

Mark Kiszla: Brian Urlacher could turn Broncos into mean machine

By Mark Kiszla
The Denver Post
March 22, 2013

Hey, John Elway. Breaking up is indeed hard to do. But get a grip, man. Kiss defensive end Elvis Dumervil goodbye.

Here's a better idea: Call legendary linebacker Brian Urlacher.

Sure, at age 34, Urlacher has more mileage than a beat-up car on the L-train. Even in Chicago, he is lovingly described as a meathead. By any measure, Urlacher ain't the Hall of Fame middle linebacker he used to be.

But this Denver team could use a little more mean.

Is Nate Irving or Stewart Bradley really a better option in the heart of the Broncos defense?

And how much is Urlacher going to cost at this point? Maybe \$2 million? Heck, Dumervil can send more money to the dead zone with one push of a button on his fax machine.

"We would like to be tougher, both physically and mentally," Elway told me recently, explaining one way he intends to improve his 13-3 team from last season.

Not that Elway needs my advice, but if there's one thing any NFL team can count on from Urlacher? He will bring the tough.

The Bears offered Urlacher a guaranteed \$1 million, plus incentives. Urlacher considered the offer a slap in the face. To be sure, most of us would like to be slapped once a year in precisely the same manner.

But has it ever been a really smart idea to poke a stick at this Bear and get Urlacher mad? If his knee holds up, there's another Pro Bowl season or two in Urlacher.

Of course, finding out would be a gamble on the part of Elway. When it's Super Bowl or bust with No Plan B, doesn't the potential reward outweigh the risk?

Bears cornerback Charles Tillman, an all-star who recognizes talent when he sees it, told the Chicago Sun-Times that Urlacher is still capable of holding up for the rigors of a 16-game NFL schedule. Tillman added: "He was the heart and soul of

our team — the defense especially — and he will be missed. I wish him the best. I didn't want to see him go. He still has juice in the tank."

Relying too heavily on old NFL stars can get even the smartest team architect fired. Nevertheless, Elway has a three-year window of championship opportunity with Manning, a limited budget and the need for more playmakers on defense.

The Broncos and Dumervil have tried everything to patch up their differences and get back together, short of calling in Dr. Phil to mediate. It made sense for a while. Doom did not earn three trips to the Pro Bowl in the past four seasons by accident. But, like many a good relationship, this one lost that loving feeling and has been soured forever by money issues.

Place the blame wherever you want, but Dumervil wrecked \$5 million of Denver's available salary cap space. Some folks would like Broncos owner Pat Bowlen to fix it with a bold stroke of a pen in his checkbook. Yeah, right. And if I wrecked your car today, would you let me take it back out for a spin tomorrow? Only if you're a saint. Or a fool.

The Broncos need a defensive end to divert some of the blocking focus from linebacker Von Miller. One of Manning's old buddies from Indianapolis, Dwight Freeney, has been asked in to see if the Dove Valley digs are to his liking.

Between Freeney and Urlacher, the Broncos might have one veteran who does damage to opposing quarterbacks and another who spends the majority of next season soothing his aching joints in the cold tub. Why try to guess which one, if Elway can sign both?

Maybe the Broncos could even get Urlacher and Freeney for roughly the price of Dumervil. Everybody loves a bargain.

When former New England receiver Wes Welker was introduced last week as the newest distinguished member of the Broncos, coach John Fox stood near the front of a room crowded with microphones and cameras. As Welker stepped to the podium to answer questions, there was the sound of one coach clapping amid the media curmudgeons. I caught Foxy's eye, shook my head and shot him a grin.

"Hey, Kizzy," Fox told me later, "you were killing me for clapping for Welker. Heck, that's what I thought you were supposed to do when a good player joins the team. I'm happy to have him."

Should the team find a way to land Urlacher and Freeney, the coach wouldn't be the only person in Broncos Country to stand up and applaud.

