

# Denver Broncos defensive tackle Terrance Knighton will honor his deal

By Mike Klis

The Denver Post

April 28, 2014

It took three years, but players are beginning to benefit financially from the NFL's collective bargaining agreement.

How do we know this? Well, because even space-eaters are getting paid.

"Trust me, I've seen it," said Broncos defensive tackle Terrance Knighton. "I've kept an eye on it."

Paul Soliai will be paid \$11 million by the Atlanta Falcons this year. That's \$11 million for every sack he had last year with the Miami Dolphins.

Linval Joseph, who had three sacks with the New York Giants last year, will make \$9 million to plug the middle for the Minnesota Vikings this year. Earl Mitchell, who had a career-best 1½ sacks last year with the Houston Texans, will get \$5 million this year to play for Miami.

Then there's Knighton, nicknamed "Pot Roast." He was effective last season as a run stuffer and also had four sacks, including a key capture of New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady in the AFC championship game.

Knighton will make \$2.5 million in 2014, the final year of a two-year, \$4.5 million contract he signed with the Broncos.

It's all about timing. Knighton was benched by the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2012, the year before he became a free agent. The Broncos were able to get him at a discount.

Had he hit the market coming off the productive year he had with the Broncos in 2013, Knighton might be a \$10 million player. Through his agent, Tony Fleming, Knighton approached the Broncos about getting a new contract, but the team isn't ready to renegotiate.

Here's why: After allocating \$32 million in 2014 money to defensive end DeMarcus Ware, cornerback Aqib Talib and strong safety T.J. Ward, the Broncos have blown their defensive budget. Also, Knighton is one of many key Broncos who are in the final year of their contracts. They include Demaryius Thomas, Julius Thomas, Chris Harris, Orlando Franklin, Rahim Moore, Kevin Vickerson, Nate Irving and Virgil Green.

"I'm definitely going to honor the contract," Knighton said. "I want to get something done and I'd like to get something done here. I don't want to bounce around. But I'm at the point now where once the season starts, I'm just strictly football."

**Footnotes.** The Broncos plan to pick up the 2015 option on Von Miller's contract this week. It calls for Miller to receive a \$9.754 million salary next year. ... Week 2 of the team's Phase I offseason program continues Monday. The Broncos will start Phase II — coaches can instruct players during individual and position drills — next Monday. While in Phase II, the entire offense can practice, and the entire defense can practice, but the offense and defense can't practice against each other.

# Broncos would be rewarded for patience

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

April, 28, 2014

If things were like they have been in recent years, the Denver Broncos would have wrapped up their 2014 draft this past weekend.

But things are not that way, and in the NFL's attempt to invade every page on the calendar, the Broncos are only in the home stretch of their preparation for the May 8-10 draft.

The Broncos are slated to pick 31st in the opening round. Their current regime of decision-makers, chiefly John Elway, have looked to trade out of that spot in the previous three drafts. But it all depends on how things go above that pick.

Often the thinking is trade out of the lower end of the first round, get an extra pick or two, and pick a similarly graded player in the upper half of the second round. This draft, in particular, is considered deep throughout, so there are plenty of teams already looking to move in the opening round.

While it's easy to get caught up in the excitement of draft day, John Elway and the rest of the Broncos' decision makers would be better off exercising patience and waiting for a quality player to fall.

Sitting among the last eight picks of the opening round, Elway has lived in both schools of the stay-or-trade thought in the previous two drafts and ended up selecting players in the same position group each time -- defensive line. In 2012, the Broncos made two trades to get all of the way out of the first round.

They initially moved from No. 25 to No. 31 in a trade with New England and picked up an extra fourth-rounder along the way. The Patriots selected Dont'a Hightower with the 25th pick and Hightower has started 27 games over the past two seasons, including a 97-tackle year in '13.

The Broncos then torpedoed the local draft party scene when they traded that No. 31 pick to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, with the fourth-rounder they got in the Patriots trade, for the No. 36 and No. 101 picks.

The Buccaneers took running back Doug Martin, who the Broncos also liked in the weeks leading up to that draft. And when Martin plowed his way to 1,454 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns as a rookie, the trade looked fairly lopsided for the Broncos right out of the gate.

But in reality, the jury is still out with the major players each recovering from a stint on injured reserve. The Broncos selected Derek Wolfe at No. 36 that year and as a rookie, Wolfe had the look of a long-time starter. Last year at this time many with the Broncos, including some his teammates, were saying Wolfe had both the look and demeanor of a future captain.

Martin tore the labrum in his left shoulder last season -- he rushed for 456 yards in six games before the injury -- and had surgery to repair it. Wolfe, too, ended up on injured reserve after seizure-like symptoms on the team's bus just before a late November road trip.

With the 101st pick in '12 the Broncos selected Omar Bolden. Bolden has already been moved from cornerback to safety and is still looking to find his niche in the defense.

Last year, with the No. 28 pick, the Broncos dabbled with the idea of making a move, but in the end stayed put and selected defensive tackle Sylvester Williams. Williams was a starter down the stretch as a rookie last season after Kevin Vickerson's injury and the Broncos see Williams as a potential impact player in the defensive line rotation this season.

In the end many of the better personnel executives in the league -- the ones more proficient in the draft -- believe patience is indeed a draft virtue at the bottom of the opening round. They believe staying put, trusting their boards and picking the guy they want will reap the best rewards. They don't let the desire to get extra picks overshadow the ability to get a premium player.

Teams will make mistakes above you -- a reach or two will be taken as the runs happen at one position or another. Some rush to fill needs they fear they won't find later. The result is often a highly-graded player falling.

The Baltimore Ravens may have lived this life, with current general manager Ozzie Newsome, better than most.

They selected linebacker Ray Lewis at No. 26 in the '96 draft -- side note: they selected Hall of Famer Jonathan Ogden at No. 4 that year, so the team's first-round effort will have a nice slice of Canton in a few more years -- selected tight end Todd Heap at No. 31 in '01, safety Ed Reed at No. 24 in '02, selected Ben Grubbs (one Pro Bowl) at No. 29 and safety Matt Elam (15 starts as a rookie in '13) at No. 31 last year.

At the moment, the Broncos have seven picks in this draft, one in each round. The depth of this draft board would suggest their best play is sit, stay at 31, and take the highest-graded player on their board as the first round winds down.

Because that player is often one somebody else should, and could, have taken sooner.