

# Gary Kubiak open to using bell cow running back with Broncos

By Troy Renck  
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The trend remains hard to escape even for those with breathtaking speed. The NFL running back position has become a timeshare. In a pass-happy league, the average number of attempts per season for top-10 rushers continues to decline.

It sank to 280 last season. It sat at 284 in 2013. As recently as 2006, it was 338. Good teams run the ball, but the growing evidence raises the question: Are the days of the bell cow back over?

Not if Broncos coach Gary Kubiak has his way. While multiple backs offer versatility and protection for injury, a front man still can exist, if not prosper.

"I can tell you this, I believe in the (bell cow). And I believe it's up to the player to prove he can do that. Do you need two guys in a season? You are darn right, in this league," Kubiak said after practice Tuesday. "But I think if a guy goes out there and he shows he can play three downs, can protect the quarterback, and can handle it, then he should stay out there."

The Broncos boast a stable of talented, young backs. C.J. Anderson leads the group, an undrafted free agent who turned opportunity last season into a Pro Bowl berth. Montee Ball lost the starter's job because of ineffectiveness and multiple injuries (apendectomy and groin). Ronnie Hillman provides a slippery change of pace, and capitalized in a limited window last season before injuring his foot. Juwan Thompson brings an added dose of power, possessing fullback strength, but a tailback's vision.

Four backs. One job. For now, it's Anderson's to lose.

"He has told us if you get the chance and play well, you will stay out there. My goal is to be out there all three downs," Anderson said. "That's my plan."

Kubiak's history with running backs provides a road map of his intentions. He rewarded those who performed. Five times his top running back finished in the top 10 in carries from 2006-to-2014, spanning his time as the Houston Texans' head coach and the Baltimore Ravens' offensive coordinator. Arian Foster led the league in 2012 with 351 and also finished in the top 10 in 2010 and 2011. Steve Slaton (2008) and Justin Forsett (2014) also cracked the the top 10 list.

Forsett shows Kubiak's open mind to relying on a workhorse. Playing for his fifth team in seven years, Forsett filled the void left by Ray Rice's termination, finishing 10th in the NFL with 235 attempts. And it wasn't like he didn't have a capable backup in Bernard Pierce.

"With Justin, he went in as a role player and all of sudden, it was like, 'Why are we taking this guy off the field? He was doing everything we asked,'" Kubiak said. "He earned the right to stay out there."

Anderson reported to camp at 218 pounds, a lighter bowling ball equipped to go 10 frames, if you will. The zone-blocking scheme requires the back to put his foot in the ground and slice the field in half with a cut back. The Broncos ran inside zone plays last season, and are adding outside stretch calls.

"If we get the holes like they had in Houston, oh man," Anderson said.

Evaluating with certainty begins with the preseason games because the Broncos, for obvious reasons, don't cut block in practice.

"It's a healthy competition," said Ball, who is working on using feet better after contact. "I tell (Anderson), 'Soon as you slip up I'm right there. And he knows it. That's how he got his opportunity."

Hillman doesn't profile as an every down back. Still, he showed quickness and toughness with 100-yard games in victories over the Jets and Chargers last season.

"We all have ups and downs. Right now they are getting most of the reps. But it's early in camp," Hillman said. "We have a lot of preseason and season to go, so I am not worried about it."

The popular football axiom goes: if you have two quarterbacks you have none. Kubiak possesses at least four running backs, but if the starter takes advantage, he will lean on one.

# Wade Phillips likes Broncos' inside linebacker depth

By Nicki Jhabvala

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The rise of Todd Davis and Steven Johnson late last season has resulted in a position battle to watch in Broncos training camp. The two middle linebackers combined for 33 tackles (20 solo) as starters after Danny Trevathan and Brandon Marshall went down with injuries.

This year, as the Broncos switch to the 3-4 defense, Davis and Johnson — along with Reggie Walker, Lamin Barrow and Corey Nelson — are fighting for backup roles as Trevathan and Marshall return to form after surgeries.

Coach Gary Kubiak said during organized team activities that inside linebacker "may be as competitive a spot as we'll have probably going into camp." Defensive coordinator Wade Phillips took it a step further Tuesday.

"Our backup group is probably the best that I've ever had," he said. "I think a lot of those guys can play and have played well in practice."

## D-line woes

If only the depth at middle linebacker carried over to the line.

Injuries and absences have taken a toll on the defensive line, causing concern for Phillips only five days into camp.

Sylvester Williams has been a mainstay with the first team at nose tackle, and Derek Wolfe, who will serve a four-game suspension at the start of the season, has been a regular at left defensive end in practices.

But as Antonio Smith works his way back after missing most of the offseason, and Malik Jackson and Marvin Austin rehab from injuries, the line is thin.

"The other day we only had six defensive linemen," Phillips said. "We were down to six practicing. That's certainly a concern just with the numbers themselves. We have some talent there, but we have to keep improving, and hopefully we'll have more people out there."

## Veteran coaching

DeMarcus Ware and Von Miller have gone at rookie tackle Ty Sambrailo hard this offseason, knowing he has to produce immediately with veteran Ryan Clady out.

But their continued communication with Sambrailo — telling him what they're seeing so he can correct his mistakes on the line — even during situational plays, has caught offensive coordinator Rick Dennison by surprise.

"It's pretty unique. I haven't seen it," Dennison said. "As an offensive coach, really appreciate it."

# Gary Kubiak: Broncos would be 'stupid' not to build offense to fit Peyton Manning

By Jeff Legwold

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Gary Kubiak has certainly heard all the words.

Including the ones -- and there have been plenty since he was hired in January to be the Denver Broncos' 15th head coach -- devoted to the idea that quarterback Peyton Manning doesn't fit the offense Kubiak and the other Broncos coaches have put together.

And at that, Kubiak simply shakes his head.

"Look, it's not my offense, it's our offense, the Denver Broncos' offense, and we wouldn't be very smart -- we'd be stupid -- not to do the things we do best," Kubiak said. "Peyton has been one of the greatest there's ever been for a long time; we're going to do things that fit him and get done the things we want to get done. That's coaching, that's our job."

In training camp's early going, it's clear the Broncos have meshed Kubiak's version of the West Coast offense with what Manning has done at a Hall-of-Fame level during his career. Together, they'll do a little of this, a little of that.

Since Manning arrived in 2012, the Broncos have begun to huddle up more, and Manning will be under center and throw on the move more than he has in the past. For his part, Manning has consistently said he's ready to run whatever plays Kubiak and offensive coordinator Rick Dennison devise, including the bread-and-butter, play-action rollouts Kubiak's offense has traditionally used.

"I feel that I throw pretty well on the run, to tell you the truth," Manning said as camp opened. "I never had as many designed rollouts or scrambles, but I've sprinted out through the years. ... I actually think I throw pretty well on the run for a guy that doesn't really run well. I actually throw well on the run, maybe even better than some guys that actually run well."

Kubiak has pointed out that he has had players finish as the league's leading rusher (Terrell Davis), leading receiver (Andre Johnson) and leading passer (Matt Schaub) during his time as a playcaller. His point is he has adjusted to his personnel, successfully, while still staying true to the things he likes to do on offense.