Elvis Dumervil mulls Ravens' offer; Freeney, Abraham visit Broncos

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
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As Dwight Freeney and John Abraham took turns visiting Thursday with the Broncos at Dove Valley, the Baltimore Ravens have made a strong push for Elvis Dumervil.

Perhaps, this dragged-out Dumervil pay-cut saga is nearing its end.

The Ravens have delivered a contract offer to Dumervil, according to two NFL sources. However, the sources say the Broncos have offered slightly more money in the early portion of the deal.

The Broncos' money has tightened because of a \$4.89 million dead-money, salary-cap hit they absorbed while releasing Dumervil last week, so re-signing Dumervil likely would mean releasing a player or two off their roster.

Miami and Tennessee are talking with Dumervil's agent, Tom Condon, but have not made formal offers, according to the two sources.

Dumervil, 29, has been with the Broncos since he was one of their fourth-round draft choices in 2006. He missed the 2010 season because of injury but has 63 ½ sacks in his other six, an average of 10.6 sacks per year. He has been named to three Pro Bowl teams.

"There will be a plan in place and John Elway will execute it," Broncos president Joe Ellis said Wednesday as he was leaving the NFL owners meetings in Phoenix. "It would be great to see Elvis come back. He's been a great player for the Broncos. Time will tell."

After the Broncos paid Dumervil \$14 million in 2011 and another \$14 million in 2012, Elway, the Broncos' front-office boss, and Mike Sullivan, the team's contract negotiator and salary-cap manager, informed Dumervil's agent Marty Magid at the NFL scouting combine last month they did not want to pay his client another \$12 million in 2013.

After acrimonious and protracted negotiations, a revision to the final three years of Dumervil's contract was orally agreed upon last Friday. The \$30 million sum of the contract remained, although his 2013 salary was reduced from \$12 million to \$8 million.

However, when the signature page of the revised contract did not make it from a fax machine at a Kinko's in Miami to the Broncos' office in time for the Broncos to send off the final paperwork to the NFL office in New York by 2 p.m., the revised deal never was executed.

Instead, minutes before that deadline, the Broncos terminated his original contract and Dumervil became a free agent.

Once he hit the market, there was immediate mutual interest between Dumervil and the Ravens. The connection is Baltimore linebackers coach Don "Wink" Martindale, who was the Broncos' linebackers coach in 2009 when Dumervil posted his career-best 17 sacks.

That season, the Broncos were using a three down linemen/four linebacker system where Dumervil was moved from defensive end to outside linebacker for the first time in his career. The Ravens, who won the Super Bowl last month, use a similar 3-4 defensive system.

Before the Ravens entered negotiations with Dumervil, the Broncos had submitted a new three-year offer on Monday night.

Dumervil's camp, though, was not happy with the discounted salary in the second year of the Broncos' proposal. If the Broncos and Dumervil finally part ways, Denver is expected to sign either Freeney or Abraham.

Freeney, 33, played his first 11 seasons with the Indianapolis Colts. He had only five sacks last season. Abraham, who will soon turn 35, played six seasons with the New York Jets and past seven with the Atlanta Falcons. He had 10 sacks last year.

Both Freeney and Abraham, though, are speed rushers who are leaving teams that played indoors on an artificial surface. The Broncos play outside and on grass at Sports Authority Field at Mile High.

Broncos like Rodgers-Cromartie's potential but plan to push him hard

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

Q: Not sure if you saw the Eagles-Panthers "Monday Night Football" game late in the season, but (ESPN analyst) Jon Gruden (criticized) Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie the entire game. He basically said most teams have discovered they can beat him regularly. What did Denver see in Rodgers-Cromartie over the past two years that made them think he could return to his 2009 form?

A: David, when the Broncos looked at their list of potential targets in free agency, executive vice president of football operations John Elway said one of the team's goals was to try to get as much value in terms of getting some of the younger players on the market.

Rodgers-Cromartie, Louis Vasquez, Terrance Knighton and even the 29-year-old Stewart Bradley fit that criteria.

