

John Elway says he's happy with Broncos' two young QBs but is "open to everything"

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

March 2, 2017

The photo-op was there and John Elway surely knew it, so he continued to chat up Dallas Cowboys coach Jason Garrett as the cameras flickered. Let the Tony Romo speculation run wild. Let the public debate over the Broncos' quarterback quagmire continue.

Let the dance continue.

Then, with a flash of his toothy smile, Elway walked up to the podium inside the Indianapolis Convention Center and offered four words to keep the music playing.

"We're open to everything," he said.

Elway, the guy who lured Peyton Manning to Denver in 2012 and who built the league's leading defense in 2015, faces arguably his toughest and most significant challenge yet as the Broncos' head of football operations. A Super Bowl victory capped Manning's career and gave way to a quarterback competition that was won by the least-likely candidate last summer, Trevor Siemian. A year of offensive frustration and transition led to a disappointing 9-7 finish, with no playoffs, a first for Elway since he assumed an executive role with the Broncos.

The decisions he must make now are similar to the ones he had to make last off-season, when his team lacked a proven starting quarterback and a reliable offensive line. But the possibilities this year are greater with 10 draft picks and more than \$42 million in salary cap space. And when free agency opens, the possibilities could be even greater.

Should the Cowboys be willing to foot a hefty bill and part with their former starting quarterback Romo, should he be open to accepting less money, and should the Broncos even want to bring in an aging veteran, a match in Denver could be made.

Maybe.

"This is the time of year that you look at everything and you try to discuss everything, every possibility, what might be available, what might not be available and talk about that and see how it affects us," Elway said. "We talk about all those types of things, so we'll see what happens."

The maybe is that until the Cowboys make the first move, it will stay that way.

"Everyone thinks we just talk about next year, but we don't," Elway said. "We talk about the impact that that has in two, three four years down the line and how does that affect us now. And eventually, once we get through all those scenarios, make a decision and see what happens. I think when you make a decision, whether it be a quarterback or an offensive lineman or whatever it is, especially in free agency, you talk about what's that going to do to you two and three years down the line."

Elway's words were similar to what he said when the Broncos signed receiver Demaryius Thomas to a five-year, \$70 million contract in 2015 and when they signed linebacker Von Miller to a record six-year, \$114.5 million deal a year ago.

How do you get the stars now but help future ones shine? How do you fill holes now while keeping some open for later?

"I think having a veteran quarterback who's won games in the past, it brings excitement to your locker room and to your city," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said. "That being said, we've got two young (quarterbacks) that played last year and won nine games combined and probably should have won more. So, moving forward, we're satisfied with those two kids and fixing the offensive line and running the football better, protecting the passer better, is a must to help those two guys play better."

Call it the long-term "Plan A" — building for now and building for later.

"We got two young ones that we're happy with that we think can be very good football players in this league," Elway said, echoing the comments of Joseph while acknowledging how the addition of a veteran could affect the pair's development.

"That's a concern," he said. "Does it stunt their growth? Where does it put those guys? How do they handle it? All of those type questions come into the discussion if we were to go down that road. How does it affect those young guys?"

Last year Siemian handily beat out Lynch and Mark Sanchez for the starting job after the team lost Manning to retirement and Brock Osweiler to free agency. Siemian played in 14 games, winning eight while enduring two injuries that cost him time. His left shoulder was surgically repaired in January, but the Broncos expect him to be ready by the start organized team activities and ready to resume the open competition that started last offseason.

For now, the Broncos have two quarterbacks with 16 starts between them and the potential to reach new heights, especially if they are playing behind a revamped offensive line.

But the reality is this: When the new contract season begins March 9, a new set of possibilities could open, too, and the real victor of the Broncos' quarterback race could be decided before Siemian and Lynch ever take the field.

Or maybe it won't.

"I'll say this: We're going to look at all the options," Elway said. "Once they become available, we're going to look at all the options. If it's best for the Denver Broncos, then it's best for this team. Because it's not only about winning next year; it's also about what it does to the future, too. All those things will come into discussion."

Vance Joseph: Trevor Siemian played through “horrific” shoulder injury, but is “on track for OTAs”

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

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The left shoulder injury that Trevor Siemian so often brushed off as “part of the game,” was apparently worse than even he knew. The AC joint injury, described by Broncos head coach Vance Joseph as “horrific,” was a Grade 5 sprain, not Grade 3 as originally believed.

Siemian underwent elective surgery in January for comfort and cosmetic reasons so he could lift weights without pain and wouldn't have a bump atop his shoulder. But during the procedure, there was more significant ligament damage that ultimately made the repair a necessity, not an option.

His planned return, however, remains unchanged.

“Trevor is doing fine. He's rehabbing every day,” Joseph said at the NFL scouting combine here Wednesday. “He's on track for (organized team activities). It's a left shoulder injury, so it's not his throwing shoulder. So we feel good about OTAs for Trevor.”

Added general manager John Elway: “I think Trevor will be fine. I'm not worried about Trevor's shoulder. I think he did a heck of a job playing through that last year, but I'm not worried about Trevor's shoulder.”

Siemian injured his shoulder in a Week 4 win at Tampa and was sidelined for the second half and the following game, against Atlanta. He missed one other game because of a foot injury later in the season, but played through the pain in his left shoulder.

In 14 starts, he went 8-6 and completed 59.5 percent of his passes for 242.9 yards per game, 18 touchdowns and 10 interceptions for an 84.6 passer rating.

“Watching Trevor last year, I was really impressed,” Joseph said. “He's a winner. He played with a horrific shoulder injury that most guys wouldn't play with. Again, he was a first-year starter, so basically a rookie starter last year and what he accomplished was big for the football team last year.”

Vance Joseph addresses DeMarcus Ware's free agency, says any new deal "has to make sense on both sides"

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

March 2, 2017

On the cusp of 35 and coming off another surgery, pass rusher DeMarcus Ware is at a crossroads — again — in his career. His three-year contract with the Broncos officially expires next week, putting him back on the free agent market and back on the shortlist of suitors.

Two teams are known to be interested, Dallas and Denver. Dallas is where he started and played the bulk of his career. He's played for Denver the past three seasons and helped the Broncos win a Super Bowl a year ago.

Ware was placed on injured reserve to undergo surgery on a ruptured disc in his back this past December, but he made it clear shortly afterward that he intended to play in 2017.

During Super Bowl LI week in Houston, Ware told ESPN that he talked to new Broncos head coach Vance Joseph and is "part of the equation" in Denver.

"Hopefully I come back there, and I want to, but it's also about the man who writes the checks and that's (general manager John) Elway," Ware said. "But I'm ready, I'm passionate and I want to lead that defense."

At the NFL scouting combine Wednesday, Joseph said he has talked with Ware multiple times, but added a new contract is dependent on myriad factors.

"He's obviously a free agent, so that being said, a lot of things go into that, as far as where he wants to be, how much he wants to play, his role," Joseph said. "So that's a work in progress."

"If we happen to acquire him back, it has to be a partnership on what role he plays, a financial partnership. His leadership is bar none. It has to be agreement and make sense on both sides on all of those things."

Ware signed a three-year, \$30 million contract with the Broncos in 2014 as a key part of Elway's defensive overhaul. Shortly after Super Bowl 50 last March, Ware agreed to restructure the final year on his contract to lower his cap hit, fitting an altered role on defense and allowing the Broncos to use the savings elsewhere.

The plan last season was to use Ware primarily in situational downs, to maximize his health and effectiveness. But injuries derailed the plan from the start. Last off-season, as he recovered from the back injury, an infection developed that delayed his return to training. Then, in a Week 2 win against the Colts, he fractured his forearm. He missed five games to recover from surgery.

Over the past two seasons, Ware played 22 out of 32 regular-season games (18 starts), and recorded 11.5 sacks and 24 quarterback hits.

“I haven’t talked to DeMarcus,” Elway said Wednesday. “He’s been around, but I haven’t had a chance to sit down with DeMarcus, so as we get through this and get back to Denver, I’m sure I’ll sit down with DeMarcus and we’ll talk about it.”

@DeMarcusWare

#SpringIn5Words ☑let's see...

Free. Agent. How. Bow. Dah

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Broncos to interview Christian McCaffrey, Vance Joseph praises Todd Davis, more

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

March 2, 2017

Another McCaffrey is high on the Broncos' list.

Christian McCaffrey, the Stanford running back and son of former Broncos receiver Ed McCaffrey, is at the NFL scouting combine this week and will be interviewed by the Broncos on Thursday night, coach Vance Joseph said.

"This kid is a really good football player," Joseph said Wednesday. "If you watch the tape, he's a pro's pro. I'm excited to watch him this weekend and interview him."

McCaffrey, projected as a late first round or early second-round selection by most media outlets, announced last December that he would skip Stanford's bowl game against North Carolina to focus on the NFL and begin his combine preparation with Englewood trainer Loren Landow.

Small (he measured 5-foot-11, 202 pounds) but versatile, McCaffrey has been deemed an immediate-impact player because of the multiple ways in which he could contribute to an NFL team — as a back, possibly as a slot receiver and as a returner.

"I think the best match-up coach in football is Bill Belichick, and he's been doing that for years. From my perspective, McCaffrey's a match-up guy. He's a chess piece," NFL Network's draft expert Mike Mayock said. "He averaged — just like Dalvin Cook and (Leonard) Fournette and (Alvin) Kamara — he averaged between 6 and 6.5 yards a carry. He's an outstanding pass-catcher. He's bigger and tougher than people think he is. And he's also a return guy."

NFL teams are allowed to interview up to 60 combine participants in Indianapolis, and the Broncos will come close to the max, if not hit the threshold.

Davis praise. Inside linebacker Todd Davis is one of the Broncos' three restricted free agents this off-season, along with kicker Brandon McManus and offensive lineman Sam Brenner. Davis and McManus, both of whom played on \$600,000 salaries last season, are expected to be tendered before the March 9 deadline.

Restricted players are given first- or second- or low-round tenders. Players can negotiate with other teams, but incumbent teams own their rights and would receive either a first-round draft pick, second-round pick or just the right-of-first refusal, respectively, if players sign offer sheets elsewhere.

Last year running back C.J. Anderson was given a low-round tender, worth only about \$1.67 million. He then signed a four-year, \$18 million offer sheet with the Miami Dolphins and the Broncos matched at the 11th hour.

Davis and McManus would likely both receive at least second-round tenders, which are projected to be worth around \$2.8 million for one year.

“Todd Davis is a physical, downhill mike backer,” Joseph said. “He fits the mold of what we want.”

Could Kubiak return? Gary Kubiak’s retirement from coaching late last season sent shockwaves through the Broncos organization, but it also surprised many across the NFL.

Ravens head coach John Harbaugh hired Kubiak as his offensive coordinator in 2014 in the gap year between his Texans head coaching job and being hired as the Broncos head man. He knows what the entire NFL knows about Kubiak: the guy loves football.

“I texted with Gary shortly after that and I was really happy for him. I would say I was a little surprised because I think Gary Kubiak is one of the premier coaches in the NFL. I got to see what a premier human being he is, too,” Harbaugh said. “Whatever’s best for he and his family. My guess is we haven’t seen the last of Gary Kubiak in the National Football League. I’m looking forward to that.”

Is C.J. the guy? Much of the decision around whether to draft McCaffrey will deal with how comfortable the Broncos are with their own backfield. Currently, Anderson, 2016 fourth-round pick Devontae Booker and Kapri Bibbs are the three backs that were on the roster last season and likely to return in 2016.

“C.J.’s been a consistent good back for the last four seasons,” Joseph said. “Booker, as a young guy, showed up last year. Late in the year, he played better and better. I’m excited about those two guys, but running the football is a must.”

The attention of course is on Anderson, who hasn’t yet been a 1,000-yard rusher. In fact, the Broncos haven’t had a 1,000-yard rusher since Knowshon Moreno in 2013. So can Anderson be that guy?

“Not by himself. We got to fix the line. We got to block better obviously,” Joseph said.

Paradis update. Broncos center Matt Paradis underwent his second successful hip surgery in February and is expected to shed his crutches in a couple of weeks. Regaining his mobility will be a major marker in his off-season of recovery. Joseph said the goal is to have Paradis back in some capacity by the start of training camp and back in full by the beginning of the regular season.

John Elway optimistic about his own contract talks with Broncos

By Cameron Wolfe
Denver Post
March 2, 2017

While Broncos general manager John Elway is hoping to make his own free agent splashes, he has his own contract situation that needs to be addressed. Elway was upbeat and positive Wednesday when discussing whether he'll remain in his current role beyond 2017.

