

Broncos seem likely to stick with Ayers at DE and draft a pass rusher

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
March 28, 2013

Elvis Dumervil is gone, and other than making sure such a transaction debacle never happens again, there is nothing the Broncos can do about it.

The Broncos' three-year offer was slightly better than the five-year contract Dumervil signed to play for the Baltimore Ravens. The Denver deal had more unconditional guaranteed money through two years (\$10 million to Baltimore's \$8.5 million) and more total dollars through the first three years (\$18 million to \$17 million).

"We're losing a great football player and a great teammate and a great leader," Broncos left guard Zane Beadles said. "He'll definitely be missed, no question about that."

All the Broncos can do now is move on. When looking at possible replacements at the pass-rushing defensive end position, it's clear from the available options that ... Boy, Elvis sure could bring the heat, couldn't he?

OK, enough. The Broncos don't belong to any one player. Not even Peyton Manning. The Broncos belong to Denver. And so there is a way the Broncos can present the argument they will wind up as a better team, with better production per dollar at right defensive end, than had they re-signed Dumervil.

The Broncos' preferred plan is to sign former Indianapolis Colts star Dwight Freeney, a free agent.

At least it was until a contract negotiation Monday revealed the two sides are far apart.

Other choices include John Abraham, who played the past seven seasons of his 13-year career with the Atlanta Falcons. It's looking more likely the Broncos could stand pat with Robert Ayers, knowing a pass rusher can be added in the first three rounds of the April 25-27 draft.

Here's a look at the three options:

Freeney. The stats say Abraham, not Freeney, should be Denver's first choice. Abraham had 10 sacks and six forced fumbles last season, Freeney only five and one.

The game film, though, demonstrates to the Broncos that Freeney has more left — for two reasons.

One, the Colts switched to a 3-4 defense last year, forcing Freeney to play outside linebacker. It's one thing to switch from defensive end to linebacker at age 25 and in your fourth season, as Dumervil did for the Broncos when he posted a career-high 17 sacks in 2009. It's another to learn a new position at age 32 in season No. 11, as Freeney did in 2012.

Two, Freeney isn't an outside linebacker. With the Broncos, he would return to his natural defensive end position. Freeney's 2012 season may have been an aberration, because he suffered a high left ankle sprain in the first half of the Colts' season opener at Chicago. He missed the next two games and never was completely healthy.

Freeney doesn't set the edge or stop the run. But use him primarily on passing downs, and he might well have one more 10-sack season in him. His asking price, though, would have to reduce significantly.

Abraham. Everybody's sure about that film? The past three seasons, Abraham made a total of 32½ sacks. Freeney had 23½. Dumervil had 20½. He missed the 2010 season because of an injury, but health is part of production.

Abraham is at the stage of his career where he might be motivated by his legacy. He leads active players with 122 sacks, ranking 13th in NFL history. Twenty more sacks would jump him to fifth place all time, ahead of Michael Strahan, and into strong Hall of Fame consideration.

Abraham turns 35 in May, but he doesn't want one more good year. He wants two more.

Ayers/draft pick. There are times when Ayers plays with the mean, violent streak that convinced Josh McDaniels to select him in the first round, No. 18 overall, in the 2009 draft. But Ayers hasn't developed into a pass rusher, evidenced by his 6½ sacks through four seasons.

Still, even if the Broncos sign Freeney or Abraham, Ayers probably would be the starter at right defensive end on rushing downs. The Broncos' projected front four on rushing downs, left to right: Derek Wolfe, Terrance Knighton, Kevin Vickerson and Ayers.

On passing downs, Von Miller would move from strongside linebacker to left defensive end. Wolfe and Ayers, with Mitch Unrein and Vickerson rotating in, would play the tackle positions. Freeney, Abraham or a draft pick within the first three rounds would play right defensive end. The Broncos are starting to warm to this idea.

Replacing Dumervil

The Broncos can go three ways in their attempt to replace right defensive end Elvis Dumervil. NFL reporter Mike Klis makes the case for each option:

Player

Dwight Freeney, Age-36, Ht. 6'1", Wt. 268, Career sacks 107.5

Has seven double-digit sack seasons. He drew the double-teams in Indy, helping partner Robert Mathis record seven seasons of at least 9½ sacks.