Rodgers-Cromartie won't turn 27 until next month and already has 77 games of experience and has been named to a Pro Bowl (in 2009). And in the sea of 30-something cornerbacks on the market, the Broncos believed Rodgers-Cromartie was the best athlete, had the kind of reach coach John Fox likes in his defensive backs and that Rodgers-Cromartie was the fastest of the group.

This is how Fox put it:

"That's not knocking any of them, but there's no question that (Rodgers-Cromartie) has great ability. It's our job to get the most of it out of him, just like anybody that had him before. We'll see how that goes, how hard he's willing to work and adapt to what we're teaching him."

When asked if he believed Rodgers-Cromartie still had the ability to be a No. 1 cornerback in a defense, Fox, a former defensive backs coach early in his NFL coaching career, said:

"There's no doubt. I knew him coming out (of college). He's a tremendous talent. I don't think there would be many arguments of the people in free agency that he

had the highest skill set. I'm not knocking anybody else, but the ability is there and now it's about developing the skills that it takes to win in this league."

And that is the stance most personnel people in the league take when asked about Rodgers-Cromartie's talent. But many of those same people will say his concentration wavers at times, and that his technique is spotty at a position where it needs to be flawless in these pass-happy days.

The Broncos came to that conclusion as well, but they also believe in the Broncos locker room. With players like Champ Bailey and Peyton Manning around him, Rodgers-Cromartie will have to lift his game just to be on board with what the Broncos are doing.

It's no accident, some in the league believe, that his best seasons were the years the Cardinals went to the playoffs — a Super Bowl appearance in his rookie season in '08, followed by a wild-card win before a divisional-round loss in '09. He went to his only Pro Bowl in '09.

When his team struggled — no playoffs in Arizona in '10 or in Philadelphia in '11 or '12 — his play dipped as well. He had 10 interceptions in the two playoffs seasons, six in three seasons combined when his team did not make the postseason.

The Broncos saw that in their evaluation, particularly in Rodgers-Cromartie's work with the Eagles. He was slightly miscast as a nickel corner in '11 and did not have an interception that season.

He fared slightly better with three interceptions, playing primarily an outside spot last season, but his footwork was spotty and was often simply in the wrong spot to play the ball.

To that end, Fox offered a glimpse of what they have already told Rodgers-Cromartie about their expectations for him.

"You turn on a 60-play tape and 30 of the plays he does you can't coach. And 30 of those plays you're maybe not so happy with. And that's probably why he's on his third team. But at the end of the day he's got the skill set. We really like him. We were very up front with him. He understands."

And it's why they signed him to a one-year deal, so they can take a look and see if they want to sign him later to a longer contract.

Pro days for draft prospects help clear issues lingering since combine

By Jeff Legwold
The Denver Post
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In a week when many of the top prospects who have the biggest questions in tow were on the field, one of the biggest — both physically and figuratively — question marks in this draft has continued to try to regain his once lofty status this week.

Utah defensive tackle Star Lotulelei, who had nudged his way into consideration for the top pick before a previously undiagnosed heart condition was discovered at the scouting combine, went through his on-campus pro day this week.

And after talking to a smattering of folks who were on hand, he fared pretty well. He measured in at 6-foot-3 ¼ inches, weighed 314 pounds, performed well in drills, including powering up 225 pounds 38 times in the bench press.

Lotulelei has been under a care of a cardiologist and told scouts he will continue to be evaluated by the doctor over the next two weeks. But he will also now have to take part in one of the most important stops in the weeks leading up to the draft and the one that's likely talked about the least in the public domain.

It's what personnel people in the NFL simply call the "re-check."

But any player whose appearance at February's scouting combine was impacted because of an injury or recent surgery is brought back to Indianapolis just before the draft for another full medical exam. The results of those exams are then forwarded to all of the teams.

This year, the players, including Lotulelei, will be examined April 15. Lotulelei's workout was good enough to put him back in the football discussions, but an awful lot of teams will have great interest in what that April 15 exam will show.