"It's going fine. It's moving ahead," Elway said, with his coined toothy smile. "I don't anticipate any problems."

Elway's comments were more optimistic than they were when he spoke in January during the coaching switch.

Broncos president Joe Ellis has remained confident he can work out a deal with Elway before his contract expires at the end of the 2017 season. Elway was also hopeful that a new contract would be finalized before he became a free agent.

Elway joined the Broncos' front office in 2011 as head of the team's football operations and, in 2014, when owner Pat Bowlen stepped down because of Alzheimer's, Elway signed a three-year contract extension and added general manager to his title.

NFL salary cap set at \$167 million; Broncos will have more than \$40 million in cap space

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

March 2, 2017

There are few jobs like the NFL, where being unemployed means a person is in great position to cash out.

The NFL set its 2017 salary cap at \$167 million per team on Wednesday. That's good news for the Broncos, the other 31 teams and the players. For the fourth consecutive season, the NFL salary cap increased by at least \$10 million from the previous season (\$12 million from 2016 to 2017).

The Broncos' individual salary cap is \$174,243,248, per the NFLPA, with an extra \$7,243,248 carried over from unused 2016 cap space. Denver currently has more than \$40 million in cap space. Overthecap.com currently has the Broncos at a shade over \$42 million in cap space, which would place the Broncos 10th in the NFL.

With those numbers, Denver is in prime position to nab multiple impact players in free agency. Coach Vance Joseph said he expects the Broncos to be active in free agency.

The Broncos have the potential to create even more cap space if they release tackle Donald Stephenson before his \$4 million salary is guaranteed on March 13. The move would save Denver \$3 million in cap space.

Denver declined Russell Okung's option saving them more than \$11 million in cap space, a move Joseph termed as financial.

Much of that cap space will be used to fix an offensive line that will likely need two new starters at tackle and possibly upgrades at guard. The Broncos will prioritize finding more talent on the defensive line to help fix a leaky run defense. Denver will likely use \$10-\$15 million of cap space on signing their rookie class, restricted and exclusive rights free agents.

Broncos want Russell Okung back; Vance Joseph gives scouting reports on draft's top OTs

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

March 2, 2017

Vance Joseph isn't sitting in the background at the NFL combine letting the Broncos executives, scouts and assistant coaches determine the entire makeup of the team. The Broncos head coach is attending his first combine as one of the main men in charge, but he has one area he's certain they need to address: the offensive line.

"Offensively we're close," Joseph said. "Offensive line, we need some help there."

The Broncos will add at least one offensive lineman in free agency and possibly more. Then attention will turn to what Joseph, general manager John Elway and many others consider to be a shallow offensive line draft class.

"I feel more comfortable if we can take care of some needs in free agency. There is a good blend in both. Free agency is there for a reason. We're always looking for value in free agency, which is sometimes hard to do," Elway said. "We can supplement some needs that we have through free agency because I don't like going into the draft with big needs. If we go into the draft, we have the propensity to reach. We try to stay out of the situation."

The immediate focus will be at offensive tackle where the Broncos could be looking for two new starters.

Russell Okung, who played left tackle last season, is set to hit free agency after the Broncos declined his option last week. It would have paid him \$48 million over four years with \$20.5 million guaranteed; a figure Denver did not feel equated with his worth although they would like him back.

Joseph and Elway consider Okung to be a good left tackle who they would like back, but as free agency approaches they have to prepare for other options.

"It comes down to money, too. It's not a bottomless pit," Elway said, expressing frustration in the 2016 offensive line play. "Even though we didn't exercise the option on Russell, that's not saying he's not going to be back. He may find another opportunity then, it is what it is. Russell is somebody we would like to continue to talk to. Then we'll look at the other guys that are going to be on the market."

Okung, who represents himself in contract negotiations, expects to receive a big payday on the market being one of a small number of starting caliber left tackles. It's possible given his growing options that Okung doesn't have to take much of a pay cut from what his \$12 million per year option would have paid.

"He's looking at the market and seeing what is out there also," Elway said. "We're not discounting or counting Russell out. He's part of the process."

Joseph named Wisconsin's Ryan Ramczyk and Utah's Garrett Bolles when asked about the top offensive tackles in this draft class. NFL Network analyst Mike Mayock gave both players first-round grades and listed them as the top offensive tackles in a weak class.

Even if Denver nabs Ramczyk, Bolles or another rookie tackle, it might be futile to ease them into action as a right tackle or off the bench because of the growing difficult transition between college and NFL for tackles.

"Their game is so much different. That's why they're not as ready to play when they come out of college," Elway said. "They need a lot of training. We just have to be ready to do that and coach them up."

Bolles and Ramczyk are expected to interview with the Broncos this week, although Joseph isn't optimistic that either will be available when the team drafts at 20. He does like both players, particularly Ramczyk.

"He plays like a NFL guy. He's got long arms. He's got great feet. He's tough and smart," Joseph said. "He's definitely a guy most teams are looking at. It's going to be tough to acquire a guy like that at 20, probably."

Cincinnati's Andrew Whitworth, 35, is the top free agent left tackle who could hit the market, but his age and Bengals desire to keep him could affect the Broncos' pursuit. The Ravens' Ricky Wagner is the top right tackle likely to hit free agency.

There are other potential left tackle candidates like the Lions' Riley Reiff, who has played both left and right tackle in his career, but Joseph seems to be shying away from those guys.

"Having a true left tackle is like having a lockdown corner," Joseph said. "It's different than a right tackle. You're facing the best rushers and you're protecting the quarterback's blind side. We want a left tackle that can play left tackle."

Elway added on the left tackle spot: "It is very important. Obviously you protect the backside of the quarterback. They're not guys that grow on trees either. They're difficult to find. We'll do everything we can to try and find the best fit. If that's Russell, great. If not, then we'll see what else is out there."

Joseph and Elway will meet Tuesday to discuss right tackle Donald Stephenson. Stephenson's 2017 salary is guaranteed on March 13, but the Broncos can add \$3 million to their \$42 million in cap space if he's released. Stephenson's struggles make it unlikely he'll return as a starter, but he's still under contract right now.

Vance Joseph leaves door open for possible veteran quarterback with Broncos

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

March 2, 2017

Tony Romo speculation persistently loomed over Broncos head coach Vance Joseph as he embarked upon his first NFL scouting combine as the man in charge here Wednesday. The 36-year-old Cowboys quarterback is the hottest name amongst a growing group of available or soon-to-be available veteran players.

Joseph remained steadfast in his contentment with the Broncos' young quarterbacks, but cracked the door wide open on potentially bringing in a veteran quarterback to usurp Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch.

"We're set, at the moment," Joseph said Wednesday morning. "With free agency starting next week, any player that can help us moving forward and help our team get better we're going to research and look into. But right now, we have two young guys that we believe in."

The NFL combine is just as much about the draft prospects as free agency and trade chatter. It's the time of year where every team is under one roof seeking to improve their rosters.

For the Broncos, the conversation seems to always revolve around the quarterback position. Ultimately, general manager John Elway will make the final decision on whether to continue developing Siemian and Lynch or pushing all the chips in with a veteran quarterback. There are pros and cons to both options, and ultimately much will be based on price and fit.

"Having a veteran quarterback who has won games in the past, it brings excitement to your locker room and your city," Joseph said. "Moving forward, we're satisfied with those two kids. Fixing the offensive line, running the football better and protecting the passer better is a must."

Siemian beat out Lynch last season and played 14 of 16 games. Lynch, the Broncos 2016 first-round pick, clearly wasn't ready for a big role and started two games when Siemian was sidelined with injuries.

Joseph and Elway have said the two young quarterbacks will have an open competition for the right to start in 2017. Lynch has the draft pedigree and the Broncos would like to see him take a huge jump in the mental portion of the game to win the job. If healthy, Siemian's 2016 production would indicate he has the inside track to beat out Lynch once again if the evaluation is truly "the best guy will play" as Joseph promised again Wednesday.

"Watching Trevor last year, I was really impressed. He's a winner," said Joseph, who expects Siemian to be ready by organized team activities as he recovers from surgery on his left shoulder.

With Lynch, there have been worries that his progression has been slow. The physical portion of the game came easily for Lynch most of his life, but he struggled with the playbook and scheme as a rookie last season. Joseph likes Lynch's mold.

“Is he ready? I’m not sure,” Joseph said. “Obviously, he’s got great skills. He’s a tall man with a big arm. Is he ready? That’s a tough question.”

Joseph said he believes the Broncos offense is “close,” and its showing last season wasn’t as bad as those outside the organization claimed but he added the offensive line needs help.

The “close” designation has led many to make the Romo-to-Denver connections. Joseph didn’t address those directly because Romo is still under contract with the Cowboys, but he certainly didn’t rule it out.

The Broncos competition at quarterback will begin in the summer and fall after the young quarterbacks, and possibly a newly acquired veteran, learn offensive coordinator Mike McCoy’s system. There’s a big question that will linger in the coming weeks and be one of the deciding factors on if Elway brings in Romo or another veteran quarterback: Can Siemian or Lynch lead the Broncos to a championship in 2017?

“Well, right now I do. Absolutely I do. But it takes more than that,” Joseph said after pausing for a few moments to ponder the question. “We got to play great defense, run the football and win the turnover battle. Obviously if (one of them is) our starter, I’ll believe that in the fall. Ask me in the fall.”

Elway on Romo: 'We're going to look at all options'

By Mike Klis

9News

March 2, 2017

Vance Joseph cracked the door on Tony Romo in the morning.

By late afternoon, John Elway came along and faced two options: Close the door shut on Romo, or open up the possibility a little more.

Sorry about this, Trevor and Paxton, but Elway, the Denver Broncos' general manager, did not select option one.

"I'll say this: We're going to look at all the options," Elway said in a media scrum Tuesday during the NFL Scouting Combine. "Once they become available, we're going to look at all the options and do what's best for the Denver Broncos and what's best for this team, because it's not only about winning next year it's also what's best for the future.

"So all those things will come into the discussion and once it gets to that point and we know where we are, we'll kick the tires on everything and do our homework on everything and then make the best decision on what we think is right for the Broncos."

Trevor Siemian, the Broncos' incumbent starting quarterback, enters year three in the NFL. Lynch, the Broncos' first-round draft pick last year, may be back to sitting again in year two.

Romo had a nice, lengthy run as quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys until he was supplanted in 2016 by rookie Dak Prescott. The expectation is Romo will be released by the start of free agency on March 9.

Nabbing Romo would mean the Broncos aren't sold on Siemian or Lynch, at least not for 2017. Wouldn't Elway be especially disappointed if his first-round draft pick sat two years?

"No. Because I think the bottom line is we want to get an answer at that position for the future," he said during an interview with 9NEWS. "Hopefully a long future. That's why we want to be very careful on the front side of it because we think he has the ability to be that guy that can carry the franchise for a long, long time. The last thing we want to do is put them in there before he's ready, before they're ready. That's why it's important for us to make the right decision on the front side to make sure we secure that future."

Vance Joseph open to veteran QB, not sure if Lynch ready

By Mike Klis

9News

March 2, 2017

Vance Joseph didn't mention Tony Romo specifically.

In general terms, though, Joseph indicated here Tuesday at the NFL Scouting Combine the Denver Broncos would be checking out veteran quarterbacks who become available in free agency. Just like the Broncos will check out all players available in free agency.

Still, Joseph was given the chance to dismiss the possibility of acquiring Romo, Joseph instead chose his words carefully.

Romo would be by far the best veteran quarterback available, providing he is released by his long-time employer, the Dallas Cowboys, by the start of free agency on March 9.

Asked about his quarterback position currently occupied by Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch, Joseph responded by saying the Broncos are fully satisfied. At least until next Wednesday.

"We're set at the moment," Joseph said. "With free agency starting next week, any player that can help us moving forward, help our team get better we're going to research and look into. But right now we've got two guys that we believe in."

Joseph essentially confirmed what 9News has been reporting for several weeks, that if the Cowboys do release Romo, the Broncos would be expected to discuss the possibility of signing him.

Let's go a little further now. The Broncos will likely contact Romo's representatives if he becomes available. Looking into acquiring Romo, though, and executing it, are not necessarily the same, even for Broncos general manager John Elway.

The Broncos won't be the only team interested in Romo. If a bidding war ensues, will the Broncos keep up?

Romo turns 37 on April 21, which is old by quarterback standards not named Peyton Manning (55 touchdown passes in 2013) or Tom Brady (Super Bowl MVP in 2014 and again at age 39 in 2016). It would be a surprise if the Broncos go much past \$10 million a year for three years in their contract offer.

