

# Trevor Siemian expected to fight for Broncos' starting QB job again. Here's why.

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

April 14, 2017

The message was made clear at the start of the new year, so it wasn't a surprise or an insult to Trevor Siemian when new Broncos head coach Vance Joseph said this week that he would have an open quarterback competition.

Siemian, the seventh-round pick who won the job a year ago, would again battle Paxton Lynch, the first-round pick the Broncos traded up to get, for the top job. Fifty-fifty.

"I think you learn pretty quickly, or at least I did, that you have to earn it every year, every day in the league," Siemian said Thursday. "That goes beyond me and Paxton. That's everybody. If you're not playing well or earning the job, earning a spot, you're getting worse. You're not going to last very long. That's the reality. I know I can get better. I have a lot of room to improve, but I think I have some things to build on, so I'm really excited. I'm excited to get going. I'm healthy, I feel good."

Last summer Siemian, a name barely on the radar, beat out veteran Mark Sanchez and Lynch for the lead role. In 14 starts, Siemian helped the Broncos to eight wins, averaged 242.9 passing yards per game, threw 18 touchdowns along with 10 picks for a passer rating of 84.6. He also took 31 sacks and sustained three injuries (two shoulders, one foot).

In January, Siemian elected to have surgery to repair the AC joint in his left (non-throwing) shoulder after injuring it in October and playing the remainder of the season in pain. Surgery wasn't a consideration at season's end, he said, but when he realized he could get the procedure and be back in time for the start of organized team activities (OTAs) this month, he was in.

Recently cleared to participate fully, Siemian is back in the weight room and back to throwing.

"I just got to be smart in the weight room," he said. "I wasn't a gladiator in there by any stretch of the imagination. Just be smart, take care of my body and get a little stronger."

The added strength, as well as wisdom gained from a year of playing experience, may help him stay healthy on Sundays, too.

"You watch other guys around the league, the older guys who stay healthy — they're really smart with the football," Siemian said. "They ditch it when they have to, they get rid of it quicker, they're shooting checkdowns pretty quickly or they're getting down. I got a chance to watch Peyton (Manning) do that. I don't know if I thought I was Superman my first year and taking a bunch of hits, but you can't play for an extended career doing that. That's something I'll fix."

While outside chatter of potentially signing Tony Romo dominated much of the Broncos' offseason, Siemian kept tunnel vision, spending the majority of his days at the Broncos' training facility for rehabilitation and film study.

He knew of the noise, but opted not to listen.

“Really, it might be hard for you to believe, but it’s out of my control. It’s tough for me to worry about stuff like that,” he said. “... I was told the whole way through I was getting a chance to compete. For me, that’s all I wanted to hear.”

And all the while, the team’s new offensive staff continued to develop the new playbook, one that will feature more plays from the shotgun formation and principles used by offensive coordinator Mike McCoy as he was last in Denver and tailored schemes to fit the strengths of Tim Tebow and then Manning.

The expectation is that Siemian, and Lynch, will be able to air it out more than last season. The hope is that with a beefier offensive line and a revived run game, the two quarterbacks will have the protection that was lacking much of last season.

The Broncos’ first free-agent signings were guard Ron Leary and tackle Menelik Watson, a pair of 300-pounders whose weight and aggression provided the building blocks to the new and coaches hope improved culture in the trenches for Denver.

That culture? “A super physical group that protects the quarterback,” Siemian said with a wide grin.

But any improvement on offense starts with the quarterback. Joseph has said repeatedly that the starting quarterback will be selected based on on-field performance and decision-making as well as leadership.

“It’s the quarterback’s job to be a leader, whether you like it or not or you’re a rookie or not,” Siemian said of filling the leadership void left by Manning a year ago and DeMarcus Ware this off-season. “That comes with your position.”

Siemian heard that message, too.

“There’s no reason not to,” Siemian said. “Playing obviously helps. It was my first year playing last year. As I get older and play more reps and do those types of things, that’s kind of my role moving forward.

“Like I said, you’ve got to earn it every day. Not just quarterbacks, but all across the board. You don’t really need any extra motivation, regardless of circumstance or whatever you’re talking about. You’ve got to earn your stripes every day. Moving forward, that’s what I’ve got to do if I want to play.”

# 2017 NFL draft's linebacker breakdown: rankings, sleepers and Broncos pursuit for depth

By Cameron Wolfe  
Denver Post  
April 14, 2017

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sixth of a seven-part series breaking down the NFL draft, April 27-29. Today: linebackers

Shane Ray has been waiting for his moment since the Broncos selected him in the first round two Aprils ago. With DeMarcus Ware's retirement, it'll be Ray's first chance to be a full-time starter and sack artist opposite Von Miller.

While Denver won't be able to replace Ware's leadership, Ray and Shaquil Barrett should be able to handle most of his on-field production.

"Shane has been ready for a long time. Shaq has been ready as well," Miller said Tuesday.

Brandon Marshall and Todd Davis are expected to return as starters at inside linebackers. Corey Nelson and Zaire Anderson provide good depth, but another player could be added as Davis and Nelson approach free agency.

For the purpose of this draft breakdown, edge defenders who would translate to a 3-4 outside linebacker in the Broncos scheme are listed.

## Outside linebackers

Strengths: Rare athlete. Game-changer off the edge with knack for making splash plays in the backfield. Elite first step and backfield penetration. Unteachable low natural bend around the corner. Played through injuries.

Negatives: Still raw in his pass-rush arsenal, makes athlete plays. College stats didn't reflect ability. Will need to add strength to play 4-3 defensive end.

### 2. Derek Barnett, Tennessee, 6-3, 259 pounds; Grade: top 10

Strengths: Finds ways to make plays. Can teach a hands clinic with his punch, rip, swat and swim moves. Strong enough to play defensive end. Put on a show vs. Alabama's Cam Robinson. Broke Reggie White's college sack record.

Negatives: Average athlete without Garrett's natural fluidity. He's doesn't have the prototypical size and length for defensive end, speed for outside linebacker.

### 3. Solomon Thomas, Stanford, 6-3, 273 pounds; Grade: top 10

Strengths: Bully inside who demands double teams. Great, consistent bull rush. Has the strength, hand-fighting skills, quick feet to win against most offensive linemen. Good variety of pass-rush moves. High motor.

Negatives: A tweener without a defined position, may be best as 4-3 defensive end. Doesn't win with edge speed often. Could struggle with stronger NFL offensive linemen.

4. Takkarist McKinley, UCLA, 6-2, 250 pounds; Grade: Late first round

Strengths: Elite speed, first step and burst off the line (ran 4.59 40-yard dash!). A 3-4 outside linebacker who has the quickness and fluidity to react to a play. High-motor, always attacking.