From a football perspective it is slightly telling about Lotulelei's status that all of the teams that sent defensive line coaches to his workout are 3-4 teams, including the Browns, who switched to the 3-4 with Ray Horton's arrival as defensive coordinator.

Horton's defenses are routinely among the most blitz-happy in the NFL, having blitzed on just over 40 percent of the defensive snaps with the Cardinals last season.

But Lotulelei wasn't the only player who is going to need to provide some answers before he finally secures his draft spot.

At Tennessee's pro day, wide receiver Corradelle Patterson once again showed himself to be big (6-2 5/8, 217 pounds) and fast (4.43 in his 40 at pro day) with tremendous upside.

But plenty of teams have questions about his maturity and his ability to make the transition to football as an occupation with the prospects of first-round money in his bank account.

It's why some teams may have even nudged Patterson's teammate, Justin Hunter, up the board a bit. Hunter, who is 6-3 7/8, 200 pounds, continued his quality pre-draft work at the Vols workout so those teams looking for a wideout and can't make themselves more comfortable with Patterson may take Hunter instead.

Tennessee-Martin defensive tackle Montori Hughes, who was dismissed from Tennessee's team before last season for both academic and off-the-field issues, had a quality workout on the Tennessee campus. Hughes is one of the biggest defensive tackles on the board (6-3 7/8, 338 pounds), plays with great power and was dominating at the Senior Bowl until he suffered a foot injury.

But he had multiple suspensions at Tennessee before the coaches finally sent him on his way last June.

Tennessee Tech wide receiver Da'Rick Rogers is also a former Tennessee player dismissed for off-the-field troubles, including violations of the school's substance-abuse policy for athletes. Rogers, who was at the combine, also worked out with the Volunteers.

Toss in Georgia's pro day on Thursday with linebacker Alec Ogletree, who had an arrest just before the combine, and linebacker Jarvis Jones, who has a spinal condition that concerns some teams, and by the time the scouts left Georgia's campus Thursday afternoon it had been quite the question-filled week for everyone to sort through.

Tom Condon factor in Elvis Dumervil saga: 3 horses in 4-horse pass rush race

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
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Tom Condon, the agent for the NFL stars, represents three of the four free-agent pass-rushing defensive ends who are currently in play.

Condon represents Elvis Dumervil, most recently with the Broncos, the New York Giants' Osi Umenyiora and the Indianapolis Colts' Dwight Freeney. The fourth, Atlanta's John Abraham, is represented by Tony Agnone/Rich Rosa.

The Broncos first choice is to re-sign Dumervil back, but they are visiting as I type with Freeney and later today with Abraham. They have not expressed much interest in Umenyiora because of his asking price.

The Atlanta Falcons reportedly are visiting with Umenyiora today. The Falcons also have interest in Dumervil.

The Baltimore Ravens want Dumervil. They are not interested in Freeney, Umenyiora or Abraham. Dumervil is their guy.

It seems that of the Broncos, Ravens and Falcons, only the Broncos have interest in Freeney as a backup plan.

A home run for Condon, then, would be to sign Dumervil with the Ravens, Freeney with the Broncos and Umenyiora with the Falcons. Condon, of course, has always said it's about clients' interests not his. And he has told the Broncos the problem with their latest three-year proposal to Dumervil is year two. He has asked them to tweak it but as of Wednesday night the Broncos had not budged.

Still, Agnone and Rosa are the underdogs in this race. They could pull off an upset by signing Abraham to the Broncos. Which is a distinct possibility considering Abraham has far better recent production than Freeney.

As a side note to this agency battle, Agnone/Rosa represented Umenyiora until last summer, when he signed with Condon. It would make for a fascinating documentary. Or an interesting blog in First-and-Orange.

Ravens make Dumervil an offer

By Bill Williamson

ESPN.com

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The Denver Post is reporting that the Baltimore Ravens have offered pass-rusher Elvis Dumervil a contract, though the deal he is considering from the Broncos appears to be for more money earlier in the agreement period.