Even if the Broncos' proposal is loaded with rich incentives, would Romo take less to play for a team that he could lift to legitimately contending for a Super Bowl again?

Something else to consider: Ultimately, adding Romo would come at the expense of the younger Siemian and Lynch. Would the Broncos be willing to surrender one, and push the other the back a couple years?

All of these questions are premature. Speaking of which, is Lynch mature enough to assume command of the Broncos' starting quarterback position this season?

"Is he ready? I'm not sure," Joseph said. "But obviously he's got great skills. He's a tall man with a big arm. Is he ready? That's a tough question. He had two starts last year. Trevor played also. It's going to be an open competition. Whoever wins the job that's who's going to play. That's as fair as it can be."

Joseph wasn't with the Broncos last season when they traded up from the No. 31 overall pick to No. 26 in the first round to nab Lynch, a 6-foot-7 quarterback from Memphis who had 28 touchdown passes and just four interceptions in his junior season.

At this time last year, Joseph was the Miami Dolphins' defensive coordinator.

Make no mistake, Lynch has a new set of coaches to impress if he is to take control of the Broncos' offense.

"I wasn't here when we drafted Paxton but I will tell you this, nothing's wrong with a young quarterback sitting a couple years," Joseph told 9News in a one-on-one interview with 9News. "A-Rod (Aaron Rodgers) up in Green Bay sat behind a veteran quarterback (Brett Favre) for a couple years and I think it helped him. Nothing's wrong with that.

"When you draft these guys early they're expected to play right away but it doesn't make them busts. It makes them not ready.

"That being said, this is going to be a fair competition. He's a tall guy with a big arm. He had two starts last year and showed some life in those two starts. He did some things last year to make every coach excited. Moving forward, I'm excited about both quarterbacks. They won nine games combined. That's pretty good for two rookie quarterbacks. And they probably could have won two more."

Those two games were against Kansas City on Nov. 27, a 30-27 overtime loss, and at Tennessee on Dec. 11, a 13-10 loss.

Siemian started both games and played extremely well against the Chiefs, and good-if-not-good-enough-in-the-red zone against the Titans.

Despite surgery on his left, non-throwing shoulder following the season, Siemian will be ready to participate in the Broncos' organized team activities (OTAs) in late-May, Joseph said. The competition with Lynch, though, won't formally commence until training camp.

"The competition is going to be in the fall," Joseph said. "It won't be in the spring. The spring is going to be a learning tool to learn Mike's system."

New offensive coordinator Mike McCoy will install a new offensive system that both quarterbacks should like, if not in the same way.

"The problem with Paxton and Trevor is they're so different," Joseph said. "Paxton's a tall, big-arm guy, athletic guy. Trevor is a fundamentally sound, great footwork, great with the ball, he can really spin the

ball throwing the football. They're different, I think Mike's challenge is finding an offense that fits both guys so they can compete equally."

And maybe for Romo, too? The precedent is there. Elway and then head coach John Fox lured 36-year-old Peyton Manning to give the Broncos his second chance in 2012.

Broncos to meet with Christian McCaffrey

By Mike Klis

9News

March 2, 2017

The Denver Broncos with the No. 51 overall draft pick in the second round are scheduled to visit with Christian McCaffrey here Wednesday night

McCaffrey, the star running back from ... wait, what?

Kidding! The hope, maybe even the expectation, is for McCaffrey is to get drafted well before the Broncos' second-round pick. The Broncos also have the No. 20 overall selection in the first round. While McCaffrey, a former star running back at Valor Christian High School and Stanford, would be considered worthy of No. 20, the Broncos have far more pressing needs along their fronts on both sides of the ball.

Still, the Broncos want to do their due diligence on their local hero. Each NFL team gets a maximum of 60 interviews, at 15-minutes each, with rookie prospects during the NFL Scouting Combine this week. The Broncos have 57 interviews scheduled and will use one on McCaffrey.

"He's a good football player," said Broncos head coach Vance Joseph. "He's obviously been productive at a major conference (Pac-12) in college football. So I'm looking forward to getting to know him. I obviously watched him on tape. He's a Valor Christian kid. A Denver kid. That's exciting. I'm happy for him. He's had a great career and he's going to be a great pro."

The son of former Broncos receiver great Ed McCaffrey, Christian McCaffrey nearly won the Heisman Trophy as a sophomore in 2015 when he rushed for 2,019 yards, caught 45 passes for another 645 yards and scored touchdowns off both a punt and kickoff return.

He rushed for another 1,603 yards this past season as a junior.

The 2017 draft is deep at the running back position. Will the Broncos get one, even if his last name is not McCaffrey?

"Very possible," Joseph said. "We've got how many picks. Ten? With 10 picks you can take whatever you want."

Other notes from Joseph's media gatherings here Tuesday:

*The Broncos' first-year coach was candid about one position of need.

"We want a left tackle," he said.

After releasing left tackle Russell Okung from his contract, the Broncos will first shop in free agency to find his replacement. Cincinnati's Andre Whitworth is expected to be on the Broncos' short list.

If the Broncos don't get their left tackle next week when free agency opens, they may consider trading up from their No. 20 draft pick to get one.

*It appears the Broncos are trying to negotiate a pay cut with veteran pass rusher DeMarcus Ware. But it also appears questionable as to whether an agreement can be reached.

Ware accepted a pay cut last season from the \$10 million he was scheduled to make in the final year of his contract to \$6.5 million. This time, he can first test the free-agent market that opens next Wednesday.

"I've talked to DeMarcus four or five different times," Joseph said. "He's obviously a free agent. That being said lots of things go into that as far as where he wants to be, how much he wants to play his role. That's a work in progress."

*Joseph chose his words carefully when asked if right tackle Donald Stephenson would return. The Broncos view Stephenson as a quality swing tackle, not a starter, but his contract includes an option that if exercised by March 13 would guarantee his \$4 million salary for the 2017 season. That's starter money.

It appears the Broncos will first see if they can sign a quality left tackle in free agency before making a final decision on Stephenson. The Broncos also have Michael Schofield and Ty Sambrailo as right tackle candidates.

*Joseph confirmed his new offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and line coach Jeff Davidson would vary the Broncos' running scheme.

"It was more zone last year," Joseph said. "We're hoping to do both (zone and gap scheme) under Mike and Jeff. When you're doing both it helps you on game day. If you're doing only one thing, teams can wire in and scheme against what you're doing."

*The Broncos lost out to San Francisco in the bidding for free agent defensive tackle Earl Mitchell last week. That still leaves the Broncos with a gaping need along their defensive line. Arizona's Calais Campbell, who grew up in Denver, may be one possibility through free agency.

"We want to try to acquire interior player who can rush the passer," Joseph said.

The Broncos' current starting defensive tackle, Sylvester Williams, is expected to sign elsewhere through free agency.

*With Broncos general manager John Elway on his third head coach in four years, there's a perception he can be difficult to work for. It's early, yet, but Joseph is pleased with his working relationship with Elway.

"John's been so supportive," Joseph said. "Obviously, for a first-time coach, coaching a football team, it's a huge job. So letting John handle the personnel with free agency and the draft, along with Matt Russell, that's a perfect match.

"With his track record of drafting well and having success with free agents in the past, it's easy to follow John's lead."

Two incidents from last season helped lead John Elway to Vance Joseph

By Mike Klis

9News

March 2, 2017

There were two incidents last season that were factors in John Elway making Vance Joseph the Denver Broncos' new head coach.

The first happened after week 2 when Broncos receivers Emmanuel Sanders and Demaryius Thomas complained they weren't getting enough passes thrown their way. Week 2.

Even though their gripes worked as Sanders and Thomas combined for 15 receptions for 217 yards and three touchdowns in the Broncos' week 3 game at Cincinnati, it was still a we-before-team moment.

The other incident was when star cornerback Aqib Talib shoved Jordan Norwood after Norwood muffed a punt in the Broncos' game against Kansas City on Sunday night, Nov. 27.

Talib is a team-first guy. He was angry because Norwood's muff hurt the team. But team guys aren't supposed to show up a teammate in front of a prime-time, nationally televised audience.

When Broncos' head coach Gary Kubiak resigned at season's end, general manager Elway believed Joseph was the correct choice to step in and lead the Broncos' locker room that is full of strong characters.

How would Joseph have handled these two incidents?

"Well, I'll say this: In the NFL, you've got to have accountability between the players," he said in a sit-down interview with 9News here Tuesday at the NFL Scouting Combine. "Because the players dictate how you practice, how you play, how hard you play. Every coach in the league is preaching the same message: You've got to play hard, you've got to play disciplined. you've got to want it. But it comes from the players.

"But it's not what you say. It's how you say it. And it's when and where you say it. I want guys to challenge teammates. But I want it done the right way. It has to be done right. But it's how you say it and it's when and where you say it."

Joseph, 44, spent 11 years as an NFL defensive backs coach before he became the Miami Dolphins' defensive coordinator last season and then made the rather sudden leap to head coach this year.

Did he get into coaching with the idea of one day becoming a head coach?

"I think it evolved," he said. "When you first get in the NFL you just want to survive. You want to survive and keep a job for seven or eight years. As time goes on, you want more as a coach. Not out of boredom, but you just want more of a challenge.

“As I came up through the ranks as a defensive backs coach I want to be a coordinator. And then from there I wanted to be a head coach and that happened really quick, after one year of being a coordinator. That was really surprising. But I’m excited to be here. I’m ready for the challenge.”

The Broncos’ locker room will challenge any coach.

Poised for free agency, John Elway expects his own deal to get done with Broncos

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

March 2, 2017

In what just might be the most important contract negotiation for the Denver Broncos with free agency set to open next week, executive vice president of football operations John Elway said he expects his own contract extension would get done.

"It's going fine, it's moving ahead," Elway said Wednesday at the scouting combine. "I don't anticipate any problems."

Elway has one year remaining on a three-year extension he signed in 2014. It is the second contract he has signed since he rejoined the Broncos in 2011.

Broncos president and CEO Joe Ellis said in Houston during Super Bowl week, his goal was to wrap up a new deal with Elway "as soon as we can." Ellis said the team has had talks -- some "early conversations" -- about extending the deal with Elway as far back as October

At the time Ellis said "that is my plan for sure and I've been optimistic throughout we'll get something done."

Elway just hired the third head coach of his tenure in Vance Joseph -- he hired John Fox in 2011 and Gary Kubiak in 2015 -- and the team has had six winning seasons in his six years in the front office with five AFC West titles and two Super Bowl appearances. The Broncos closed out the 2015 season with a win over the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50 during the fourth of Peyton Manning's four seasons with the team.

Elway's pursuit, and signing of Manning in 2012 led to four consecutive years with at least 12 wins. This year's 9-7 finish, however, marked the first time since Elway returned to the team in '11 the Broncos did not make the playoffs.

With so many varied business interests, including restaurants and auto dealerships, Elway has often been asked about his long-term plan as an NFL executive. His belief that a third contract will get done makes it clear he has continued to enjoy the competitiveness as a team's top football decision-maker.

"They're talking about it, it's in process," Elway said. "I don't anticipate it being a problem."

The Broncos have gone 67-29 (.698) in regular-season games during Elway's tenure.

John Elway: 'Possibility' that Broncos add veteran quarterback

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

March 2, 2017

These days, when people say "veteran quarterback" to Denver Broncos executive vice president of football operations/general manager John Elway, they usually mean Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo.

By league rules, Elway can't talk about Romo or any other player under contract with another team, but with Romo expected to be released by the Cowboys at some point in the coming weeks, Elway still wouldn't slam the door Wednesday on the possibility of acquiring a veteran quarterback. But Elway added it's not a decision about just the 2017 season but "two or three years down the road."

Asked at the scouting combine if the team intended to add a veteran quarterback to the mix with Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch, Elway said:

"I'll say we're going to look at all the options -- once they become available, we're going to look at all the options," Elway said. "If it's best for the Denver Broncos, if it's best for this team, because it's not only about winning next year but also what it does for the future too. All those things will come in the discussion. Once we get to that point, we know where we are, we'll kick the tires and do our homework on everything and make the best decision for the Broncos."

Elway also said the Broncos wanted a player at quarterback that "we could hang our hat on for a long, long time." Asked if the Broncos could add a veteran quarterback for the short term and still keep both the 25-year-old Siemian and the 23-year-old Lynch on the roster to both develop, Elway added:

"Yes, that's a possibility, I'm not going to say that's not a possibility. At this point in time, everything's a possibility."