John Abraham, Age-34, Ht. 6'4", Wt. 263, Career sacks 122

Better recent production than Freeney and can be had for less money. Besides sacks, Abraham is Dumervil-like in forcing fumbles and J.J. Watt-like in pass deflections.

Robert Ayers, Age-27, Ht. 6'3", Wt. 274, Career sacks 6.5

Better run defender than Freeney, Abraham and Dumervil. Sticking with Ayers would catapult a pass rusher up the Broncos' draft board.

Elvis Dumervil's exit could cause some backlash in Broncos locker room

By Jeff Legwold
The Denver Post
March 28, 2013

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

Q: Was letting go of Elvis Dumervil a mistake or can the Broncos recover from it?

A: Kody, the circumstances that led the Broncos to release Dumervil were a mess on all sides.

Most in the league and many players I've spoken with say it looks to them like a case where whatever decisions were going to be made by Dumervil and his former agent should have been made before the clock was in its final hour.

Dumervil knew beyond a shadow of a doubt the team was simply not going to allow his original base salary of \$12 million in the upcoming season to be guaranteed. And certainly any player — any employee in any workplace for that matter — isn't going to be excited about the prospect of a pay cut.

There is a matter of pride, of ego, of feeling unappreciated, no matter what the dollar figures involved are. In the end, after weeks of back-and-forth after opening up the pay-cut discussions at the combine, the Broncos felt like they moved plenty from their original proposal to make an offer of \$8 million or so in that first season.

But when Dumervil and his former agent turned the offer down one hour before the deadline, it set the wheels in motion for what happened. Because, at the time, Dumervil was not in the same city, or even same state, as his agent, and he wasn't in Denver either.

So when Dumervil changed his mind, and papers needed to be signed, he could not simply walk into the Broncos' Dove Valley complex or his agent's office and do it. There was an extra step involved because Dumervil had to be located — he was at lunch — and Dumervil then had to find a place to use a fax machine.

Had Dumervil and his former agent simply been together somewhere — a small expense given \$8 million was on the table for the upcoming season — it would have saved a step and a pile of precious minutes.

In the end, the offer Dumervil agreed to in Baltimore (five years, \$35 million with a \$7.5 million signing bonus and a \$1 million base salary in '13) was longer overall, but wasn't much better, in terms of initial guaranteed money, than the one the Broncos had on the table after his release.

But it's often easier for a player, after discussions over a pay cut or a changing role or a demotion on the depth chart, to accept those changes in a new locker room rather than one where he has been for several years. Dumervil hinted at that Tuesday in Baltimore when he said he felt it was "time to change scenery."

For the Broncos, the part of the aftermath that will need some attention will be the locker room. Dumervil was a popular player, a team captain who had been named to three Pro Bowls. There will be some in the room who wonder if the Broncos will ask for what was initially a 50 percent pay cut for the upcoming season when their turn comes for those same discussions.

It's also why the whole he-has-a-contract mantra teams use at times during a player's holdout ring so hollow among the other players.

That said, most players usually accept wrestling over contracts as part of the business of football and that some changes will come as a result of that. Rod Smith used to half-joke he never went upstairs at Dove Valley because "only bad things happen up there."

Head coach John Fox put it like this recently when asked about potential backlash in the locker room:

"I concern myself with everything and the locker room is a huge part of dealing with players, but I think our guys understand there's two sides of football, there's football and it's very concentrated and all the things necessary to put a winning product out there. And there's business. And I don't know that business is our favorite part or anyone else's favorite part, but it's part of football and it usually occurs in the offseason. They understand that."

On the field, the Broncos will have to find an impact rusher for passing downs. The Broncos feel like with a little attention in the draft, with signing Terrance Knighton and Kevin Vickerson on the inside at defensive tackle and with Derek Wolfe's versatility, they will be able to adjust quickly on run downs.

They targeted Dwight Freeney to be a spot player on passing downs and will try to sign Freeney or John Abraham as the edge complement to Von Miller. The draft is deep in the defensive line as well, and the Broncos will now dangle what is Robert Ayers' best chance for significant playing time in Fox's tenure to see how Ayers responds as well.

Dumervil had 63 ½ sacks in six seasons in the defense — he spent a seventh season (2010) on injured reserve — and the Broncos may need more than one person to make up for that.

