

Kiszla: Tom Brady arrogantly dissed Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall. He hasn't forgotten.

By Mark Kiszla
Denver Post
August 3, 2017

Hey, Tom Brady. There's a guy in Colorado who has a score to settle with you. It's Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall, itching to get Brady and the defending Super Bowl champions back in Denver later this year.

"We're going to handle what we've got to handle. We can't wait to get them in our house," Marshall told me Wednesday. "It's a rivalry. It's something you circle on the schedule."

It clearly irks Marshall that New England has been established as a prohibitive favorite to repeat as league champion. Denver refuses to concede anything to any AFC rival, despite the love NFL prognosticators are giving the Patriots.

"We know what they say. There's a 51 percent chance they'll win the Super Bowl," Marshall said. "That's ridiculous."

What's more, Marshall has had a bone to pick with Brady for more than 18 months, ever since Brady arrogantly and openly dissed him during Denver's 20-18 victory at the AFC championship game in January 2016. That's a big reason why on a hot summer day, Marshall was already anticipating a game against the Patriots in November, when Brady next visits Denver.

"He don't do so well over here," said Marshall. He knows Brady's career record against the Broncos in Colorado is a weak 3-7, including four losses during New England's last five visits.

The bullies on the Denver defense have messed so badly with young quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch, I'm beginning to wonder if coach Vance Joseph should hire a playground monitor at training camp.

Early in practice on a sunny summer morning, Marshall jumped a route and picked off a pass from a bewildered Lynch, who never saw the linebacker coming. Maybe it would be a more fair fight if Marshall picked on a quarterback closer to his own size, like Tom Terrific, who's married to a supermodel and owns five Super Bowl rings.

The relentless pressure of edge rusher Von Miller, who insists 30 sacks in a season is feasible, strikes fear in the hearts of quarterbacks. The No-Fly Zone, led by shutdown corners Chris Harris and Aqib Talib, force an offensive coordinator to adjust his game plan accordingly. Marshall understands and accepts those harsh realities often mean Denver's inside linebackers are targeted as the holes in a stout pass defense.

Marshall remembers Jan. 24, 2016, as if it were yesterday. The Broncos were playing New England with a trip to Super Bowl 50 on the line. It was second down. The Patriots broke the huddle.

“Tom Brady ...” Marshall recalled. “He looked at (running back) James White and said: ‘You’ve got 54. Get open.’”

Marshall didn’t need to check his jersey. He’s No. 54. Brady shouted the Patriots were coming after him.

“Before the play,” said Marshall, still mystified how Brady could have such open contempt of his pass-coverage skills. “He didn’t read the defense. He just said: ‘You’ve got 54. Get open.’”

How did Marshall react?

“I took it as a challenge. I was offended, at first. ... He said it so loud, like he wanted me to hear,” Marshall said.

From the shotgun, Brady took the snap and immediately looked for White on an option route. He threw. Marshall refused to be beaten. The pass fell incomplete.

Marshall trotted to the Denver sideline, being replaced in Denver’s third-down defensive package by teammate Danny Trevathan. Before leaving the field, however, Marshall recalled, “I looked at Brady and I looked at James White, like ‘All right. That’s how you feel about me?’”

There was no harm to the Broncos on the play. But it left a permanent scar on Marshall’s pride.

“I’ll never forget that,” Marshall said. “I’m going to say something to Brady at some point.”

The player turning heads at Broncos training camp is also the smallest

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

August 3, 2017

De'Angelo Henderson has had a familiar face by his side, coaching him, encouraging him, pushing him throughout the Broncos' first week of training camp. Between team drills, running backs/assistant head coach Eric Stutesville has been in Henderson's ear. Throughout afternoon walkthroughs, Stutesville has been in Henderson's ear.

After a walkthrough, as players filter out of the field house and trot back to the locker room, Stutesville keeps Henderson back, walking with him slowly, still in his ear.

"He's talking me out of being a perfectionist," Henderson said. "He wants me to be excellent but not perfect, so sometimes I strive to be perfect on everything I do. He'd like me to be excellent, so if you mess up, hit the reset button and start over and go from there."

Henderson admits he's his own worst critic, a trait that has paid off, propelling him from Coastal Carolina to the NFL after many major-college programs passed him over. At 5-foot-7, 208 pounds, Henderson has already proved to be much more than the little guy.

"He's a quick, explosive, marks-out runner," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said. "For a shorter, stockier guy, he can get narrow through holes. He's quick through holes. As a defender, it's hard to see the guy. He's behind (tackle) Menelik Watson and he makes a cut. That's a surprise for a linebacker. It's a surprise when he's in the A, B, and C gap, but you can't see the little guy. He's fast through the hole."

The Broncos added speed to their offense in the offseason, a priority for Joseph as he began to revamp the unit's scheme. In doing so, they welcomed an influx of talented backs with explosiveness and potential to jump-start a facet of their game that ranked 27th in the NFL last year with only 92.8 yards rushing per game.

Henderson, along with veteran Stevan Ridley, has led the way.

"He's been a really pleasant surprise," Stutesville said of Ridley, who was signed when Devontae Booker suffered a wrist injury. "He's a pro, and he knows the great opportunity that's sitting here. We're very excited about him."

Stutesville is excited about the running back group as whole, with good reason. In an offseason when the focus has been on the passing game and finding the Broncos' starting quarterback, eyes have shifted to the run game that has come alive early in camp workouts, helped by an improved offensive line.

Henderson is the youngest and smallest and least-experienced of the bunch, but one with the "juice," as Joseph likes to say, as a runner, a receiver and in pass protection.

His burst and “surprise” factor were noticeable in his four years at Coastal Carolina, where he set school records in all major rushing categories: carries (732), yards (4,635), touchdowns (58) and 100-yard games (25).