Elway and Broncos coach Vance Johnson have consistently said through the offseason that Siemian and Lynch would compete in training camp to be the team's starting quarterback. Elway and Johnson also have said that if the team expended some resources to make the offense better overall, it would improve Siemian's or Lynch's chances to be successful in the Broncos' pursuit of a playoff spot.

And the future of the two players will enter in any decision the Broncos make once free agency opens. Romo and Buffalo Bills quarterback Tyrod Taylor -- both still under contract with their teams -- are usually the most discussed veteran quarterbacks as possibilities for the Broncos.

"That's a concern: Does it stunt their growth?" Elway said of Lynch and Siemian. "Where does it put those guys? How do they handle it? And all those type of questions come into the discussion if we were to go down to that road. How does it affect those young guys? How does it affect their reps? Are they still going to continue to get better or is that going to impede their growth?"

"Those are things that are under consideration and [we] think about if we're going to bring in a veteran or not."

For his part, Romo will turn 37 later this month and has played in just five games combined over the past two seasons.

Told the prevailing wisdom by many in the league is that the Broncos would be in the mix to add a veteran quarterback, Elway laughed and said, "Well, I guess I should."

DeMarcus Ware's potential return to Broncos still 'work in progress'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

March 2, 2017

Denver Broncos coach Vance Joseph opened his first scouting combine as a head coach Wednesday, and he covered a wide range of topics.

DeMarcus Ware: Ware is set to be an unrestricted free agent next week, will turn 35 years old in late July and is coming off back surgery. Ware has missed 11 games in the last two seasons combined – six with back troubles and five due to a fractured forearm.

Ware has continued to be in the Broncos' facility much of the offseason to this point as he works with the team's medical and training staffs in the wake of his surgery. At the Super Bowl last month he said he felt "like a new man" and hoped to return to the Broncos.

Joseph said Wednesday that he would like Ware back, but discussions over expectations of playing time and role in the defense were still unfinished.

"I've talked to DeMarcus four or five different times," Joseph said. " ... Lots of things go into it, what he wants to do, how much he wants to play, his role, but that's a work in progress."

Russell Okung and Donald Stephenson: In the expected makeover of the team's offensive line, the Broncos informed Okung they would not pay a \$1 million bonus that would engage the final four years of his contract and give Okung \$21 million guaranteed. So Okung will be a free agent next week and the Broncos have an opening at left tackle.

And Stephenson, the team's right tackle, has a clause in his contract that would guarantee his \$4 million base salary if he's on the roster on March 13.

Joseph said Wednesday that the Broncos would consider bringing Okung back, just at a lower price than Okung was scheduled to make, and that Stephenson's future was still open for discussion with executive vice president of football operations/general manager John Elway.

"[Stephenson] has a guarantee, that's John's area, I'm meeting with John again Tuesday on that," Joseph said.

Christian McCaffrey: Denver's own Heisman Trophy finalist would be in play when the Broncos pick at No. 20 in the first round in April's draft. McCaffrey's father, Ed, was a two-time Super Bowl winner with the Broncos during Elway's Hall of Fame tenure at quarterback and Christian McCaffrey is doing his pre-draft work in suburban Denver.

Joseph said the Broncos had McCaffrey, a Stanford running back, on their list of players they would formally interview Thursday.

Asked if he believed it would be difficult for Christian McCaffrey to potentially play in his hometown for the same team his father played for, Joseph said: "Not at all, he's a pro's pro." McCaffrey is generally regarded as either the No. 3 or No. 4 running back on the board by most teams, so whether he can be selected in the first round remains to be seen in what is regarded as a deep class at running back.

Vance Joseph on Broncos' QBs: 'We've got two young guys we believe in'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

March 2, 2017

Another day, another endorsement for Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch at quarterback for the Denver Broncos.

Wednesday, Broncos coach Vance Joseph opened the NFL scouting combine with another affirmation about the plan at quarterback. The plan continues to be Siemian and Lynch learning the new offense and competing for the job in training camp.

With the prospect Tony Romo will be released by the Dallas Cowboys or Tyrod Taylor by the Buffalo Bills, the Broncos' decision-makers keep being asked about adding a veteran quarterback.

"We're set at the moment ... any player we think can help us we're going to research it," Joseph said. "But right now we've got two young guys we believe in."

Asked what would change that thinking, Joseph said: "Right now, nothing."

Joseph did acknowledge signing a proven, veteran quarterback can "bring excitement" to the team's fan base or even in "your locker room," but then said he believed if other parts of the offense were repaired, Siemian and Lynch would benefit and the Broncos would be back in the playoff mix.

"We've got two young guys who won nine games combined last year and probably should have won more," Joseph said. "So moving forward, we're satisfied with those two kids and fixing the offensive line and running the football better. Protecting the passer better is a must, help those two guys play better."

Siemian had surgery on his left (non-throwing) shoulder after the season and Joseph said Wednesday he's still on track to participate in the team's organized team activities (OTAs) in May. However, Joseph added since OTAs include non-contact drills, Siemian wouldn't be rushed back to the field.

"Watching Trevor last year, I was really impressed," Joseph said. "He's a winner, he played with a horrific shoulder injury most guys wouldn't have played with. Again, he was a first-year starter ... and what he accomplished was big for the football team. ... OTAs, we're hopeful he's a full-go."

Broncos coach likes the 2 QBs he has

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

March 2, 2017

Just when Vance Joseph appeared to close the door on bringing in a veteran quarterback such as Tony Romo to follow in Peyton Manning's footsteps in Denver, John Elway cracked it back open.

The Broncos' new coach said Wednesday at the NFL scouting combine that he likes his two young QBs, Trevor Siemian, who's recuperating from (non-throwing) shoulder surgery, and Paxton Lynch, who's recovering from a disappointing rookie season.

So does his boss, but Elway later said he would never say never.

"We'll kick the tires on everything and do our homework on everything and then make the best decision for what's right for the Broncos," Elway said.

He acknowledged he'd have to weigh the potential pitfalls such a move might present.

"How does it affect those young guys and how does it affect their reps, and are they still going to continue to get better, or (will it) impede their growth if we were to do that?" Elway said. "Those are all things that go into consideration to think about whether we bring in a veteran guy."

Many have speculated the oft-injured Romo, supplanted by Dak Prescott in Dallas, will land in Denver much like Manning did in 2012 for his comeback.

Joseph isn't allowed to talk specifically about players on other teams, but he reaffirmed the Broncos' intentions to stick with their young QBs, who count a combined \$2 million against next year's \$167 million cap.

"I think having a veteran quarterback who's won games in the past, it brings excitement to your locker room and your city. That being said, we've got two young guys that played last year that won nine games combined — and probably should have won more," Joseph said.

"So, moving forward, we're satisfied with those two young kids, and fixing the offensive line and running the football better and protecting the passer better is a must to help those two young guys play better."

Siemian had surgery on his left shoulder Jan. 3 after playing three months with what's been described as a grade-5 A.C. joint sprain, which he suffered in Week 4, forcing him to miss 1½ games. He also missed a game with a sprained foot.

The severity of his shoulder injury is usually seen in car crashes, not on football fields, and the recovery can take up to half a year.

Joseph said he trusts Siemian will be ready for non-contact OTAs next month — the four-month mark — but noted this spring is all about both QBs learning Mike McCoy's system before competing in earnest for the starting job in training camp.

Siemian went 8-6 and threw for 3,400 yards with 18 TDs and 10 interceptions, statistics all the more impressive, Joseph said, when you consider he played most of the season with a severely damaged shoulder.

"Watching Trevor last year, I was really impressed. Again, he's a winner. He played with a horrific shoulder injury that most guys wouldn't play with," Joseph said.

Lynch went 1-1 last year and showed he was far from polished as he adjusts from the spread offense he ran at Memphis to the pro-style system and its requisite footwork, quick reads and intricate playbook.

Joseph demurred when asked if that raw-but-talented Lynch is ready to supplant the savvy-and-strong Siemian.

"Obviously, he's got great skills. He's a tall man with a big arm. Is he ready? That's a tough question," Joseph said. "... It's going to be an open competition and whoever wins the job, that's who's going to play. That's as fair as it can be."

Elway chose Siemian in the seventh round in 2015 and moved up to select Lynch with the 26th overall pick in the first round last year. But he said he'd be OK with Siemian winning the job again in 2017 if that's the way it works out.

"Well, yeah. If Paxton's not ready to go, then I don't want him to go," Elway said. "The key thing is, we drafted Paxton to come in and compete for a job. Trevor did a good job last year. But we're looking for a guy that we can hang our hat on for a long, long time. The last thing we want to do — whether it be Paxton or anyone else — is put them in before they're ready."

Joseph said McCoy has a tough task in preparing for two different styles of quarterback.

"The problem with Paxton and Trevor, they're so different," Joseph said. "Paxton's a tall, big-armed guy, athletic guy. Trevor is fundamentally sound, great footwork, great with the ball. He can really spin the ball as far as throwing it. So, they're different. So, I think Mike's challenge is finding an offense that can fit both guys so they can compete equally."

Notes: Joseph said he senses an excitement and a hunger in his conversations with players since his hiring in January: "Nine wins last year felt like a losing season in Denver," Joseph said. ... Elway is entering the final year of his contract but said he expects smooth negotiations and to get a deal done soon.

NFL prospects have been prepping for this big week

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

March 2, 2017

The 330 players arriving at the league's annual combine have been preparing for this week's "Underwear Olympics" like a prize fighter gets ready for his big night, pumping iron and cutting carbs.

They've been following strict programs designed to help them get stronger, run faster and jump higher in anticipation of getting poked and prodded, measured and treasured.

"The hardest thing for these kids to really understand when they get to the combine and the pro day is they get one shot at all these drills," said Loren Landow, who trained Stanford star Christian McCaffrey among more than two dozen NFL hopefuls at Landow Performance in suburban Denver over the last two months.

"Whereas your strength coach in college used to let you do it over and over until you got your best time, now that's not the case when you're being evaluated in a time crunch," Landow said. "They're going to give you one opportunity and it's all about how well you perform at that moment with high levels of stress and some fatigue on you."

That's why they've been training with such single-minded focus since their bowl games.

"It's a lot of just trying to improve all the funky drills that they have you doing at the combine that you know aren't necessarily things that we practice as a football player on a daily basis," said Wyoming offensive lineman Chase Roullier, who trained with Landow.

That's been the formula ever since Mike Mamula absolutely killed it at the 1995 combine and rocketed into the first round, where the Philadelphia Eagles traded the 12th overall pick and two second-round selections to Tampa Bay so they could move up five spots and get the Boston College defensive end at No. 7.

Mamula was among the first players to train specifically for the tests he'd face at the combine: the 40-yard dash, the three-cone drill that measures agility and the 225-pound bench press.

Now everybody targets this week in Indy like Mamula did all those years ago.

Today's prospects train six days a week for eight weeks or more all so they can impress NFL executives who will test their speed, strength, skills and brain power while also checking out their medical background and any off-field history for any red flags.

"I feel like it's definitely getting us ready for the combine as far as all the guys we're competing against each other," said Air Force receiver Jalen Robinette, who led the nation in yards per catch in 2016. "Because it's a real big interview/competition there at the combine. And being able to break down the drills and mentally be practicing everything, it's awesome. Literally every day I hear new stuff about the combine that they teach me here."

"Preparation is everything."

They pretty much follow the same basic program because they'll be doing the same tests at the combine. But the training is also personalized by position.

"I'll talk to the agents and from the agents' perspective, I'll say, 'What are the scouts telling you that they want to see from your player? Do they want to see them heavier, lighter?'" Landow said. "At the end of the day, I don't think you ever go wrong in providing a little bit more mobility, flexibility to an athlete and getting them stronger. More explosive is always the key in this short window so they can really show their best in all their 'measurables.'"

These players have all undergone mock combines, too, where they put all their training together for dry runs to give them a taste of what this week will bring.

"I think it makes the hugest difference," Roullier said. "If I were to go in there and do this stuff cold, I mean, I'd have an idea of what I'd be doing because it's all stuff that I've done in the past. But my technique would be just awful, you know, it's just all these little things that you need to change and I'm able to get coached up on all of them. It's just continuing to improve those little things and it makes a huge difference in the numbers."

This training isn't cheap. It can cost tens of thousands of dollars, although the pricing structure changes for draft wannabes and sure bets.

"If an athlete is an NFL combine invite, the agent will pay for everything," Landow said. "If you have a kid who may be a bubble guy who didn't get the combine invite but you know can play, the agents will typically foot the bill. Some guys if they're a priority free agent maybe at best, sometimes it's coming out of their own pocket."