Schaub didn't play in the offense the same way the more mobile Jake Plummer did, and neither Schaub nor Plummer played the same way John Elway did during the Broncos' back-to-back Super Bowl seasons.

"That's the thing about Kubes, he will make it whatever it needs to be," Plummer said. "He'll look at Peyton, study Peyton and create something that is true to what he wants to do and is true to what Peyton does. That is Kubes' strength, he's just one of the smartest dudes out there and he is great with people, he understands people. I know when he left the Broncos [in 2006 to coach the Houston Texans], I wanted to cry."

"Obviously I don't get into the comparisons between this year and last year, but yeah, I think you learn," Manning said.

Kubiak, Elway's former backup as a player, is known among his peers as a grinder, a coach who "is all about ball." Many think that aspect of his personality will make him a kindred spirit for Manning, much the same way Manning bonded with former Broncos offensive coordinator Adam Gase.

Kubiak worked with Hall of Famers in Elway and Steve Young early in his coaching career, and now, just over two decades later, he gets his chance to work with Manning. Gase was once asked what Manning wants most from a coach, and his response was "answers" -- Manning has filled piles of spiral notebooks over the years with notes on topics that interest him -- and Kubiak has come to enjoy that pathological inquisitiveness.

"For me as a coach, man, you love that," Kubiak said. "It's interesting because early in my career, my first round as a coach, I was a young coach trying to coach a Hall of Fame player [Elway]. ... It's great to work with those guys. It's so challenging. They're so smart. They want all the answers. They deserve all the answers. To watch a guy as long as he's been doing it, the way he takes care of himself and how important it is to him, I'll be honest with you, it's a blast right now. We're trying to fit everything together, and we'll do that. But he's a joy to work with every day because he loves ball. It's what he loves to do."

# Broncos' veterans happy to share knowledge with younger teammates

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

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There was a time when offense versus defense was as much a part of training camp as ice baths and two-a-days.

Well things change, time passes and Denver Broncos offensive coordinator Rick Dennison believes his youthful group will benefit from a new day.

A new day that includes DeMarcus Ware going over things with rookie left tackle Ty Sambrailo or cornerback Chris Harris Jr. talking it over with second-year receiver Cody Latimer.

"I'll tell you what, I have been a lot of places, but this is kind of unusual," Dennison said. "... Ty is a young guy and [Ware] can tell him how he is going to attack him, what he sees and what he feels. Anything that they can add to us to help us for September because we're just practicing right and getting ready. I've overheard DBs tell us, 'This is how you're running this route. That's why I know that's coming.' It's been awesome."

Dennison spent 11 seasons as a Broncos linebacker and 15 seasons as an assistant coach for the team before Gary Kubiak hired him in January to be offensive coordinator. So Dennison has seen plenty of the Mason-Dixon-like approach between offense and defense in training camps gone by.

But things are different, at least after the play is over.

"We always want to win the play, the drill, whatever," Harris said. "That's always going to be true, that's just the competitor in everybody. But in the end we're all about trying to get to the Super Bowl and we need these young guys to be ready to do that. So, anything anybody can do now is for that."

Harris said earlier in his career with the Broncos -- he made the team as an undrafted rookie in 2011 -- he was struck by how often receivers asked cornerback Champ Bailey so many questions during practice. These days quarterback Peyton Manning is often a stopping point for defensive players and coaches alike who wonder what the future Hall of Famer saw on a particular play.

This Broncos offense will be particularly young in the offensive line and after Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders, at wide receiver as well. There are several players, including Sambrailo and Latimer, who are trying to cover as much distance on the learning curve as possible.

"And it's pretty unique -- I haven't seen it," Dennison said. "There have been a couple of things here or there, but I see it all the time here. So I, as an offensive coach, really appreciate it."

"I think it's important," Ware said. "If I'm just doing my thing and not helping those guys out, I'm not being the whole player I can be. We're all teammates, we all want to get to the same place. Yes, you

want to perform as well as you can in practice, make plays, but what's going to matter is what happens in games. And to make plays in games, we all have to be prepared for that."

# Thursday camp preview: Cam Newton's red zone struggles and more

By Jeff Legwold and ESPN.com Staff Writers

ESPN.com

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NFL Nation reporters look ahead to Thursday practices at their team's training camp.

## AFC EAST

**Buffalo Bills:** The Bills will continue to grind through their first full week of training camp, but injuries are starting to pile up. RB Anthony Dixon (calf) is expected to be out for several weeks, and starting RB LeSean McCoy (toe) is being held out of practice. Cyrus Kouandjio, the favorite for the right tackle job, could also miss time with a knee injury. -- Mike Rodak

**Miami Dolphins:** With Dallas Thomas nursing a shoulder injury, the focus Thursday will be at guard as Billy Turner and rookie Jamil Douglas try to earn starting jobs. -- James Walker

**New England Patriots:** After holding their annual night practice for season-ticket holders inside Gillette Stadium, the Patriots return to practice this afternoon, when we'll again keep a close eye on the cornerback position. Free-agent signing Tarell Brown has begun working alongside Malcolm Butler in recent practices, with Logan Ryan moving into the slot. A Butler-Brown starting combination could ultimately be the answer to how the Patriots plan to replace Darrelle Revis and Brandon Browner. -- Mike Reiss

**New York Jets:** The Jets, grinding through a stretch of five straight days of practice, still are looking for clarity at right guard. The competition between Willie Colon, Brian Winters and Brent Qvale is "all even," according to Todd Bowles. Some separation would be nice. -- Rich Cimini

## AFC NORTH

**Baltimore Ravens:** While there's plenty of attention on the Ravens' alleged involvement in Deflategate, the health of their wide receivers is a far bigger issue. Rookie first-round pick Breshad Perriman and Marlon Brown, two of Baltimore's top four receivers, are sidelined. Perriman is considered day-to-day with a knee injury, and Brown is out indefinitely with a nerve problem with his back. This opens up more playing time for young targets like Jeremy Butler, Michael Campanaro and Darren Waller. -- Jamison Hensley

**Cincinnati Bengals:** Might this be the day the Bengals' offensive line units, particularly their second- and third-stringers, are able to hold their own against the defensive front? Through the first five days of training camp, Cincinnati's D-linemen have plowed regularly through their counterparts. Veteran offensive tackle Andrew Whitworth said it's often easier at this point in camp for defensive linemen to speed-rush past backpedaling offensive linemen who are still rediscovering how to work together. After the entire team was off Wednesday and Whitworth and Andre Smith had veteran's off days Tuesday, the Bengals' O-line should be well-rested. -- Coley Harvey

Cleveland Browns: The Browns have their final practice before heading south to Columbus for Friday night's intrasquad scrimmage. The team will detail its plans for the scrimmage and try to avoid adding to an injury list that's already too long for coach Mike Pettine. -- Pat McManamon