Negatives: Still raw with a need for more defined pass-rush moves. Too often relies on speed and effort rather than technique. He'll miss most of the summer after shoulder surgery.

5. Jordan Willis, Kansas State, 6-4, 255 pounds; Grade: Early second round

Strengths: Has NFL size and game. Uses hands well to win one-on-ones. Effective swim move and decent speed burst around the edge. Sets the edge well and knows his assignments.

Negatives: Doesn't have a lot of bend in his game. He almost always attacks straight ahead using his hands or speed to win. Needs more diversity in pass rush moves.

Next up: Taco Charlton, Michigan; Tyus Bowser, Houston

Mid-round starter: Tarell Basham, Ohio: Similar game to Willis using his burst and straight-line attack to pressure offenses. He should be a solid pass rusher if a coach can add to his skill set and channel his effort.

Late-round sleeper: Avery Moss, Youngstown State: His better-known teammate, Derek Rivers, may go on the second day, but Moss has the athleticism, length and shedding ability to be a key contributor.

Inside linebackers

1. Reuben Foster, Alabama, 6-0, 229 pounds; Grade: Top 15

Strengths: Can be the center of a defense. Three-down player who makes splashes as a run defender and in coverage. Plays bigger than his size. Moves all over the field with fluidity, awareness.

Negatives: Played behind loaded Alabama defensive line. Not ideal middle linebacker size. Shoulder injuries could cause teams to red flag him. Had an incident that got him sent home from the combine.

2. Haason Reddick, Temple, 6-1, 237 pounds; Grade: First round

Strengths: New-age linebacker with speed, athleticism and versatility to be an impact three-down player. Playmaker who had 10.5 sacks and 22.5 tackles for loss as a senior. Tough. Shined as a natural coverage linebacker at the Senior Bowl.

Negatives: Massive rise from Day 2 pick to possible top-15 selection is a little worrisome. He doesn't have a defined position. Misses too many tackles. Does he have the strength to play in the box full-time?

3. Jarrad Davis, Florida, 6-1, 238 pounds; Grade: Early second round

Strengths: Physical, banger with the strength to play any linebacker spot. Running backs will hate to play him. Good tackler. Adequate enough in coverage to defend most tight ends and running backs.

Negatives: His aggression often gets him injured and there's questions if he can remain healthy in the NFL. Slow to read plays at times, gets him caught up in the mess.

4. Zach Cunningham, Vanderbilt, 6-3, 234 pounds; Grade: Early second round

Strengths: Always around the ball, making plays. One of the draft's best coverage linebackers. Great range and speed to play sideline-to-sideline.

Negatives: Misses way too many tackles. He will need to add more strength to play inside. Struggles to shed blocks.

5. Raekwon McMillian, Ohio State, 6-2, 240 pounds; Grade: Late second round

Strengths: Attacks first, asks questions later. Always around the ball and making plays. Reads quarterbacks well. Holds his own in space.

Negatives: A little clunky in coverage sometimes, can be beat by shifty playmakers. May need to get bigger, stronger to hold up in box. Solid speed, but not a great athlete.

Next up: Ryan Anderson, Alabama; Kendall Beckwith, LSU

Mid-round starter: Anthony Walker, Northwestern: A potential three-down starter who looked great in coverage against Stanford's Christian McCaffrey.

Late-round sleeper: Dylan Cole, Missouri State: Taking a swing at this aggressive small-school linebacker with eye-popping speed and strength could make a team look like a genius.

# CU's Chidobe Awuzie, top 3 OTs among 22 prospects to attend NFL draft, Christian McCaffrey won't

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

April 14, 2017

It has turned into a fashion show with blinged-out shoes and colorful suits taking center stage, but one of the highlights of the NFL draft is seeing the raw emotion players show when they get their draft call and walk the stage to shake the hand of Commissioner Roger Goodell.

The NFL on Thursday released the names of 22 prospects who have accepted invitations to attend the NFL Draft, April 27-29 in Philadelphia. Among the group is Colorado cornerback Chidobe Awuzie and the three most highly regarded offensive tackles in the draft, Utah's Garrett Bolles, Wisconsin's Ryan Ramczyk and Alabama's Cam Robinson.

The most notable takeaway from the list is those who will not attend, including former Stanford running back Christian McCaffrey of Denver, and the possible first overall pick, Texas A&M's Myles Garrett, as well as the draft's top receiver, Clemson's Mike Williams. Some prospects would rather avoid the spotlight. Some fear negative publicity if they drop further than projected on draft day. Some prefer to spend their special day with their family at home.

Awuzie is one of six cornerbacks who will attend the draft, a nod to the depth at the position. Three quarterbacks — Clemson's Deshaun Watson, North Carolina's Mitchell Trubisky and Notre Dame's DeShone Kizer — are also scheduled to attend.

There are also 13 NCAA head coaches scheduled to attend the draft, including Alabama's Nick Saban, Clemson's Dabo Swinney, Stanford's David Shaw, Ohio State's Urban Meyer and Notre Dame's Brian Kelly.

## Players attending NFL draft

Player	Pos.	College
Jamal Adams	S	Louisiana State
Jonathan Allen	DT	Alabama
Chidobe Awuzie	CB	Colorado
Derek Barnett	DE	Tennessee
Garrett Bolles	T	Utah
Gareon Conley	CB	Ohio State
Corey Davis	WR	Western Michigan
Leonard Fournette	RB	Louisiana State
Adoree' Jackson	CB	Southern California
Kevin King	CB	Washington
DeShone Kizer	QB	Notre Dame
Marshon Lattimore	CB	Ohio State
Malik McDowell	DT	Michigan State
Takkarist McKinley	LB	UCLA

Ryan Ramczyk	T	Wisconsin
Haason Reddick	LB	Temple
Cam Robinson	T	Alabama
John Ross	WR	Washington
Solomon Thomas	DE	Stanford
Mitchell Trubisky	QB	North Carolina
Deshaun Watson	QB	Clemson
Tre'Davious White	CB	Louisiana State

Coaches confirmed to attend NFL draft

Coach	College
Larry Fedora	North Carolina
P.J. Fleck	Minnesota
Butch Jones	Tennessee
Brian Kelly	Notre Dame
Urban Meyer	Ohio State
Jim Mora	UCLA
Ed Orgeron	Louisiana State
Chris Petersen	Washington
Matt Rhule	Baylor
Nick Saban	Alabama
David Shaw	Stanford
Dabo Swinney	Clemson
Kyle Whittingham	Utah

# Terrance “Pot Roast” Knighton calls it a career

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

April 14, 2017

Call him Coach Roast.

Terrance Knighton, the 6-foot-3, 355-pound defensive tackle better known as “Pot Roast,” told ESPN on Wednesday that he will retire from the NFL to pursue a career in coaching.