For a combine invitee, the cost can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

"I know with housing and food and all that it ends up being like 10, 20 grand that my agent's dropping just in these few months up to the combine. So, it's a lot," said Roullier, who's out to ensure this week that the training pays big dividends.

Broncos' Vance Joseph remains open-minded about veteran quarterback

By Troy Renck
KMGH
March 2, 2017

For the first time Wednesday, the Broncos cracked the door open on the pursuit of a veteran quarterback.

Coach Vance Joseph told Denver7 he remains comfortable with Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch. However, he did not rule out adding an experienced signal-caller in free agency. Tony Romo was not mentioned by name, but his situation could soon clarify with the Dallas Cowboys prepared to release him.

"I think having a veteran quarterback who has won games in the past brings excitement to your locker room and your city," Joseph said. "That being said, we have two young guys who won nine games combined and should have won more. Moving forward we are satisfied with the two young kids. We need to fix the offensive line, run the football better and protecting the passer better is a must."

What would change the Broncos' commitment to a Siemian-Lynch derby for the vacancy? The right name perhaps?

"I am not sure. Right now we have two guys, and there's no one available to talk about," Joseph said.

Romo's status continues to inch toward resolution. The feeling has been for weeks that Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones will do right by Romo, releasing him to pursue a starting job after he lost his spot to Dak Prescott. According to multiple reports, Romo, who turns 37 in April, believes he can play 2-to-3 more seasons. He appeared in only five of the Cowboys' last 32 regular-season games, undermined by two collarbone breaks and a compression fracture of the L1 vertebra in his back. In his last healthy season in 2014, Romo threw for 3,705 yards with 34 touchdowns and nine interceptions.

Romo is scheduled to make \$14 million this season. To facilitate a move to Denver, he would likely have to be willing to lower his base salary given the team's desire to address multiple needs under the salary cap. The Broncos are expected to express interest in Romo when he becomes a free agent.

Teams consistently listed as potential suitors for Romo include the Broncos, Houston Texans, Kansas City Chiefs and Chicago Bears.

Joseph addressed Siemian's recovery from elective surgery on his left shoulder and Lynch's growth curve. Siemian told Denver7 last week he is out of the sling and healing on schedule. Siemian admitted he would know a more definitive timeline after a follow up exam later this month.

"Trevor's doing fine. He's rehabbing everyday in the building. He's on track for OTAs (in April)," Joseph said. "It's his left shoulder. We feel good about where he's at."

Joseph also added that the focus of OTAs will center on the quarterbacks learning new offensive coordinator Mike McCoy's system, which is about 60 percent implemented at this point.

"The competition will be during training camp," Joseph said.

As for Lynch, this remains an important offseason for him to improve. He went 1-1 last season and appeared uncomfortable under center and with the verbiage of an NFL offense.

"Is he ready? I am not sure. Obviously he has great skills. He's a tall man with a big arm," Joseph said. "But is he ready? That's a tough question."

Joseph painted the picture of a Broncos team that will be aggressive in free agency as it attempts to fill holes on the offensive and defensive lines. Denver is seeking a left tackle after cutting ties with Russell Okung, and Joseph plans to talk with general manager John Elway about right tackle Donald Stephenson's status on Tuesday. The Broncos must decide by March 13 whether to guarantee Stephenson's option.

Joseph said the team's preference is to find a left tackle in free agency, if possible, and not attempt to convert a right tackle. He also said center Matt Paradis, who underwent surgery on both hips this offseason, should be ready for the start of training camp.

Defensively, Joseph discussed multiple issues. He stressed the team's strengths create options given how the Broncos defend the pass and rush the quarterback. He likes the physicality of inside linebacker Todd Davis, who is a restricted free agent, and kept the window open, if only slightly, for the return of rusher DeMarcus Ware.

"Lots of things going into that as far as where he wants to be, how much he wants to play and his role," said Joseph of Ware, who projects as a 20-snap player if he remains with the Broncos. "That's a work in progress."

As a first year coach, Joseph appeared comfortable in the spotlight Wednesday as he continues to grow into his role. He inherits a team poised to rebound.

"We won nine games last year, and you would think we won three," Joseph said. "That's a good thing. We have a top 10 defense and the offense isn't as bad as people think. We need to finish in the red zone. But we aren't that far away."

Broncos' John Elway 'open to everything' at quarterback

By Troy Renck

KMGH

March 2, 2017

When Dallas Cowboys coach Jason Garrett stopped Broncos general manager John Elway at the Indiana Convention Center, pictures clicked. The inference was unmistakable. Connect. The. Dots. The two had to be talking about soon-to-be-released quarterback Tony Romo, right? Elway did nothing to silence the chatter about the Broncos pursuing the veteran on Wednesday.

"We are open to everything. We are going to look at all the options once they become available," Elway said. "If it's best for the Denver Broncos and best for this team...because it's not just about winning next year, but what it does to our future as well. All those things will come into the discussion. And once we know where we are, we will kick the tires on everything and do our homework on everything."

Garrett indicated he has not talked to Romo in weeks. He insisted there's "no question (Romo) can still play at a high level." Romo presents an interesting case for the Broncos. When he becomes a free agent, as expected, the fit is easy to see. But will Romo be willing to take a contract that makes sense, and how will he view suitors, particularly if Houston is involved? Texans coach Bill O'Brien did not talk specifics, but admitted Houston's offense must improve.

The Broncos traveled down this road five years ago, moving all their chips to the center of the table for Peyton Manning. The intensity has not been the same for Romo, but it's definitely under consideration. The pursuit of Manning was framed thusly: Denver saw itself as one piece away. Does Elway feel the same way now?

"I think we are good enough on the defensive side. We need to get better offensively. And this is the time of year we have to get better," Elway said.

Elway said it is possible the Broncos could sign a veteran quarterback and keep Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch. Elway has no concerns about Siemian's health after he underwent elective surgery on his left shoulder on Jan. 3.

"He did a hell of a job playing through it last year," Elway said. "I am not worried about Trevor's shoulder."

The offensive line creates hand-wringing. The Broncos have been unable to find matches in the draft or solidify the group. Center Matt Paradis (surgery on both hips) is expected to be ready for training camp. That leaves One Man and Four Maybes.

The Broncos could feature multiple new starters. Elway said he has not closed the door on bringing back Russell Okung, whose four-year, \$48 million option was declined. Okung, however, wants to test the market. No decision has been made on right tackle Donald Stephenson, who was benched twice last season and will make \$4 million this season. The Broncos could decide as early as Tuesday on Stephenson's future. His 2017 salary guarantees on March 13.

Elway is prepared to pursue tackles and guards in free agency. He did not discuss names, but the top left tackle is Andrew Whitworth, and coveted guards include Kevin Zeitler and T.J. Lang.

"Well it comes down to money, too. It's not a bottomless pit. So there are only so many things we can do," Elway said. "Even though we didn't exercise the option on Russell, we are not saying he won't be back. He might find another opportunity. Russell is somebody we would like to continue to talk to. And we will look at other guys on the market."

In a wide-ranging interview with local reporters, Elway covered a variety of subjects:

--On his own contract extension negotiations, which president Joe Ellis has said should get done: "It's going fine. It's moving ahead. I don't anticipate any problems," Elway said.

--He said the team remains interested in re-signing nose tackle Sylvester Williams, who is determined to test the free agent market. The club has not ruled out bringing back outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware. Elway plans to talk to Ware after the combine. His situation is complicated by his health, age and possibly a smaller role with the Broncos. The Cowboys could be interested in reuniting with Ware. The Broncos want free agent defensive back Kayvon Webster back. However, he desires more playing time, which could come elsewhere.

--Elway didn't rule out considering a contract extension for safety T.J. Ward. The Broncos have been successful in locking up core players before they hit the market.

--Regarding the running game, Elway maintains "high expectations" for C.J. Anderson to return healthy and produce a "big year." Anderson is close to being cleared following knee surgery midway through the season. When Anderson saw Elway's comments on Twitter, Anderson tweeted, "You can count on me boss."

--I asked Elway about exercising cornerback Bradley Roby's fifth-year option. He said there was no reason to make the decision yet. "We will wait until we have to, but obviously Bradley has played very well for us."

--There was a crisis of confidence with the offense, Elway conceded. "I think the whole offense was frustrated. The key thing is that we get more competitive on that side. For our sake, I hope they can go out there and enjoy playing a little more than they did last year and have more success."

Broncos will interview Christian McCaffrey at NFL combine

By Troy Renck

KMGH

March 2, 2017

So you're saying there's a chance.

The Broncos plan to interview Christian McCaffrey at the NFL combine on Wednesday as they sift through players to draft. Few are more known to local fans than McCaffrey, who starred at Valor Christian and is the son of former Broncos star receiver Ed McCaffrey.

At the 20th spot in the first round, McCaffrey projects as a slight reach. However, when considering his varied skillset it could be argued he makes sense. McCaffrey, pictured above running at a recent training event, can return punts, kicks, and work at running back and slot receiver, the latter of which has provided minimal impact the past two seasons.

"He's a really good football player. If you watch the tape, he's a pro's pro," Joseph said Wednesday outside of the interview room. "I am excited to watch him this weekend and interview him."

McCaffrey measured at 5-foot-11 and weighed 202 pounds. He brings explosiveness and quick feet that allow him to create space where none exists. McCaffrey is considered by many as the third best running back in this draft behind LSU's Leonard Fournette and Florida State's Dalvin Cook. Fournette weighed in at 240 pounds on Wednesday, 5 pounds heavier than anytime in college.

McCaffrey's versatility makes him a potential fit for multiple teams. Several mocks have him going to the Broncos, Packers and Patriots.

"From my perspective McCaffrey's a matchup guy," NFL Network Mike Mayock analyst said on a conference call. "He averaged -- just like Cook and Fournette and (Alvin) Kamara -- between 6 and 6.5 yards per carry. He's an outstanding pass-catcher. He's bigger and tougher than people think. And he's also a return guy."

The Broncos continue to look for ways to improve their running game, which ranked 27th in the NFL. Joseph praised starter C.J. Anderson but admitted "he can't do it alone." The Broncos like Devontae Booker's potential and ability to catch passes out of the backfield, which could influence their interest in McCaffrey. Denver is also trying to fill multiple needs, meaning a defensive lineman or tight end might be deemed more valuable in the first round.

Regardless, McCaffrey figures to have plenty of suitors, which will only increase with an anticipated strong combine showing.

"He's a dynamic player who can do it all," Broncos general manager John Elway said. "Wherever he goes, he's going to have an impact immediately."

Tony Romo or Paxton Lynch? Broncos could face dilemma

By Woody Paige
Colorado Springs Gazette
March 2, 2017

Feeling lucky?

Powerball is \$53 million.

As I write this, the Bulls are favored by two points over the Nuggets on Tuesday.

I would bet on Chicago, which is 18-11 at home. The Nugs are 10-19 on the road. (By the time you read this, the game will be over, and the Nuggets probably won.)

But I never wager on sports. I've seen too many weird endings, bizarre turnarounds and incredible comebacks, and, despite my vocation, I don't really have a clue who's going to win. I couldn't pick Ryan Gosling from Ryan Reynolds or Ryan Phillippe out of a police lineup.

The only time I gamble is on pizza delivery, and I usually lose (cold, late, and inedible).

But, today I kind of like the odds of Tony Romo being with the Broncos and Paxton Lynch or Trevor Siemian not leading the Broncos to a Super Bowl victory this year.

The Broncos, according to my pals at the sports books in Las Vegas, are 16-to-1 to win Super Bowl LII. They are ranked seventh, with the Patriots and the Cowboys the preferences at 4½ and 10-to-1.

But nobody in Vegas or Denver knows who will be the Broncos' quarterback - a piece of important information, wouldn't you think? John Elway, Vance Joseph and Mike McCoy claim there will be a sincere competition between Trevor Siemian, who was 8-6 as a starter in 2016, and Lynch, who was 1-1 in his two starts.

However, the wise guys who make the line say that the Broncos are favored to wind up with Romo as their starting quarterback. If you bet \$100, you can win \$300. The Chiefs are second at 7-to-2, and the Texans are 5-to-1.

Let's begin with the Lynch Proposition. We all should be rather certain that John Elway - who hand-picked Lynch as the Broncos' No. 1 draft selection 2016 after trading up to get him - would love to see his protégé become the starting quarterback soon than later, and probably wanted him to start the Broncos' last game.

However, coach Gary Kubiak - who, according to two former associates, "was miserable last season" - wanted to go out with a victory, and left Siemian (who Kubiak had persuaded Elway to draft the year before) in until the end.