Elvis Dumervil took less to sign with Ravens

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
March 27, 2013

I have the details to the five-year contract Elvis Dumervil signed with the Baltimore Ravens.

And upon closer inspection, Dumervil wasn't fibbing when he said it wasn't about the money.

Let's compare the Ravens' contract to the Broncos offer. first the Ravens:

2013: \$1 million salary; \$7.5 million signing bonus = \$8.5 million (fully guaranteed)

2014: \$1 million salary; \$3.5 million option bonus (injury-only guarantee) = \$4.5 million

2015: \$4 million salary

2016: \$4 million salary

2017: 5 million salary

Totals

1 year: \$8.5 million

2 years: \$13 million

3 years: \$17 million

5 years: \$26 million (\$5.2 million/yr average)

Full guarantee: \$8.5 million

Escalators: \$8 million; incentives: \$2 million

Broncos

2013: \$5 million salary; \$3 million signing bonus = \$8 million (fully guaranteed)

2014: \$5 million (\$2 million fully guaranteed)

2015: \$5 million

Totals

1 year: \$8 million

2 years: \$13 million

3 years: \$18 million (\$6 million/yr average)

Full guarantee; \$10 million.

Escalators: \$2 million

Conclusion:

Most agents and executives within the industry would say the Broncos offered a slightly better deal because they had more guaranteed money and a better three-year average. The escalators for both the Ravens and Broncos were built around a 12-sack season.

Moreover, don't forget the Broncos paid Dumervil \$31.2 million the previous three years. And throughout the free-agent process, the Broncos had a better deal than the Ravens in year one and two. If it was about the money, Dumervil would signed back with the Broncos before Sunday.

This was not about the money. This was about a broken relationship between the Broncos and Dumervil, and the Ravens showering Dumervil with love.

MY Denver Card: 90,000 students get one card for all Denver programs

By Adrian Garcia
The Denver Post
March 27, 2013

Denver youths now have year-round access to basketball courts, gyms, and pools thanks to an idea from a local girl and Wednesday's launch of the MY Denver Card. The program allows more than 90,000 students to be more active at no charge.

Denver Broncos linebacker Wesley Woodyard joined Mayor Michael Hancock to kick start MY Denver Card. After announcing the program, Hancock and Wesley played basketball with local kids.

"He's pretty bad," said Juwan Clarke, 15, after playing with the mayor. Clarke was more pleased with Hancock's new initiative.

"It made me want to be at the rec more now that I don't have to pay to enter," Clarke said.

The MY Denver Card is a regular Denver Public Schools student ID with a barcode sticker on the back. Five-year-olds to 12th graders can freely enter Denver's 26 recreation centers and 29 pools after filling out an application.

"There is nothing smarter than delivering a world-class city filled with abundant opportunities so that all our children can succeed," Hancock in a the Washington Park Recreation Center.

In 2011 a shy Maggie Trout, 12, recognized Wednesday, came up with the idea after she forgot her library card and was unable to check-out books.

Maggie approached District 7 Councilman Chris Nevitt with the idea for one card for all Denver services and programs.

"I am thankful for Maggie because I could not think of a more worthwhile effort than giving our children the keys to learning and staying active," Hancock said.

The program is being funded by \$1.7 million from revenues approved by the passage of Measure 2A.

"This allows for kids to not have to hang out on the corner or in front of the TV," said Erin Brown, deputy manager for recreation.

Brown was one of the supporters of the program. Others included members of city council, DPS, Parks & Recreation and UnitedHealthcare of Colorado.

Applications can be picked up at recreation centers or found on Denvergov.org.

Better offseason: Chiefs over Broncos

By Bill Williamson

ESPN.com

March 27, 2013

It seems the Kansas City Chiefs have had the best offseason thus far in the AFC West.

In our AFC West poll this week, we asked readers to vote on whether the Chiefs or the Broncos have had the best offseason. Both teams have been considered to have among the best offseason in the NFL.

In our poll, the Chiefs are the winners. As of 2:30 p.m. ET, 57 percent of the votes were in favor of Kansas City, while 43 percent of the votes were in favor of the Broncos.

