

# Jhabvala vs. Kiz: Calais Campbell or Kevin Zeitler — which free agent would be more valuable to the Broncos?

By Nicki Jhabvala and Mark Kiszla  
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What free agent would be more valuable to the Broncos: Calais Campbell or Kevin Zeitler?

Kiz: The Broncos have pressing needs on the offensive and defensive lines. John Elway has money to burn. But here's the problem with NFL free agency: \$10 million doesn't nearly go as far as it once did. Defensive end Calais Campbell, a Denver South High graduate, would look great in a Broncos uniform. So would Kevin Zeitler, a right guard from Cincinnati. If you had to choose one, which would it be?

Jhabvala: Both are going to earn contracts near or at the top of their position in free agency, and the answer for the Broncos really lies in general manager John Elway's priorities in revamping the roster. Given the generally weak offensive line market this year, I'd put the money toward the defensive line and bring Campbell back to Colorado, where he would fit well in the Broncos' 3-4 and be that missing piece in the run defense.

Kiz: Elway doesn't have an unlimited budget. So I would take Campbell over Zeitler. Yes, the Denver offensive line is a mess. But if the Broncos are going to get back to Super Bowl contention in 2017, it will be because their defense returns to true championship form. Denver needs a run-stopper and a veteran voice in the locker room to replace DeMarcus Ware. Campbell could fill both roles.

Jhabvala: The offensive line needs upgrades for the Broncos to go anywhere next season. Kevin Zeitler would likely provide that, but as Joel Corry told me last week, he's "breaking the bank." While I expect significant changes on the offensive side, both in personnel and system, maintaining and even improving the defense is vital. Plus, Elway spent big to overhaul the defense in 2014 and has made it clear he doesn't want to "take a step back" on that side of the ball.

Kiz: This much we know is true about Elway. He isn't afraid to spend big money on a free agent, but in contract negotiations, Elway also takes the stance that playing for Denver is a privilege. Unless Zeitler and Campbell are willing to take less than top dollar, neither man will play in Denver. It would not surprise me if Elway looks for better bargains at right guard (T.J. Lang) or on the defensive line (Brandon Williams).

Jhabvala: I always go back to 2015 because it set a precedent in Denver: If Peyton Manning, a sure-fire Hall of Famer, agrees to a \$4 million pay cut, then all bets are off. To the chagrin of agents, the Broncos are known for taking a hard-line in negotiations, and for the most part (there have been exceptions), it's worked. Chris Harris is playing on pennies, really. Derek Wolfe took less to stay. DeMarcus Ware restructured his deal last year. Elway has been successful in getting his guy at his price. So whether it's Tony Romo (if he's even available) or Calais Campbell, I expect him to have the same strategy. If the price tag is too high, Elway won't hesitate to move on.

# DeMarcus Ware meets with John Elway, will likely test free-agent market

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

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Broncos outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware met with general manager John Elway on Tuesday, the first day of the league's legal tampering period, to discuss his future in Denver. Although a return to the Broncos can't be ruled out, it appears Ware will test the open market as a free agent.

Ware, 34, has been around the Broncos' facility to continue his rehabilitation from back surgery (ruptured disc) that forced him to miss the final game of last season. At the Super Bowl in Houston last month, the veteran pass rusher made it clear that he is on the mend and plans to play a 13th NFL season.

"I definitely want to play. I've got a lot of passion. I'm always chasing that ring," Ware told ESPN. "People say if you get four sacks you pass this guy, or if you get five sacks you pass that guy — four-this, five-that. But my biggest thing is always I want a ring while I'm sacking the heck out of the quarterback."

Ware got his first and only Super Bowl ring as a part of the Broncos' top-ranked defense in 2015, roughly two years after Elway signed him off the street to lead Denver's defensive remake.

When healthy, Ware is still a force. In his three years with the Broncos, playoffs included, he totaled 25 sacks for a loss of 176 yards, moving up the league's all-time sack list to No. 8, with 138.5.

But he has also missed 10 regular-season games over the last two years because of injuries.

Last March, he agreed to restructure the final year on his three-year contract to reduce his salary-cap hit and better reflect his role on the defense. The Broncos wanted to use him on more situational downs, to try to preserve his health while maximizing his value on the field.

But the back injury, which developed an infection over the summer, delayed his training in the offseason. Then he suffered a fractured forearm in a Week 2 win over the Colts that kept him out of five games.

Although Ware is beloved by his teammates and respected as a leader in the locker room, the rise of Shane Ray and Shaquil Barrett has made Ware's presence on the field more of a want than a need for Denver. A return to Dallas, where he started his career and spent nine seasons, might be an option.

"It's the injury history more than anything else because he's fairly productive still when he's on the field. He just can't stay on the field," said former agent and current CBS Sports salary-cap expert Joel Corry. "... I wouldn't be shocked if he went back to Dallas. They need a pass-rusher in the worst way. He's really more of a luxury for Denver than necessity because they drafted Shane Ray to replace him. That happened in Kansas City — Dee Ford took over for Tamba Hali. And also Shaquil Barrett's an improving player. You need more pass-rush depth, but you don't necessarily need DeMarcus Ware, particularly if he's not willing to accept less of a role than he's had in the past."

# Broncos place 2nd-round tenders on RFAs Todd Davis, Brandon McManus; tender 8 ERFAs

By Nicki Jhabvala  
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The Broncos have placed second-round tenders on restricted free agents Todd Davis and Brandon McManus. The one-year offers are worth \$2.746 million each, a significant pay raise for the two who were each paid \$600,000 last season.

The team also placed exclusive rights tenders (\$615,000) on eight players: centers Matt Paradis and James Ferentz, receivers Bennie Fowler and Jordan Taylor, running back Kapri Bibbs, outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett, long snapper Casey Kreiter and inside linebacker Zaire Anderson. Unlike restricted free agents, who have at least three accrued seasons, exclusive rights free agents (two or fewer accrued seasons) cannot negotiate with other teams once they receive the tender, making their signing a formality.

Davis and McManus have until April 21 to sign their offer sheets. They can negotiate with other teams, but the Broncos hold the right to match other offer sheets within five days, or let them walk in exchange for second-round draft picks.

The second-round tenders, as opposed to the low-round tender (\$1.671 million) placed on running back C.J. Anderson last year, affords the Broncos a little more security in retaining Davis and McManus. Anderson signed a four-year, \$18 million offer sheet with Miami days after receiving the Denver's RFA tender. Although the Broncos ultimately matched, it cost them much more than the \$2.553 million allotted for a second-round tender last year.

No such risk was taken with Davis, a starting inside linebacker, and McManus, their most accurate kicker in team history.

Davis, 24, joined the Broncos off waivers from New Orleans in 2014 and earned two starts that season. In 2015, his first full season with the Broncos, Davis played in every game, starting twice and recording 14 total tackles.

After Danny Trevathan defected for Chicago in free agency last March, Davis was elevated to a starting position and led the Broncos with 97 tackles last season, to go with a shared sack, one forced fumble and three pass breakups.