Assume for the moment that Lynch does start in 2017. He won't be 24 until eight days after the Super Bowl next Feb. 4. Only 10 starting quarterbacks of the 102 in Super Bowl history have been 25 or younger. Just five - Joe Namath (25), Joe Montana (25), Tom Brady (24), Ben Roethlisberger (23) and Russell Wilson (25) - have been on the winning side.

The Broncos' chances of winning a Super Bowl, with Lynch at quarterback, are less than 5 percent, and that's if you consider him in a class with those five QBs at tender ages.

Siemian will turn 26 the day after Christmas. Ten quarterbacks have made their Super Bowl debut in the Super Bowl at 26. Four - Bob Griese, Terry Bradshaw, Jim McMahon and Troy Aikman - won the championship. Among those who didn't were John Elway (against the Giants) and Cam Newton (against the Broncos).

Based on history, the Broncos have an approximate 9 percent chance to winning the Super Bowl with Siemian. (It took Elway four Super Bowls and 15 years to win his first.)

More than half the Super Bowl quarterbacks were 30 or older (52), and 26 won.

Tony Romo will be 37 on April 21. Nine quarterbacks in Super Bowls were 37 or older, and six won - Tom Brady and John Elway twice, and Peyton Manning and John Unitas once each. Manning was the oldest at 39. Manning, who was in the NFL for 17 years, won two of four Super Bowls, Elway two of five.

Actually, the odds of being in a Super Bowl, and winning, at 25 or younger, or at 26, are slightly higher than those who are 37 or older.

Oddly enough.

Will Romo come to Denver? Despite what anybody believes, there is no clarity yet. Neither Elway nor Romo are sure. They're not betting.

So, those are among the multitude of reasons I wouldn't bet, or recommend it.

Buy a Powerball ticket instead.

John Elway weighing long-term effects in Broncos' QB dilemma

By Lindsay Jones
USA Today
March 2, 2017

John Elway will be thinking about more than just the 2017 season when he decides whether the Broncos should pursue a veteran quarterback this offseason.

Among the things Elway will weigh is how adding a veteran starting-caliber quarterback is how it will affect a roster that currently includes two young quarterbacks: Trevor Siemian, who started 14 games last season, and 2016 first-round pick Paxton Lynch.

"That's a concern," Elway said Wednesday to a small group of reporters at the NFL scouting combine. "Does it stunt their growth? How does it affect their reps? How does it impede their growth if we were to do that?"

Still, expect Elway to take a hard look at the quarterback position when free agency opens March 9, especially if Tony Romo were to be released by the Dallas Cowboys. There are other veterans the Broncos could look at, like the Buffalo Bills' Tyrod Taylor or journeyman Brian Hoyer, but Romo is the only potentially available quarterback who would appear to be a clear immediate upgrade from Siemian or Lynch.

"We'll look at other guys who will be on the market," Elway said.

But quarterback is hardly Elway's only concern heading into free agency. He needs to work on fixing the offensive line – including possibly finding two new starting tackles – and fortifying the defensive front after stopping the run was a significant weakness last year.

Elway said the team has not necessarily moved on from left tackle Russell Okung after declining his four-year, \$48 million option earlier this week. Elway wants to talk to Okung about returning on a lesser contract, but understands Okung might find a sweeter deal elsewhere on the market.

The Broncos will also be in the market for defensive linemen and will allow defensive tackle Sylvester Williams, a first-round pick in 2013, to test the open market. Elway also said he plans to speak with veteran pass rusher DeMarcus Ware next week after returning to Denver. Ware is an impending free agent but has been rehabbing from back surgery at the Broncos' facility.

2017 NFL combine: Jeffery, Fournette and more winners and losers from Day 1

By Will Brinson
CBSSports.com
March 2, 2017

The first day of the new-look NFL combine (the league rearranged the setup to an older format, which is maybe only something interesting to people on the ground here) was largely dominated by the new-look league year (the combine was pushed back a week, plopping the initial rumblings of free agency squarely in this timeframe), with franchise tags being a hot topic in Indy as a large group of coaches and general managers spoke to throngs of media members.

There wasn't any prospect action, so for now we'll focus our winners and losers -- and it's just a name, everyone is a winner, don't be mad -- largely on a group of people who are already in the league.

But there were very much a group of people who benefited from the action Wednesday, with franchise tags officially announced prior to Wednesday's 4 p.m. ET deadline and a few surprises occurring.

Leave your angry remarks or suggestions in the comments or hit me on Twitter @WillBrinson.

Winners

Alshon Jeffery: The Bears wide receiver didn't get tagged on Wednesday, which means he's about to hit free agency. And it means he's about to cash in. Jeffery has issues off the field (a PED suspension in 2016) and has been injured during the last two seasons. But he's still a young, physical receiver with immense talent. He is going to get (over)paid by someone in free agency. Getting guaranteed money this year would be great, but hitting the market now is a major boon to his bank account.

Nick Perry: Perry might make even more money. There are many pass rushers available in this draft, but there isn't a whole lot of availability for guys on the open market thanks to Chandler Jones, Jason Pierre-Paul and Melvin Ingram all getting the franchise tag (full list here). Perry is a 26-year-old pass rusher who started 12 games last season and recorded 11 sacks. His market is going to be enormous , and he is probably going to get north of \$10 million a year.

Forrest Lamp: There is a very weird obsession with the length of certain body parts in the NFL, and for teams interested in drafting offensive linemen, arm length is a big deal. You can't be holding off blockers with tiny little T-Rex arms. Lamp, a hot prospect at guard who is probably going to go in the first round, just made himself some real cash by somehow making his arms an inch longer between the Senior Bowl and the combine.

Who knows how (Inspector Gadget therapy treatment?) or why the magical Lamp's arm grew in the past few weeks, but it's irrelevant, because he is now over the magic number of 32. He's going to get drafted early.

Trumaine Johnson: The Rams decided to place the franchise tag on Johnson again this year, rather than let him hit free agency, which means he's now going to make more than \$16 million this season. He's a poor man's Kirk Cousins, getting a chance to play on two fully guaranteed deals before hitting the market. He is the highest-paid cornerback in the league, which is remarkable considering where he stands in the "most-talented cornerback in the league" conversation. He also joined some rare company.

Losers

Paxton Lynch: The good news is that Vance Joseph said he believes that the Broncos are OK with Lynch and Trevor Siemian. The bad news is that Joseph also said he's "not sure" that Lynch is ready to start. Maybe that's just offseason motivational chatter, but it's odd that he wouldn't be pumping up his second-year quarterback, even if there isn't a whole lot of work on which to base that assumption. The offseason is for optimism, and this was an odd take. It makes you think that, even if John Elway really wants to make sure that the Lynch pick (he was taken in the first round in 2016) ends up being a good one, Tony Romo is very much in play for Denver.

Trade rumors: If the Browns, 49ers or Bears were hoping they could really start to put the framework of a Jimmy Garoppolo deal in place at the combine, they can think again. The rumors ran rampant Wednesday that the Patriots do not plan on trading Garoppolo. The good news is that even if the Patriots are leaking that, it absolutely does not put a kibosh on any chatter about Garoppolo. What makes more sense is that the Pats get this news out there over the last few weeks (we've seen multiple reports about Garoppolo not being traded) to create more demand for their backup quarterback, who is in short supply. Basic economics, really.

Colin Kaepernick: The 49ers quarterback is exercising his option to leave the 49ers, but where is he going? There aren't many good starting quarterbacks, and there aren't many great quarterbacks in the draft, but there will be teams hesitant to sign him for his off-field beliefs (whether that's right or wrong is irrelevant; it's true), and there will be teams hesitant to sign him because he hasn't been great the last few years. There are also better options coming to this market, including Romo, Mike Glennon and Jay Cutler, to name a few.

Leonard Fournette: The powerful running back out of LSU rolled right into the combine giving no bleeps about his size, having apparently put on five pounds since his playing days in Baton Rouge and weighing a robust 240 pounds. No one's drafting him to be faster than everyone else, but giving up an early pick for a running back is a risky proposition, and it's even riskier if the running back is adding pounds. We'll see how he looks when he rolls in for media sessions and for the drills -- if it's all muscle and he looks just as fast as before, he would flip right back over to the other side of this piece.

New Broncos coach Vance Joseph says he's 'not sure' Paxton Lynch is ready to start

By Will Brinson
CBSSports.com
March 2, 2017

New Broncos coach Vance Joseph didn't exactly give a ringing endorsement of second-year quarterback Paxton Lynch at the 2017 NFL combine.

Joseph was asked if Lynch was ready to play right now and said he's "not sure" and confirmed it would be an "open competition" between Lynch and Trevor Siemian.

"Is he ready? I'm not sure," Joseph said. "But he's got great skills. He's a tall man with a big arm. Is he ready? That's a tough question. He had two starts last year. Trevor played also. It's going to be an open competition."

The competition thing isn't concerning, because that's a standard talking point at every NFL event when it comes to coaches and GMs offering information about future position battles. It would be stunning if the Broncos quarterback competition wasn't open. But hearing Joseph basically say he has no clue whether his first-round pick from last year can actually play is concerning.

And he made it pretty clear that he needs to see Lynch be more consistent in his approach before he's willing to give him the job.

"Well, consistency, you know. Playing quarterback in the NFL is about consistency, not turning the ball over, making good decisions, that's important to playing quarterback in the NFL," Joseph said when asked about what he wants to see from Lynch.

The Broncos' offseason is going to hinge on a lot of different things. One of the biggest things will be the likely free agency of Tony Romo, who remains a very viable candidate for the Broncos' quarterback position if he becomes available and is willing to take less money in free agency .

Maybe GM John Elway ultimately decides he wants to make a run at another Super Bowl with his youngster. But his new head coach didn't sound like he was particularly enthralled with the idea.

John Elway leaves door open for Tony Romo to Broncos: 'We'll see what happens'

By John Machiota
DallasNews.com
March 2, 2017

For about 20 minutes Wednesday afternoon, Tony Romo was the center of attention at the Indiana Convention Center. Romo is not attending this week's NFL scouting combine, but he's the most popular non-draft related topic in town.

During that short period of time, Denver Broncos general manager John Elway and Cowboys coach Jason Garrett held news conferences on separate stages.

A few minutes after Elway did nothing to close the door on the possibility of Denver making a run at Romo, Garrett fielded 10 consecutive questions about Dallas' former franchise quarterback.

"We're open to anything," Elway responded when asked about the possibility of adding a veteran quarterback. "We'll always look at it. This is the time of year that you look at everything and try to discuss everything, every possibility, what might be available, what might not be available. We'll see what happens."

Elway did not mention Romo by name because he's still a member of the Cowboys organization. Talking about another team's player is considered tampering, a punishable offense in the NFL.

But it was clear to the 20-plus reporters standing in front of the Hall of Famer that the discussion was about the Cowboys' all-time leading passer.

Romo will probably be released in the near future, allowing him to sign with any club. A Broncos franchise that has won three Super Bowls with quarterbacks in their late-30s makes sense. Elway was 37 and 38 during his two Super Bowl victories. Peyton Manning was 39 when Denver won it all last year. Romo turns 37 next month.

Over to Elway's left, Garrett was responding to questions focused more on where his relationship stands with Romo. It's clearly not what it used to be. In previous offseasons, the two have attended multiple Duke and SMU basketball games together.

Garrett revealed Wednesday that they haven't spoken since "right after the season."

After Garrett's 12 minutes at the podium, he talked with local reporters for another 15 minutes off to the side.

His relationship with Romo again was brought up.

"I don't want to comment too much on that," Garrett said. "I haven't spoken to Tony much during this offseason. I think that has a lot to do with we're coaching the Pro Bowl, a lot of different things we're doing as a coaching staff. He's got a new little baby on the way, so he's busy with that.

"I know he's continuing to get his rehab done so he can be healthy as possible going forward. But I have an immense amount of respect for Tony Romo. I've been so fortunate to be around him, to be able to coach him, to develop the relationship that we've had over the last 10 years. I just hold him in the highest regard."

Romo and Garrett have spent the previous 10 seasons working together. They became close. But when Garrett chose to stick with rookie standout Dak Prescott as the team's starter after Romo returned from injury, it appears things changed.

Time has a way of healing wounds and that could happen here. Either way, Garrett doesn't seem overly concerned.

In fact, he spent most of his time Wednesday complimenting Romo.

"There is no question we believe that Tony Romo can still play," Garrett said. "I thought he did a real good job working back from the injury this year. That was not easy.

"[Seeing how] he practiced towards the end of the year and played in that game against Philadelphia, there is no question in our mind that he can still play at a high level."