The paper also reports that the Miami Dolphins (Dumervil's hometown team) and Tennessee Titans are now interested. The Pittsburgh Steelers are also interested.

If Denver doesn't land Dumervil, the team could sign John Abraham or Dwight Freeney as a replacement. Both visited Denver on Thursday. The saga should end within the next 48 hours.

Dwight Freeney, John Abraham leave Denver deal-less

By Kareem Copeland

NFL.com

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The Denver Broncos set in motion contingency plans when the Elvis Dumervil fax debacle took place. The plans included interviews with free agents Dwight Freeney and John Abraham in case a new contract with Dumervil can't be reached.

Both Freeney and Abraham were in Denver on Thursday, and both left without a deal, a source familiar with the situation told NFL Network's Michelle Beisner.

The Broncos still would prefer to keep Dumervil, and NFL.com's Ian Rapoport reiterated on NFL Network's "NFL Total Access" that Freeney and Abraham are backup plans. Dumervil, however, reportedly was not impressed with the Broncos' post-fax offer.

We'll see where this goes.

Ravens, Broncos competing for Elvis Dumervil, sources say

By Aaron Wilson
The Baltimore Sun
March 21, 2013

The Ravens defeated the Denver Broncos in the AFC divisional round in overtime on their march to the Super Bowl XLVII title.

Now, the two teams are competing for a prize free agent: Pro Bowl pass rusher Elvis Dumervil.

The Ravens and Broncos are both making strong financial bids to try to land Dumervil, according to league sources with knowledge of the situation.

Both teams have made contract offers to Dumervil, per sources. No visit has been scheduled for Dumervil with the Ravens at this time.

Dumervil was cut by the Broncos when a fax debacle unfolded with late-arriving paperwork prompting Denver to release him rather than pay him \$12 million guaranteed for the 2013 fiscal year.

Despite the dead money situation, the Broncos want Dumervil back and have submitted a contract offer to him that he hasn't accepted.

The Ravens want to add a pass rusher to work in tandem with former NFL Defensive Player of the Year outside linebacker Terrell Suggs, and Dumervil is at the top of their list, sources say.

Dumervil, 29, finished second on the Broncos last season with 11 sacks behind Pro Bowl outside linebacker Von Miller.

Dumervil is a compact, relentless pass rusher who has a good spin move and diverse repertoire of moves to get to the quarterback.

He led the NFL with 17 sacks in 2009 when he was coached by Ravens linebackers coach Don "Wink" Martindale.

Martindale has vouched for Dumervil's skills, work ethic and character to team officials, who would like to continue an effort to overhaul the front seven. The Ravens have previously added defensive linemen Chris Canty and Marcus Spears via three-year, \$8 million and two-year, \$3.55 million contracts, respectively.

Ravens general manager Ozzie Newsome immediately reached out to Dumervil's former agent, Marty Magid, to try to schedule a visit after the Broncos released the Pro Bowl defender rather than pay him a \$12 million fully guaranteed salary for this year when a late fax scuttled a potential contract adjustment.

Dumervil hired new new representation, Tom Condon and Ben Dogra of megafirm CAA after firing Magid, who represents Ravens running back Bernard Pierce.

Harris' Play Earns Bonuses

Andrew Mason

DenverBroncos.com

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ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- The NFL announced its performance-based bonuses Wednesday, and no Bronco cashed in like cornerback Chris Harris.

Harris, whose league-minimum contract is rooted in his undrafted status upon breaking into the NFL in 2011, received \$254,164 from a league-wide bonus pool of \$110.72 million (an average of \$3.46 million per team). That figure placed him 14th among all NFL players; he was the only Bronco to rank among the league's top 25.

Harris earned the bonus by becoming a first-teamer at right cornerback and playing 84.5 percent of the Broncos' defensive snaps in 2012. He tied for the club lead with three interceptions -- returning two for touchdowns -- and broke up 12 passes, which matched Tony Carter for the most among the Broncos.