"Todd Davis is a physical, downhill mike backer," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said at the NFL combine. "He fits the mold of what we want."

McManus, 25, joined the Broncos in 2014 via trade with the New York Giants and took over for Matt Prater. After struggling with consistency that season, McManus returned to beat out Connor Barth for the starting job in training camp of 2015 and has had a firm hold on the position since.

Including playoffs, McManus has booted 78 of 92 field goals for a franchise-best 84.8 field-goal percentage (minimum 20 attempts). He's also kicked the third-most field goals (eight) in team history from at least 50 yards out and, in the 2015 postseason, he was 10-for-10. Last season, McManus converted 85.3 percent of his field-goal attempts and 97.0 percent of his extra-point attempts.

Offensive lineman Sam Brenner, the Broncos' only other restricted free agent who was on injured reserve and did not play last season, was not tendered and will become an unrestricted free agent at 2 p.m. Thursday, when the new league year begins.

The NFL's legal tampering period for unrestricted free agents began Tuesday at 10 a.m., allowing teams a two-day window to negotiate new deals with the agents of free agents. Contracts cannot be signed until Thursday afternoon.

# Broncos slap \$2.75 million tender to Brandon McManus, Todd Davis

By Mike Klis

9News

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Restricted free agents are people, too.

Even if they are considered afterthoughts compared to players who are about to enter the unrestricted free-agent market, Denver Broncos kicker Brandon McManus and inside linebacker Todd Davis are richer for it.

The Broncos slapped a second-round, \$2.746 million tender on both McManus and Davis on Tuesday, all but assuring they will return to the team in 2017.

The Broncos could have considered giving those players a lower-level, non-draft pick tender of \$1.671 million but that would have opened them up to receiving offers from other teams.

Although McManus and Davis hope their second-round tenders will lead to multiyear contract extensions before the 2017 begins – as it did last year for inside linebacker Brandon Marshall -- they are at least assured of making 4.5 times more than their \$600,000 salaries from last season.

McManus, 25, has one of the NFL's strongest legs. He has made 59 of 69 field goals the past two years as the Broncos' full-time placekicker, including a perfect 39 of 39 from inside 40 yards.

He was also a perfect 10 of 10 in field goal attempts during the Broncos' 3-0 postseason run in 2016 that ended with a Super Bowl 50 title.

Davis, 24, made the most of his first chance to start as he replaced Danny Trevathan in 2016. According to Pro Football Focus, Davis never missed a tackle last season as he led the Denver defense with 96 stops.

The Broncos declined to give guard Sam Brenner his restricted free agent tender. Brenner missed all of last season with a concussion suffered in training camp.

The Broncos also tendered third-year minimum salaries of \$615,000 to centers Matt Paradis and James Ferentz, outside linebacker Shaq Barrett, receivers Bennie Fowler and running back Kapri Bibbs. Receiver Jordan Taylor, inside linebacker Zaire Anderson and long snapper Casey Kreiter were tendered \$540,000 salaries.

# To chase or not to chase: Broncos' Tony Romo dilemma

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

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A week at the league's scouting combine in Indianapolis yielded plenty of opinions about the draft.

But beneath all the talk about the pros-to-be was a swirl of thoughts, opinions and predictions about what will happen with Dallas Cowboys quarterback Tony Romo. Injury history and all, Romo is the most proven quarterback who might be available in an offseason when free agency is thin and the draft is loaded with question marks at the position.

The Denver Broncos were among teams mentioned when Romo's name came up in Indy. Told at the combine the "prevailing wisdom" is the Broncos would be in the market for a veteran quarterback, the team's chief football decision-maker, John Elway, fired back: "Whose prevailing wisdom is that?"

Told it was that of other league evaluators, Elway said, "Then I guess I should.

"I'll say this: We're going to look at all the options once they become available. We're going to look at all the options, and 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 it's also what it does for the future ... 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."

Romo, who will turn 37 next month, is still under contract with the Cowboys, so teams can't talk on the record about his future. If Romo becomes available, there will be reasons to sign him:

The information available says he's in fabulous shape after working out this past season, having played just seven plays -- all in the Cowboys' regular-season finale -- and is motivated for the proverbial last rodeo with a playoff contender.

Paxton Lynch might not be ready and has shown he's going to need time navigating his second NFL playbook in two seasons. And Trevor Siemian is coming off left (nonthrowing) shoulder surgery. During the combine, Elway said, "I'm not worried about Trevor." But having one quarterback coming off surgery and another who might not be ready could push the team into a move.

It worked with Peyton Manning. Manning was released by the Colts with significant health questions and wasn't close to ready to play when the Broncos signed him in 2012, and that turned into four division titles; a record-setting performance in 2013, when Denver scored 606 points; two Super Bowl trips and one Super Bowl win.

And reasons not to:

Romo can't make his back and collarbone issues go away, no matter how much cardio he does. Polled informally throughout the combine, talent evaluators have significant concerns about Romo making it through a season as a starter. They wonder if he could take more than a handful of hits without facing another lost season.

You're not getting the Romo of 2014. The Broncos have said they like their situation at quarterback with Lynch, 23, and Siemian, 25. The team was two dropped passes from a playoff berth last season, and Siemian has the trust of his teammates. More than one has said privately they believe the Broncos can win with Siemian if they get better on the offensive line. And because Lynch is a draft pick, a first-rounder who Elway traded up to select, there is some feeling Siemian would be the odd quarterback out for a short-term solution such as Romo. That's a big price tag for what most in the league believe is a one-year move.

It worked with Manning and that's all a franchise can expect. The Broncos' long-term outlook takes a significant hit if they become the sign-a-veteran-quarterback team every year. They'll likely have to jettison a young quarterback and then play their prized prospect before he's ready if Romo got hurt. And Romo has played in parts of just five games in the past two seasons.

The bottom line is the Cowboys don't have to decide quickly if they don't want to. Elway also did offer this at the combine: "We're looking for a guy you can hang your hat on for a long, long time."

If Romo hits the market, everyone will see if Elway is "looking" for that long-term solution now or plans to do it later.

# Thin crop of offensive linemen in free agency, draft challenges Broncos

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

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With the NFL's scouting combine complete, the Denver Broncos offseason plan to fix the offense will require some decision-making in the near future.

Executive vice president of football operations/general manager John Elway needs to decide how many of the fixes can be made in the draft and how many in free agency. Asked at the combine if he believed the Broncos, who missed the playoffs for the first time since 2010, were close to returning to the postseason conversation, Elway pointed to where he believes most of that work needs to be done.

"We're good enough on the defensive side," Elway said. "I think we have to get better offensively and this is the time of year we have to get better so I think we're still in a position where we can compete."

The offensive line is where the Broncos will face the most difficult balance between the draft and free agency. Neither the draft -- which is not deep at the position -- nor free agency -- which doesn't offer many long-term solutions -- are great options.