Pittsburgh Steelers: The battle for the left outside linebacker spot between Arthur Moats and Bud Dupree should start to heat up Thursday. Dupree, a first-round rookie, hasn't disappointed with his athleticism, but Moats is the more reliable option at this point. With two practices before preseason games kick off, let's see if Dupree digs in. -- Jeremy Fowler

#### AFC SOUTH

Houston Texans: Texans coach Bill O'Brien has been itching to see Ryan Mallett and Brian Hoyer against an opponent, and he'll get that chance today. Houston traveled to Richmond, Virginia, last night and its three practices against Washington will be critical to determining who wins the quarterback competition. -- Tania Ganguli

Indianapolis Colts: The Colts have their first day off since the start of training camp after completing a night practice in full pads Wednesday. Receiver Andre Johnson and running back Frank Gore are proving age is just a number, as the Colts' two key offseason additions have made a smooth transition to picking up the offense and fitting in. "Football is life for Frank," offensive coordinator Pep Hamilton said. "[Johnson's] catching radius is off the chart as well as the fact that Andre is a big, physical, strong man." - Mike Wells

Jacksonville Jaguars: WR Marqise Lee went down with a hamstring injury during Wednesday practice, and if his past experiences with that kind of injury are any indication, he won't be on the field for a while. Arrelious Benn took some first-team reps in Lee's place, but this opens the door for several other receivers -- including former Baltimore Ravens receiver/punt returner Tandon Doss -- who are fighting for what may be only one spot on the 53-man roster. -- Mike DiRocco

Tennessee Titans: The Titans' receivers and tight ends have been dropping too many passes and if the rate doesn't slow down, it'll start to become a bigger concern. Tight end Delanie Walker and rookie receiver Dorial Green-Beckham are at the top of the list of guys who have to clean things up and prove more reliable for the quarterbacks throwing to them. -- Paul Kuharsky

#### AFC WEST

Denver Broncos: The Broncos could use a little more good health along the defensive line, having finished out one practice earlier this week with just six defensive linemen able to go. Broncos players had Wednesday off, which gave the likes of Malik Jackson (calf) and Marvin Austin Jr. (groin) some extra rest. Coach Gary Kubiak has said he hoped both could participate on even a limited basis Thursday. -- Jeff Legwold

Kansas City Chiefs: The Chiefs have their first day off from practice, and it might be a good idea for the players to catch up on their rest. When the Chiefs return to work on Friday, they'll begin a stretch of six straight days of practice, their longest of camp. Five of those practices are scheduled to be in pads. -- Adam Teicher

Oakland Raiders: It's essential for quarterback Derek Carr to build chemistry with new receivers Amari Cooper and Michael Crabtree. We'll get a good look at how that's coming on Thursday, when the Raiders are expected to work more on the hurry-up offense. -- Bill Williamson

San Diego Chargers: After a day off, the Chargers ran the ball effectively in the red zone on Wednesday. That's good news for a revamped O-line that struggled to consistently create holes last season, but bad news for a defense that couldn't stop the run in 2014. A better effort is needed up front defensively for the Chargers on Thursday. -- Eric D. Williams

#### NFC EAST

Dallas Cowboys: As the Cowboys work through in-game situations each day, today's focus is short-yardage and goal-line work, which is the only time players are allowed to tackle teammates to the ground. Jason Garrett has asked for a more physical camp as things have progressed and today's work figures to be the most physical to date. -- Todd Archer

New York Giants: Thursday afternoon's practice will be open to fans, who can watch to see whether second-year defensive back Bennett Jackson keeps his momentum. Jackson, a converted cornerback who missed his 2014 rookie season due to injury, has run with the first team at safety for three practices in a row. The Giants are looking for answers at safety, and if Jackson keeps making the most of his reps, he could bring more clarity to a shaky position. -- Dan Graziano

Philadelphia Eagles: The Eagles return to the NovaCare Complex for practice after an off day on Wednesday. Sam Bradford's left knee made it through the first three days of practice without incident. His next step will be to develop better timing with his receivers. He has 10 practices to do that before the preseason opener against Indianapolis. -- Phil Sheridan

Washington Redskins: The Redskins begin three days of practices vs. the Houston Texans starting Thursday, which provides the team another chance to measure quarterback Robert Griffin III's progress. Griffin has done a nice job in camp, but he's also facing a defense he now knows well -- one that forces him to hit checkdown passes and avoid dangerous throws. It was after practicing vs. New England last season that doubts about Griffin surfaced. Keep in mind: In the season opener last year, Griffin completed 29 of 37 passes for 267 yards vs. Houston. But he was sacked three times and led just one touchdown drive. A good showing this week would be welcomed by Redskins management. -- John Keim

#### NFC NORTH

Chicago Bears: Head coach John Fox attempted to downplay rookie Kevin White's shin injury, but the health of Chicago's top pick is a concern. The Bears' offense will try to bounce back after the defense thoroughly dominated Wednesday's practice. -- Jeff Dickerson

Detroit Lions: Ameer Abdullah has been one of the Lions who has put together an impressive first few days of camp. With each day that starting RB Joique Bell misses, the chance for Abdullah to earn the trust of the coaches and other starters increases. This will be something to watch as the Lions slowly make their way to the first preseason game next week against the Jets. -- Michael Rothstein

Green Bay Packers: The competition for the punting job has gotten off to a slow start. Incumbent Tim Masthay has had only nine live punts so far in training camp, while Cody Mandell has had just eight.

Expect that to change. Get your stopwatches ready because special teams coordinator Ron Zook said the reps will increase starting with Thursday's practice. -- Rob Demovsky

Minnesota Vikings: Following a day off on Wednesday, the Vikings get back to work at Minnesota State on Thursday. Coach Mike Zimmer, who has been in Florida with his ailing father, Bill, is expected to be back with the team for the morning walk-through and afternoon practice. -- Ben Goessling

#### NFC SOUTH

Atlanta Falcons: The status of Falcons rookie running back Tevin Coleman (hamstring strain) will be worth monitoring the rest of camp. Coleman, who's competing with Devonta Freeman for the starting role, did not practice Wednesday. Coach Dan Quinn said he hopes Coleman returns soon. In the meantime, his absence means more reps for Antone Smith, Jerome Smith and perhaps rookie Terron Ward. -- Vaughn McClure

Carolina Panthers: Carolina's first day of installing its red zone offense didn't go so well for quarterback Cam Newton, who completed only two passes and failed to get his unit in the end zone on two series. For a team that ranked 27th in the league in red zone scoring last year, that left a lot to be desired. It's way too early to push panic buttons, but keep an eye on the Panthers' proficiency inside the 20 today to see if there's improvement. -- David Newton

New Orleans Saints: The Saints are expected to install some red zone and two-minute packages, which means QB Drew Brees should take center stage. Those drills can get ultracompetitive, and it will be interesting to see who emerges as Brees' go-to guys in those key situations with Jimmy Graham now in Seattle. -- Mike Triplett

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: The Bucs return to practice Thursday after having Wednesday off. One player under close scrutiny is middle linebacker Bruce Carter. He is being asked to learn a new position after playing on the outside in Dallas. -- Pat Yasinskas