I tend to agree. Yes, Denver did well and it looks primed to have a successful season. But the Chiefs had more work to do and they filled many holes. So, I can understand why the Chiefs won this vote. Thanks to everyone who played along.

Power Rankings: Move over, Ravens, it's Broncos time now

Pete Prisco
CBSSports.com
March 27, 2013

Now that free agency is winding down, and teams are readying for the draft, it's time for another batch of Power Rankings.

Unlike like the last set, this set is done with more of a look ahead to 2013, rather than having the influence of 2012.

So if you're looking for the Baltimore Ravens atop the rankings, look again. It's not that I, like most, believe they have suffered a ton of hits in free agency that will be their big problem. It's just that I thought they overachieved last season and got hot at the right time -- and quite frankly they were a good team, not a great one.

The Ravens will be in the playoff mix again -- thanks to Joe Flacco -- but they will not head into the 2013 season as the top team here.

That's the Denver Broncos.

The Broncos were one bad play by safety Rahim Moore away from beating the Ravens and getting to the AFC Championship Game, which would have been at home. I still think if they win that game, they win it all.

Since then, the Broncos have had a terrific offseason. John Elway has made a lot of right moves, the fax fiasco that cost them Elvis Dumervil not one of them.









The offensive line needed an upgrade inside, so he signed guard Louis Vasquez from the Chargers. The secondary needed help at corner, so he brought in corner Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie on a show-me deal. They needed help inside on defense, so he signed former Jaguars defensive tackle Terrence Knighton, who is talented but somehow got in the doghouse last season.

And then he capped it off by signing Wes Welker to a deal to help the inside passing game, an area Peyton Manning loves to exploit. They will add a veteran pass rusher soon to take over for Dumervil.

Denver was the top seed in the AFC last year, and now they are better. The Broncos are currently the best team in the league.

The 49ers and Seahawks will balk at that, but let's not forget they have two quarterbacks who have to prove they can do it again. We know Manning can.










So, for now, it's the Broncos at the top.

| RANK | TEAM | POWER RANKINGS | MOVE (LW) |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 |  | They've made some nice additions in free agency, adding to an already good roster. This is a talented team with a great quarterback. | ▲ 1(2) |
| 2 |  | They haven't done much in free agency, but they do have 14 draft picks. They will be just fine. | ▲ 1(3) |
| 3 |  | They did the smart thing and re-signed their own free agents. Adding Steve Jackson will improve the run game, but they have to get a pass rusher. | ▲ 1(4) |
| 4 |  | They lost Welker, but added Danny Amendola. I like the signing of Adrian Wilson. And, oh yeah, they have Tom Brady and Bill Belichick. | ▲ 1(5) |
| 5 |  | The additions of Cliff Avril and Michael Bennett will really help the pass rush, an area that took a hit with the torn ACL suffered by Chris Clemons. | ▲ 2(7) |
| 6 |  | They don't participate in free agency and focus on the draft. They have to get help for that defense. | —(6) |
| 7 |  | Yes, they've lost some players, but this organization will be able to handle it. They have one of the best front offices in the league. Signing Dumervil was big. | ▼ 6(1) |
| 8 |  | Is Ed Reed an upgrade over Glover Quin at safety? He is in name only. They also lost a pass rusher in Connor Barwin. | —(8) |

RANK TEAM

POWER RANKINGS










MOVE
(LW)

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 9 |  | They re-signed some key pieces, but what about Andre Smith? They have to get him back. | —(9) |
| 10 |  | They've added some much-needed help in free agency, especially on the offensive line. Ryan Grigson has been active in this free agency period. | ▲1(11) |
| 11 |  | Getting Jermon Bushrod to play left tackle and Martellus Bennett to play tight end will help the offense. But they have a hole in the middle of the defense without No. 54. | ▲1(12) |
| 12 |  | They don't have any money to spend, so they have a huge hole at corner. But their 2013 season is all about Robert Griffin III and his knee. | ▼2(10) |
| 13 |  | No money meant no real help came in free agency. The draft will be big for Jerry Jones. | —(13) |
| 14 |  | They have to be better on their lines in 2013, something the coaching staff is well aware of right now. | ▲1(15) |
| 15 |  | In a division with two dominant teams, they've done some good things by signing Jake Long and Jared Cook. This team is coming fast. | ▲3(18) |
| 16 |  | Getting Sean Payton will help the offense, but have they done enough on defense? I do like the signing of Keenan Lewis. | ▲1(17) |
| 17 |  | They lose Percy Harvin -- a problem -- and add Greg Jennings and pick up a first-round pick. But it's all about Christian Ponder's growth. | ▼3(14) |