That presents a bit of a dilemma for the Broncos. It's also why the Broncos have told Russell Okung, despite not paying an option bonus in his contract that would have included \$21 million guaranteed, they are willing to bring Okung back at a lower price.

"He may find another opportunity ... Russell is somebody we'll continue to talk to," Elway said in Indianapolis. "It's going to come down to what Russell wants to do."

The Broncos may have to be prepared to spend big out of the gate if they want a younger lineman or two in free agency who also have a safer injury history than other available players -- Dallas' Ronald Leary fits that profile. And if they want a walk-in starter at tackle in this draft, they might have to use a first-round pick on one of the top three on the board.

And as the league's coaches and draft evaluators left Indianapolis after Monday's final workout, those three tackles were Wisconsin's Ryan Ramczyk, Utah's Garrett Bolles and Auburn's Cam Robinson. Call it the spread-offense effect, but offensive line are now considered far more a work-in-progress position for the top players in the draft.

"That's what you never know," Elway said. "... That's why they're not as ready to play when they come out of college. They need a lot of training, [you] just have to be ready to do that, coach 'em up and get them ready."

It's also why Elway spoke of most of the offensive linemen available in the draft as more long-term projects.

"It's not real deep," Elway said. "But then again ... you do have some guys down the line you can hopefully train and will eventually be good players."

The Broncos met with all three of the top tackles at the combine, and Bolles spent his mission for the Church of the Latter Day Saints in Colorado before he closed out his playing career at Utah.

"I love Colorado," Bolles said. "I have a heart there, because those are the people that I taught on my mission. So if I end up going there, I'd be just fine. But I don't care where I go. Wherever I end up, I'll be happy."

In the end how the Broncos fare in the first 48 hours of free agency will offer the first significant look at how extensive their offensive line makeover will be and how they will go about the free agency-draft mix. If they sign a guard, then their plan will likely include one, or both, of their tackles from last season (Okung and Donald Stephenson) back in the lineup. Or, they could give a tackle a look with their first pick (No. 20 overall) of the draft.

Elway has consistently said he doesn't like to carry major roster needs into the draft because he believes it clouds how a team makes picks.

"It's all going to come down to the right fit," Elway said. "There is always the value piece, the money piece ... but if you can you like to take care of those major needs in free agency."

# Learning from the fickle nature of NFL free agency

By Kevin Seifert

ESPN.com

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Building an NFL roster is easy. It's all about drafting and developing your own players. Unless you don't draft well. Then all you have to do is sign free agents. Unless, of course, there are no good free agents to sign, in which case the answer is simple: Sign the average ones, and give 'em a bunch of money to make it seem significant.

In truth, of course, the magic formula is that there is no magic formula, at least not lately. An analysis of the past three free-agent markets evidences nearly every imaginable outcome.

Via the chart at the bottom, compiled by ESPN Stats & Information, we can see teams that reacted aggressively to poor draft classes -- sometimes with disastrous results (Jacksonville Jaguars). There are teams that all but ignore free agency, both to their general benefit (Green Bay Packers, Carolina Panthers) and detriment (San Francisco 49ers). Most teams try to blend a mix of free agents with their draft classes, a rational approach that works better in some cases (Denver Broncos, New England Patriots) than others (Tampa Bay Buccaneers).

The fickle nature of free agency, and the myriad ways that unrelated factors can impact its success, leaves more teams preferring to minimize market involvement. Speaking last week at the NFL scouting combine, Indianapolis Colts general manager Chris Ballard articulated a consensus view. Ballard, hired last month to build a better team around quarterback Andrew Luck, said "you have to be right on the player you sign."

He added: "That's where my fear of free agency comes in, making sure we know exactly what we're [getting]. Is he a good fit? Is he the type of person that's going to come in and the other players are not going to resent him because he's making a lot of money?"

The dramatic recent rise of the salary cap, from \$120.6 million in 2012 to \$155.3 million in 2016, has reinforced and exacerbated another ugly fact of free agency: The best players rarely hit the market. Teams flush with cap space usually can meet the pre-market demands of their pending free agents, leaving talent-hungry teams to overvalue and overpay second-tier discards.

That's why the Pittsburgh Steelers, for example, are a rare participant. As the chart shows, all but two teams dished out contracts with a combined total value of more than the Steelers' \$86.9 million. It's difficult to argue with the results; the Steelers' 32 victories during that period have been exceeded by only two teams.

"We've always been a draft, develop, keep-our-own [team]," Steelers general manager Kevin Colbert said. "I think you're seeing more teams doing it. And as a result, you're seeing less and less quality free agents. There's an inherent danger in that, because some of the players who are hitting the market with the number of dollars that are available, [they] might not be quite worth what they're going to get paid because of the supply and demand. And I think that's reflective in a lot of the early cuts, the five- and six-year deal guys who usually get cut after two or three.

"You have to be careful about the free-agent market and not overpay for maybe an average player."

Consider the Jaguars' spending spree, beginning in 2014 with running back Toby Gerhart, guard Zane Beadles, linebacker Dekoda Watson, defensive tackle Ziggy Hood and receiver Tandon Doss. The Jaguars moved on from all of them within two years. They have gutted their 2015 class as well, having released defensive end Jared Odrick and cornerback Davon House while trading tight end Julius Thomas. Those eight players alone were signed to contracts that included nearly \$75 million in guaranteed money, a case study for players whose market value didn't match their value to their new team on the field.

Last week, of course, general manager Dave Caldwell said the Jaguars "have to be disciplined." He added: "We're going to set a limit for the guys we target and we're going to be aggressive for the guys we want, [but] we can't be careless with the money."

The Broncos, on the other hand, are among the handful of teams that view free agency as a necessary deterrent against reaching for needs in the draft. In theory, a handful of holes filled in March and April can allow for a less rigid draft approach. The Broncos have signed fewer unrestricted free agents than a majority of NFL teams, but the dollar total of \$236 million ranks No. 12 -- an indication that general manager John Elway has pursued and signed notable players for much-needed roles. That list includes cornerback Aqib Talib, defensive end DeMarcus Ware, safety T.J. Ward and receiver Emmanuel Sanders, whose contracts included nearly \$65 million in guaranteed money.

"I feel more comfortable if we can take care of some needs in free agency," Elway said. "I believe that there is a good blend in both. Free agency is there for a reason. ... I think 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 [with a long list of needs], we have a propensity to reach. We try to stay out of that situation."

And that, if anything, might be the most reasonable approach to free agency: Find your comfort zone, a place built from deep knowledge of your own roster, and maneuver aggressively within it. It will vary from team to team and general manager to general manager. When you pay big, make sure it's for a player who has a chance to perform at a high level within the context of your team. And then, hold on.

As we can see, there is no straight line between free agent activity -- at any level -- and success.