Knighton spent two of his eight pro seasons with the Broncos (2013-14) following four seasons with the Jaguars. When Jack Del Rio left Jacksonville for Denver to be the Broncos’ defensive coordinator, Knighton followed as a free agent and anchored the line in Del Rio’s 4-3 system.

In two years in Denver, Knighton recorded 61 total tackles (25 solo) and five sacks, helped Denver to a pair of AFC West titles and a Super Bowl XLVIII appearance.

The ensuing offseason, Broncos general manager John Elway spent big to improve the defense, welcoming pass-rusher DeMarcus Ware, safety T.J. Ward and cornerback Aqib Talib.

Ware’s arrival was one he couldn’t forget.

“When I first got here, Pot Roast, he was like, ‘D-Ware, you gotta have No. 94,’” Ware recalled in a recent interview with The Denver Post. “I’m going to give you No. 94.”

A year prior, Knighton helped convince linebacker Brandon Marshall that signing with the Broncos’ practice squad after he was released from the Jaguars would be a move he wouldn’t regret.

“I remember I was at dinner with some of the guys that had made the team, and that’s when my agent called me like, ‘Look man, they want you on the practice squad and you’ve got to choose between Denver, Oakland and Jacksonville. You’ve got 10 minutes,’” Marshall recalled in a 2015 interview with The Associated Press. “I called T-Knight real quick, ‘Pot Roast, I’m like, Yo, what’s y’all situation like? They want me on the practice squad, what should I do?’ And he’s like, ‘Man, you come here, you work hard, you’ll be fine, I promise you.’”

“I’m like OK, didn’t make me any promises. ... So, I called my agent back up and I said, ‘Hey, man. I’m going to Denver.’”

Although Knighton wasn’t ready to leave Denver, his time expired when his contract did in 2015. Del Rio left for the head-coaching job in Oakland, and Knighton signed a one-year contract with Washington, reuniting him with longtime friend Chris Baker.

Knighton was picked up by the Patriots in 2016, but released before the start of the regular season.

His next stop in football is to-be-determined, but after years of anchoring the defensive line, the plan is to move to the sidelines.

# Siemian, Lynch begin QB competition with press conferences

By Mike Klis

9News

April 14, 2017

The Great Denver Broncos quarterback competition doesn't start until we say it does.

A big part of the job: Representing the team – and the city – in press conferences.

And so the QB competition began Thursday when both Paxton Lynch and Trevor Siemian met the media.

The confidence Lynch exuded was impressive.

“Obviously, I believe in myself to be the starter this year,” Lynch said. “I’m going to work hard just like I did last year. I’m going to learn the offense, get extra work with these guys when I can and be in the building as much as I can at this time. That’s what I’m aiming for. That’s what I want to do.”

Sounds like a new guy.

Siemian, meanwhile, stood up there like he’s been there before. He was the starter last year and yet new coach Vance Joseph said it’s wide open competition. Siemian has too much equanimity to be offended.

“With all due respect to Paxton, you’ve got to be on edge wherever you are,” Siemian said. “You’ve got to earn it every day. Not just quarterbacks, but all across the board. You don’t really need any extra motivation, regardless of circumstance or whatever you’re talking about. You’ve got to earn your stripes every day. Moving forward, that’s what I’ve got to do if I want to play for a while.”

Sounds like the same guy.

So which quarterback took the early lead? It doesn't matter. Mark Sanchez was the guy at this time last year. He wound up among the team's final cuts.

What will matter are the preseason games. So says the media.

# Vance Joseph states appreciation for Dan Rooney

By Mike Klis

9News

April 14, 2017

It's not a stretch to suggest Vance Joseph is the Denver Broncos' head coach because of Dan Rooney.

Joseph deserved the job on his own merits, but there was a time in professional sports when the most qualified African Americans were not getting hired for high-level positions.

Rooney, the longtime owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers and namesake of the "Rooney Rule" that requires NFL teams to interview minority candidates for head coaching vacancies, died Thursday. He was 84.

"As someone who's privileged to work in the NFL, my sincere condolences go out to the Rooney family, (head coach) Mike Tomlin and everyone else at the Steelers who knew Mr. Rooney," said Joseph, who in January became the first, African American full-time head coach in the Broncos' 57-year history. "I know he was a champion for diversity, not only around the NFL but also within his team. I believe the opportunity he gave coach Tomlin many years ago opened up a lot of doors for minority coaches around the league, including myself.

"When you talk about the "Rooney Rule," and giving everyone a chance to interview for these jobs that's a credit to Mr. Rooney and his incredible legacy."

# Broncos QBs Trevor Siemian, Paxton Lynch excited about new offense

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

April 14, 2017

Trevor Siemian has heard new coach Vance Joseph say how much he liked what Siemian did at quarterback last season for the Denver Broncos.

Siemian started 14 games, going 8-6 after winning the job in training camp last summer. Still, he isn't surprised that Joseph will have him compete for the starting job with Paxton Lynch.

"Not at all. That was said pretty clearly to us before we even left," Siemian said Thursday after the Broncos finished their third offseason workout. "That's been the same message for both me and Paxton the whole way through. Not really any news there on my end."

Joseph has declared the competition "50-50 right now" and believes it will "go down to the wire, hopefully."

Joseph, offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and quarterbacks coach Bill Musgrave -- all new arrivals since Gary Kubiak stepped away from coaching after last season -- will put the two quarterbacks through the paces in the weeks and months to come.

While the quarterbacks are being evaluated, Joseph said he will use the team's work in April, May and June for Siemian and Lynch to learn the new offense. The on-field competition will largely take place in training camp and the preseason games.

"They're two very good coaches," Lynch said of McCoy and Musgrave. "... I'm very excited what I've seen so far, and the stuff that [McCoy] told us and the stuff he wants the quarterbacks to do -- take a little more shots. And I know there's been more shotgun stuff, at least in the playbook that we've seen so far. I came into this very confident and ready to work hard."

Siemian, who had surgery in January on his left (non-throwing) shoulder, has been cleared medically to participate in all of the team's workouts. He finished with 3,401 yards passing to go with 18 touchdowns and 10 interceptions last season.

Joseph has praised Siemian's work in '16, including playing with the shoulder injury suffered in Week 3. Lynch was a first-round pick last April; the Broncos traded up to make the selection.

Siemian said Thursday he didn't believe the fact he started last season or Lynch's draft status would have any impact on the decision the coaches eventually make this time around.

"You've got to earn it every year, every day in the league," Siemian said. "That goes beyond me and Paxton; that's everybody. If you're not playing well, or earning a job, or earning a spot -- or [you're] getting worse -- you're not going to last very long. That's the reality of the thing."

"... With all due respect to Paxton, you've got to be on edge wherever you are. You've got to earn it every day. ... You don't really need any extra motivation."