#### NFC WEST

Arizona Cardinals: As the Cardinals take their first day off from training camp, their focus will be on how long wide receiver Michael Floyd will be sidelined with dislocated fingers in his left hand. Early speculation is that it could be as long as four weeks. -- Josh Weinfuss

St. Louis Rams: Now that the Rams are back in pads, the offense is hoping to be a little more competitive against the defense. Quarterback Nick Foles has not hesitated to take chances down the field early in camp and was letting it fly in Tuesday's practice, but he's been just a bit off on some of the throws. With a chance to look at the film during an off day, it'll be worth watching whether he and his receivers can start connecting consistently on Thursday night. -- Nick Wagoner

San Francisco 49ers: The 49ers, after five straight practices, including the last two in pads, enjoy their first off day on Thursday. It gives QB Colin Kaepernick time to continue working on his throwing mechanics, while getting more comfortable calling plays in the huddle. -- Paul Gutierrez

Seattle Seahawks: The big thing to watch Thursday is what safety Earl Thomas does on the field. The Seahawks activated him from the physically unable to perform list Wednesday, making him eligible for

practice. With Thomas coming off a complete reconstruction of his shoulder, it's likely Seattle will ease him into drills. Thomas loves practicing so he might try to do too much. -- John Clayton

# 'Game on' for Tom Brady against Peyton Manning: The end is near

By ESPN.com News Service

ESPN.com

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Tom Brady makes no bones about how he rates himself against Peyton Manning.

Brady, in an email to an old friend made public as part of the federal Deflategate lawsuit, says the "final chapter" of his rivalry with Manning will be decided when Brady ultimately plays for seven or eight more years -- and Manning lasts only another two.

The candid email, dated Nov. 1, 2014 -- the Saturday before Brady's Patriots routed Manning's Broncos 43-21 in a Week 9 game at Foxborough -- was one of two Brady messages published Wednesday by The Boston Globe.

The emails were submitted among documents in the NFLPA's suit over his four-game suspension.

"Thanks popa," Brady writes to childhood friend Kevin Brady during an email exchange discussing a Grantland story that illustrated a decline for Manning in comparing the two quarterbacks. "I've got another 7 or 8 years. He has 2. That's the final chapter. Game on."

Jay Flannely, a blogger friend of Brady's nicknamed "Beav," goes into much deeper detail about why Brady, who is 38, is superior to Manning, who is 39.

But Flannely had the benefit of hindsight, calling the Broncos front-runners while writing Brady the day after the blowout win.

"Manning needs things to be perfect to succeed, weather, his system, etc.," Flannely writes. "You right about November --- HUGE"

Brady simply defers to Flannely's analysis in his reply.

"We are some hard working grinders beav," Brady writes. "That's what our team is all about. Our best is still ahead of us."

Flannely also had complimented Brady's performance, saying the one thing he had noticed was how well he was moving: "foot work, scrambling, keeping plays alive--- clearly u worked hard on this."

"Also agree with your postgame presser assessment--- left points on the field -- should have put a hundred on that team...FGs into TDs changes that--finish drives," Flannely writes, before taking a shot at the Broncos.

"Always helps when other team is DUMB--- LBer on Gronk on 2 yd line? VON MILLER!?" Flannely adds. "I really like this team and we have a long way to go but I want ring 4! Rest, rehab, reflect--- Lets get ready for this run."

"Proud of U. Beav. GO BLUE!!! GO PATS!!! GO TB!!! GO G!!!"

# NFL doctor: Medical timeout might have helped in Super Bowl

By Rachael Cohen  
Associated Press  
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Under the NFL's new medical timeout rule, Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman might not have been on the field with New England trying to score the go-ahead touchdown in the Super Bowl.

Edelman appeared dazed after a fourth-quarter hit by Seahawks safety Kam Chancellor. The trainer stationed in the press box to watch for potential head injuries noticed and let the staff on the sideline know. But with the Patriots in an up-tempo offense, Edelman remained in the game through the end of the drive.

Only then was he tested for a concussion, and the results were negative — but that doesn't necessarily mean he wasn't concussed.

Dr. Richard Ellenbogen, co-chair of the NFL's Head, Neck and Spine Committee, noted Wednesday that in 90 percent of concussions, the symptoms can clear within minutes.

"It is very possible for a person to play, come out and then test normal," he said. "We're trying to get ahead of that."

Under the new rule, the trainer in the press box can immediately notify the referee to call a medical timeout. The game and play clock stop until the player can leave the field, and his team isn't charged for a timeout. The player must then sit out at least one snap.

"The issue is at the time of the injury," said Ellenbogen, the department chair for neurological surgery at the University of Washington. "That's a place where we think we have an opportunity to do better."

Ellenbogen insisted that no one play prompted the NFL to institute the new rule. But league officials made clear at a presentation about its health and safety procedures Wednesday that the Edelman hit was exactly the kind of scenario the medical timeout is designed to address.

"It was a hurry-up offense. There was no incomplete pass; there's no huddle," said Jeff Miller, the NFL's senior vice president of health and safety policy. "There was no obvious time in which somebody could intervene."

Edelman went on to catch what would be the winning touchdown pass on New England's next possession.

Miller predicted the medical timeouts would not be used often because of other mechanisms already in place: Referees, teammates and coaches have been instructed to notice when a player is in distress and ensure he leaves the field. But still there were some cases where none of them were aware of the apparent head injury.

"It's designed to be a fail-safe," NFL vice president of officiating Dean Blandino said of the new rule.

Team physicians on the sideline will be able to watch replays this year to figure out how someone was hurt. The trainer in the press box has replay access and can send the clip down to the field to help the doctors make a diagnosis if they didn't see the hit.

Dr. Robert Heyer, the Panthers' team physician and the president of the NFL Physicians Society, showed video Wednesday of a play where a Carolina player was kneed in the head — and Heyer didn't see it from 10 yards away because of all the other players swarming around the ball.

If the trainer in the press box isn't able to notify the referee before the next snap or doesn't see the apparent injury until watching replays, the medical timeout can still be called later in the drive, Blandino said.

The NFL said Wednesday that there were 112 concussions in regular-season games in 2014, down 24 percent from the 148 in 2013 and 35 percent from the 173 in 2012.

# Clowney's father denied bond on attempted murder charges

By Staff Writer  
Associated Press  
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The father of Houston Texans defensive end Jadeveon Clowney has been denied bond after being charged with two counts of attempted murder in a shooting at a Rock Hill bar.

A lawyer asked for bond because Clowney's father, David Morgan, was hurt in the shooting Tuesday. Local media reported that police opposed the request because of the seriousness of the charges.

Rock Hill Police Capt. Mark Bollinger says the department added charges based on continued investigation. Morgan was also charged with possession of a weapon during a violent crime, possession of a firearm by someone convicted of a violent crime and carrying a pistol unlawfully, according to arrest warrants.

Houston coach Bill O'Brien would not comment on the arrest. He did say that the Texans were supportive of all their players.

"We want our players to have success," he said after practice in Houston. "We want them to go into each and every day knowing they have our support. I believe our players know that."