#### **\*Free-Agent Signings By Team From 2014-16**

| <b>RANK</b> | <b>TEAM</b>     | <b>*FA SIGNINGS</b> | <b>TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE</b> | <b>W-L</b> |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| 1.          | Jacksonville    | 28                  | \$488,413,000               | 11-37      |
| 2.          | Oakland         | 34                  | \$414,186,176               | 22-26      |
| 3.          | New York Giants | 45                  | \$384,517,532               | 23-25      |
| 4.          | New York Jets   | 33                  | \$312,886,060               | 19-29      |
| 5.          | Chicago         | 55                  | \$301,681,765               | 14-34      |
| 6.          | Miami           | 32                  | \$282,625,000               | 24-24      |
| 7.          | Philadelphia    | 28                  | \$276,890,000               | 24-24      |

**\*Free-Agent Signings By Team From 2014-16**

| <b>RANK</b> | <b>TEAM</b>   | <b>*FA SIGNINGS</b> | <b>TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE</b> | <b>W-L</b> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| 8.          | Atlanta       | 40                  | \$270,320,866               | 25-23      |
| 9.          | Washington    | 31                  | \$259,911,763               | 21-26-1    |
| 10.         | Tampa Bay     | 32                  | \$259,897,536               | 17-31      |
| 11.         | Tennessee     | 31                  | \$252,225,000               | 14-34      |
| 12.         | Denver        | 27                  | \$236,687,236               | 33-15      |
| 13.         | Houston       | 31                  | \$216,080,705               | 27-21      |
| 14.         | New Orleans   | 42                  | \$205,801,882               | 21-27      |
| 15.         | Indianapolis  | 26                  | \$183,069,706               | 27-21      |
| 16.         | Kansas City   | 23                  | \$182,974,999               | 32-16      |
| 17.         | Baltimore     | 30                  | \$165,355,000               | 23-25      |
| 18.         | Arizona       | 26                  | \$150,915,429               | 31-16-1    |
| 19.         | Cleveland     | 21                  | \$149,868,823               | 11-37      |
| 20.         | San Diego     | 26                  | \$149,635,588               | 18-30      |
| 21.         | Buffalo       | 32                  | \$148,365,000               | 24-24      |
| 22.         | Detroit       | 40                  | \$144,545,293               | 27-21      |
| 23.         | L.A. Rams     | 22                  | \$131,712,181               | 17-31      |
| 24.         | New England   | 34                  | \$126,035,882               | 38-10      |
| 25.         | Minnesota     | 25                  | \$118,395,000               | 26-22      |
| 26.         | Dallas        | 28                  | \$116,363,600               | 29-19      |
| 27.         | Seattle       | 27                  | \$110,965,000               | 32-15-1    |
| 28.         | Cincinnati    | 19                  | \$99,895,000                | 28-18-2    |
| 29.         | San Francisco | 17                  | \$94,499,000                | 15-33      |
| 30.         | Pittsburgh    | 25                  | \$86,865,000                | 32-16      |
| 31.         | Green Bay     | 12                  | \$68,068,125                | 32-16      |
| 32.         | Carolina      | 24                  | \$54,309,000                | 28-19-1    |

# Broncos GM John Elway meets with DeMarcus Ware about returning

By Troy Renck

KMGH

March 8, 2017

No one leads like DeMarcus Ware. He is a coach, a friend and a mentor.

In three seasons in Denver, the outside linebacker has left an indelible footprint. Ware owns 21.5 sacks and an additional 3.5 during the Broncos' playoff run to a Super Bowl 50 championship.

The Broncos want him back. General manager John Elway met with Ware on Tuesday to touch base about re-signing him, according to a player source. Wrinkles must be ironed out. Ware will be 35 in July and has to accept a limited role of roughly 20 plays per game. He worked with the Broncos a year ago on a restructured contract. Now he is a free agent, however, and could find a bigger opportunity and more money elsewhere, including Dallas.

Ware made his mark in Denver not only on the field, but off it. All-Pro Von Miller credits Ware for serving as a older brother figure in his life. Miller grew up idolizing Ware, and Ware's attention to detail in his diet and game preparation rubbed off on Miller. Ware finished last season injured, undergoing surgery to repair a bulging disc in his back. He says he feels terrific, and wants to keep playing. He boasts 138.5 career sacks, leaving him a compelling argument to make the Hall of Fame.

In Denver, however, the depth chart at his position is growing crowded. Shane Ray produced a breakthrough season in his second year, notching eight sacks and 48 tackles. Former Colorado State star Shaquil Barrett continues to show potential as well. It makes keeping Ware a potential luxury if the salary is not right. Tuesday offered a chance for the sides to get an idea of what it might take to facilitate Ware's return.

# Broncos place second-round tenders on kicker Brandon McManus, Todd Davis

By Troy Renck

KMGH

March 8, 2017

No messing around this time around.

A year after placing the lowest restricted free agency tender on C.J. Anderson, the Broncos acted more aggressively with kicker Brandon McManus and linebacker Todd Davis on Tuesday.

As expected, the Broncos placed a second-round tender on McManus and Davis. It decreased the likelihood of either player receiving an offer sheet from another team. A year ago, the Dolphins tried to pry away Anderson, leading Denver to give the running back a four-year, \$18 million contract with a \$5 million signing bonus and \$7.6 million guaranteed.

McManus, 25, ranks as one of Denver's most reliable weapons the past two seasons, converting 59 of 69 field goal attempts, including eight from at least 50 yards. Davis moved into the starting lineup last season following Danny Trevathan's departure to the Chicago Bears in free agency. Though he struggled in pass coverage at times, Davis finished with 97 tackles and one forced fumble. Coach Vance Joseph praised Davis at the NFL Combine, indicating the Broncos' desire to keep him.

A second-rounder tender provides a \$2.746 million salary for the 2017 season for each player. It also means if a team makes an offer that the Broncos decline to match, Denver would receive a second-round pick, likely dissuading suitors.

The Broncos also issued exclusive rights tenders to eight players, with no surprises. The list: center Matt Paradis, linebacker Zaire Anderson, outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett, running back Kapri Bibbs, center James Ferentz, long snapper Casey Kreiter and receivers Jordan Taylor and Bennie Fowler.

# Broncos make push for O-linemen, D-linemen as free agent discussions begin

By Troy Renck

KMGH

March 8, 2017

Gentlemen, start your ATMs.

The free agent negotiating period began Tuesday at 10 a.m.

The Broncos started the legal tampering period -- an oxymoron that allows for teams to talk to free agents but not finalize deals until Thursday at 2 p.m. -- by chasing line help and reportedly kicking the tires on a running back.

With \$35 million to spend, subtracting the drafted rookie money pool, the Broncos sit in position to sign multiple players, including a premier addition. The anticipated plan remains aggressive pursuit of offensive guards and defensive linemen, while exercising patience in the left tackle market.

The Broncos have interest in Washington's defensive lineman Chris Baker, joining the Redskins and Buccaneers. As a national NFL analyst told Denver7 on Tuesday night, Baker makes sense because he's a "run stuffer" who plays with a high motor. These are the type of players line coach Bill Kollar wants given his aggressive, demanding style.

