver does attempting to catch a pass. Can’t hit him in the head or neck, can’t hit him with the crown or forehead hairline parts of the helmet.”

The penalty for violating the new alignment rule would be a 5 yards for illegal formation. If the rusher attempted to go low, it would be a 15-yard penalty, similar to the rule on punts and kickoffs.

# Goodell Addresses League Issues

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

March 19, 2013

**SCOTTSDALE, Ariz.** – From the opening game of the 2013 schedule to the offseason calendar to expending the postseason, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell touched on a variety of subjects on Monday at the NFL owners meetings.

Below are some of the topics that he covered:

## Postseason Expansion

There was discussion about expanding the playoffs, but Goodell said that there will be no expansion for the upcoming season.

"The Competition Committee looked at some of the issues and identified those issues," he said. "There are things that we will now take and put them into our own consideration and have our own discussions with the union at some point in time to get their views on if this makes sense. I think the information when I met with the Competition Committee yesterday was helpful for us in our consideration. Now, we have a little bit of work to do before we can advance it. It clearly won't be happening for this year if there was any doubt about that."

## 2013 Season Opener

Traditionally, the defending Super Bowl champions kick off the NFL season with a home game on Thursday night.

That has created an issue this year because the Baltimore Ravens and Baltimore Orioles share a parking lot and the Orioles are already scheduled to play at home on the Thursday night of the NFL's opening week.

Goodell said that he has talked to Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig about the Orioles possibly playing earlier in the day and pushing back the Ravens' kickoff.

"We think that is the right thing," he said. "We have agreed to move the game a little bit later in the evening to try to accommodate the baseball game. We think it will be a great day. As a kid who grew up as an Orioles fan, to have the Orioles game in the afternoon and then go to the Ravens' Super Bowl championship celebration for the Kickoff Game will be a great day. We hope that is the way it will happen."

Last year, the New York Giants hosted the NFL's opener on a Wednesday night to avoid a conflict with President Barack Obama's speech at the Democratic National Convention.

Goodell ruled out a repeat of a Wednesday opener this year due to the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah, which falls on that day.

"Unfortunately, the only (other) option is to take the Ravens on the road," Goodell said. "We think that is wrong for the Ravens' fans. We would not want that to happen. That is why we are trying to reach an accommodation here."

### **Pro Bowl Plans**

The future of the Pro Bowl was a much-discussed item in advance of this year's game.

Quarterback Peyton Manning and cornerback Champ Bailey, who were each selected to their 12th All-Star Game this year, have shared their feelings on the importance of the annual event.

"Clearly there was an improved effort," Goodell said. "I have spoken to several of the players and I appreciate that (effort). I have also had conversations with the players and so have our staff. They have also met with the Competition Committee last month to talk about what we can do to make the game more attractive, more exciting and more competitive. There are some very good ideas. I'm going to report to the membership on that in the next two days and before we leave here I think we'll be able to fill you in a little more."

### **Elvis Dumervil's Contact Situation**

Goodell was asked whether he would step in and intervene with the Broncos and Elvis Dumervil in regards to the defensive end's contact.

"All contracts are reviewed by our office," he said. "I specifically won't be doing that, I don't think. If there is something significant they might bring it to my attention. Those (inspections) are done as a matter of course."

### **Proposed Rule Change**

Among the rule changes that the Competition Committee proposed was one that would make it illegal for any player to initiate contact with the crown of his helmet in the open field.

"We raised this with the players in Indianapolis at the Combine," Goodell said. "We have had full discussions and I have spoken with players individually, including some of them who are in the media. It is something we are working through with

our coaches. The committee spent a significant amount of time, not only considering that input, but also looking at tape. Their analysis, having met with them yesterday, is that they've done an awful lot of very good work. It is not just how the rule works but also how it is officiated, and what is the impact of the game."

### **Offseason Schedule**

Goodell said that an "alternative calendar" was presented for the offseason.

"We think that it makes a lot of sense," he said. "I think the players saw the benefits of doing that and they wanted to talk to their membership, which they were doing last week at their meeting. I have not heard or gotten a report back from them about what their reaction is, but as soon as I speak to DeMaurice (Smith), I'll have a better understanding."

# Fox on Proposed Rule Changes

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

March 19, 2013

The NFL competition committee has proposed six rules changes for the upcoming season at the owner's meetings in Scottsdale, Ariz.

The proposal that has generated the most discussion is the one aiming to eliminate players initiating contact with the crown of their helmets.

"I think even what they've tried to do on defense, they've tried to eliminate the crown of the head," Head Coach John Fox said. "That's in essence using the helmet as a weapon. Instead of just relegating it to the defense, now they are relegating it to the offense because they saw examples of it."

Fox said it wasn't a surprise that the NFL is looking into this rule change based on the recent emphasis on player safety.

"It's just basically eliminating that crown-leading type of blow of the head," he said. "They've been teaching that for years on defense to get away from that because it is very potentially dangerous, especially for the neck area."

Under the new rule, it would be a 15-yard penalty and subject to additional discipline from the league if an offensive or defensive player created contact with the crown of his helmet.

Fox is confident that it won't be difficult to teach the new rule to his players.

"Players are really adaptable," he said. "Right now, the simple equation is they want the helmet used for protection, not as a weapon. I think that message gets across. It's slowly gotten across as far as the passing game. Now there are rules on the table that are going to involve the running game as well. They will adapt. They have in the past and will moving forward."

The rule changes are designed not only to make the game safer at the NFL level, but also to help teach younger football players the proper fundamentals from the beginning.

Focusing on player safety in the NFL produces a trickle-down effect that reaches players who are just starting to play tackle football.

"We're changing," Fox said. "And I agree with the direction we're going because I think at the end of the day you want young people playing football because what

we're doing is not just affecting the top of the world. It's affecting youth, high school and college. To make it safer is probably better for the future of the game."

# 2013 Draft Order Finalized

Stuart Zaas  
DenverBroncos.com  
March 19, 2013

**ENGLEWOOD, Colo.** -- The NFL awarded 32 compensatory draft choices to 16 clubs on Monday to finalize the 2013 NFL Draft order.

Denver did not receive an additional selection, so the team will enter the draft with six picks - one in each round except the sixth. That choice was sent to Philadelphia in the Brodrick Bunkley trade back in August, 2011.

Below is a list of where Denver's picks fall:

Round	No.	Overall
1	28	28
2	28	58
3	28	90
4	28	125
5	28	161
7	28	234