A police report from the Rock Hill Police Department says the 45-year-old Morgan was removed from the bar for sitting on a stage. Police say he was seen later at the back of the property before firing several rounds at Braxton Homesley, described in the police report as the victim. Police say Homesley returned fire.

Officers picked up Morgan at Piedmont Medical Center. He was being treated for a gunshot wound to the shoulder.

# 8 Things Overheard In Montee Ball's Golf Cart

By Staff Writer  
CBS 4 Denver  
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This weekend's episode of The 19th Hole features a Denver Broncos player who is really hoping that he can improve his golf game.

Running back Montee Ball tells CBS4's Vic Lombardi on the CBS4 Sports show that instead of being one of the lesser players out on the links when he attends charity golf tournaments with teammates, he'd like to be up there with the best.

During the show Ball takes some extra steps to up his game, including visiting Golf TEC. And Vic Lombardi plays a little prank on Ball as they take swings together at Cherry Creek Golf Course.

Watch the show on Saturday after the CBS PGA Tour broadcast of the third round of the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational, and read some of the conversations between Ball and Lombardi that took place in the golf cart during the taping of the show:

What's the most tired you've ever been in a game, at any level?

The most carries Montee Ball ever had in a game was 36.

"In college, once you get up to 34 carries before fourth quarter you can start to feel it on your body," Ball said. "That's Wisconsin football!" Lombardi said. Ball says you think at that point "Man, we've got a whole 'nother quarter and I'm pretty beat right now. I'm pretty spent." But Ball said that feeling is part of the reason why he loves football.

He almost went to Stanford.

Ball wound up having a great college career at Wisconsin, but choosing which school to go to wasn't an easy decision for him. All of the colleges in the Big 10 conference recruited Ball, and so did Stanford. He said Stanford "kind of has a similar ground-and-pound type of game. At least, in my years (they did.)" He says Jim Harbaugh, who was the Stanford coach at the time, called him while he was a junior in high school. But Wisconsin won out after Ball took his official visit to Madison. "I talked to the coaches and saw the environment and loved it."

He wasn't surprised by the attention he got as a member of the Broncos once he arrived in Colorado. Montee Ball got used to being in the spotlight in Wisconsin as a star on the Badgers football team. "All they have up there is Brewers, Badgers and Packers. So I was kind of used to this. Everywhere you go they know who you are, what your position is, your stats — all that stuff."

The new offensive system for the Broncos is exciting for all the backs.

"It's weird seeing Peyton (Manning) in the I formation or under center," Ball said. "I've seen him under center a few times. But we're still going to be putting the ball in the air, that's for sure."

He's doesn't hold any dislike for C.J. Anderson.

"We're definitely friends. We understand you can't have any bad blood against someone who's producing. That's what they're here for. It's healthy competition. We understand that if, say, C.J. is the hot hand in the game he's going to get the majority of the carries. And vica versa. If it's me, he

understands that I'm going to get the majority of the carries. So it's a great competition. Which is going to make the offense better, I believe."

He's among those who think the Seahawks made a bad call in the Super Bowl. 2nd and goal. The Super Bowl on the line. The Seahawks had a chance to score a touchdown but they threw an interception and lost the game. "You've got Marshawn Lynch," Ball said. "This guy breaks tackles like it's nothing. He could have walked it in."

Every running back oozes confidence, but Ball has a really lofty goal. "I want one of those breakout years. The 1,800-1,700 yard years where they put you in the stat books as one of the best in the game that year. Definitely I'm working full hard to be one of the best in the game. My goal is to win a Super Bowl. I want to be the running back on the 2015 team that wins the Super Bowl."

It doesn't take long for Ball to recount his proudest moment as a Bronco so far. Any running back loves it when an opponent knows your team is going to run and there's nothing they can do to stop you. "The Patriots knew we were going to run it against (them) in the game before the Super Bowl on 4th and 2 and they gave me the handoff and I got the first down. And I'll never forget it." Ball said he certainly was a bit nervous, it being his rookie season and all. "I just told myself, 'Just don't drop the ball.' "

# Archie Manning says Peyton Manning is a 'realist' on subject of retirement

By Ben Fredrickson  
Knoxville News Sentinel  
August 5, 2015

It's a staple of sports talk radio in Knoxville.

At any point during the week, you can start the car, dial in your station of choice and embrace the debate.

How much longer will Peyton Manning play?

The Tennessee legend's dad weighed in Tuesday night.

"He's a realist," Archie Manning said of his middle son. "I know this: He would like to get everything he can get out of this year, and see what happens."

The head of the Manning family was the featured speaker at the 34th annual Greater Knoxville Sports Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony at the Knoxville Convention Center on Tuesday.

Ten inductees entered the fold: Bob Kesling (broadcaster), Brian Brophy (track), Joan Cronan (athletic director), Antone Davis (football), Herman Goddard (auto racing), Charles McRae (football), Vernon Osborne (coach), Eddy Powers (official), Gloria Ray (athletic director) and Bob Woodruff (athletic director).

Each carries a long resume of success in his or her field. The Mannings can relate.

Peyton Manning broke the huddle on his 18th year in the NFL during Denver Broncos training camp last week. The restructured contract he agreed to this offseason expires after 2016.

"Peyton has been very fortunate," Archie Manning said. "He missed a year (2011) with four neck surgeries. Other than that, he's been pretty doggone healthy. Hopefully, he can stay healthy this year and enjoy his year. Knock on wood."

Meanwhile, Eli Manning is entering his 12th season as a New York Giants quarterback.

Throw in Archie Manning's 14-year NFL career and the family has combined for 19 Pro Bowls and three Super Bowl rings.

These guys know a thing or two about longevity.

"It takes some really good fortune," Archie Manning said. "Football is physical. You're going to have injuries, so you've gotta be lucky to get through it without the injuries that cause you to hang it up and not be able to play any more."

At some point, sooner rather than later, Peyton Manning will have to hang it up. Many fans hope his post-playing career involves a role with the UT football team. Archie Manning pumped the brakes.

“I don’t know if Peyton is thinking about that,” he said. “He thinks a lot of (UT football coach) Butch (Jones), though. Peyton loves his school, and keeps up with the players here. He likes to come work out in the summer. He’s really excited about the players that Butch had recruited and the progress they’ve made. He knows, like we all know, it (the SEC) is a tough league. I think Coach Jones is the right guy. I think Tennessee fans are going to be in for an exciting year.”

He hopes the same is true for the Broncos. Part of the reason he didn’t re-join the College Football Playoff selection committee after neck surgery made him withdraw last season was to ensure he had more time to watch the Broncos.

How much longer will Peyton Manning play?

His dad won’t say for certain. And maybe he doesn’t know. He just knows this season is an important one.

# Chris Kuper: Blocking scheme can keep opposing defenses off-guard

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
August 5, 2015

Few people know the ins and outs of what the Broncos' offensive linemen face this summer better than Chris Kuper.