Baker, who played for the Broncos as an undrafted free agent in 2009, emerged as a reliable contributor for Washington. He played the last five seasons for Washington, starting 27 of the past 32 games.

Dallas' Ronald Leary and Green Bay's T.J. Lang sit atop the wish list at guard. Leary went undrafted because of a degenerative knee condition, but capitalized on opportunity with the Cowboys. He proved solid until losing his job to La'el Collins in 2015. Leary wanted a trade before last season, but stayed put and regained his job after Collins suffered an injury. Leary's back has been an issue in the past, so any team offering big money must be comfortable with his health. Lang plans to visit teams in free agency. Past injuries suggest his health will be a component of any free agent bid. Other guards available include Detroit's Larry Warford and Minnesota's Brandon Fusco.

On the offensive side, The Sporting News reported the Broncos have interest in running back Danny Woodhead. Woodhead produced for new Broncos offensive coordinator Mike McCoy in San Diego, including a career-high 80 receptions in 2015. A former star at Chadron State in Nebraska, Woodhead has battled injuries. He has failed to play more than three games in two of the past three seasons.

Woodhead fractured his fibula in 2014 and tore his ACL a year ago.

As for quarterback Tony Romo -- no story is complete without his mention -- the Broncos are prepared to express interest if and when he becomes a free agent. The sooner the better as it allows Denver a chance to slot money and fill multiple needs.

# Tony Romo, John Elway have a closer relationship than many realize

By Woody Paige  
Colorado Springs Gazette  
March 8, 2017

All's quiet on the AFC western front.

On the first day of "legal tampering" (oxymoron?) the Broncos, the Raiders, the Chiefs and the Carson California Chargers were crickets.

The Chargers released three veterans; the Raiders signed up for Bank of America ATM cards, and the Chiefs and the Broncos put one-year "love me" tenders on restricted free agents.

Ho. Hum.

Couldn't somebody in this division have worked up a fake news story better than "Broncos do some slight sniffing of Danny Woodhead and Other Marionettes"?

So, pro tem, QB or not QB, that is the question for the Broncos.

As I opined in a column weeks ago, to twist a 12th century French proverb, Romo will not be built in a day.

An impeccable NFL source - one of three who gave me the national scoop a year ago at this time that Peyton Manning would be retiring - told me Tuesday afternoon that the Broncos indeed are No. 1 on Tony Romo's wish list. If he is released soon, Romo intends to visit Denver and Dove Valley first and meet with John Elway, Joe Ellis, Vance Joseph and Mike McCoy.

Another knowledgeable league source said Romo would be interested only in joining the Broncos, the Texans, the Chiefs and, rather surprisingly, the Rams. Romo, the source claimed, would take less guaranteed salary, with significant bonus incentives, to play for the Broncos for two-three seasons.

Chiefs general manager John Dorsey has declared that the franchise will stay with Alex Smith and not be involved in a Romo pursuit. The Texans would have to commit to at least \$34 million in quarterback outlay (\$19 mil to Brock Osweiler in salary and prorated bonus, and about \$15 million for Romo). The Rams aren't expected to be contenders, but Romo would be the starter over Jared Goff, could secure the most money (approaching \$20 million a year), would be working with a new Los Angeles staff (including his former Dallas head coach - Wade Phillips) and live in California, which might charm Romo's wife Candice, who will be giving birth to the couple's third son during training camp in August.

Tony and Candice do like Colorado. They spent vacations in Aspen in 2014, during the Cowboys' bye week, and again in February, 2015. Manning, a source said, suggested in a conversation with Romo that Denver is an excellent city to play football, live and raise children.

Romo and Elway have a closer relationship than generally is realized. They unintentionally, but fortuitously, ran across each other and had a brief exchange at a party in Washington during the inauguration. More important, the two previously played golf, hung out and had a serious competitive rivalry for years at the American Century celebrity/athletes summer tournament in Lake Tahoe.

A first-round match in 2011 featured Elway, Romo and Michael Jordan. Beginning in 2007, Elway and Romo regularly were among the top amateur finishers. Romo placed ahead of Elway three times; Elway got the best of the pair in another year, and they tied for second in 2010.

Several years ago at that tournament, I met, and spent some quality time, with Romo - a genuinely good and funny guy.

Because of his recent injuries, Romo, who had been considered the best current golfer playing in the NFL, gave up the game. But Romo would make a remarkable best-ball partner with Elway.

And football partner.

In his 13 years in the league, Romo's never had a losing record in a season with more than six starts. After retirement, he is expected to follow the Elway plan of becoming an NFL executive. Elway could mentor Romo as he did John Lynch.

Romo was very impressed with the offense McCoy utilized with the Broncos (and Manning) and the Chargers (and Philip Rivers). McCoy obviously would tailor a scheme to fit Romo's strengths.

Romo grew up in Burlington, Wis., and was a high school quarterback when Brett Favre starred for the Packers. But Romo admitted years ago he was "a bigger fan of John Elway" and pulled for the Broncos to win Super Bowl XXXII.

What if he followed Elway and Manning as a Broncos' Super Bowl-winning quarterback?

The Western front certainly wouldn't be quiet.

# Like Peyton Manning, Tony Romo can lead Broncos to Super Bowl

By Paul Klee  
Colorado Springs Gazette  
March 8, 2017

This time there is a Plan B.

How you feel about Tony Romo quarterbacking the Broncos depends on how you feel about the presumptive alternatives, Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch: Is the 'B' for (B)roncos savior or (b)ackup?

"We got two young ones that we're happy with, that we think can be very good football players in this league," Broncos general manager John Elway said, aiming a fire hose at the Romo speculation burning through Colorado.

Not (b)uyin' it. Imagine the thing you love the most. Then you get \$42 million to do it.

"I feel more comfortable if we can take care of some needs in free agency. I believe that there's a good blend in both, that free agency is there for a reason," he told reporters at the scouting combine in Indianapolis about weighing free agency vs. the draft.

This time the prize is a quarterback who was undrafted out of a Division I-AA program, Eastern Illinois. The last time it was a quarterback drafted No. 1 overall out of an SEC program, Tennessee. The Broncos are really digging through the scrap heap this time, huh?

From Peyton Williams Manning to Antonio Ramiro Romo, the parallels are striking, entertaining and helpful in predicting what happens next. Like Manning, there is an injury risk. Like Manning, there is a high draft pick already here - Brock Osweiler then, Lynch now.

These days the Broncos operate more like the Yankees than the Rockies. Denver's M.O. is to lure proven, title-hungry veterans in lieu of drafting and hoping for the stars of tomorrow. With a \$12 million jump in the salary cap and only nine teams with more to spend, according to OverTheCap.com, I expect the Broncos to enter free agency like it's Black Friday.

NFL teams can negotiate with free agents on Tuesday. It's Tuesday. Those deals can become official as soon as 2 p.m. MST on Thursday. Welcome to Broncos Christmas.