Lynch said he believed McCoy was ready to put the Broncos' quarterbacks in the shotgun more this season than last. He also said McCoy wants to push the ball downfield more with the passing game.

"A whole new system now," Lynch said. "... Obviously I believe in myself to be the starter this year. ... That's what I'm aiming for. That's what I want to do."

Lynch, who played in a college spread offense, doesn't think the new offense gives him an extra advantage.

"I think it helps everybody," Lynch said. "I think it's exciting. ... I'm looking forward to it for the whole group. I think we've got a chance to be special."

# Broncos QBs have to fix flaws before they can win the job

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

April 14, 2017

The Denver Broncos quarterbacks are at the start of what will be a full-grown quarterback competition in the weeks to come, but Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch already know they've got things to repair in their play before they can worry about the 2017 season.

Coach Vance Joseph has said the two will use April, May and June largely to learn the new offense and the on-field competition for the starting job will mostly be underway in training camp.

Lynch looked uncomfortable at times as a rookie last season when he made the transition from the spread offense played at Memphis to the Broncos' system. He continues to work on his footwork and learning what defenses are trying to do. To that end, Lynch spent time with Charlie Taaffe, a long time college play-caller who also coached in the Canadian Football League.

Lynch had worked with Taaffe before the 2016 scouting combine.

"I wouldn't say there's just one area," Lynch said Thursday. "I kind of did a bunch of stuff, from my footwork, to some classroom stuff that I could do ... whatever Coach Taaffe could really help me [with], seeing stuff before the snap and after the snap is really what I've been focusing on."

Opposing defensive coaches said Lynch had a difficult time with the move from his college offense to the pro game. They said he was slow to work the middle of the field in the passing game and often too quick to pull the ball down and run if his first read wasn't open.

Having played almost exclusively out of the shotgun at Memphis, Lynch also saw his accuracy waver at times as he tried to drop back from under center to throw. That's why, Lynch said Thursday, he returned to work with Taaffe in the weeks before the Broncos opened their offseason program.

"I figured once the season ended ... he would know right where I left off and where I need to pick up," Lynch said.

For Siemian -- who had offseason shoulder surgery and missed two games last season with injuries -- his biggest offseason task was clear from the moment his 2016 work was done. Gary Kubiak, before he stepped down from coaching in January, said he told Siemian his biggest job would be to find a way to keep himself from taking so many hits in the pocket.

Siemian said Thursday, he took that advice to heart.

"You look around the league, the older guys that stay healthy, they're really smart with the football," Siemian said. "They ditch it when they have to, they're shooting check-downs pretty quickly or they're getting down. I got a chance to watch Peyton [Manning] do that. I don't know if I thought I was

Superman my first year [as a starter] and thought I could take a couple hits. You can't play for an extended career doing that. I'll fix that."

Asked if that meant he would include the "self-sack," a tactic Manning would use when he would go to the ground if a pass-rusher came free right after the snap, Siemian joked: "I've gone outside and fallen down a few times."

Siemian also referenced the Broncos' work on third downs overall, which, in addition to the run game, was a trouble spot last season for an offense that struggled to close out drives with touchdowns.

"Tough for me to pinpoint exactly one thing," Siemian said. "Obviously we want to be better on third downs, whether that's me throwing it, running it, ditching it, or running the ball on better on third and short. As a quarterback, whether it be me or Paxton, we've got to get better there, stay on the field, hopefully score a ton of points."

The Broncos will continue their conditioning-only workouts next week as well before they have their first minicamp April 25-27 when the players will get in their first on-field work in position groups.

# Rooney Rule will forever associate Dan Rooney with the highest ideals

By Kevin Siefert

ESPN.com

April 14, 2017

Perhaps the least understood aspect of the NFL's Rooney Rule is why it is named after Pittsburgh Steelers patriarch Dan Rooney.

The year was 2002, and the NFL was under heavy criticism for its weak record of hiring minority coaches. Worse, the year before, two teams -- the Minnesota Vikings and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers -- had fired prominent black coaches and replaced them after interviewing only one (white) candidate. The league entered 2003 with just two black head coaches. Then-commissioner Paul Tagliabue knew he had a problem, so he called on the owner who most possessed the empathy, sensitivity and strength within league circles to attempt change.

The resulting policy was not Rooney's idea, nor did he dictate its specifics. As chairman of the league's diversity committee, he played a more important role -- one that provides a template for remembering him after his death Thursday. Rooney delivered the credibility Tagliabue needed to impose a more inclusive hiring process on owners who resented the oversight.

To this day, reasonable people can disagree about the effectiveness of the Rooney Rule. There are eight minority head coaches in 2017, but as an ESPN study has pointed out, it remains difficult for them to crack into the pipeline. The policy requires teams to interview at least one minority candidate for its head coaching opening, but it does not apply to assistants, and it has on many occasions led to "token" interviews designed to meet the criteria before a favored white candidate could be hired.

At the same time, it has produced undeniable success stories, events that simply would never have happened if the rule did not exist. It also highlighted inclusivity as a path to success. Look no further than Steelers coach Mike Tomlin, whom Rooney hired at age 34 after just one season as the Vikings' defensive coordinator.

There is almost no chance that Tomlin would have been hired at that point in his career prior to the policy. Rooney admitted as much in 2007, saying: "Before the interview, he was just another guy who was an assistant coach. Once we interviewed him the first time, he just came through, and we thought he was great."

Given a formal chance to present himself, Tomlin won over a franchise that at the time appeared to favor longtime assistant Russ Grimm. Since then, the Steelers have appeared in two Super Bowls, winning one, and have the NFL's third-best winning percentage (.644). Tomlin has the sixth-most wins in league history for the first 10 years of a head coaching career. Diversity among job candidates isn't just a matter of compassion; casting the widest net increases the chances of finding the best coach.

Rooney had learned that lesson decades earlier when the Steelers hired Bill Nunn Jr., a Pittsburgh-area sports writer, as a scout in 1967. They made him their first black personnel executive two years later, and then watched as he built the Steelers' 1970s Super Bowl teams in part with players from historically

black colleges who had been overlooked by other teams. In 1974, Joe Gilliam became one of the NFL's first black quarterbacks to start a game when the Steelers used him in place of Terry Bradshaw, who was on strike.

That history wasn't the only factor in making Rooney best-suited to lead social change in the NFL. He was also unique in his ability to build league consensus behind the scenes. Retired NFL executive Joe Browne said via Twitter that "no NFL owner ever worked better" to maintain labor peace.

Indeed, NFL people spent Thursday celebrating Rooney's character and contributions to the league. In a statement, Tagliabue memorialized Rooney as "an extraordinary man of faith, conviction, reason and peace."