If Elway agrees, Romo could be finishing his career wearing orange and navy blue.

Broncos' Justin Simmons helping Martin County students find their way

By Aimee Ford Foster
Treasure Coast News
March 2, 2017

Justin Simmons has been in the spotlight for a long time.

He was the bedrock defender and exciting offensive option for the Martin County High School football team before moving on to a successful career at Boston College. After a standout four years there, he was drafted in the third round of the 2016 NFL draft by the Denver Broncos.

As a rookie, he played 13 games with three starts, racking up 30 tackles and two interceptions. He got a ton of social media play after blocking an extra-point attempt against the New Orleans Saints with teammate Will Parks scooping up the ball and returning it for two points, giving the Broncos a 25-23 win.

But Simmons is still a Martin County kid at heart.

During this offseason, he's taking time to talk to area students about what it takes to succeed. His first appearance was at J.D. Parker Elementary, after school staff member Kindell Rivers asked him. Rivers was one of Simmons' coaches at Martin County.

"I make sure they know that I'm from here and that I came from the same school system they're in, and whatever dreams they have for their lives, it can be obtained by coming out of the Martin County school system," Simmons said. "I tell them a little bit about my journey; I tell them about getting good grades and being respectful to my elders and classmates.

"That played a huge role in why I became a success. I hope it sticks because I'm an NFL player."

After that first visit to J.D. Parker, Simmons, a 2012 Martin County graduate who married his high school sweetheart, Taryn Richard, last spring, was hooked.

"I hadn't really planned on going to other schools, but after I talked to those kids and saw how attentive they were, I thought it would be a good idea," he said.

His message is effective, said Crystal Lake Principal Brenda Watkins.

"The students asked a variety of questions, like who got you started in football and who is your role model," she wrote in an email. "The boys and girls alike were interested in listening to Justin and asking questions. Justin is such a nice guy, and we would be interested in bringing him back again."

Simmons, 23, doesn't hold back when he talks about succeeding in school. He said he struggled as a freshman in high school and said it almost cost him the chance to play sports.

"I like to tell the kids that," he said. "And quite frankly, I'm kind of tired of there being a bunch of kids from our area who have the potential to do this, but they don't because their grades aren't good enough or they don't have a great home life. There's a lot of talent that goes unnoticed because of choices and mistakes that we as kids make.

"They think they're getting overlooked because it's such a small area, which is not the case. A lot of times kids don't get to do what they want because they weren't pushed to get good grades. I tell them how important good grades are and how respect will take you a long way and open doors when football is said and done."

Martin County football coach Chuck Kenyon wasn't privy to Simmons' early struggles, but does remember his work ethic.

"Whatever he did, however he did it, he did it the right way," Kenyon said.

Simmons, who along with Taryn has fallen in love with the Denver area, plans to spend time on the Treasure Coast each offseason. His parents, Kim and Victor, are here, and so are brothers Nate and Tristan, both of whom played at Martin County, too. Nate plays college ball at West Virginia Wesleyan, where he'll be a senior in the fall. Tristan graduates from Martin County this spring.

"I'm hopefully going to be in the NFL for a while, and I want the boys and girls in this area to know that I'm accessible to them," Simmons said. "I wish I had someone like that around when I was growing up, someone I could look up to and model the kind of person I wanted to be.

"I have the opportunity to do that for the generation growing up."

John Elway thinks he has “that guy” in Paxton Lynch

By Michael David Smith

Pro Football Talk

March 2, 2017

Broncos General Manager John Elway says the top job when building a team is finding the franchise quarterback who can be “that guy.” And Elway thinks he drafted “that guy” last year.

Elway said on PFT Live that he still thinks he made a good pick when he took Paxton Lynch in the first round of last year’s draft, although he acknowledged that until Lynch proves it — and the Broncos prove they can develop him — it’s all speculation.

“I think so. I’m excited about Paxton. But you never know,” Elway said. “Last year, picking Paxton in the first round, and the talent level that we see, Paxton is going to have a great career in the NFL. The bottom line is bringing him along the right way and developing him the right way.”

Elway’s comments echo those of head coach Vance Joseph, who said yesterday that he thinks the Broncos are in good shape with Lynch and Trevor Siemian. The Broncos may always change their tune when Tony Romo becomes available, but they are talking like a team that is set at quarterback.

Vance Joseph says Trevor Siemian will be ready for OTAs

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
March 2, 2017

Broncos quarterback Trevor Siemian, who had shoulder surgery after the 2016 season, recently expressed optimism that he'll be available for offseason workouts, but he didn't say unequivocally that he'll be ready. Appearing on PFT Live, Broncos coach Vance Joseph was far more clear.

Specifically, Joseph said Siemian will be ready for Organized Team Activities.

Siemian will compete with second-year first-rounder Paxton Lynch as they both learn Mike McCoy's new offense. There could be a veteran quarterback currently under contract with another team who joins the mix. Due to the tampering rules, I told Joseph I wouldn't ask him about those quarterbacks.

"Good," Joseph said.

Hopefully, you'll say the same thing after hearing the interview.

Elway: Broncos will talk with Russell Okung, could sign him again

By Zac Jackson
Pro Football Talk
March 2, 2017

The Broncos won't be picking up the option on Russell Okung's contract for 2017, but the team isn't necessarily closing the book on its relationship with Okung after one season.

Speaking to reporters at the NFL Scouting Combine Wednesday, Broncos vice president of football operations John Elway said the team will explore its options at left tackle, and that those options will include considering signing Okung again. He said the team plans to talk with Okung again soon.

"I wouldn't say we've moved on," Elway said.

Okung signed a five-year deal worth \$53 million with the Broncos last March while acting as his own agent, but after one year and \$8 million the Broncos announced last week that they won't pick up the option, making Okung a free agent on March 9.

Plenty of teams are looking for left tackle help, so Okung will have options.

Vance Joseph on Broncos' QBs: We're fine with Siemian and Lynch

By Michael David Smith

Pro Football Talk

March 2, 2017

Will the Broncos make a move for Tony Romo? Not from the sound of coach Vance Joseph's comments today.

Joseph said he feels good about Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch and doesn't see a need to add a quarterback.

"We've got two young guys that combined to win nine games last year as starters, probably should have won two more, so we're fine there with those two kids," Joseph said.

It's true that the Broncos went 8-6 with Siemian as the starter and 1-1 with Lynch as the starter in 2016, but that was with the best defense in the NFL. When you have the best defense in the NFL, you'd like to be better than 9-7 and out of the playoffs.

So it may just be posturing from Joseph, and the Broncos may still look for a new starting quarterback. But publicly, anyway, the Broncos are insisting that their quarterback situation in 2017 will be the same as it was in 2016: Siemian and Lynch are the guys.

Combine Debrief, Day 1: Translating QB chatter

By Gregg Rosenthal

NFL.com

March 2, 2017

Wednesday's press conferencepalooza at the NFL Scouting Combine was most notable for what wasn't said.

Bills coach Sean McDermott was as noncommittal as possible about Tyrod Taylor's future. Broncos executive John Elway and Texans coach Bill O'Brien both expressed flexibility about seeking a veteran quarterback without daring to utter Tony Romo's name. The Bucs stayed on message by saying they "don't have to make a decision yet" on Doug Martin, yet also made it clear they aren't counting on him. These pre-free agency press conferences have evolved into a public game of "chicken."

McDermott hit the podium just ten days away from a franchise-altering deadline regarding the massive option in Taylor's contract. NFL teams plan out every last minute of their OTA practice schedule months in advance, yet McDermott said he doesn't know what they'll do with Taylor. McDermott said the word "process" so often that it felt like a Philadelphia 76ers press conference, circa 2015.

"We're going through that process right now and the thing about all of our players, and Tyrod's no different, is we're going to go through the process, we're going to exhaust every ounce of time, look at it from every angle. I think the thing you'll find out about me is I'm pretty methodical in my approach. And so it takes time and that's what's in front of us right now," McDermott said.

Translation: There might not be anyone better out there than Tyrod so we might roll with him after all. But we still don't see him as a true franchise quarterback or this answer would be a lot more definitive.

I asked McDermott if he's compared Taylor to available free agent quarterbacks.

"The process you look at is you look at it from all different angles and so you compare Tyrod based on the quarterback position, the intangibles we look for, the critical factors at the position and then, yes, you look at it from other areas as well and that being the candidates that are out there in the free agent market," he said.

Translation: We're still hoping to do better, but optimism is flagging. There are up to eight teams that could potentially take a spin on the quarterback carousel this offseason. There aren't that many quality options available. The Bills won't yet rule out making a surprise run at someone like Tony Romo, but standing pat with Taylor is likely the best they can do.

Here's how we'd interpret some other key statements from Wednesday's media availabilities:

1) "We've got two young ones that we're happy with, that we think can be very good football players in this league," -- John Elway on Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch.

Translation: If Tony Romo were to come to Denver, it would have to be on the Broncos terms. The Broncos don't need a new quarterback. Broncos coach Vance Joseph said the Broncos were "fine there with those two kids" and it's credible.

Elway also said he was open to any options, but expressed concern that adding a veteran would "stunt the growth" of his young players.

2)"We don't have to make that decision right now." -- Bucs coach Dirk Koetter and general manager Jason Licht on running back Doug Martin.

Translation: Martin's suspension may be the only the thing keeping him on the roster.

Solving their running back position is a "high priority" and an open question, Koetter admitted. Martin is suspended the first three games of the season for violating the NFL's PED policy and finished last year in a rehab facility.

Don't be surprised if the Buccaneers get aggressive in free agency at running back to replace him, possibly with Adrian Peterson. This is a deep crop of running backs in the draft, one Eagles general manager Howie Roseman said was potentially "historic," so the Bucs could add to the position throughout March and April.

,p>3)"The phones in our office work. ... If somebody wants to call and talk to us, call and talk to us. But they're going to find out that we value AJ McCarron quite a bit." -- Bengals director of player personnel Duke Tobin on backup quartebrack AJ McCarron.

Translation: We aren't giving McCarron away. Combined with the ESPN report Wednesday that the Patriots aren't expected to trade Jimmy Garoppolo, teams like the Patriots and Bengals are trying their best to create leverage and raise a potential price tag in a trade.

4)"I know what you're really asking," Browns VP Sashi Brown, on whether he would give up the No. 12 overall pick for "the right" veteran quarterback.

Translation: Sashi Brown is smarter than a gaggle of reporters trying to trick him into talking openly about his lust for Garoppolo.

Brown said he expected Robert Griffin III to still be on the roster in April and that his upcoming roster bonus won't be a big determining factor in whether he stays on the team or not. It would be a surprise if Griffin made another Week 1 start in Cleveland, but Brown's comments illustrate how uncertain this quarterback market remains. Brown admitted there is "urgency" to find a quarterback this season and said they have already ranked the top three quarterbacks in this class. Going the rookie route looks more likely for the Browns by the day.

5)"We'd like to have Terrelle back and that's a priority for us. That said, we're not going to panic if he's not back." -- Sashi Brown on receiver Terrelle Pryor, who did not receive the franchise tag Wednesday.

Translation: There's a better chance of RGIII being on the Browns roster in April than Pryor, which is both surprising and a little depressing.

6)"There's no better time to take a young quarterback than when you have a guy like Carson (Palmer), who can help develop him." -- Cardinals general manager Steve Keim on drafting a potential quarterback of the future this season.

Translation: Palmer's retirement flirtation scared us straight. It's time to draft a quarterback.

7)"I see Blake as our quarterback." -- Jaguars coach Doug Marrone on Blake Bortles.

Translation: He actually means it! Marrone and the entire organization have doubled down on Bortles all offseason. Marrone made it clear there isn't a scenario where Bortles will face competition for the starting job. It's a risky belief that may have sold the Jaguars on giving Marrone the job. The organization risks following Bortles off a cliff in unison.

8)"The what-if game is real and if you are prepared to go down that road there are a lot of layers to it." -
- Falcons coach Dan Quinn on re-watching Super Bowl LI many times.

Translation: Losing a 25-point lead in the Super Bowl really, really hurts. If nothing else, Quinn's relentless positivity and energy make him well-suited to carry the Falcons past the pain.

9)"Well, I know that we don't have any really under contract." 49ers coach Kyle Shanahan on his quarterback situation.

Translation: I already miss Matt Ryan.