Manning was cut by the Colts. Romo probably will be cut by the Cowboys. The upset of free agency won't be if Romo signs with Elway and the Broncos. The upset is if he doesn't. Elway was 37 and 38 when he won Super Bowls here. Peyton Manning was 39. Romo turns 37 on April 21. To say Romo fits a franchise that has A) two quarterbacks, so it has none B) a long history of turning aging quarterbacks into Super Bowl champs is suggesting a Patagonia outlet store would do well in Denver.

How many more boxes need to be checked?

"I think when you start talking about a veteran quarterback - and everyone thinks we just talk about next year, but we don't - we talk about the impact that has two, three, four years down the line," Elway said.

We're all guessing here. With more cameras allowed in an Elway Uber ride than in the Broncos meeting rooms, all we have to work with is what's happened before. And what's happened before - when the Broncos fail to win the Super Bowl in some fashion or another - is Denver going all in.

"Any time you lose a guy like Peyton Manning at the end of his career and then you transition into a new young guy as you try to find that next guy is going to be difficult," Elway said.

The quickest road back to the Super Bowl has four stops: offensive line (first and foremost, no matter the quarterback), running back, defensive line and, yes, quarterback. Siemian or Lynch could get there. Romo could get there quicker.

"When it comes down to a quarterback it's (about) competitiveness and toughness and it's mental toughness," Elway said. "It is a tough game and a tough position. It's a great position, but it's a tough position, because of the expectations that go along with it, the pressure that goes along with it."

This time feels like last time.

# Denver Broncos corporate sponsorship season is in full throttle

By Monica Mendoza  
Denver Business Journal  
March 7, 2017

Football is still few months off, but this is the heart of the Denver Broncos' sales season.

The corporate sales team is wheeling and dealing for the upcoming season and expects to close about 100 corporate sponsor deals.

Each one of the sponsors will have its own deal, but at the heart of it is paying to use the Broncos' name on merchandise, on signs and banners, in traditional advertising spots and in social media.

Sponsors also are buying entry to training camp practices and events hosted by the NFL team for a chance to hand thousands of fans towels or trading cards co-branded with their logos of the Broncos and their company.

“We may have some [sponsors] at a smaller level with the team that just want to have engagement with the Denver Broncos,” said Jon Carlson, the team's director of business development. “Whereas with the national companies, they are in ... a more well-rounded deal that has all the media – TV, radio, signs, logo rights.”

All told, the National Football League's 32 teams took in more than \$1.25 billion in the 2016-17 season in sponsorship money, according to IEG research, a Chicago-based sponsorship consultant. That's up 4.3 percent over the previous year. The teams share TV revenue and national sponsorship money.

According to IEG rankings, the Broncos are average in the sponsorship category when compared to all the NFL teams. Forbes estimates that Broncos revenue was \$387 million in 2016, ranking it at No. 11 in the NFL for total valuation.

Carlson declined to say what that corporate sponsorship take for the Broncos is or what percentage of the total team income it represents.

“We are a private company,” he said. “Those are numbers we don't disclose.”

Years ago, the sports sponsorship mentality was focused on selling signs, along with television and print advertising. Now with technology and social media, the game has changed, Carlson said.

The Broncos can approach a potential sponsor with data about how many of their fans shop in their stores or buy their products. The team works with New York-based market researcher Nielsen Scarborough to tell businesses where Broncos fans shop for groceries or to get their oil changed.

“We can show year over year how those metrics increase for those clients,” Carlson said.

Randy Haifley, president of the Grease Monkey Front Range Advertising Committee, took a meeting with the Broncos in 2012. Denver-based Grease Monkey International franchises 267 oil-change and auto-maintenance stores in the U.S. and Mexico.

The Front Range committee represents 55 Grease Monkey stores out of the state's 79 locations. The committee had spent its marketing money on radio spots and it tried coupons on grocery receipts. Still, Grease Monkey had a few rough years, Haifley said. Car counts had been steadily declining.

“We were at the point where we’ve got to increase car counts, so what do we do?” he said.

That's when the Broncos told Grease Monkey that 11 percent of Broncos fans get their oil changed at Grease Monkey.

“And that number shocked us,” Haifley said.

Grease Monkey wanted to tap into those Broncos fans, including about 27,000 fans who attend training camp practices and about 76,000 who attend home games — not to mention the millions who watch the games on television each season.

“We saw it as a huge potential for growth for us,” said Cassie Glasser, Grease Monkey marketing coordinator for the Front Range Advertising Committee. “We know Broncos fans are loyal. We need to more of them to be Grease Monkey customers.”

Each of the 55 stores ponied up. They put 3.5 percent of every dollar earned into the ad pot to pay for the Broncos contract.

“The offer they made to us was expensive and a big part of our budget,” Haifley said. “But it’s what we felt was needed.”

Car counts were up 5 percent this past year. That’s up from the annual half percentage point before the Broncos sponsorship.

“We definitely feel we get our money’s worth,” Haifley said.

The company renewed its sponsorship for the coming season.

# Unheralded special teams guys often best free agent signings

By Rob Maaddi  
Associated Press  
March 8, 2017

The best signings in free agency are usually unheralded players.

Quarterbacks and skill position players get the most money. High-profile defensive guys get plenty of attention. Special teams players fly under the radar but can make the most impact.

The Philadelphia Eagles signed safety Chris Maragos and linebacker Bryan Braman in 2014 to bolster their special teams. They did just that. The Eagles have had one of the best special teams units in the NFL the past three seasons.

"Part of the messaging to the team from my standpoint is we have three aspects of our team: You've got offense, defense, special teams. And, special teams is so important to the success of your team," Eagles coach Doug Pederson said.

Maragos was lured away from the defending Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks three years ago and signed a contract extension last fall. Braman will become an unrestricted free agent and should get a nice contract from a team looking to improve its coverage units.

Here's a look at some of the NFL's top special teams players who were signed as free agents:

**JOSH MARTIN:** The linebacker was signed off the Indianapolis Colts' practice squad and led the Jets with 14 special teams tackles in 2016. Martin will be an unrestricted free agent this week. He drew Bill Belichick's attention before the Jets played the Patriots. "In the kicking game, Martin is the guy to stop," Belichick said. "I mean, he's one of the top players in the league (on special teams). He's done a great job for them."

**ERIC WEEMS:** The Falcons signed the wide receiver to a two-year deal after a successful first stint with the team before he went to Chicago. He finished fourth with 17 special teams tackles and will be an unrestricted free agent.

**BRYNDEN TRAWICK:** The Raiders signed the safety away from Baltimore last March and he finished with 15 special teams tackles. Oakland has a tough decision to make on WR Andre Holmes, a core special teams guy who will be an unrestricted free agent.

**DWAYNE HARRIS:** The Cowboys' special teams haven't been the same since they let the wide receiver sign with division rival New York Giants in 2015. Harris had 14 special tackles last season and returned one punt and one kickoff for TDs in 2015.