Outside the league bubble, however, Rooney almost certainly will be remembered for the rule that bears his name. Its results can be debated, but its spirit cannot. Dan Rooney will forever be associated with ideals like fairness, opportunity and inclusivity. Who wouldn't aspire to that?

# Broncos quarterbacks Trevor Siemian, Paxton Lynch embrace '50-50' competition

By Troy Renck

KMGH

April 14, 2017

Trevor Siemian stood in the front of reporters with a smirk and good health. His surgically-repaired left shoulder is healed. He continues throwing without limitations, and he holds no grudges.

Reporters asked Siemian multiple times if he felt insulted the Broncos opened the quarterback competition. After all, he went 8-6 last season with 18 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. If you think he perceived this as a slight, you would be wrong.

"I think you learn pretty quickly, or at least I did, that you've got to earn it every year and every day in the league. That goes beyond me and Paxton. That is everybody. If you're not playing well, earning a spot, you are getting worse," Siemian said. "That is the reality of this thing."

Siemian knows he must improve. He earned a Pro Bowl alternate bid, yet guided an offense that finished fourth in three-and-outs, struggled in the red zone and went through a touchdown drought of Grapes of Wrath proportions down the stretch. Lynch knows he must make up ground. All the talk of an even derby matters little if he doesn't show growth. Teammates have told Denver7 they've seen more confidence in Lynch since he arrived for training two weeks early. Lynch looked and acted more like a starting quarterback Thursday than anytime last season.

It doesn't hurt that new coordinator Mike McCoy's offense should help draw out his athleticism.

"This week we have gone over the playbook (in the first of multiple installations) and it looks good," said Lynch, who went 1-1 as a rookie starter, but slogged through the season as he learned to drop back and work under center. "I am excited from the stuff he has told us. We are going to be taking (more) deeper shots. There will be more shotgun stuff. I am excited."

Siemian's decision to repair his shoulder appears validated. While no "gladiator" in the weight room, he is able to lift. He needs to add strength and muscle to increase his availability. It is a skill at the NFL level, with Siemian admitting he will employ the self-sack (fainting goat anyone?) if necessary to stay out of harm's way. With Tony Romo no longer under consideration, the Broncos are attempting to microwave the development of their young quarterbacks.

This, after all, is not a rebuild. It is a CTRL-ALT-DEL. New coach, same expectations.

"You relish that definitely. There are so many good things about this place. But to me, maybe, the coolest thing is that you are expected to compete for championships," Siemian said. "We didn't make the playoffs last year, and that was tough for us, tough for the coaches, tough for the front office, everybody. That is what you want -- those expectations to be there every year."

# Broncos host Christian McCaffrey Thursday, visited with Cam Robinson Wednesday

By Troy Renck  
KMGH  
April 14, 2017

No need for an airline ticket. All Christian McCaffrey requires is a trip north on I-25 to visit the Broncos on Thursday. He remains one of the greatest homegrown athletes in state history, a former breathtaking star at Valor Christian. Nonetheless, hometown or not, this counts as one of the team's official 30 visits.

This one moves the needle.

For an offense that needs "juice," as coach Vance Joseph admitted, McCaffrey entices the audience. No running back in this draft boasts his versatility. He can run between the tackles, work as a third-down weapon, line up as a slot receiver and return punts and kicks. He fits the pro game given his multi-layered skill set. A projected late first-rounder two months ago, McCaffrey is now expected to go in the top 17 picks. The Broncos select at No. 20 overall.

Would the Broncos consider trading up for him? Given their other needs, it would be a mild surprise. However, the Broncos want a speedy back to complement C.J. Anderson. Last month, the team hosted Oklahoma's Joe Mixon, a player some teams have taken off their draft board because of his suspension for punching a female student at Oklahoma in 2014.

The most glaring need sits at left tackle. It is not likely the starter is on the roster, though Menelik Watson, Donald Stephenson and Ty Sambrailo are options. The Broncos visited with Alabama's Cam Robinson Wednesday. He made headlines in college as a road grader, but also ran into trouble. He was arrested in Louisiana 13 months ago on guns and marijuana possession charges. However, the case was dropped. Robinson has the size and strength of a starting NFL tackle -- 6-foot-6, 322 pounds -- but his pass blocking has raised concerns. The Broncos also have interest in left tackles Garrett Bolles, who plays violently, but raw, and Ryan Ramczyk, who won't be cleared to participate until June following hip surgery.

According to a report, the Broncos will also visit this week with Wisconsin outside linebacker T.J. Watt, the younger brother of Texans star J.J. Watt. Watt showed strong skills as pass rusher with relentless effort, but will need to become more diverse with his moves to succeed in the NFL.

# Siemian says he's not insulted he's in QB competition again

By Arnie Stapleton  
Associated Press  
April 14, 2017

Trevor Siemian won the starting quarterback job in Denver last year and did nothing to relinquish it. Paxton Lynch didn't come close to challenging Siemian for the job and never did anything to unseat him.

Yet, new coach Vance Joseph declared this week it's a "50-50 ... open competition " between Siemian, the 250th overall pick in 2015, and Lynch, the 26th overall pick last year.

The incumbent said he's "not at all" insulted by having to fight for his starting job again.

"I think you learn pretty quickly, or at least I did, you've got to earn it every year, every day in the league. And that goes for beyond me and Paxton; that's everybody," Siemian said Thursday as the Broncos capped their first week of offseason workouts. "If you're not playing well, earning a job or earning a spot, you're not going to last very long. That's the reality of the thing.

"I know I can get better. I've got a lot room to improve, but I think I've got some things I can build on. So, I'm really excited. I'm excited to get rolling. I'm healthy. I feel good."

Siemian was medically cleared to participate in the offseason program after undergoing surgery in January on his left shoulder, which he bruised against Tampa Bay in October.

"I was just having problems lifting at the end of the season and it bothered me," Siemian said in explaining why he opted for the operation. "And, knock on wood, hopefully I play well and I've got to be in the weight room quite a bit, so that's not something I wanted to deal with."

Siemian spent much of his offseason rehabbing at the Broncos headquarters and Lynch returned a couple of weeks ago to acclimate himself to the altitude.

Both quarterbacks said they're eager to work with offensive coordinator Mike McCoy , who previously had success in Denver building offenses for Tim Tebow and Peyton Manning.

Lynch said he's excited to see a healthier dose of the shotgun, which he ran exclusively at Memphis, deep passes and rollouts in the new playbook.

For his part, Siemian disputed the notion that McCoy's style will benefit Lynch more.

"I think it helps everybody. That's the plan, at least. I think it's exciting. I think Coach McCoy, really our whole staff, is pretty special and they've got a proven track record all over the place. So, I'm looking forward to it for the whole group. I think we've got a chance to be special."

Siemian threw for 3,400 yards and 18 touchdowns with 10 interceptions while going 8-6 last year. Lynch had two TD passes and an interception while throwing for 500 yards and going 1-1.