RANK TEAM

POWER RANKINGS







MOVE
(LW)

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 18 |  | They've suffered some hits in free agency, but they usually do. This is a team that focuses on the draft. | ▼ 2(16) |
| 19 |  | They haven't done much to help the roster, which leaves some holes on defense. They better draft well. | —(19) |
| 20 |  | They are still trying to trade for Darrelle Revis, but if not they have a big hole at corner. | —(20) |
| 21 |  | Getting Mike Wallace will really help Ryan Tannehill, but they have a huge hole at corner still. | ▲ 1(22) |
| 22 |  | They've done some good things in free agency. Reggie Bush and Glover Quin were nice pickups. But where's the pass rush? | ▲ 6(28) |
| 23 |  | They've added a lot of guys this offseason, including quarterback Alex Smith. Andy Reid hasn't been shy, and the team is better, but how much better? | ▲ 8(31) |
| 24 |  | They've added some nice pieces in free agency, but now comes the tough part: Who plays quarterback? | ▲ 5(29) |
| 25 |  | How much better are they after free agency? They better get an offensive lineman early in the draft. | ▼ 4(21) |
| 26 |  | The new regime has fortified the defensive front, which will help, but are they sold on Brandon Weeden? | ▼ 1(25) |

RANK TEAM

POWER RANKINGS

MOVE
(LW)

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 27 |  | They spent a lot of money on players in free agency, but if Jake Locker doesn't improve it won't matter. | ▼ 4(23) |
| 28 |  | Is Drew Stanton the guy? They signed him and it looks that way. Who knows what he can do? | ▼ 1(27) |
| 29 |  | Are they really considering Terrelle Pryor at quarterback? If so, why even keep Carson Palmer? | ▲ 1(30) |
| 30 |  | The next big decision for them is what to do with Darrelle Revis. Since they look to be a mess, they should just trade him. | ▼ 6(24) |
| 31 |  | Who plays quarterback? Is there any doubt they have to draft one early after letting Ryan Fitzpatrick walk? | ▼ 5(26) |
| 32 |  | They stuck to their plan of not spending in free agency, which is the right thing to do. This team is on a three-year rebuilding plan. | —(32) |

Welker Signing Helps Broncos Offense and Defense

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

March 27, 2013

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. – When the Broncos agreed to terms with wide receiver Wes Welker, Head Coach John Fox called it a “double signing.”

Not only is he a new weapon for quarterback Peyton Manning and the Denver offense, but the team no longer has to defend against him.

Except in practice, and that is a challenge that the Broncos defenders are looking forward to.

“It's gonna be some amazing practices with me and Welker in this slot,” cornerback Chris Harris tweeted after the signing was announced. “Games should be easy.”

Welker caught 118 passes last year, earning his fifth consecutive Pro Bowl invitation.

Now he brings that slot-receiver skillset to a Broncos offense that ranked fifth in passing yards a year ago.

Fox knows from his experience trying to defend against Welker what a mismatch he creates in the middle of the field.

“I know from defending Wes Welker for years, what a tough matchup he is,” Fox said. “When you trot that particular personnel group out there and you have names like Demaryius Thomas, Eric Decker and Wes Welker, they can't double all three of them.”

The signing of Welker gives Denver three receivers who topped the 1,000-yard mark in 2012. The trio combined for nearly 300 catches, 4,000 yards and 30 touchdowns last season.

“They have to pick and choose and you figure out what that is and try to exploit what they do,” Fox said. “The biggest thing with him is that he has skins on the wall. He's been a very productive player in our league—and recently—and is a tough matchup. We're excited to have him.”

Broncos' Offseason Schedule Set

Gray Caldwell

DenverBroncos.com

March 27, 2013

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- In the midst of the "offseason," many players will make their way back to the team's Dove Valley headquarters in a little less than three weeks.

The team's voluntary offseason conditioning program is set to begin on Monday, April 15. Below you will find the club's offseason schedule, with information on what each phase means.