“At that level of competition, when you turned on the tape, he flashed,” Stutesville said. “He made a lot of plays and made you like him and watch him. He runs hard and yeah, he’s a little guy, but he’s tough. I liked his game.”

At the NFL combine in March, where Henderson was interviewed by the Broncos, he ran a 4.48-second 40-yard dash that tied for fourth among running backs, alongside Christian McCaffrey and future Philadelphia Eagles draft pick Donnel Pumphrey.

Not bad for a kid who received only four scholarship offers coming out of high school in Summerville, S.C.

“He’s a guy that’s impressed me,” cornerback Chris Harris said. “Henderson, he’s a guy that just comes downhill, so I’m excited to see what he does when we put the pads on.”

But as Henderson hears the praise from veterans and heeds the advice from the voice constantly in his ear, he said his tendency to seek perfection is simply to prove one thing.

“That I can play football,” he said. “A lot of people got a lot of doubts, because I come from a small school. I’m short in stature compared to other running backs. Even though I got drafted here, there are still a lot of people who said we shouldn’t have gotten him. I’m going to show you why you should have taken me.”

Quotables and notables from Day 6 of Broncos training camp

By Nicki Jhabvala
Denver Post
August 3, 2017

QUOTABLES

Best lines from Broncos players and coaches:

Emmanuel Sanders, WR, on going against Broncos cornerbacks Chris Harris and Aqib Talib in camp: "Every training camp it's me and Talib and me and Chris. We always go at it. That's No Fly Zone, and guess what, I've got a jet, a private jet, I'm trying to fly. Sometimes they blow my plane out of the sky and sometimes I fly good. I look down on them like, 'Hey, I'm flying up here, y'all can't stop me.' That's the beauty. Those two are all-pro cornerbacks and I'm blessed to go up against them every single day."

Von Miller, OLB, on mentoring rookie DE DeMarcus Walker: "If you're able to really harness the force young Padawan, and really take advantage of your opportunity that you have, there's not too many defensive tackles that get to go play outside linebacker and move around."

Virgil Green, TE, on scuffles in practice: "It's a physical sport, things happen. If we didn't have guys that had their adrenaline running out here every day, then you really don't trust the guys in the locker room. We want to have tough guys on both sides of the ball."

NOTABLES

Players who stood out, for better or worse:

Quarterbacks: Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch raised eyebrows because of their inconsistent play. Siemian had a pass batted down by defensive end Jared Crick and then threw a pick-six to inside linebacker Brandon Marshall on the next play. Lynch found Austin Traylor for a deep touchdown catch, but was later intercepted by Aqib Talib.

Stevan Ridley: The veteran back who was signed when Devontae Booker went down with a wrist injury took on the bulk of RB reps and has impressed with his speed, sharp cuts and ability to quickly find holes.

Austin Traylor: The 6-foot-3, 255-pound tight end reeled in arguably the best catch of camp: a leaping grab in the left corner of the end zone on a deep ball thrown by Lynch.

Von Miller likes the versatility of rookie DeMarcus Walker; Broncos shuffle offensive line

By Nick Kosmider
Denver Post
August 3, 2017

Von Miller insists he has always been a player who will take others aside and offer any pearls of wisdom he's collected during his football career.

"People just see it more now, I guess," Miller said.

Miller's help in the development of rookie DeMarcus Walker could be especially important. The second-round pick out of Florida was moved from defensive end to outside linebacker Sunday as the Broncos attempt to bolster a thin group of pass rushers.

Miller has been impressed with Walker's versatility, which has allowed him to make a quick impression in camp.

"I said, 'DeMarcus, you can play inside, you can play defensive end and you can move outside and play outside linebacker,'" Miller said. "I'm not sure there's a player in the National Football League who can do that. I talk to him about that every single day: 'If you're able to really harness The Force, Young Padawan, and really take advantage of your opportunities ... and be elite at all three positions, I think that's something to watch out for.'"

Stephenson joins battle at left tackle

The Broncos moved Donald Stephenson from right to left tackle Wednesday and moved Ty Sambrailo from left to right tackle. Stephenson and rookie Garrett Bolles both played with the first team at left tackle. Sambrailo played behind Menelik Watson at right tackle.

"It's still those three guys battling for the left tackle spot," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said of Bolles, Sambrailo and Stephenson. "Stephenson has done some good things in training camp. We gave him a chance to go over to the left to jump into that competition to be the left tackle."

Matt Paradis participated in more team periods as the first-team center. The Broncos have brought Paradis along slowly in camp as he continues to recover from offseason surgery on both hips. Offensive guard Ron Leary missed his second straight practice with a groin injury. Joseph said Leary should return to practice Thursday.

Weighing in on QB battle

Broncos wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders said the starting quarterback battle between Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch is "even" through six practices.

The way Sanders sees it, separation won't come until the preseason begins.

“We’re going to see when the lights turn on and when we go to San Francisco (for joint practices beginning Aug. 16) and when we play against other teams,” Sanders said. “What are you going to do in the game? I think that will be the determining factor.”

Footnote

Running back Bernard Pierce (hamstring) and cornerback Marcus Rios (groin) missed Wednesday’s practice. ... Running back Jamaal Charles participated in 11-on-11 team drills for the first time.

Piling up 30 sacks in a season? Broncos' Von Miller thinks it can be done.

By Nick Kosmider
Denver Post
August 3, 2017

Khalil Mack, the standout Oakland Raiders pass rusher and reigning defensive player of the year, created a fervor recently when he threw out an eye-popping goal for his sack total this season.

The way Mack sees it, he could tally 30 sacks in 2017. That's what he told Peter King of MMQB.com earlier this week. Never mind that the NFL record, set by Michael Strahan in 2001, is 22½ sacks or that Mack has never had more than 15 sacks in a season.