The performance-based system is designed to reward players -- particularly young ones from the lower rounds or from outside the draft altogether. It does sometimes help aging veterans; Atlanta center Todd McClure, who just announced his retirement last week at 36 years old, pocketed an extra \$251,204 beyond his base salary last year.

According to the league, bonuses are calculated by what the league calls a "player index," in which his total number of plays are divided by his regular-season compensation, which includes contract incentives and the signing bonus. The "player index" is subsequently measured against his teammates to calculate the bonus.

Cincinnati linebacker Vontaze Burfict led all players with a performance bonus of \$299,465 in 2012. Since he was an undrafted rookie free agent after a troubled college career at Arizona State, Burfict made the league minimum rookie base salary of \$390,000, so his salary was boosted by 76.8 percent.

Burfict's bonus wasn't as high as the league-high bonuses in each of the last four seasons of the bonus program under the old CBA (2006-09). Chargers offensive tackle Jeromey Clary's performance bonus of \$405,859 for the 2008 season remains the league record.

Harris' total exceeds those of guard Chris Kuper in 2008 (\$208,937) and offensive tackle Tyler Polunbush in 2009 (\$237,237), the last two years of the previous performance-based bonus program.

There was no league-wide bonus system for the 2010 or 2011 seasons, the last year of the previous collective bargaining agreement and the first of the new CBA. Any performance bonuses received for those two seasons were under terms of the player's individual contract.

Overcoming Obstacles on NFL Path

Posted 11 hours ago

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

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INDIANAPOLIS – Today, Garrett Gilkey pushes people around.

But it wasn't always that way.

Not that long ago, the offensive lineman was a victim of bullying at his Chicago-area high school.

"I came in my freshman year at Sandwich (High School) at about 5-11, 160 pounds, 170 pounds," Gilkey said. "Most guys were bigger than me. Really, I like to tell people that I was just the little redheaded, gingery, skinny-looking (kid). I was pear-shaped. I had these wide hips and this skinny-looking upper body. I was just a prime target for many of the cruel kids in Sandwich."

After undergoing heart surgery prior to his freshman year, Gilkey wasn't able to participate in sports.

That led to more bullying and exclusion from the rest of the football team.

"I was undersized and I was actually bullied and ostracized by my entire school and I was booed a few times in front of the entire school," Gilkey said. "I was constantly bullied, constantly picked on. It was a very hard year."

He then transferred to Aurora Christian High School where he hit his growth spurt as a junior, filling out into a lineman's frame.

His high school position coach called Gilkey into his office after a game during his senior season and told him, "Your footwork is like that of an NFL lineman."

"That's when that spark came into my life," Gilkey recalled. "I remember thinking, I'm 17 years old, 'How in the heck can you say my feet look like an NFL lineman's feet?' That's where it began."

With the dream of the NFL dangled in front of him, Gilkey set out to play college football.

The only problem was that no Division I schools recruited him.

So, he decided to go to the same school that his high school coach, former NFL wide receiver Don Beebe, attended.

If Beebe could make it to the NFL from Chadron State, Gilkey figured he had a shot as well.

"I'm the first player from Chadron to go to the Senior Bowl," Gilkey said. "I'm the second player to go to the NFL Combine – Beebe being the first. It's kind of a cool connection. Hopefully the second player to be drafted; Beebe being the first. Having him as my high school coach, that's just a really cool opportunity."

A first-team All-American at Chadron State during his senior season, Gilkey played both tackle positions during his career with the Eagles.

His combination of strength and agility earned him an invite to the Senior Bowl as well as the 2013 NFL Scouting Combine.

There, he went head-to-head with NFL prospects from BCS powerhouses but took advantage of the even playing field to show that he could compete against the best.

"You know, it was good for me to acclimate myself to the NFL speed of things," Gilkey said about that experience. "I definitely have things I need to work on but it allowed me to gain that confidence and assure the scouts, the coaches, the GMs and showing them that I'm not a developmental player, that I'm a guy that can come into a training camp and can compete for a job right off the bat."