Siemian said last year made him a better quarterback.

"Well, I played," Siemian said. "You can't substitute those reps and I learned that pretty quickly. I think even toward the end of the year ... the game just felt a little easier for me, I saw things a little better. And you can't substitute those reps, so hopefully that helps me out."

Lynch said having a year in the NFL under his belt — even though he only played 10 quarters — helps him, too.

"It's a whole new system now than it was, but obviously there are some similarities," he said. "You're still going to take five-step drops and seven-step drops and make protection calls and read defenses. So, the fact that I've had a year to kind of adjust to that and go against our defense for a year is really going to benefit me."

Lynch worked this offseason with Charlie Taaffe, a former longtime college play-caller, to refine his footwork and overall game.

Siemian said he wants to improve "across the board," too, but there's one aspect of his game he's really going to focus on: protecting himself better.

The vicious hit that knocked him out of a game at Tampa Bay on Oct. 2 left him with a sprained A.C. joint in his left shoulder that sidelined him for a game, affected him for weeks and led to his offseason operation.

"You look around the league, the older guys that stay healthy, they're really smart with the football," Siemian said. "... I don't know if I thought I was Superman my first year and I could take a bunch of hits, but I can't play for an extended career doing that. So, that's something I'll fix."

Siemian even joked he's been practicing taking a dive.

"Yeah, I'm going outside and falling down a few times," he cracked, "tripping up on the way to the weight room intentionally."

# Trevor Siemian ready to defend starting spot in Broncos' QB competition

By Lindsay Jones  
USA Today  
April 14, 2017

For the second consecutive years, the Denver Broncos have kicked off the offseason program with a wide open quarterback competition.

There's no new veteran in the mix after Tony Romo signed with CBS instead of a new NFL team. And if the Broncos add a rookie in the draft later this month, it likely won't be with a high pick.

So that leaves incumbent starter Trevor Siemian, who started 14 games last year, and 2016 first-round pick Paxton Lynch to engage in another competition that likely won't be settled until late summer. Siemian beat out Lynch and veteran Mark Sanchez for the starting job in 2016.

It would be understandable if Siemian entered this offseason unhappy about yet another quarterback competition. After all, he did win the job last year, and won eight games despite playing through a significant non-throwing shoulder injury. He had surgery on that shoulder in January and was recently fully cleared by the Broncos' medical staff to participate in the offseason program.

But Siemian said he and Lynch were both told back in January after the departure of head coach Gary Kubiak, who resigned after the final game of last season, that they would have to battle once again, and new head coach Vance Joseph would pick the 2017 starter.

"I think you learn pretty quickly, or at least I did, that you've got to earn it every year and every day in this league," Siemian said Thursday.

The coaching change could benefit Lynch, who started two games last year while Siemian was sidelined, the most.

Kubiak was Siemian's biggest supporter, and the offense currently being installed by new offensive coordinator Mike McCoy might be a better fit for Lynch's skill set, with more shotgun formations and deep passes.

"That's one thing I'm excited about, because I played my whole college system was shot gun, really. I know we're going to have to get under center," Lynch said. "But him pressing the ball downfield, I'm pretty excited about too, and having the opportunity to run around a bit too."

Joseph said earlier this week that he's looking for consistency from his quarterbacks. But he's also looking for leadership skills and who can best command the locker room and the huddle.

There was no question that Siemian was better at those things last year. But Lynch returned to Denver two weeks ago after spending the offseason working with a private quarterbacks coach in Orlando feeling more confident about his chances in the 2017 competition.

“I believe in myself to be the starter this year,” Lynch said.

Siemian is hoping he’ll be able to use the experience he gained as the starter last year, while also proving he can be a better quarterback now that he’s healthy. Siemian dealt with the shoulder injury from early October on, and made the decision in January to have surgery because it was difficult for him to lift weights.

Among the lessons Siemian took from his first year as a starter is the need to protect himself better. That means making more quick throws, dumping off passes to running backs or throwing the ball away while under pressure. Could his arsenal of skills now include a Peyton Manning-style self-sack, going to the grass before a pass rusher could throw him down?

“I don’t know if I thought I was Superman my first year and that I can take a bunch of hits, but you can’t play for an extended career doing that. That’s something I will fix,” Siemian said.

For now, there is little either player can do to separate himself. The true competition won’t begin until the team can get on the field for the first time later this month at a veteran minicamp, and then through a series of organized practices in May and June.

“With all due respect to Paxton, you’ve got to be on edge wherever you are. Like I said, you’ve got to earn it every day. Not just quarterbacks, but all across the board,” Siemian said. “You don’t really need any extra motivation, regardless of circumstance or whatever you’re talking about. You’ve got to earn your stripes every day. Moving forward, that’s what I’ve got to do if I want to play for a while.”

# Paxton Lynch: I focused on myself through Tony Romo talk

By Josh Alper  
Pro Football Talk  
April 14, 2017

The Broncos have the same two quarterbacks at the top of their depth chart as they did when the 2016 season ended, but there was a fair amount of talk about Tony Romo coming to Denver before Romo took a job with CBS.

During a media session on Thursday, Broncos quarterback Paxton Lynch was asked about hearing the Romo speculation during the offseason. Lynch spent time working with a private coach in Florida before the start of the team's program and said that was a bigger focus for him.

"I saw it, but was focused on myself," Lynch said, via Nicki Jhabvala of the Denver Post. "Whoever was going to be here, I knew that's who I would have to compete against."

Lynch said the transition to the NFL as a rookie was "pretty difficult" because of how different it was than what he'd done at Memphis, but that having a year under his belt has made him more comfortable despite the change in coaches. Lynch added that he's excited about offensive coordinator Mike McCoy making more use of the shotgun, although he'll still have to beat out Trevor Siemian to be the one lining up in it.

# Lions president: Regular-season schedule coming next Thursday

By Mike Florio  
Pro Football Talk  
April 14, 2017

The draft comes in two weeks exactly. According to Lions president Rod Wood, the release of the 2017 regular-season schedule is coming in one week exactly.

Via Dave Birkett of the Detroit Free Press, Wood said Thursday at the unveiling of the team's new uniform that the team's new schedule (along with everyone else's) comes next Thursday.

The who and the where of the 256 games already is known. But the when drives plenty of interest as fans await information as to a wide variety of details, from the high-profile games to the configuration of byes to the placement of the short-week obligation that each team receives once per year.

# Trevor Siemian, Paxton Lynch eye improvement in different areas as QB competition begins

By Aric DiLalla  
DenverBroncos.com  
April 14, 2017

Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch are in the same spot.

A week into offseason workouts, Siemian and Lynch find themselves in a “50-50” battle for the Broncos’ starting quarterback job, Head Coach Vance Joseph said Monday.