Count Mack's AFC West counterpart, the Broncos' Von Miller, as one player who thinks 30 sacks is a reachable mark in this age of pass-rushing stars.

"I think it is," Miller said Wednesday when asked if such a lofty number was realistic. "You've got to come out and get 10 in that first month, which is doable. You get two-and-a-half and then get two-and-a-half the next game and two-and-a-half the game after that. You might miss a game and then you get two-and-a-half again and you have 10 in five games. Then you get three, two, three. It's definitely doable."

Miller, who holds the Broncos' single-season record for sacks with 18½ in 2012, said setting a new standard comes down to making the math work in a pass rusher's favor. With running backs and tight ends constantly chipping dangerous edge rushers, Miller estimates he gets five "open" rushes — a one-on-one matchup with a tackle on a passing down — per game.

"If you get five open rushes, you have to win all five of those rushes," Miller said. "Out of those five, you might get two or three sacks out of those. That's the math that I have on it. Out of those five plays, you have to get home on all of those plays."

Miller may face even more attention from offenses than usual, particularly early in the season. Between the retirement of DeMarcus Ware and injuries to outside linebackers Shaquil Barrett and Shane Ray, Denver finds itself thin in the pass-rushing stable.

It likely means the Broncos will be bubble-wrap careful with Miller during the preseason, which begins for Denver on Aug. 10 at Chicago.

Miller said he is not concerned with how much playing time he will get in exhibition games.

"I'm thinking about my Instagram more than my preseason snaps," he said. "Whatever coach (Vance) Joseph says, I'm going to be ready to go. Whatever he's got for me."

Broncos return to practice with a heavy focus on running game

By Nick Kosmider

Denver Post

August 3, 2017

Stevan Ridley planted his right foot in the grass and burst to his left. The veteran running back made one more athletic move to avoid a would-be tackler and then accelerated toward the end zone, his offensive teammates raising their arms in celebration behind him.

T.J. Ward had seen enough big runs early in the Broncos' sixth training camp practice Wednesday. The veteran safety called the entire defense into a huddle and delivered a colorful speech with a simple message: step it up.

And so it went during a Broncos practice, the team's third straight in pads, that focused heavily on the run game. Though the quarterback competition between Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch is the biggest story of camp, the Broncos have been working diligently to improve their ability to run the football and defend the run, two areas that hurt the Broncos in 2016 as they missed the postseason.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph said Monday that the team's padded practices would skew toward the run to give the staff a better idea of their progress on the ground during the most physical workouts.

"The more we progress (as an offensive line), the more we're starting to do things," center Matt Paradis said. "We've got a lot of new guys, but we've got a really good group. Guys are working hard and we have a physical group that is setting the tone for the offense. I'm excited about it."

Ridley, who is battling for a roster spot after being signed by the Broncos on the opening day of training camp last week, turned a few sizable holes created by the offensive line into big runs. C.J. Anderson, Juwan Thompson and rookie De'Angelo Henderson also produced strong runs. Jamaal Charles also participated in 11-on-11 drills for the first time.

"I think our run game is going to be explosive this year, and it's going to open up the pass," wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders said. "Whereas, when I first got here (in 2014), we said we were going to be able to pass the ball to open up the run. I think our run game is going to be so good with this line if they can just continuously improve."

Not to be outdone, the Broncos' inside linebackers made a mark for the defense. Brandon Marshall intercepted a pass over the middle by Siemian. Several plays later, Todd Davis burst into the backfield and stopped Henderson just as the running back collected a handoff.

It was an up-and-down day for the quarterbacks, who continued to split first-team repetitions.

Lynch had one of his best throws of training camp during an 11-on-11 session. His deep ball down the left sideline was perfectly on target for the outstretched hands of Austin Traylor, a free-agent tight end out of Wisconsin.

Lynch also was intercepted late in practice when cornerback Aqib Talib jumped an out route along the right sideline.

Running back Bernard Pierce, offensive guard Ron Leary and cornerback Marcus Rios were held out of practice due to injuries. Broncos coach Vance Joseph said he expects Leary to return to practice Thursday.

John Bowlen attorney seeks to quash arrest warrant for son of Broncos owner

By Kieran Nicholson

Denver Post

August 3, 2017

An attorney representing John Bowlen filed a motion in Arapahoe County on Wednesday seeking to quash an arrest warrant issued for the son of Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen.

The arrest warrant was issued Tuesday for John Bowlen after he was arrested Sunday in California on suspicion of DUI and driving over 100 mph.

Harvey Steinberg, who represents Bowlen, filed Wednesday's "motion to set aside order issuing a bench warrant."

Bowlen was convicted in April 2016 in a domestic violence case, and he appealed the conviction. The appeal to district court was denied in November 2016. He then sought relief from the Colorado Supreme Court, which denied the appeal in March 2017.

"The Court did not specify when the defendant's probation sentence would commence if he was unsuccessful on appeal," according to Steinberg's motion.

The motion also claims Bowlen was not properly instructed by the court on how and when his probation was to start.

"The Defendant was without court notice of where and to whom to report, and how to commence his probation sentence," according to the filing.

Bowlen never consenting to "terms of probation" in the Arapahoe District Court case, the motion said.

Wednesday's filing also claims the court "never lifted the appeal stay," so, "the appeal stay ... is still in effect." Bowlen, furthermore, could still seek a "federal remedy" in the original domestic violence conviction, further extending a stay of probation.

Bowlen bailed out of jail in California on Monday. The motion here asks the court to "vacate" the bench warrant for his arrest. "The Defendant respectfully requests a hearing on this motion."

Bronco notes: Sloter lends steady hand, Charles gets reps

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 3, 2017

Kyle Sloter stays outside the Great Quarterback Competition fray, completing passes, staying quiet, watching the others and waiting for his turn.

Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch are competing for the Broncos' starting quarterback job. Seventh-round rookie Chad Kelly stays inside getting treatment for his knee and right wrist injuries and working out.

Sloter is the afterthought.

But a fairly effective third-string quarterback (with Kelly injured) for an undrafted rookie out of Northern Colorado who had more receptions (13) than pass completions (0) through his first three college seasons for Southern Miss and the UNC Bears.

"That's my goal, to come out here, know where to go with the ball and know my responsibilities, all that good stuff," Sloter said Wednesday. "I feel like if you're a good decision-maker then you have a chance to stay on the team or get some reps in meaningful games. I try to be the best game-manager while still taking shots down field and getting the ball in the hands of the right people."

Initially, the Broncos may have viewed Sloter as a "camp arm," or someone who could throw to the back-end of the receiver lines. But he stuck around through the offseason program, and right now he appears in line to play the fourth quarter of the Broncos' first preseason game against the Chicago Bears.

Forgive, Sloter if he goes out there with the mindset he can compete, do a good job, and, you know, see what happens.

"Everybody in this organization wants to start, regardless of what their position is," Sloter said. "I want to be the starting quarterback. At a certain point you have to think about how realistic that is. I understand they've been here, they've deserve the first shot.

"I'm embracing the role that I'm in, whether that's the first-string, or third-string quarterback, or clipboard holder, whatever it is, I'm going to do my best at whatever my job is."

Charles, Ridley get looks

For the first time since he signed with the Broncos three months ago, running back Jamaal Charles participated in 11-on-11 team drills Wednesday. He didn't get a handoff as he was used exclusively in pass routes. Still, he was out there with a brace on his right knee.

“What I’m hoping is that we’ll get the same Jamaal Charles we got in Kansas City—explosive, big plays,” said Broncos receiver Emmanuel Sanders. “We’re looking for play makers on the offensive side of the ball. Hopefully he can bring that to us. Obviously, he’s still rehabbing and still trying to get in shape. We’re hopeful for him.”

The Broncos also elevated newcomer Stevan Ridley to the No. 2 running back behind C.J. Anderson through the early part of practice. Ridley then started getting his right leg stretched out.

With Devontae Booker out another five to seven weeks – he was sporting a bulky cast around his right wrist Wednesday – the Broncos may need one of those veterans to regain old form.

Ridley had a 1,263 rushing yards in 2012; Charles last had a 1,000-yard season in 2014.

Fight! Fight!

There were three pushing and shoving incidents during practice Wednesday, two involving receiver Kalif Raymond.

“(Monday), the offensive line got into a little scuffle,” Sanders said. “I hear them say, ‘We’re not the old offensive line! We’re not the old offensive line!’ Meaning they are bringing that grit, that meanness, that toughness. Those are the type of guys that—my mentality as a wide receiver is to match the offensive line. I like that.”

Bronco Bits

Right guard Ron Leary rested his injured groin one more practice Wednesday. Broncos coach Vance Joseph said Leary is expected to practice Thursday. ...

Donald Stephenson moved back to No. 2 left tackle with Ty Sambrailo shifting over to right tackle. Garrett Bolles has been primarily the first-string left tackle.

Best battle of Broncos camp: Sanders vs. Talib

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 3, 2017

The most entertaining battle in camp hasn't been Trevor Siemian vs. Paxton Lynch. To the contrary, there have been times, like much of the camp practice Wednesday, when the quarterback competition has been difficult to watch.

The mano y mano contest that has been worth 10 times the price of free admission (Wait, what?) at UCHHealth Training Center this summer has been receiver Emmanuel Sanders going up against cornerback Aqib Talib.

"Ah, come on, every training camp is me and Talib, me and Chris (Harris Jr.)," Sanders said Wednesday. "We always go at it. That No Fly Zone, but guess what? I've got a jet, a private jet I'm trying to fly. Sometimes they blow my plane out of the sky and sometimes I fly good and I'm looking down on them like, 'Hey, I'm flying up here, you all can't stop me.'

"Those are two All Pro cornerbacks and I'm blessed to go up against them every single day."

Maybe, Siemian and Lynch are really the next Joe Montana and Steve Young. Only no one knows it because the Bronco quarterbacks have to go up against the No Fly Zone every day.

OK, so Siemian and Lynch are not Montana and Young. But it is difficult throwing against the Broncos secondary.

There were a couple times Saturday when it appeared Sanders had Talib beat on deep balls, but Siemian's throws weren't there. There was a Lynch pass here Wednesday when Talib stepped in front of Sanders for an interception.

Siemian appears to be leading the Great Quarterback Competition. But even he hasn't found a consistent rhythm when throwing against the Broncos' secondary.

"You come out here and you complete passes versus these guys, when it comes to the game—I'm not going to say it's going to be easier, but you know you're going against the best of the best," Sanders said. "It's not going to get any harder for sure. As long as they understand that and know that, I think we'll be fine."

Early camp observations: Improved line, concerns at outside linebacker, Trevor leads

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 3, 2017

As the Denver Broncos reached their first break in training camp, there have been some promising developments, concerns, and plenty of practice reps to make initial observations in the Great Quarterback Competition.

Encouragement

We'll see how offensive tackles Garrett Bolles and Menelik Watson handle the pass-rushing likes of Lorenzo Alexander, Joey Bosa, Khalil Mack and Justin Houston on game day.

But it does appear the Broncos' offensive line will be physical in the run game. It had its way against the Broncos' defensive front during a goal-line period Sunday and extended running sessions on Monday.

I credit Vance Joseph's belief in the pads. The Broncos have been in pads all three days possible. Pads mean physical contact. The run game is a physical exercise. Joseph, the Broncos' first-year head coach, has veered from his predecessor Gary Kubiak in this area. Pads, pads and more pads.

The additions of Ron Leary and Bolles has also brought a tougher mentality to the offensive front.