**MARC MARIANI:** The Titans signed the wide receiver a week before the season opener last year and he stabilized Tennessee's return game.

# Raiders could be 'on track' for March vote on Las Vegas relocation

By Tom Pelissero  
USA Today  
March 8, 2017

The Oakland Raiders could cement their Las Vegas future by the end of the month.

A strong presentation Monday by the Raiders' new financing partner gave a sense of confidence to the NFL's stadium and financing committees, who could recommend it for a vote in time for the league's annual meetings that begin March 26 in Phoenix.

"While no vote was taken, it looks like it could be on track for a vote at the March meeting," NFL executive vice president Eric Grubman told USA TODAY Sports by email after the meetings wrapped Tuesday.

There are still things to be finalized, including temporary stadium, condition precedent and lease negotiations. The league would still consider any new information from Oakland, whose mayor, Libby Schaaf, presented her plan Monday to try to keep the Raiders in the Bay Area.

But Grubman said there was "no new information on the A's (who share the Oakland Coliseum with the Raiders) or the timing" – fundamental issues that leave Oakland without a clear and actionable plan from the NFL's standpoint. And while Schaaf presented the new thinking from Fortress that the league will analyze, no one from the investment group attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Grubman said, officials from the Raiders and Bank of America "presented a traditional structure for the full amount of the financing" that needed to be addressed after billionaire casino magnate Sheldon Adelson and Goldman Sachs, which has close ties to Adelson, dropped out.

In October, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval signed a bill for \$750 million in public funding towards the nearly \$2 billion stadium project. Adelson had pledged \$650 million towards the project, but announced he was severing ties after the Raiders presented a plan that didn't include him.

The Raiders have pledged \$500 million, some of which would be covered by an NFL loan. Bank of America is fully committed to the construction loan, which the Raiders could use in full or in part depending on sale of personal seat licenses, naming rights, etc.

Raiders owner Mark Davis has said the Las Vegas stadium probably wouldn't be ready until 2020, leaving the Raiders to play out their option years in Oakland the next two seasons and then figure out a one-year lease somewhere for 2019.

Twenty-four of 32 NFL owners would need to approve relocation. The Raiders' current plan A relocation fee has not been determined.

# Broncos tender Todd Davis, Matt Paradis and several others

By Josh Alper  
Pro Football Talk  
March 8, 2017

The Broncos issued a slew of tenders to their restricted and exclusive rights free agents on Tuesday.

The team confirmed that they tendered kicker Brandon McManus in a release announcing moves involving 10 players overall. McManus received a second-round tender as a restricted free agent and, per multiple reports, so did linebacker Todd Davis.

Davis started 15 games for Denver last season and ended the year with 97 tackles, a half-sack and a forced fumble. He stands to make \$2.746 million under the tender and any team that wants to sign him would have to give the Broncos a second-round pick for the right to do so.

Starting center Matt Paradis headlines the list of eight ERFAs tendered by the Broncos on Tuesday. Paradis is recovering from surgeries to both hips, but is expected to be back to health for next season. Linebacker Zaire Anderson, linebacker Shaq Barrett, center James Ferentz, running back Kapri Bibbs, long snapper Casey Kreiter, wide receiver Bennie Fowler and wide receiver Jordan Taylor were the others.

# Broncos give Brandon McManus the second-round tender

By Zac Jackson  
Pro Football Talk  
March 8, 2017

The Broncos have placed a second-round tender on restricted free agent kicker Brandon McManus, PFT has confirmed.

The Broncos likely feel the second-round tender will keep teams away from trying to sign McManus to a deal the Broncos wouldn't match. Any team that signed McManus would owe the Broncos a second-round pick.

McManus, 25, has made 59 field goals over the last two seasons and has made better than 85 percent of his field goals in that span. He made a career-long 57-yarder in 2015 and had a 55-yarder last season.

The second-round tender is worth \$2.746 million. The Broncos and McManus can still work on a long-term deal, but if they don't he'll make \$2.746 million in 2017 under the tender.

# **Broncos have some interest in Danny Woodhead**

By Darin Gantt  
Pro Football Talk  
March 8, 2017

Perhaps some of the tampering happening at the moment is between the Broncos and running back Danny Woodhead.

According to Alex Marvez of the Sporting News, the Broncos are among multiple teams expected to show interest in the Chargers free agent.

The 32-year-old running back suffered a torn ACL early last season, but is just a year removed from an 81-catch season.

The Broncos are ostensibly deep in the backfield with C.J. Anderson and Devontae Booker, but Woodhead, if well, would provide an interesting alternative.

# Demaryius Thomas has inconsistent message for Tom Brady

By Mike Florio  
Pro Football Talk  
March 8, 2017

During the phase of the calendar where money talks in a big way, Broncos receiver Demaryius Thomas recently did some talking out of both sides of his mouth.

Via the New York Daily News, a video has emerged (courtesy of TMZ) that shows Thomas in a Milledgeville, Georgia bar. At the outset of the video, an arguably inebriated Thomas and another guy are shouting, "F--k Tom Brady!"

Thomas then smiles before the clip ends and says, "But he's great."

Next comes video of Thomas dancing on top of the bar. First with his shirt, and then without it.

It looks like Thomas was simply having fun, but any time anyone like Thomas is out in public having that kind of fun, chances are it's now going to end up being fodder for the amusement of others.

# Broncos issue restricted free-agent tenders to Todd Davis, Brandon McManus

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
March 8, 2017

Eight exclusive-rights free agents and two restricted free agents received their tenders from the Broncos on Tuesday, two days before the free-agent signing period officially begins.

Inside linebacker Todd Davis and kicker Brandon McManus received restricted free-agent tenders, as veterans of three previous NFL seasons apiece.

McManus has become one of the league's best kickers in the past two seasons, while Davis became a full-time starter alongside Brandon Marshall last season.

Davis' work caught the eye of Head Coach Vance Joseph during the new coach's review of the footage from the 2016 season after he took the job in January.

"Todd Davis is a physical player; he's a physical, downfield [middle] 'backer," Joseph said at the Scouting Combine last week. "He fits the mold of what we want."

Starting center Matt Paradis highlights the list of eight free agents who received exclusive-rights tenders. Joining him are inside linebacker Zaire Anderson, outside linebacker Shaquil Barrett, center James Ferentz, running back Kapri Bibbs, long snapper Casey Kreiter and wide receivers Bennie Fowler and Jordan Taylor.

# Let the legal tampering begin: Mason's top 100 non-Broncos free agents, version 3.0

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
March 8, 2017

1. G Kevin Zeitler, Cincinnati
2. CB Malcolm Butler, New England (RFA)
3. DL Calais Campbell, Arizona
4. LT Andrew Whitworth, Cincinnati
5. G T.J. Lang, Green Bay
6. CB A.J. Bouye, Houston
7. TE MARTELLUS BENNETT, NEW ENGLAND

It will be fascinating to see the market for the 275-pound Bennett, who is proven but could see teams shy away from him given the extreme depth of this year's tight-end class in the draft.