Since Gilkey was able to overcome the bullying to become an All-American, straight-A-earning student athlete, he hopes to use his own experiences to help others.

"I'm starting an anti-bullying campaign," he said. "I think I have a great position, being my size, and standing up and talking about my experience being bullied, being ostracized and being made fun of. People see me now and think, 'How could this person ever be bullied?' I have a great voice and great platform to share those experiences and share my faith, as well."

2013 NFL Draft Preview: Tackles

Gray Caldwell
DenverBroncos.com
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A look at the top offensive tackle prospects in the 2013 NFL Draft.

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- In the weeks leading up to the 2013 NFL Draft, DenverBroncos.com is taking a look at the draft prospects position-by-position.

We will devote a week to each group, looking back at some of the Broncos' previous picks at the position and showcasing some of the top prospects through top stories, blogs and Broncos TV videos.

This week: offensive linemen, a position we'll divide into tackles and guards/centers.

Below you will find five of the top prospects at the tackle position. Tomorrow, we will preview the interior linemen.

TOP PROSPECTS AT THE POSITION:

ERIC FISHER

- **POSITION:** Tackle
- **COLLEGE:** Central Michigan
- **HEIGHT:** 6'7"
- **WEIGHT:** 306
- **CAREER STATS:** 34 starts
- **COMBINE:** 5.05 40-yd. dash, 27 Bench reps, 116 in. broad jump

On whether he can play left and right tackle:

"Yeah, I think I'm a very versatile offensive lineman. I'll play anywhere on the offensive line. I love the territory, I love playing in the trenches and doing my job."



D.J. FLUKER



- **POSITION:** Tackle
- **COLLEGE:** Alabama
- **HEIGHT:** 6'5"
- **WEIGHT:** 339
- **CAREER STATS:** 35 starts
- **COMBINE:** 5.31 40-yd. dash, 21 bench reps

On his attitude on the field:

"I'm vocal. I feel emotion. That's me. Emotional leader. I tell (the opposing defensive lineman) I'm here to come take your lunch money. ... I try to finish it. Kind of like Mortal Kombat."

LUKE JOECKEL

- **POSITION:** Tackle
- **COLLEGE:** Texas A&M
- **HEIGHT:** 6'6"
- **WEIGHT:** 306
- **CAREER STATS:** 37 starts
- **COMBINE:** 5.30 40-yd dash, 27 bench reps, 106 in. broad jump

On A&M moving to the SEC:

"SEC defensive lines are stout. They are the best defensive lines in the country. Going from the Big 12 to the SEC, you can definitely see a difference, you can see it on film and you can definitely see it playing against it. I think it's a great stepping stone to go to the NFL after playing against the top guys I played against this year, and I'm excited about that next step."



LANE JOHNSON



- **POSITION:** Tackle
- **COLLEGE:** Oklahoma
- **HEIGHT:** 6'6"
- **WEIGHT:** 303
- **CAREER STATS:** 23 starts
- **COMBINE:** 4.72 40-yd. dash, 28 bench reps, 118 in. broad jump

On how playing quarterback in junior college helps while playing tackle:

"When you're playing quarterback, you kind of know where things are coming from, defensive linemen, where blitzes are coming from. Now playing tackle, you kind of know how it feels to get blindsided, when you can't see what's coming. I think it definitely helps as far as blitz protections."

JUSTIN PUGH

- **POSITION:** Tackle
- **COLLEGE:** Syracuse
- **HEIGHT:** 6'4"
- **WEIGHT:** 307
- **CAREER STATS:** 34 starts
- **COMBINE:** 5.14 40-yd. dash, 28.5 vert. jump, 103 in. broad jump

On his familiarity with NFL offenses:

"In college we ran the same offense as the New Orleans Saints did, because (former Syracuse) Coach (Doug) Marrone came from the Saints. So we did a lot of zone blocking and stuff. We also did power scheme my freshman and sophomore seasons, so I'm accustomed to both styles of offense. I think I can fit either way."