There are also early signs the punt return game will be much improved with speedy rookie Isaiah McKenzie, although he must prove over time he can consistently catch the ball.

Concern

The injuries to Shane Ray and Shaq Barrett have put the Broncos' vaunted pass rush in peril. The No. 1 reason why the Broncos won Super Bowl 50 was the relentless heat they put on the quarterback from beginning to end.

That pass rush was led by Von Miller, and closely followed by DeMarcus Ware, Malik Jackson, Derek Wolfe, Barrett and Ray.

For the season opener against the Los Angeles Chargers, the Broncos will have only Miller on the outside from that group, and Wolfe from the inside.

Ray will miss a game or two because of a torn wrist ligament, but even when he returns his effectiveness may be compromised. Miller in his rookie year, and Ware last year were not nearly the same pass rushers when playing with a club on one hand.

Barrett won't be available until the second quarter of the season at the earliest because of a hip injury.

Ray and Barrett were to play the outside linebacker opposite Miller. Kasim Edebali, who had one sack last year for New Orleans, and Vontarrius Dora, who has only played in one NFL game, must come on during the remaining part of training camp and the preseason.

Otherwise, Miller will be lucky to have 8.0 sacks this year with all the tugging and pulling and double- and triple-teams he will encounter.

Quarterback

I'm not sure what John Elway or Vance Joseph are seeing. But after watching practice in front of record crowds at UCHHealth Training Center, Trevor Siemian appears to be the clear leader in the Great Quarterback Competition. This is my opinion from what my eyes have seen.

Siemian was terrific in the shoulder pad-practice Saturday, not so good in the full padded practice Sunday, and decent on Monday. He hasn't completely hit his groove, yet, but for the most part, Trevor has been Trevor.

Siemian doesn't have Paxton Lynch's talent. But Lynch has struggled. He really struggled Saturday and Sunday, before showing improvement Monday.

Lynch has demonstrated why he was a first-round draft pick. He has made some terrific plays with his arm and legs. Consistency, though, remains elusive.

Joseph said he primarily wants to see good decision-making from his quarterbacks and this is where Lynch needs more time to develop.

It doesn't mean he's eliminated. The Broncos will have a scrimmage Saturday and a preseason game next Thursday at Chicago.

But if Joseph called the quarterback competition today, it's my opinion Siemian has outplayed Lynch.

John Bowlen's attorney asks judge to cancel arrest warrant

By Mike Klis and Kevin Vaughan

9 News

August 3, 2017

An attorney for John Bowlen – the son of Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen – on Wednesday asked a judge to rescind an arrest warrant for the 31-year-old, who is facing allegations he violated the terms of his probation in a 2015 domestic violence case.

In the filing, attorney Harvey Steinberg asserted that the younger Bowlen was never formally notified that his probation had started when the Colorado Supreme Court declined to hear his appeal on March 27.

John Bowlen was arrested Sunday in California on suspicion of drunken driving.

On Tuesday, Arapahoe County Judge Darren Louis Vahle signed an arrest warrant for Bowlen after concluding there was “probable cause to believe the conditions of probation have been violated.”

In all, Vahle found evidence that Bowlen had violated his probation five different ways – failing to abide by all laws; failing to contact his probation officer; failing to perform community service; failing to pay fines in the domestic violence case; failing to undergo domestic violence, drug and alcohol, and mental health evaluations and treatment; failing to obtain permission to travel outside Colorado.

In the domestic violence case, John Bowlen was convicted of shoving his girlfriend against a bathroom wall as she was trying to dial 9-1-1. At his sentencing April 14, 2016, Judge Vahle placed Bowlen on probation for two years. The probation didn’t actually start until Bowlen exhausted his appeal – which, according to the petition to revoke his probation, occurred March 27 when the Colorado Supreme Court declined to hear the case.

Not so, Steinberg argued in his motion.

He cited a statement made by Judge Vahle during Bowlen’s sentencing hearing: “Since there is not a jail sentence, the court will not require further bond in this case, but the sentence is stayed until the time for the appeal runs, or until the appeal is filed, and then we’ll have to figure out how to proceed from there.”

Steinberg argued that Bowlen still has appeal rights; that “to the best of the defendant’s knowledge the appeal stay that was granted by this court on April 14, 2016, is still in effect”; that the judge never ordered him to report to probation; and that he “never signed any understanding of the terms and conditions of probation.”

“Because the defendant did not consent to the terms of probation, this court lacks any probable cause to issue an arrest warrant because he allegedly violated probation,” Steinberg wrote.

Steinberg asked for a hearing on the motion and the chance to present evidence on the question of whether Bowlen's probation was actually in effect.

It is not clear how soon the judge might take up the case.

Since Pat Bowlen announced in July 2014 he has Alzheimer's disease, ownership of the Broncos has been placed in the Pat Bowlen Trust, with trustee and team chief executive officer Joe Ellis having full authority to run the franchise.

The trust states that Pat Bowlen's desire is for one of his seven children to earn the right to become the Broncos' controlling owner.

John Bowlen has legal troubles going back more than a decade – which could come into play when it's time to decide who will ultimately control the Broncos.

Cody Latimer says confidence issues are 'in the past'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 3, 2017

There is a crossroads of sorts in front of Denver Broncos wide receiver Cody Latimer.

Latimer entered the league as the Broncos' second-round pick in 2014 -- the 56th pick overall -- with optimism in tow. He was a big, strong wide receiver who repeatedly wrestled the ball away from defensive backs in scoring situations in college, and the expectation was he would quickly find his way into the regular rotation with Broncos.

But that hasn't happened. As he moves through his fourth training camp, Latimer has wrestled with his confidence at times on offense -- he has 16 catches in three seasons -- and now finds himself part of one of the most hotly contested position groups on the roster.