A 2006 sixth-round draft pick who eventually became one of the league's best guards, Kuper played eight seasons for the Broncos, including four with current Offensive Coordinator Rick Dennison as his position coach and one with Clancy Barone, the current offensive-line coach, on the job. He understands a zone-blocking-based scheme based on his first three years when Mike Shanahan was still the head coach, and other concepts that followed from 2009 onward until injuries forced his retirement after the 2013 season.

What Dennison, Barone and Head Coach Gary Kubiak want is a result of equal parts technique, athleticism, quick thinking and attitude. As right guard Louis Vasquez said Aug. 1, "My mentality is by the end of the fourth quarter, we want to feel your soul wilt in our hands."

And Kuper says that Vasquez, a 2013 All-Pro, is in the best position to send that message to a young group that features five players who have never started in the NFL among its first two units.

"I think the leader in the room has to kind of instill that in the young guys," Kuper said when he joined Broncos TV for a live show at Buffalo Wild Wings in Highlands Ranch on Aug. 5.

"It's hard to come in as a young guy and just -- there's guys who naturally have it, and you're just like, 'OK, that's one of those players that he's going to have that and he's going to bring that type of attitude and people can feed off that,' but it's hard to kind of step off that and put yourself out there at that point when you're a rookie.

"But that's definitely what they want, and they're going to get it just with the scheme. They're going to be cutting every play. Someone's getting cut, and the defensive line hates it, but it's part of the game. They're going to call them, 'dirty,' you know, whatever it is, but that's part of the game. There's going to be some nastiness out there regardless."

But it's nastiness with a purpose: to keep the defense guessing and give the offense an extra split-second to get a jump on its foe. One of Kuper's most distinguished predecessors, Hall of Famer Gary Zimmerman, noted this in April.

"I think the biggest thing in the zone blocking is that the defense has a lot more to think about, because a lot of plays look alike, and there's a lot of pass plays that look like run plays," Zimmerman said then. "It kind of puts a little more thinking on the defense as in the previous years, where they just lined up and played, and knew that the pass was coming. Now they're going to have to first determine if it's a run or a pass, and then go from there."

Kuper expanded on Zimmerman's breakdown.

"The run game, period, is going to be great. And then the run action, the play pass off of that, but when you get really good in this system, and you make everything look the same, the defensive line doesn't know whether they're on the front side or the back side," Kuper said. "They don't know whether they're protecting themselves against a cut, or getting reached.

"So that little split-second, half-second, whatever it is, we get the edge or they're going to try to play the cut -- [whether] they're going to cut back or they're going to get cut, it's there."

But it will take some work for the young offensive linemen to get there. Kuper did not start until the sixth game of his second season and felt it took a bit longer before he truly mastered the scheme.

"I know that I probably wasn't ready my rookie year. I probably would have been sufficient enough to get out there and play. But I think in my third year [2008] is when I really started to pick things up and learn some of the tricks, watching that older group of guys in front of me," Kuper said, "and then you just get to the point where you're so comfortable with the scheme that you have a little bit of confidence to try those things."

Some of the young linemen may not have the luxury of that extensive gestation time before their first start. But that doesn't mean they can't be ready.

Kuper watched practice Tuesday and likes what he sees from some of the young linemen, specifically second-round pick Ty Sambrailo -- who Kuper described as "pretty athletic" -- and fourth-rounder Max Garcia, who "has got some strength to him."

"They'll both fit well in the system," Kuper said. It's going to be a battle. They've got some decisions to make, and I think it's too hard to tell where they're at at this point in camp.

"They're going to figure it out as we get into [preseason] games and kind of see who shows up, because that's when you really see what you have."

# Mason's Mailbag: Taking stock as Broncos training camp pauses

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
August 5, 2015

Matthew Roy @BigboyMRoy34

@MaseDenver how is new, young o-line looking? Able to protect the Qb and drive block off the ball for the running game? #askmase  
12:04 PM - 5 Aug 2015

It is as you would expect for a group that will have, at minimum, three starters who did not start for the Broncos last year -- and when Ryan Harris works at right tackle, often utilizes a first team that includes three offseason pickups, one moving back to his old position (Louis Vasquez) and another who played 47 offensive snaps last year (Ben Garland). (Although, it must be noted, there's plenty of shuffling going on from period to period at this point.)

There will be hiccups. There will be some timing issues at the snap. There will be some pass rushers who burst into the backfield -- especially when facing Von Miller, DeMarcus Ware and the suddenly surging Sylvester Williams, who now looks like the first-round talent he was supposed to be.

But although there were some issues Tuesday -- a few pass-protection breakdowns, some plays where Williams, Vance Walker and Todd Davis collectively collapsed carries at the line of scrimmage -- with each day, there are more moments where the offensive line has its footing. Vasquez and center Gino Gradkowski are working better together, firing off the snap and moving together to create a hole for C.J. Anderson to the right side.

Ty Sambrailo gets better every day, thanks to some assistance from DeMarcus Ware, who has provided invaluable tips to the rookie. The young players on the second team, Matt Paradis and Max Garcia, have earned notice in my Quick Hits and Takeaways; their tenacity is consistent and they do a good job getting their hands up and extended.

Expect further ups and downs. Expect there to be times where Peyton Manning knows the rush is coming and falls in order to anticipate a sack and preserve himself for another opportunity. But now there are moments when you can see the line working as it should.

Mike Middleton @Third\_Eye84

@MaseDenver How has James Casey looked? I'm intrigued by his dual role potential, and welcome the return of the FB. #AskMase  
10:21 AM - 5 Aug 2015

Among the two fullback/tight ends, Casey is the known commodity; he's handled the hybrid role before in Houston, and he offers stability. He had a 34-reception season with the Texans, so he can be a viable underneath target.

Using a tight end as a fullback is part of the overall evolution of this offense. In the 1990s through the early 2000s, Kubiak and the Broncos preferred to convert a large running back to fullback, which ensured that the fullback was not "just" a blocker, but could contribute as a runner and an underneath passing target. Howard Griffith was a prolific running back at the University of Illinois who set the NCAA single-game touchdown record (eight) in 1990. Mike Anderson began his career by earning NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year honors as a running back; he moved to fullback in 2002 but eventually returned to his old position.

Times have changed, however, and a fullback with a tight end background offers more flexibility because that player can then line up in a traditional tight end position outside the tackle, or standing up in the slot or toward the outside.

"They play a lot of spots, too. That's the nice thing," said Offensive Coordinator Rick Dennison. "They both have good hands -- that helps. Our fullbacks, we want them to be smart and physical. We ask them to do a lot in the fronts and stuff in the run game."

The 240-pound Casey is a perfect fit for that job. But part of his task is guiding Joe Don Duncan so he can be just as effective in the long term. Duncan is attempting to make the same transition Casey executed with the Texans, so no one is better qualified to offer guidance.

"James has easily been my biggest mentor since I've been here -- a huge help," Duncan said. "I'm in here with him every morning talking about the offense and what do you here, what do you do there, what if you get this look, all that stuff. He's been nothing but helpful. He doesn't hesitate at all to answer my questions."

Duncan is 30 pounds heavier than Casey, and is an intriguing long-term option. But experience matters at fullback; it takes years to know how to recognize a defense's intent and know where to go, both in making the hole and then in quickly identifying which defender to block at the second level. Casey's comfort level in this part of the job is his differential advantage.