8. WR Pierre Garçon, Washington
9. G Larry Warford, Detroit
10. NT Brandon Williams, Baltimore
11. WR Alshon Jeffery, Chicago
12. S John Cyprien, Jacksonville
13. NT Dontari Poe, Kansas City
14. WR DeSean Jackson, Washington
15. CB Stephon Gilmore, Buffalo
16. S Tony Jefferson, Arizona
17. OLB Dont'a Hightower, New England
18. S Barry Church, Dallas

19. RT RICKY WAGNER, BALTIMORE

The lack of viable young offensive tackles on the market means that Wagner is about to get paid -- although perhaps with a contract that is above his performance level.

20. CB Logan Ryan, New England
21. WR Terrelle Pryor, Cleveland
22. G Ronald Leary, Dallas
23. OLB Nick Perry, Green Bay
24. CB Morris Claiborne, Dallas
25. G Andrew Norwell, Carolina (RFA)
26. CB Prince Amukamara, Jacksonville
27. CB Dre' Kirkpatrick, Cincinnati
28. DT Dominique Easley, L.A. Rams
29. S Jahleel Addae, L.A. Chargers

30. ADRIAN PETERSON, MINNESOTA

Caveat emptor! Of the 12 running backs to change teams after going over the 10,000-yard mark for career rushing yardage, only one -- Indianapolis' Frank Gore -- had a 1,000-yard season with his new team.

- 31. FB Kyle Jusczyk, Baltimore
- 32. C J.C. Tretter, Green Bay
- 33. S D.J. Swearinger, Arizona
- 34. ILB Zach Brown, Buffalo
- 35. ILB Kiko Alonso, Miami (RFA)
- 36. CB Terence Newman, Minnesota

37. C NICK MANGOLD, EX-N.Y. JETS

Moving to guard could expand Mangold's list of potential suitors and could get him a better contract as a result.

- 38. S T.J. McDonald, L.A. Rams
- 39. Edge rusher Julius Peppers, Green Bay
- 40. CB Ross Cockrell, Pittsburgh (RFA)
- 41. Edge rusher Charles Johnson, Carolina
- 42. Edge rusher James Harrison, Pittsburgh
- 43. RB Eddie Lacy, Green Bay
- 44. NT Chris Baker, Washington
- 45. WR Adam Thielen, Minnesota (RFA)
- 46. Edge rusher Lorenzo Alexander, Buffalo

47. WR BRANDON MARSHALL, EX-N.Y. JETS

Even with the Jets' quarterback issues, he still caught 59 passes for 788 yards last season. Further, he remains durable, missing just four games in the last six seasons.

- 48. ILB Perry Riley, Oakland
- 49. S Bradley McDougald, Tampa Bay
- 50. TE Jared Cook, Green Bay
- 51. S Quintin Demps, Houston

52. CB BRANDON FLOWERS, EX-L.A. CHARGERS

A part of a three-headed purge of contract commitments that took place Tuesday morning, Flowers missed the last six games of the season because of a concussion. At 31, he's still effective when he's in the lineup, but the concussion concerns could give teams pause.

- 53. C A.Q. Shipley, Arizona
- 54. S Mike Adams, Indianapolis
- 55. DT Alan Branch, New England
- 56. ILB Gerald Hodges, San Francisco
- 57. DT Nick Fairley, New Orleans

58. DT Johnathan Hankins, N.Y. Giants
59. CB Captain Munneryn, Minnesota
60. CB Darius Butler, Indianapolis
61. C Joe Hawley, Tampa Bay
62. Edge rusher Jabaal Sheard, New England
63. CB DeShawn Shead, Seattle (RFA)
64. S J.J. Wilcox, Dallas
65. RB Latavius Murray, Oakland

66. G JAHRI EVANS, NEW ORLEANS

He lingered on the market for months, and could face a similar situation this season -- if he decides to return for an 11th season at age 34.

67. DE/DT Jared Odrick, ex-Jacksonville
68. TE Jack Doyle, Indianapolis
69. G Stfen Wisniewski, Philadelphia
70. G Luke Joeckel, Jacksonville
71. ILB Kevin Minter, Arizona
72. WR Dontrelle Inman, L.A. Chargers (RFA)
73. ILB Lawrence Timmons, Pittsburgh
74. WR Kenny Britt, L.A. Rams
75. WR Kendall Wright, Tennessee
76. RB Jacquizz Rodgers, Tampa Bay
77. QB Brian Hoyer, Chicago
78. G Riley Reiff, Detroit
79. S Micah Hyde, Green Bay
80. WR Kenny Stills, Miami
81. RB LeGarrette Blount, New England
82. WR/KR Cordarrelle Patterson, Minnesota
83. Edge rusher Datone Jones, Green Bay
84. WR Josh Gordon, Cleveland
85. TE Jordan Cameron, Miami

86. RB JAMAAL CHARLES, EX-KANSAS CITY

At this point, Charles is best suited to be a situational running back, which could help with his knee issues while taking advantage of the relative lack of wear and tear in terms of accumulated hits that resulted from having fewer than 100 touches in four of his previous nine seasons.

87. G/T D.J. FLUKER, EX-L.A. CHARGERS

Better at guard than at tackle during his four seasons in San Diego, Fluker became available when the Chargers elected to release him rather than pick up his fifth-year option. The release creates no dead money for the Chargers, and is a reminder of the flexibility that exists for teams when issuing fifth-year options right up until the start of the new league year.

88. WR Brandon LaFell, Cincinnati

- 89. G/T Austin Pasztor, Cleveland
- 90. G John Jerry, N.Y. Giants
- 91. WR Anquan Boldin, Detroit
- 92. LT Ryan Clady, N.Y. Jets
- 93. Edge rusher Andre Branch, Miami

94. WR TORREY SMITH, EX-SAN FRANCISCO

His only 1,000-yard season came in 2013, and in the last two seasons, he had just seven touchdowns -- four fewer than he had in the 2014 campaign alone, his last season with Baltimore. Few players need a change of scenery more than Smith, who was caught in the vortex of chaos in the Bay Area.

- 95. FB James Develin, New England
- 96. CB Leodis McKelvin, ex-Philadelphia
- 97. WR Michael Floyd, New England

98. QB MIKE GLENNON, TAMPA BAY

The eight-figure average annual salary Glennon should receive on the market is evidence of a) the lack of viable quarterbacks available and b) the market-caused hyper-inflation on quarterback salaries. If the Bears get Glennon, it also reveals what Chicago thinks of the draftable quarterbacks and the ability of any of them to spur a turnaround that is likely essential to save John Fox's job.

99. WR Stevie Johnson, ex-L.A. Chargers

100. RB DANNY WOODHEAD, L.A. CHARGERS

If the reports of his strong progress from a torn ACL are true, Woodhead's proficiency as a target in the flat will provide a valuable chess piece for an offense looking to create as many mismatches as possible.