"I know it, you just have to stand in that group to see we've got a lot of players," Latimer said. "But I've got my confidence, it's there, there's no going back. I know what I can do, I know this offense, just play fast. I'm ready, I'm ready to go. That confidence stuff is in the past, it's in the past. I go out here and line up, put me wherever, I go out and play ball."

The Broncos do have a crowd at receiver with plenty of still-unanswered questions about how things will shake out beyond Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders. To that end, Bennie Fowler has worked as the third receiver much of the time early in camp.

Jordan Taylor flashes a leaping catch in traffic at least once a practice, and the Broncos used two draft picks on wide receivers this past April -- Carlos Henderson and Isaiah McKenzie -- who already figure prominently in the return game.

That leaves Latimer, who has never had more than eight receptions in a season, trying once again to carve out enough of a role on offense to go with his mainstay status on special teams. When special teams coordinator Brock Olivo was asked this week about players who could be a special-teams captain, Latimer was one of the players he named. Latimer said his work on special teams over the last three seasons has helped him work through the rough spots on offense.

"Before I looked at it like I haven't had much production on offense so it's what's kept me in the league," Latimer said. "That's how I have to do it on offense, I have to embrace it the same way. When you're back on the wall, against the wall, and you're not producing on offense the way you're supposed to, you don't want to be cut. So I embrace special teams. I understand a lot of people have built careers on special teams."

Special teams will likely determine how many receivers the Broncos keep when they cut the roster to 53 players. In recent seasons, they have routinely had five or six on the roster, but because of injuries in 2016 they had eight on the roster at one point.

Latimer acknowledges that he struggled with confidence over the last three seasons, two of those years coming with Peyton Manning at quarterback, but he believes he's a different player going into the most difficult battle he's faced for a roster spot.

"It's a full room," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said. "... You can see how hard people are competing there because they know it's a full room. But I think Cody is one of the players there who has had a hell of a camp, but we have some players there who are having a hell of a camp."

If Latimer can fight his way far enough up the depth chart to make the roster, it could pay off, as he's an unrestricted free agent after the season.

"Previous years I felt like I wasn't doing enough on offense and I had to make special teams work," Latimer said. "Not now. I still approach special teams with everything I have because that's what got me on the field. But I like what I can do in this offense. I just have to be consistent, bringing it every day and keep making plays."

Emmanuel Sanders on navigating the 'No Fly Zone'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 3, 2017

The Denver Broncos have finished each of the last two seasons as the league's No. 1 pass defense.

The team's defense, especially the defensive backs, have made life as difficult as possible for quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch during practice as they compete for the starting job.

And when coach Vance Joseph was asked if he had to take that into account when evaluating the play of the two quarterbacks, he quickly brushed that aside with the advice to find wide receivers Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders and "throw the ball to them."

Wednesday, Sanders gave his own account of navigating practice against four starting defensive backs -- Chris Harris Jr., Aqib Talib, T.J. Ward and Darian Stewart -- who have been named to the Pro Bowl over the last two seasons.

Asked about his skirmishes with those defensive backs thus far in training camp, which have included Ward leveling Sanders after a catch over the middle, Sanders said:

"Every training camp it's me and Talib and me and Chris, we always go at it. That's the 'No Fly Zone,' and guess what, I've got a jet, a private jet, I'm trying to fly. Sometimes they blow my plane out of the sky and sometimes I fly good. I look down on them like, 'Hey, I'm flying up here, y'all can't stop me.' That's the beauty. Those two are All-Pro cornerbacks and I'm blessed to go up against them every single day."

Von Miller: First month key in pursuit of 30 sacks in season

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 3, 2017

He's not saying it would be easy, but Denver Broncos linebacker Von Miller has done the math, and he believes that one of the league's elite pass-rushers could hit 30 sacks in one season.

"I think it is doable," Miller said after Wednesday's practice.

That is the tallest of orders for any player, even one of Miller's ability, especially because no player has reached more than 22.5 sacks in a season since it became an official league statistic in 1982.

Hall of Famer Michael Strahan set the record with 22.5 sacks in 2001.

Miller's best season thus far has been 18.5 sacks in 2012, his second in the league. Last season, when Miller saw an almost constant stream of double- and triple-teams, he finished with 13.5 sacks and was held without a sack over the last four games of the regular season. He has 73.5 sacks in his career.

Oakland Raiders quarterback Derek Carr said this week that Khalil Mack had set his goal at 30 sacks in a season. Mack won the league Defensive Player of the Year Award in 2016 by one vote over Miller, with 11.

"That's the number I shoot for, but I didn't want him to tell everybody else," Mack said Saturday. "But at the same time, DC, he knows how hard we work, what kind of work we put in, and he knows what I want. But at the same time, realistically, we just want to get the record, at least."

Mack was one of several of the league's best pass-rushers who attended a pass-rush summit that Miller hosted in California this offseason. Miller said he hopes to expand the program every year.

In the big picture, Miller said the first month of the season would be key in any pursuit of 30 sacks.

"You've got to come out, you've got to get 10 in that first month," Miller said. "You've got to get 10 in that first month, which is doable. You get two and a half, two and a half the next game and two and a half the next game after that. Then you might miss one game, and then you get two and a half, then you've got 10 in five games right there. Then if you go three, two, three, it's definitely doable."

Miller said any pass-rusher who piled up some sacks early in the season would then have to deal with the added attention as the weeks went by.

Last season Miller had five sacks in the Broncos' first three games of the season, including a three-sack effort in Week 2 against the Indianapolis Colts.

He went as far as to say such a record pursuit could come down to how a player did, or did not, make the most of limited opportunities.

"Teams are going to chip you, that's definite, that's just the gospel right there," Miller said. "But you've got to take advantage of those opportunities. If you get five open rushes, you've got to win all five of those rushes. Out of five you might get two or three sacks out of those, that's the math that I have," Miller said. "Out of all the rushes in the game, all of the plays in the game, out of those five plays, you've got to get home on those plays. It's definitely doable."