April 15-18, April 22-25

Phase 1 Workouts

The offseason workout program is strictly voluntary, beginning with phase one workouts. Phase one consists of the first two weeks of the team's offseason conditioning program, and is limited to strength and conditioning and physical rehabilitation. Only strength and conditioning coaches are allowed on the field, and no footballs will be used -- with one exception. Quarterbacks are permitted to throw to receivers, as long as they are not covered by any other player. Helmets are not permitted during phase one.

April 29-May 2, May 6-9, May 13-16, May 23

Phase 2 Workouts

For the next three weeks of the conditioning program, the club will participate in phase two workouts. In phase two, all coaches are allowed on the field. On-field workouts can include individual player and position drills, but no full team drills. No offense versus defense drills are allowed, but special teams drills on a separate basis -- kicking team or return team only -- are permitted. Helmets are still not allowed during phase two.

May 10-12

Rookie Minicamp

On May 9, the Broncos' rookies -- both drafted and undrafted -- will report to Dove Valley. They'll go through physicals, get fitted for equipment and take care of other administrative items. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the rookies will take the field for the first time in a minicamp that is designated for only rookies, though NFL rules stipulate that certain non-rookies are also eligible to participate. Last season, 30 players took part in the camp, including two on a tryout.

"I think it kind of slows things down for us so we're not just thrown right into the fire," defensive end Derek Wolfe said before last year's rookie minicamp. "We're all learning here. So I assume it'll help slow it down for us a little bit."

May 20-22, May 29-31, June 3-6

OTAs

Phase three of the offseason conditioning program brings Organized Team Activities, or OTAs. The club will conduct 10 days of OTAs, in which all coaches are allowed on the field. No live contact drills are allowed, including one-on-one offense versus defense drills. However, special teams drills and team offense versus team defense drills are allowed as long as there is no live contact. Helmets are allowed, but no pads or shells are permitted.

June 11-13

Mandatory Minicamp

The first and only mandatory veteran minicamp of the offseason program takes place in mid-June. Physicals will take place on Monday before practices on Tuesday through Thursday. The same rules of OTAs apply to the mandatory minicamp. Two-a-days are permitted on two of the three practice days, but players are allowed to be on the field for a maximum of three-and-a-half hours, and the second practice must be limited to a walkthrough. From June 14 until late July, when training camp is tentatively scheduled to kick off, the players cannot participate in any team-organized workouts.

Mile High Salute to Fans Tour Announced

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

March 27, 2013

The inaugural Mile High Salute to Fans Tour, presented by U.S. Bank, will be hitting the road in April to thank Broncos fans all across Colorado.

The 2013 tour will include stops in 20 different Colorado cities and will be free and open to the public.

"We are very excited to bring the Mile High Salute to Fans Tour to each of the 20 cities next month," Broncos Senior Vice President of Business Development Mac Freeman said. "The tour will allow us to get out and thank fans throughout Broncos Country for their on-going support. Spending time in the communities that support us so passionately is extremely important to everyone in the Broncos organization."

The tour will begin in Boulder on Monday and will end in Glenwood Springs on Sat., April 6. Visiting multiple destinations each day throughout the week, each stop will include autographs and photos with Broncos players, cheerleaders and Miles the Mascot.

Players scheduled to appear on the tour include safety David Bruton, defensive end Malik Jackson, defensive tackle Mitch Unrein and defensive tackle Kevin Vickerson.

Fans can visit www.DenverBroncos.com/SaluteToFansTour for complete tour details.

Bailey and Clady Award High School Equipment Grants

Stuart Zaas

DenverBroncos.com

March 27, 2013

After being named to the USA Football's All-Fundamentals team earlier in the offseason, a pair of Broncos will be able to use the honor to help young football players.

Broncos cornerback Champ Bailey and offensive tackle Ryan Clady will each donate a \$1,500 equipment grant to a high school football program through USA Football, the official youth football development partner of the Broncos and the NFL.

Bailey will award his grant to Denver North High School.

"The USA Football equipment grant will allow Denver North High School to replace shoulder pads that are over 10 years old," Denver North High School Athletics Director Kevin Bendjy said. "The generosity of USA Football will now allow 26 of our scholar-athletes to wear the most up-to-date equipment, which we anticipate will improve performance and safety."