From now until the Broncos’ opener in early September, Lynch and Siemian will seek to find an edge in the locker room and on the field. At some point, one will inch ahead in a competition Joseph hopes is decided by a razor-thin margin.

For now, the former first-round pick and last year’s starter are dead even. That’s OK with Siemian, who guided the Broncos to an 8-6 record in his first year as a starter.

“I think you learn pretty quickly — or at least I did — you've got to earn it every year [and] every day in the league,” Siemian said. “And that goes for beyond me and Paxton. That's for everybody. If you're not playing well or earning a job or earning a spot [and] you're getting worse, you're not going to last very long.

“That's the reality of the thing. I know I can get better. I've got a lot of room to improve, but I think I've got some things I can build on. I'm really excited. I'm excited to get rolling.”

And the competition is definitely OK with Lynch, who started two games and played in a third as Siemian dealt with injuries.

“[I have] the same mindset I had last year,” Lynch said. “It was the same situation I kind of came into [as a rookie]. I’ve had a year in the NFL, a year to adjust. ... I’m ready to come in here and compete and have an opportunity to go out there and be the starter.”

Siemian’s health won’t hold him back as the competition begins. The seventh-round pick in 2015, who won the starting job during the 2016 offseason, dealt with a shoulder injury that kept him out of one contest and a foot issue that sidelined him for the other. After offseason surgery, however, he’s “full-go” for all offseason activities, Joseph said earlier this week.

Staying that way won’t be easy in a league where many play hurt, but being available for all 16 games is a skill Siemian must improve as he battles Lynch for the starting job.

“I think you watch and look around the league [and see] that the older guys that stay healthy, they're really smart with the football,” Siemian said. “They ditch [it] when they have to, they get rid of it quicker, they're shooting check-downs pretty quickly or they're getting down. I had a chance to watch [former quarterback] Peyton [Manning] do that.

"I don't know if I thought I was Superman my first year and I could take a bunch of hits, but you can't play for an extended career doing that. That's something I'll fix."

Lynch, meanwhile, is focused on improvement in other areas.

Such is this quarterback competition. Just as the two players have different skill sets, they have different aspects of their games in which they must get better.

As the Broncos develop a new system under Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy, Lynch is looking for more command in a system he thinks will be similar enough to the one run by former head coach Gary Kubiak. Though the Broncos are through just three installation periods, Lynch said he expects McCoy to push the ball downfield and put him in the shotgun, where he excelled in college.

Those tweaks have Lynch in a place where he feels ready to take the starting job.

"Obviously I believe in myself to be the starter this year, but I'm going to work hard just like I did last year," Lynch said. "I'm going to learn the offense, get extra work with these guys when I can, be in the building as much as I can at this time. That's what I'm aiming for. That's what I want to do."

After a year in the NFL, Lynch seems ready to take the next step in his career. He said he feels more comfortable — both in regards to the playbook and around the facility. That's already evident to his teammates, whom Lynch saw when he returned to Denver a week before offseason workouts began.

"I think [the workouts] are very important," Lynch said. "Any chance I get to be around the guys and to be around the coaches, I jump at. That was one of the reasons I was here early. I was kind of itching to get back. I got back as soon as I could."

Siemian was around the facility for much of the offseason he rehabbed from his shoulder surgery.

He's got other things besides his health on which he's focused, including improving on third down and continuing to serve in a leadership capacity. But as he approaches the competition, he'll lean on the best teacher for which any quarterback can ask: game experience

"Well, I've played," Siemian said. "You can't substitute those reps, and I learned that pretty quickly. I think even toward the end of the year, just how I know my production — I don't know how it stacked up earlier in the year — but the game just felt a little easier for me. I saw things a little better. And you just can't substitute those reps, so hopefully that helps me out."

Lynch will get his own reps soon enough as the Broncos head toward OTAs. Siemian wanted to be fully healthy for when those practices begin, and that played a factor in him electing to undergo offseason surgery.

He's ready now. As is Lynch.

And so is everybody watching.

# Draft position breakdown: Defensive backs

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
April 14, 2017

## 1. S JAMAL ADAMS, LSU

HEIGHT: 6-0 - WEIGHT: 214

ARM LENGTH: 33 3/8 inches - HAND SIZE: 9 1/4 inches

40: 4.56 seconds

SHORT SHUTTLE: 4.13 seconds - THREE-CONE DRILL: 6.96 seconds

Adams should be a starter from the moment he steps into an NFL locker room. Given his maturity and his veteran-like ability to take the right angles, he makes his relatively average timed speed a non-issue.

Adams plays cleanly. When he makes contact with opposing receivers, it comes as the ball arrives; he will rarely draw flags. He can deliver the necessary hits required of his position, and he fits in today's game well; he hits cleanly and puts himself at minimal risk of fines or suspensions.

With 17.5 tackles for losses during his three years at LSU, Adams is as effective against the run as he is in coverage. He is the complete package, and it would be no surprise to see him go in the first five picks.

## 2. CB MARSHON LATTIMORE, OHIO STATE

HEIGHT: 6-0 - WEIGHT: 193

ARM LENGTH: 31 1/4 inches - HAND SIZE: 8 7/8 inches

40:4.36 seconds

The best cover cornerback in college football last year, Lattimore maximized his only season as a starter for the Buckeyes, intercepting four passes and breaking up 13 others. He also stayed healthy, which eased concerns that set in during his first two seasons, when he battled hamstring problems. His freshman season (2014) was wiped out following hamstring surgery and he took a medical redshirt.

There is still untapped upside for Lattimore. He can get bigger and stronger; his frame should be able to handle another 10 pounds without any loss of quickness and speed. More muscle should make him formidable in press coverage, and would allow him to live up to his likely top-10 status.

## 3. S MALIK HOOKER, OHIO STATE

HEIGHT: 6-1 - WEIGHT: 206

ARM LENGTH: 32 1/4 inches - HAND SIZE: 10 3/4 inches

Just like Lattimore, Hooker did not become a full-time starter until last year, but he took the opportunity and sprinted with it. The ballhawking safety intercepted seven passes, a total matched by only two FBS safeties in this year's class (Colorado's Tedric Thompson and Air Force's Weston Steelhammer).

Hooker preferred playing basketball growing up; in fact, he even gave up football early in his high-school career to focus on the sport he has called his "first love." He resumed playing football as a high-school junior, doing enough to earn scholarship offers.

Hooker's hoops background manifests itself in his ability to change direction smoothly and remain light on his feet. Hooker also uses his quickness to compensate for any instances in which he misreads a play at the snap.