Broncos QB battle: Plenty of ups and downs for Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 3, 2017

Every day, every practice, every throw is part of the Denver Broncos' competition at quarterback between Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch. Here's a closer look at their day:

Trevor Siemian

Siemian opened with the second-team offense and certainly had some rough spots early in practice, including an interception, before he settled in and closed the day with more efficiency.

Wow moment: Siemian spied fullback Andy Janovich up the right sideline in team drills for what would have been one of the biggest plays of practice. Siemian also allowed wide receiver Jordan Taylor to shine; he is in one of the tightest position battles on the roster. Siemian made a quality throw up the left sideline to Taylor during a third-down period.

Whoa moment: Siemian was erratic early coming out of Tuesday's day off for the players, including a throw to Bennie Fowler that was swatted away by Bradley Roby, a pass knocked down at the line of scrimmage by Jared Crick and an interception by linebacker Brandon Marshall, all among his first set of throws of practice.

Paxton Lynch

Lynch opened with the starters and his day went the opposite of Siemian's, with his best throws coming early in the workout before he found some trouble of his own.

Wow moment: Lynch's best throw came in the early snaps when he hit a leaping A.J. Derby up the left sideline. Lynch followed that pass moments later with another big play up the left side, this time to Taylor. His best throw likely won't stir much conversation, but he showed some progress when he came off his first read to reset and find wide receiver Cody Latimer for a first down in one team period.

Whoa moment: Despite being 6-foot-7, Lynch has had an inordinate number of passes batted down at the line of scrimmage already in this training camp. That total includes three more that were knocked down by linemen Wednesday to go with another that was tipped at the line before it was then knocked down in coverage. Lynch also was intercepted by Aqib Talib after a poor choice on a fourth-down play late in practice.

HOF Series: Davis' NFL career was short but oh so sweet

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

August 3, 2017

In between the magnificence and the migraines, Terrell Davis' NFL voyage was bookended by two bone-crushing hits that came to define a career remembered as much for its brevity as its brilliance.

The first hit harkened his arrival, the second one his departure.

Davis was just another lost-in-the-shuffle rookie back in 1995 filled with doubts when the Denver Broncos traveled to Tokyo for an exhibition game against the San Francisco 49ers.

"Let's just say if I spoke better Japanese I wouldn't be here," said Davis, who contemplated quitting football right then and there. "I'm telling you, I was this close to walking out of there because I looked at everything around me and I just had no shot of making the team. I was a sixth-round draft pick, I was seventh on the depth chart, I wasn't getting any reps in practice, I had my coach constantly on me. And it just didn't feel like there was any way of me making the team."

He told himself he could put his degree in consumer economics from the University of Georgia to use instead as he pondered hailing a cab and catching his own flight home.

"Thank God I didn't," Davis said. "And then I made the big hit."

Summoned to cover a kickoff the next night, the rookie on nobody's radar burst downfield and delivered a savage hit on returner Tyrone Drakeford that left fellow Hall-of-Famer-to-be Shannon Sharpe marveling, "Who was that?!"

That was the savior who would end the frustrations of a long-suffering franchise, city and larger-than-life quarterback who could never win the big game before Davis came along.

Davis is the only running back with back-to-back Super Bowl titles, an MVP trophy, a Super Bowl MVP honor, a 2,000-yard season and seven consecutive playoff wins in which he topped 100 yards rushing.

He accomplished all this despite playing just four full seasons and enduring migraine headaches like the one he suffered against Green Bay in Super Bowl 32, when he scored three touchdowns after regaining his vision at halftime.

Davis shudders to think how close he came to frittering it all away.

"For anybody out there struggling, I try to tell them even if your situation seems dire, don't give up," said Davis. "Just keep fighting, keep fighting, keep fighting. You never know."

Sticking it out gave Davis football immortality. He'll be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame next week.

"I'm thrilled for him," said John Elway, who called Davis "the main reason why" the Broncos won consecutive titles in the late 1990s that ended Denver's string of Super Bowl embarrassments.

Yet, Davis, the only running back other than Jim Brown to average more than 100 yards a game over his career, was long considered too much of a short-timer to be enshrined in Canton. He played only seven seasons and was never the same after blowing out his right knee on Oct. 3, 1999.

Davis was chasing down Jets safety Victor Green after an interception when teammate Matt Lepsis made a lunging tackle that also wiped out a trailing Davis.

"It was a wild play," Davis said. "Wrong place, wrong time."

Davis, who had averaged an astonishing 1,603 yards and 14 touchdowns over his first four years, missed the rest of that season and would play in just 13 more games and score two touchdowns over the final two years of his career.

Consider this, however, about the play that essentially ended his career: He easily could have saved his health and his chances of putting up more big seasons by pulling up and not chasing down Green.

But is that the hallmark of a Hall of Famer?

His career wasn't long, but as Elway said, "other than the years he was hurt, he was great."

Picking up first downs and safety blitzes. Taking pressure off the passer. And yes, chasing down defenders after an interception.

The Hall of Fame selection committee recognized those traits and rewarded him in spite of his truncated time in the league.

"I'm thrilled that they overcame the one thing that was keeping him out, and that was the length of his career," Elway said. "Because, while he was playing, there was nobody better."

Still, Davis thought his wait would last a little longer because LaDainian Tomlinson was up for election for the first time this year.

"And I said, 'T.D., don't say that, because you deserve it,'" recounted Tomlinson, who shared "the biggest hug" with Davis after both were elected.

"It was good to see him get in because if he had played just two or three more years, he was a first-ballot Hall of Famer," Tomlinson said. "Because he got hurt, he had to wait a little bit. But all of us players knew he was going to eventually get in. How dominant he was when he played the game, he just couldn't be denied."