Takeaways from John Elway and Vance Joseph at the Scouting Combine

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
March 2, 2017

With the new league year just eight days away and the Scouting Combine kicking into full gear, Head Coach Vance Joseph touched on several topics in question-and-answer sessions with media Wednesday. A few key takeaways from his answers follow:

1. REACHING OUT TO DEMARCUS WARE

Ware is the most accomplished Bronco who is set to become an unrestricted free agent. The lines of communication are open with him, as Joseph said he's had "four or five" conversations with the veteran of 12 previous seasons, including the last three with Denver.

But whether Ware stays or not depends on multiple factors, some of which are beyond the Broncos' control.

"Lots of things go into that, as far as where he wants to be, how much he wants to play, his role," Joseph said. "That's a work in progress."

Even though Ware turns 35 in July and has battled with injuries the last two years, an opening to continue his playing career if he desires should be there. Dwight Freeney's evolution into situational use the last few seasons offers a template for the path Ware could take if he returns, and the scarcity of productive edge rushers should give him opportunities.

"Pass rushers are awfully hard to find," Joseph said. "It's a combination of obviously having great ability [with] also great feel as a pass rusher."

"If you can rush the passer and cover, you can play great defense. But they're hard to find, and they're hard to acquire if you don't have them."

2. QB COMPETITION WON'T REALLY BEGIN UNTIL TRAINING CAMP

That's when Joseph expects Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch to grapple in earnest for the starting job. Their work during organized team activities will revolve around learning the scheme.

"The spring, with OTAs, that's going to be more for those guys to learn Mike's system," Joseph said. "The real competition is going to be in training camp."

Joseph expects Siemian to be ready for training camp after he rehabilitates from a left-shoulder injury that Joseph called "horrific" and one that "most guys won't play with."

"The most important thing for him is to be in meetings with Mike [McCoy] and to learn Mike's system, because the competition's going to be in the fall. It won't be in the spring. The spring is going to be a

learning tool for those kids to learn Mike's system, and the real competition is going to be in the fall camp."

When the quarterbacks return for organized offseason workouts, the offense will be ready. Joseph said that Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy has already completed "probably 60 percent" of the offensive scheme.

"Moving forward, he's going to tweak some more things after the Combine to finish it up," McCoy said.

The scope of the quarterback position could change during free agency, but for now, Joseph said he's "satisfied with those two young kids."

"Well, we're set at the moment, obviously. With free agency starting next week, any player that can help us moving forward and can help our team get better, we're going to obviously research and look into. But right now, we've got two young guys that we believe in," Joseph said.

"Right now we've got two guys, and no one's available that we can even talk about."

3. BRONCOS TO INTERVIEW CHRISTIAN McCaffrey

The coach added that the team plans to interview the Stanford star, Valor Christian product and son of former Broncos wide receiver Ed McCaffrey on Thursday night.

Joseph added that he was not concerned that the younger McCaffrey would be unable to handle the extra pressure that could go along with being drafted by the Broncos because of his background.

"Absolutely not. This kid's a really good football player," Joseph said. "You watch the tape, he's a pro's pro. So I'm excited to watch him this weekend and interview him [Thursday] night."

Added Elway: "Knowing what I know of Christian -- and knowing how competitive he is -- I think that he's got a great deal of respect for his dad, but I think he also looks at himself, that he's going to blaze his own trail. The expectations that he has of himself are awful high."

4. WILLIAMS, WEBSTER WILL TEST MARKET

Elway said that Sylvester Williams and Kayvon Webster will hit the open market when free agency begins March 9, which could mean the Broncos have to absorb the loss of both their starting nose tackle and their season-long defensive captain.

"[Williams] wants to see the market," Elway said. "We've had conversations with his agent. It sounds like that they want to hit the market and find what is out there."

For Webster, other teams may offer playing time that the Broncos cannot with Aqib Talib, Chris Harris Jr. and Bradley Roby all in firm command of the top three cornerback spots.

"With the corners that we have, and the situation that he's in, obviously, it's a good thing for him to hit the market," Elway said. "We never want to lose anybody, but there's so much turnover year after year that you know that's going to happen. I'm hopeful that Kayvon gets something that is good for him."

5. MATT PARADIS EXPECTED TO BE READY FOR TRAINING CAMP

That's the target date for the center's return after he underwent his second hip surgery last month -- a procedure that "went well," Joseph said.

Although the line is in flux, Paradis appears to be the most secure component of that group, earning praise from McCoy last month, describing him as "a great guy to have up front."

"I love the way he plays the game," McCoy said. "His toughness, his approach, his love of the game. You love that guy that just shows up every Sunday and plays -- and fights through a lot of [injuries]."

6. LOOKING AHEAD: T.J. WARD

The starting safety's four-year contract expires after this season, and while Elway said that the team will look into a potential extension in the offseason, there are other moving parts that must be considered.

"I think we have to look at where we fall in and how we can do something with the money -- what we have available next year, and who else is up next year," Elway said.

The Broncos gave an extension to fellow safety Darian Stewart last season, and also drafted Justin Simmons and Will Parks last year.

7. JOSEPH WANTS TODD DAVIS BACK

Davis is set to become a restricted free agent March 9, but Joseph praised the veteran of three Broncos seasons, saying that Davis "fits the mold of what we want" from a middle linebacker.

"He's a physical, downhill 'mike' 'backer," Joseph said, adding that he wants to continue the Davis-Brandon Marshall partnership. Marshall signed a long-term extension last June after being a restricted free agent.

John Elway not closing the door on any quarterback possibilities

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
March 2, 2017

The Broncos obviously have two quarterbacks on their roster: returning starter Trevor Siemian and 2016 first-round pick Paxton Lynch, who are expected to be in an "open competition" this summer.

There could be more, but that is to be determined by how the market changes in the next few days and weeks -- and whether the situation is right for the team.

"I'll say this: We're going to look at all the options," Executive Vice President/General Manager John Elway said. "Once they become available, we're going to look at all the options if it's best for the Denver Broncos and it's best for this team, because it's not only about winning next year, it's also what it does in the future, too.

"All of those things come into discussion. Once we get to that point where we know where we are, we'll kick the tires on everything and do our homework on everything and then make the best decision for what's right for the Broncos."

If the Broncos add a veteran quarterback, that doesn't mean that Siemian and Lynch would both not return -- although there would likely be less repetitions for at least one of them, if not both.

"I'm not going to say that's not a possibility," Elway said. "But at this point in time, everything is a possibility."

There is also the message that adding a veteran would send, a scenario of which Elway is mindful.

"Well, that's a concern. Does it stunt their growth? Where does it put those guys? How do they handle it?" Elway said.

"All those types of questions come in the discussion if we were to go down that road, is how does it affect those young guys and how does it affect their reps, and are they still going to continue to get better, or [will it] impede their growth if we were to do that?"

"Those are all things that go into consideration, to think about whether we bring in a veteran guy."

Head Coach Vance Joseph said he was satisfied with Siemian and Lynch, believing the Broncos could be successful with either, depending on who emerges this summer.

But as with Elway, Joseph knows that you must keep an open ear to possibilities.

"Well, we're set at the moment, obviously. With free agency starting next week, any player that can help us moving forward and can help our team get better, we're going to obviously research and look into," he said. "But right now, we've got two young guys that we believe in."

Vance Joseph: Broncos 'need some help' on the offensive line

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
March 2, 2017

After studying the film of the Broncos' 2016 season, Vance Joseph felt the Broncos' offense was better than he had expected.

"Offensively, I think we're close -- not as far [away] as everyone thinks we are," he said.

But the offensive line remains the primary issue.

"We need some help there," he said.

That aid could come from the draft, with a class that Joseph described as "decent," but "not deep." But he wants to make sure a potentially solid line can be set before the draft.

"Free agency is first. It's that way for a reason, in my opinion," Joseph said. "It's that process first, and if we can acquire a guy to help us, it makes the draft a little bit simpler, easier. If you don't, then you have to go out and maybe make some moves to acquire a guy to help you at the offensive line position."

Whoever the Broncos add will work in a scheme that incorporates both zone and gap concepts, reiterating a point made by Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy and Offensive Line Coach Jeff Davidson three weeks ago.

"If you're doing only one thing, teams can wire in and scheme against what you're doing," Joseph said. "But if you're doing both gap schemes and zone schemes, then it makes you tough to defend."

BUILDING PROCESS STARTS BY SETTling THE TACKLE SPOTS

The position is in flux heading into free agency, but Joseph said he would likely not bank on moving a right tackle to the left side and seeing how he fares.

"Having a true left tackle is like having a lockdown corner. That's different than a right tackle," Joseph said. "It's a different spot. You're facing the best rushers. It's a quarterback's blind side. So I would say, 'No,' to that. We want a left tackle that can play left tackle."

One prospect Joseph likes is Wisconsin's Ryan Ramczyk, but he acknowledged it might be difficult to get him with the No. 20 selection, especially with the scarcity of elite tackles in this year's draft.

Joseph also opened the door to bringing back Russell Okung, who is set to become a free agent after the Broncos declined to exercise their option on the left tackle who started 16 games last year.

"Obviously he's a veteran player that played pretty [well] last year. But financially, those things come into account when you're trying to sign players back, and doing what's best for the entire team and the entire roster financially is important.

"But he did play [well]. He's a good man, and if we can [possibly] get him back, we can sure try."

The status of right tackle Donald Stephenson is also to be determined. Joseph said he would meet with Executive Vice President/General Manager John Elway.

"Well, he's got an option that's coming up -- a guarantee. And that's John's area. I'm meeting with John on Tuesday about that. That's going to be discussed, and again, it depends on what's best for the football team. That's where that lies."

Broncos' salary-cap figure set for 2017

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
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John Elway and the Broncos will have a little bit of extra cap space with which to work when the new league year begins March 9.

The NFL and NFL Players Association announced that the base salary cap will be \$167 million, with the Broncos' figure at \$174,243,248 thanks to the carryover of space from last year.

That gives the Broncos a higher salary cap for 2017 than 20 teams, including division foes Kansas City (\$172,002,168) and the Los Angeles Chargers (\$167,113,693) and AFC rivals like New England (\$172,292,335), Houston (\$171,935,924) and Pittsburgh (\$170,269,367), according to numbers posted by the NFLPA.

According to OvertheCap.com, that cap figure leaves the Broncos with \$42,064,799 of cap space for the new league year, which would rank 10th.

Vance Joseph on QB competition: 'The best guy will play'

By Aric DiLalla
DenverBroncos.com
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As the new league year approaches, Head Coach Vance Joseph reaffirmed his plan for an open competition at quarterback between last year's starter, Trevor Siemian, and first-round pick Paxton Lynch.

"It's going to be an open competition, and whoever wins the job, that's who's going to play," said Joseph during his media availability Wednesday at the 2017 NFL Scouting Combine. "That's as fair as it can be."

Joseph, the first coach to speak Wednesday, said he has seen good things on film from the pair of quarterbacks who combined for nine wins in 2016.

That leaves the Broncos in a good position as they move ahead to 2017.

And while he has not chosen a starter, Joseph said Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy won't be limited in his ability to install the core of an offensive system.

"Most offenses have a foundation of run game and pass game that they want to implement in the offseason," Joseph said. "I think the problem with Paxton and Trevor [is] they're so different. Paxton is a tall, big-armed guy, athletic guy. Trevor is a fundamentally-sound [guy] — great footwork, great with the ball. He can really spin the ball as far as throwing the football."

"So, they're different. So, I think Mike's challenge is finding an offense that fits both guys so that they can compete equally. That's the challenge for Mike."

The best news for the Broncos may be that both quarterbacks should be healthy enough to compete for the job.

Siemian, who won eight of his 14 starts in his first year as a starter, is expected to be ready for Organized Team Activities (OTAs) when they begin in May after having surgery on his non-throwing shoulder after last season.

"Trevor's doing fine," Joseph said. "He's rehabbing every day in the building. He's on track for OTAs. It's a left-shoulder injury, so it's not his throwing shoulder. We feel good about OTAs for Trevor."

As Joseph looks ahead to the Broncos' quarterback competition, he said he's unsure whether Lynch, the 26th-overall pick in last year's draft, is prepared to take over as the team's starting quarterback.

"Is he ready? I'm not sure," Joseph said. "But obviously he's got great skills. He's a tall man with a big arm. Is he ready? That's a tough question. He had two starts last year."

If Lynch is to grab the starting job on a permanent basis, Joseph says he needs to see more consistency from the former Memphis quarterback.

“Playing quarterback in the NFL is about consistency,” Joseph said. “Not turning the ball over, making throws, making good decisions — that’s important to play quarterback in the NFL.”

There’s no timetable as Joseph looks for either Lynch or Siemian to take control.

“Whenever it happens, it happens,” Joseph said. “The best guy will play.”