I am a die-hard bronco fan in the heart of Viking land. One thing I haven't really heard anything about is the punt and kicking game? I believe we have four guys for two positions. What direction do you think the Broncos will go?

-- Timothy Hokanson

All we know for now is that the Broncos want to carry three players among the long snapper, kicker, punter and kickoff specialist, so one person must handle two roles. That's why Connor Barth's work on kickoffs Tuesday was so crucial, and he slammed the ball to the end zone, which was a promising sign. There is plenty more on the kicking competition in Tuesday's Quick Hits and Takeaways.

Andy Featherstone @afeather1

@MaseDenver #askmase who is the best cornerback on the team? Talib? Harris?

9:53 AM - 5 Aug 2015

They have different skill sets, so there's a bit of an apples-to-oranges comparison. But if used properly, they're equals. Talib is best served by being a physically aggressive cornerback, using his size at the line of scrimmage to disrupt the timing of a receiver and then playing the ball if it still comes his way. He had

a nice interception Tuesday by using his reach to grab a pass intended for Cody Latimer in the back of the end zone.

You want Talib against bigger receivers like Latimer, because he can use his size to disrupt; he's able to handle targets as big as 265-pound Jimmy Graham, as he did in a Patriots-Saints game two years ago. You want Harris against smaller, quicker targets. Harris knows this, and that's why he was frustrated that he didn't draw the T.Y. Hilton assignment in January; as he said three months later: "I mean, that's what God put me on this earth for: for guys like [Hilton]," Harris said.

Both are skilled enough to be shifted around to give the opposing offense something to think about, but their skill sets are so different -- and so complementary -- that you don't want to call one better than the other.

Sam Walter @numbtenor21

@MaseDenver Has either Dysert or Siemian done enough to separate from the other? #askmase  
10:52 AM - 5 Aug 2015

At this point, no. They're still splitting repetitions with the third team on days when Manning practices, although Dysert is always the third quarterback up with Siemian behind him, owing to experience as much as anything else.

Both have had their moments. Dysert looks comfortable rolling out and throwing outside of the pocket, but during Tuesday's practice when he had traditional drop-backs in the one-on-one period, he missed on intermediate range throws to the sideline. One pass to Solomon Patton appeared to flutter as it approached the target, and Lorenzo Doss jumped it for the interception.

Siemian's accuracy is improving -- which would remedy one of the issues that dogged him at Northwestern, where he completed fewer than 60 percent of his passes. His arm is strong; some of the passes he fires are lasers. His footwork has improved, and the rehabilitation work on his knee from his torn ACL last year helps him put more on his plant foot and more strength into his throws. The apt word at this point to describe the second-round pick would be intriguing.

Dysert's experience gives him an advantage, and preseason game work has always been crucial for him. He noted this week that he hopes to have more opportunities to throw downfield than he did in last year's preseason, when he had a high quarterback rating (100.7) but a lot of shakedowns and a low average per attempt (5.9 yards). But at the end of the preseason, the Broncos will have to decide whether Dysert or Siemian has a higher ceiling -- and then if they want their fourth quarterback to stay, likely roll the dice on him passing through waivers at the final cutdown. (With the competition tight at so many positions, keeping four quarterbacks on the 53-man roster is likely not a viable option.)

With Welker, Decker, and Thomas gone, how deep can Denver safely go if Sanders, Thomas, Latimer, and the starting TEs get injured? Would losing them take Denver out of contention? We don't hear much from the backups at WR. Is that a weak spot (backup WR/TE) that could be a concern if one of our studs gets hurt?

-- Randy Hulse

If a team loses its top three wide receivers and its top two tight ends, you start looking for the locusts. And there is not one team in the history of the sport that could sustain its passing production if it lost that many of its top targets -- although Peyton Manning could likely keep such a team afloat.

But the Broncos are not weak in terms of depth. When Thomas returns, Latimer becomes the No. 3 option (and technically a backup), and you still have Andre Caldwell, who has good timing with Manning and can spell any receiver for a stretch. The progress of Jordan Taylor and Solomon Patton is intriguing, although Taylor is more a long-term play and Patton, if he sticks on the roster, is a change-of-pace speed threat. And whoever lines up at fullback can also play tight end, as noted earlier.

There is a perception among many that you lack quality depth if the backups cannot match the production of the starters even when all starters are lost. In the wildly extreme circumstance you suggest, the offense would take a hit. But as long as Peyton Manning is firing the passes, this would remain a team that contends.

How come Simon Fletcher isn't in the Ring of Fame? He is the team's all-time sack leader.  
-- Ian M.

His candidacy is hurt by a lack of league-wide accolades. Of the 22 players in the Ring of Fame who played after the AFL-NFL merger, only two did not earn an All-Pro nod, a Pro Bowl selection or an AFC or NFL Offensive or Defensive Player of the Year award while with the Broncos: kicker Jim Turner and quarterback Charley Johnson. Johnson is -- rightfully -- credited with helping get the franchise over the hump to its first winning season; he provided a shot of legitimacy the club desperately needed. Turner's case is probably most comparable to Fletcher's, since he retired as the Broncos' leader in a key statistic (scoring).

So there is a rationalization, and you can make a case for Fletcher.

But you've also got Jason Elam and Champ Bailey coming up in the next few years, and stronger cases could be made for Al Wilson (five Pro Bowls and one first-team All-Pro selection) and Trevor Pryce (four Pro Bowls, one first-team All-Pro selection, one second-team All-Pro selection) than Fletcher.

Ron @ronNcaphill

@MaseDenver Hi Andrew, this is a kinda softball question, but ... no scrimmage at stadium this year for 1st time in awhile, right? #askmase

7:44 AM - 5 Aug 2015

Yes, this is the first year without a stadium practice since 2008.

Renaud L. Notaro @RenKnowItAll

Can I fly my drone over #Broncos practice on Thursday? #AskMase #NFL

9:44 AM - 5 Aug 2015

I'm sure these people can help you:

Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20591

# Broncos' scout honors life of daughter

By Allie Raymond

DenverBroncos.com

August 5, 2015

Evelyn Grace Spytek had a laugh that could make anyone smile.

“[It] was intoxicating,” said John Spytek, a national scout for the Broncos. “I think we always feel like that, but to hear our family and friends talk about her laugh... everybody’s smiling. I always appreciate a good laugh but hers was different.”

His wife, Kristen, smiles as she remembers taking Evelyn trick-or-treating last Halloween in her owl costume on a perfect fall day in Denver.

“It was absolutely darling and we went for a stroll,” said Kristen. “It was an awesome day and the weather was wonderful and she looked adorable in her outfit. It was just very her.”

But on Dec. 26, 2014, the Spyteks’ world was turned upside down. Just two months after her second Halloween and three months shy of her second birthday, Evelyn passed away from complications due to a CMV-related surgery.