4. S JABRILL PEPPERS, MICHIGAN

HEIGHT: 5-11 - WEIGHT: 213

ARM LENGTH: 30 3/4 inches - HAND SIZE: 9 5/8 inches

40: 4.46 seconds - BENCH PRESS: 19 reps

SHORT SHUTTLE: 4.11 seconds - THREE-CONE DRILL: 6.99 seconds

Peppers played last season as a linebacker but projects as an NFL safety, leading some to label him as a "tweener." But labels are dangerous, and for Peppers, patently incorrect. The only label that matters is "football player," and few at any position were better.

Few players have Peppers' blend of intelligence and aggression. He anticipates the direction of run plays before they take place, and rarely gets caught misreading a play. His skills in the box lend themselves well to handling a role similar to the one held in Denver by T.J. Ward, working as a safety in base package downs and as a linebacker in the box for nickel plays.

And all that doesn't mention what he can do with the football. Last season, Peppers scored four times -- three on the ground, and once via a punt return. He averaged 14.8 yards per punt return, 26.0 yards per kickoff return and 6.2 yards per carry in 2016. His 54-yard punt return for a touchdown against Colorado last season demonstrated the breadth of his abilities with the football, as he read his blocks perfectly, found his long stride quickly, ran through a potential tackler and finally cut back to make another man miss.

5. CB TRE'DAVIOUS WHITE, LSU

HEIGHT: 5-11 - WEIGHT: 192

ARM LENGTH: 32 1/8 inches - HAND SIZE: 9 1/8 inches

40: 4.47 seconds - BENCH PRESS: 16 reps

SHORT SHUTTLE: 4.32 seconds - THREE-CONE DRILL: 6.90 seconds

In an impressive Senior Bowl week, White handled man and zone coverage with equal effectiveness, cementing his status as a potential Day 1 pick.

White's measurables don't jump off the charts, but his leadership and football intelligence do, and those translate to his play. His ability to learn fast helped him succeed during Senior Bowl week. He started all four seasons at LSU, and by his junior and senior years he handled safety-like responsibilities in terms of getting the secondary set before the snap.

White could also have a role on special teams. At LSU, he averaged 10.0 yards on 68 career punt returns, scoring three times.

REST OF THE TOP 15

6. CB Marlon Humphrey, Alabama

7. CB Gareon Conley, Ohio State

8. CB Teez Tabor, Florida

9. CB Chidobe Awuzie, Colorado

10. S Marcus Williams, Utah
11. CB Sidney Jones, Washington
12. CB Quincy Wilson, Florida
13. CB Adoree' Jackson, USC
14. S Budda Baker, Washington
15. S Desmond King, Iowa

#### BRONCOS DB OUTLOOK

It remains as good as it gets.

The "No-Fly Zone" is intact. All four of its members have made Pro Bowls in recent years, with safety Darian Stewart and cornerbacks Chris Harris Jr. and Aqib Talib earning bids last season.

But the planning for the future began last year with the addition of safeties Justin Simmons and Will Parks. At the time the Broncos selected them, Stewart was in the final year of his contract; he signed an extension seven months later. Now T.J. Ward and cornerback Bradley Roby head into their contract years, although the Broncos could exercise a fifth-year option on Roby.

The departure of Kayvon Webster to the Los Angeles Rams in free agency also opens up the No. 4 cornerback spot. Lorenzo Doss and Taurean Nixon are both in the mix, but the Broncos could add a cornerback from this year's deep class.

#### TEN-YEAR HISTORY: DBs DRAFTED BY BRONCOS

As renowned as the "No-Fly Zone" is, it is remarkable that no members of its starting quartet arrived via the draft. Talib, Stewart and Ward were free-agent pickups; Harris joined the Broncos as an undrafted signee in 2011. Denver has picked at least one defensive back in nine consecutive drafts; the last time the team didn't take a DB, it had just four picks.

2007: None

2008: CB Jack Williams, Kent State - Round 4, No. 119 overall; S Josh Barrett, Arizona State - Round 7, No. 220 overall

2009: CB Alphonso Smith, Wake Forest - Round 2, No. 37 overall; S Darcel McBath, Texas Tech - Round 2, No. 48 overall; S David Bruton Jr. - Round 4, No. 114 overall

2010: CB Perrish Cox, Oklahoma State - Round 5, No. 137 overall; CB Syd'Quan Thompson, California - Round 7, No. 225 overall

2011: S Rahim Moore, UCLA - Round 2, No. 45 overall; S Quinton Carter, Oklahoma - Round 4, No. 108 overall

2012: CB Omar Bolden, Arizona State - Round 4, No. 101 overall

2013: CB Kayvon Webster, South Florida - Round 3, No. 90 overall

2014: CB Bradley Roby, Ohio State - Round 1, No. 31 overall

2015: CB Lorenzo Doss, Tulane - Round 5, No. 164 overall; CB Taurean Nixon, Tulane - Round 7, No. 251 overall; S Josh Furman, Oklahoma State - Round 7, No. 252 overall

2016: S Justin Simmons, Boston College - Round 3, No. 98 overall; S Will Parks, Arizona - Round 6, No. 219 overall

# Head Coach Vance Joseph on Dan Rooney's passing

By Aric DiLalla

DenverBroncos.com

April 14, 2017

In the wake of Steelers Chairman Dan Rooney's passing Thursday, Head Coach Vance Joseph reflected upon Rooney's legacy, specifically regarding the impact the Rooney Rule had on his coaching experience.

"As someone who's privileged to work in the NFL, my sincere condolences go out to the Rooney family, Mike Tomlin and everyone else at the Steelers who knew Mr. Rooney. I know he was a champion for diversity, not only around the NFL but also within his team. I believe the opportunity he gave Coach Tomlin many years ago opened up a lot of doors for minority coaches around the league, including myself. When you talk about the 'Rooney Rule,' and giving everyone a chance to interview for these jobs, that's a credit to Mr. Rooney and his incredible legacy."

The Rooney Rule was instated by the league in 2002, in large part due to Rooney's lobbying. It requires every franchise to interview at least one minority candidate for head coaching positions and senior football operation jobs once there is a vacancy.

Recently at the 2017 NFL Annual League Meeting, Joseph also spoke at length about the Rooney Rule and how it evens the playing field when it comes to interviewing for available coaching positions.

"It's a good rule to have in place because you have a chance to make the so-called playing field fair I would think. With that being said, everyone wants to hire who they know. Black or white or whatever nationality, if I know you, I want to interview you. That is what it is about in my opinion," Joseph said. "It's a good rule to have in place because you're just checking a box to make sure that everyone is getting a chance to interview for those jobs. I do agree with the rule. It's a fair rule in my opinion."

When Dan Rooney hired Mike Tomlin in 2007, he was the organization's first black head coach. Like Joseph, Tomlin only had one season as a coordinator under his belt before becoming the Steelers' head coach. When Joseph was hired in January, he was the 18th black head coach in NFL history.