Clady chose to award his grant to his alma matter, Rialto Eisenhower High School in California.

"The 2012 Citrus Belt League Champion Eisenhower Eagle football team thanks USA Football and Ryan Clady for the equipment grant," Eisenhower High School head football coach Mike Clark said. "The equipment – helmets and shoulder pads – will be used to help us defend our league championship. Without support from USA Football and Ryan Clady, we would have difficulty remaining competitive against the higher revenue teams we have to compete against."

Employing core football fundamentals advances a youth player's performance and safety, particularly in the areas of blocking and tackling. USA Football has educated more than 100,000 youth football coaches in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., through its online courses and single-day coaching clinics. Approximately 3 million American children age 6-14 play organized tackle football, placing it among the country's most popular youth sports.

More on past USA Football All-Fundamentals Team players' techniques is available at:

www.usafootball.com/all-fundamentals-team.

2013 NFL Draft Preview: Safeties

Gray Caldwell

DenverBroncos.com

March 27, 2013

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: defensive backs, a position we'll divide into cornerbacks and safeties.

Below you will find five of the top prospects at safety. For a photo gallery of the position group, [click here](#).

TOP PROSPECTS AT THE POSITION:

JOHNATHAN CYPRIEN

- **POSITION:** Safety
- **COLLEGE:** Florida International
- **HEIGHT:** 6'0"
- **WEIGHT:** 217
- **CAREER STATS:**
365 tackles, 7 interceptions, 22 pass breakups
- **COMBINE:** 38.5 in. vert. jump

On playing at a smaller school:

"Teams are aware that I did come from Florida International, but I think there's a lot of talent in the Sun



Belt conference, and not just from Florida International, but the entire conference. So, since I've been here, I haven't gotten too many questions about competition."

MATT ELAM



- **POSITION:** Safety
- **COLLEGE:** Florida
- **HEIGHT:** 5'10"
- **WEIGHT:** 208
- **CAREER STATS:** 168 tackles, 23.5 tackles for loss, 6 interceptions
- **COMBINE:** 4.54 40-yd. dash, 17 bench reps, 35.5 in. vert. jump

On his biggest strength:

"My physicality. I play very hard. I love to strike people. I feel that's what helps me stand out the most, and I'm very versatile. I can cover the slot receivers, I can go down and cover, I can go in the box and tackle. I feel like I'm very versatile, I can play in the post. I feel like that's what makes

me stand out the most."

BACCARRI RAMBO

- **POSITION:** Safety
- **COLLEGE:** Georgia
- **HEIGHT:** 6'0"
- **WEIGHT:** 211
- **CAREER STATS:**
235 tackles, 16 interceptions, 6 forced fumbles
- **COMBINE:** 17 bench reps

On how he describes himself as a player:

"I describe myself as a safety as the quarterback of our secondary. At the University of Georgia, I made all the calls. I'm a ballhawk. I have great instincts. I'm a leader. If you need a big play or an interception, or forced fumble, I can be that guy for your team."



ERIC REID



- **POSITION:** Safety
- **COLLEGE:** LSU
- **HEIGHT:** 6'1"
- **WEIGHT:** 213
- **CAREER STATS:** 199 tackles, 6 interceptions, 11 pass breakups
- **COMBINE:** 4.53 40-yd. dash, 40.5 in. vert. jump, 134 in. broad jump

On the transition from college to the NFL:

"The huge thing, especially for DBs in their transition to the NFL, is that it's not like college anymore. You can't bang a receiver all the way down the field. You only have a 5-yard cushion. I'm looking to improve upon my coverage without touching receivers."

(via ProFootballWeekly.com)

KENNY VACCARO

- **POSITION:** Safety
 - **COLLEGE:** Texas
 - **HEIGHT:** 6'0"
 - **WEIGHT:** 214
 - **CAREER STATS:**
264 tackles, 16 tackles for loss, 5 interceptions
 - **COMBINE:** 4.63 40-yd. dash, 15 bench reps, 38 in. vert. jump
-

On whether safeties are underrated:

"I think people are starting to appreciate safeties more, now that tight ends are turning into freaks and controlling the middle of the field. So you've got to have a safety who can cover and come up and hit."