Cytomegalovirus, or CMV, is very common and is typically harmless to the general population. But CMV can be harmful to babies when infected before birth; this is known as congenital CMV. Typically, congenital CMV affects newborns through primary infection; meaning mothers are infected for the first time during pregnancy.

“[It was] a healthy pregnancy to start, everything was going great - my first baby,” Kristen said. “Around 20 weeks at the ultrasound appointment we noticed that something was a little bit wrong – we didn’t know what. We thought it was genetic; we went through a series of testing and diagnostic testing and things like that with no diagnosis. Our daughter Evelyn was born at 36 weeks and within two days of life they diagnosed her with congenital CMV.”

Kristen and John had never heard of CMV before. It wasn’t something that Kristen had learned in any books she read during her pregnancy. The Spyteks were first introduced to the virus through a simple Google search and self-diagnosis after Kristen’s ultrasound revealed abnormalities.

“It never came up in literature that I was reading,” Kristen said. “It never came up in the doctor’s office. I simply Googled something and was trying to self-diagnose a little bit towards the end of the pregnancy and came across this term for the very first time - but never had any conversations with the medical team about this possibility.”

According to NationalCMV.org, congenital CMV affects one in every 150 children born each year, adding up to 30,000 children in America in a single year. Of those 30,000, one in every five born with congenital CMV infections will develop permanent health problems. That’s roughly 6,000 children with as many as 400 infant deaths annually.

Based on the website's statistics, more children will have disabilities due to congenital CMV than other well-known infections and syndromes, including Downs Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Spina Bifida, and Pediatric HIV/AIDS.

"All this despite the fact that this is the most common viral cause of birth defects and disabilities in this country, [there was] still nothing from the doctors," John said. "The only time we heard about it was when we put some of the soft markers that were showing up on the ultrasounds into Google and it spit out congenital CMV at us."

Congenital CMV can present a host of different issues for newborns including loss of hearing, vision, birth defects and mental disability.

In Evelyn's case, she was born with a smaller head size (microcephaly), was deaf in both ears and needed therapy to help her motor skills and to eat.

"We were devastated," John said. "When you're dealing with a virus that attacks the brain, that's not treatable stuff. That's long lasting. That's permanent. We did what we could."

The Spyteks did everything in their power to make life easier for Evelyn, but last December she passed away at 21 months following a necessary surgery due to CMV.

Then, just three short weeks after Evelyn's death, Kristen and John welcomed their second child; a healthy baby boy named Jack.

"It was borderline impossible. There are really no words for it, to be honest. It was hard," said John of the whirlwind of emotions.

"It was extremely overwhelming," Kristen said. "Coping with the loss of our beautiful daughter unexpectedly and bringing another child into the world was crazy highs and lows of the utmost degree... It was crazy and in a lot of ways our son has helped us. He's helped us navigate what we're trying to do here and what we're trying to accomplish. I think that's allowing us to stay motivated on this mission."

The Spyteks' mission is to continue growing CMV awareness through a foundation they started, the National CMV Foundation.

John and Kristen decided to start their organization after Evelyn's birth. Stemmed from their frustrations at the lack of cognizance among expecting mothers, the Spyteks launched their foundation and website, NationalCMV.org, in July.

"We had a lot of early talks about [how] we need to do something," John said. "We should have known about this. Maybe it's not preventable, but awareness will help with our cause."

The Spyteks have relied heavily upon grass-roots efforts to help spread awareness and raise funds for their cause. One way they have effectively raised money for the National CMV Foundation is through 'Compete 4 CMV', a series of community-based events.

Just this spring, John's former football teammates at the University of Michigan took part in the OhioHealth Capital City Half Marathon on May 2 in Columbus, Ohio.

“It was really special and lifting to have them do that,” John said. “To have [15] former teammates and spouses do something active to support our cause and honor Evelyn is special to us.”

Kristen and John’s objective for the National CMV Foundation is simple: “Our goal and our vision is really to eradicate congenital CMV, hopefully in the next 30 years,” Kristen said. “That is absolutely the vision.

“We just really want to start the conversation so women are going to their doctors offices asking about this, how can they help prevent it now that maybe they have a child that’s diagnosed... just to make sure they are actively pursuing the right avenues for their child’s growth. Evelyn taught us a ton and we did what we could for her but there is so much more we wish we could have done. I wish we were better informed.”

The foundation has not only made them determined to educate mothers, but it has also helped them honor their daughter’s memory.

“We both felt since she was born and learned this that if we’re ever going to have peace in our hearts over any of this [it would be] because we did something in her name and we changed the narrative and the outcome of it,” John said.

The Sypteks’ foundation isn’t the only good that has come from Evelyn’s lasting legacy. The little girl taught her parents more about their perspectives on life how to keep their heads up through even the toughest situations.

“I would say tremendous patience and grace - humility,” Kristen said of what Evelyn has taught her. “She dealt with such adverse things that most individuals [don’t] have to deal with and she overcame... Watching her do it with a smile and with her calm gracious attitude, it was so eye opening to us. We probably weren’t super laid-back people before and now we’re amazingly calm in terms of dealing with some of our other life obstacles because it’s not challenging compared to what she did.”

While her parents remember her laugh and cherish memories like her last Halloween, those aren’t the only memories Evelyn has given her parents. Even after her passing, Evelyn has brought friends together for a cause, made her family closer and inspired change.

Through the Sypteks’ dedication, Evelyn lives on.

# Fan travel packages available for Broncos Ring of Fame ceremony against Green Bay

By DenverBroncos.com Staff

DenverBroncos.com

August 5, 2015

PrimeSport is offering Official Broncos Ring of Fame Packages for the ultimate loyal Broncos fan looking to make it home for the Ring of Fame ceremony this year.

PrimeSport, the leader in providing direct access to the biggest sporting events and Official Fan Travel Partner of the Denver Broncos announced today that an official Ring of Fame Travel Package has been added to the 2015 season.

"We are proud to announce that we will be inducting Broncos owner, Pat Bowlen, into the Ring of Fame this year," said Dennis Moore, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at the Denver Broncos.

"PrimeSport has been a tremendous partner implementing our official fan travel and we are very excited about the first class experience they will provide our fans for our Ring of Fame this year!"

As part of the partnership, PrimeSport is offering Official Broncos Ring of Fame Packages for the ultimate loyal Broncos fan looking to make it home for the Ring of Fame ceremony this year. Official Ring of Fame packages are available now and come complete with hotel accommodations, roundtrip transfers to the game, the Official Broncos Pre-Game Event at Sports Authority field and a game ticket. PrimeSport is also offering official fan travel packages to the Broncos games in Chicago (November 8th) and Indianapolis (November 23rd). Official fan travel packages can include game tickets, hotel accommodations, official souvenirs, and much more.

"We are excited to announce our extended partnership with the Denver Broncos and providing their fans with the best experience possible for their Ring of Fame this year," says Sam Soni, CEO at PrimeSport. "We have built a reputation in the NFL as a reliable and dependable source for fan and corporate travel and we look forward to delivering those great experiences to Broncos fans for this special event."

Fans looking to buy an official Broncos Ring of Fame package should go to [PrimeSport.com](http://PrimeSport.com).