Monday Night Football gig a lifetime goal for Beth Mowins

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
August 3, 2017

Beth Mowins is touring training camps this month ahead of dry runs at a pair of exhibition games as she prepares to become the first woman in 30 years to call an NFL regular season game.

The 50-year-old former college basketball player who joined ESPN in 1994 and began calling college football for the network in 2005 will handle play-by-play duties when the Los Angeles Chargers visit the Denver Broncos on Sept. 11. She'll team with former NFL coach Rex Ryan for the late game in a season-opening "Monday Night Football" doubleheader.

The last woman to call an NFL game was NBC's Gayle Sierens in 1987.

"I think all of us want bigger and better games and bigger and better moments and certainly the Monday Night Football franchise is one of the biggest in TV history," Mowins said. "It's definitely something as a kid you watch Monday Night Football and you hope maybe one day you could be there."

To prepare, Mowins teamed up with Ryan to call the Florida State spring game. The pair will work the Buccaneers-Jaguars preseason game Aug. 17 and the Giants-Browns game four days later for practice — their calls will be taped but not broadcast. Mowins also has visited the Chargers' and Broncos' training camps.

Growing up in Syracuse, New York, with sports-minded parents and three brothers, Mowins realized she could combine her two greatest loves — sports and talking.

"I used to watch the NFL Today show all the time and Phyllis George was on there, and that was probably the first time I had seen a woman in that moment, on television, covering football, talking with all these players and reporting," Mowins said. "And that was something I asked my mom if I can do and she said, 'Yes, you can.'"

"And between my mom patting me on the back and my dad giving me a little kick in the backside to make sure I was fighting for it every step of the way ... I had some wonderful encouragement to get there."

Her father was a basketball coach and she would go on to play hoops at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania before getting her Master's degree from Syracuse University. She began her journalism career in 1991 as sports and news director at WXHC-FM radio in Homer, New York.

Mowins isn't focusing on what her future holds as far as NFL games go. Nor is she concerned with the pioneering aspect of her assignment, she said.

"I understand the significance of it and the importance of this moment and I hope there are a lot of young girls and young boys out there who not necessarily see me as a play-by-play announcer but as a

kid who had a dream and had wonderful support from family and friends to pursue that dream and put in a lot of sweat equity to get the opportunity," Mowins said.

"And I don't worry too much about any place in history. I'll let other people handle that. My focus is on the day to day and while I know it's new to everybody else, it's not new to me. I've been calling Monday Night Football games for my family sitting in the living room for decades. So, hopefully I can be just as entertaining in the booth as I have been at home."

Peyton seeking football programs that advance the game

By Staff

Associated Press

August 3, 2017

Peyton Manning is looking for football programs interested in advancing the game.

The five-time MVP quarterback and now an ambassador for Riddell will review applicants for an equipment grant from the company through its Smarter Football initiative, now in its third year. Smarter Football is a grass-roots campaign that recognizes and rewards teams across the country for implementing smarter tactics on and off the field. Some 1,700 football programs across North America from the youth level up to semi-pro have applied for an equipment grant the past two seasons.

"Over the years, I've attended many youth and high school football practices," says Manning, who retired after winning the Super Bowl in February 2016 with Denver. "I've witnessed the struggle many of these programs undergo to get the right equipment to provide proper protection for their players. In addition to promoting a safer approach to the sport together, Riddell's Smarter Football program has the opportunity to ignite new energy into these hard-working programs."

Riddell has launched Precision-Fit, a state-of-the-art three-dimensional head scanning process used to build a custom-fitting, player-specific helmet liner system to provide personalized protection. Riddell also has technology that summarizes players' on-field alerts and identifies training opportunities for athletes.

"I've always valued preparation and information, both on and off the field," Manning adds. "I studied everything from the helmet I wore to the tape I watched to the plays I called to try to set myself and my team up for success."

"This year's program will continue to recognize and reward those at all levels of play who have taken steps towards improving and advancing the sport of football, especially when it comes to player safety and protection."

Broncos players becoming convinced it will take games to decide QB derby

By Troy Renck
KMGH
August 3, 2017

Before Trevor Siemian failed to complete a pass in the first two team periods and fired an interception to Brandon Marshall, before Paxton Lynch zipped a fourth down pass into cornerback Aqib Talib's stomach, I wondered if a change was needed.

Is it time for the No. 1 offense to work against the No. 2 defense to gain confidence? There's no public discussion of making a change, but after six days it's fair to wonder if the competition is becoming counterproductive.

One thing is clear in talking to multiple players off camera for Denver7: The games are the thing. With both quarterbacks dealing with a mixed bag of results, they need a new opponent to create separation. Bring on the Chicago Bears. Hello, dual practices with the San Francisco 49ers. Those will become the midterms for these quarterbacks. The grades in these settings should, and likely will, carry more weight.

After six days, here is my scorecard (did I mention the games will be more important? OK, good). Siemian 2, Lynch 2, 2 draws. It leaves Siemian with a slight edge because he played so well Saturday, and he finished strong Wednesday in 7-on-7 drills and ended his outing with connections to receiver Jordan Taylor.

Time for him Fly

While the defense continues to make life difficult for the quarterbacks, the receivers believe they are getting better from the daily tests. Emmanuel Sanders, who put a gym in his house to work out and changed to a healthier diet, continues to excel. Not a day goes by that he is not sparring with the defensive backs.

"Every training camp, it's me and Talib, and me and Chris (Harris Jr.). We always go at it. That's the 'No Fly Zone,' and I've got a private jet," said Sanders. "I am trying to fly. Sometimes they blow my plane out of the sky and sometimes I fly good. I look down on them like, 'Hey, I'm flying up here, y'all can't stop me.' That's the beauty. Those two are All-Pro cornerbacks and I am blessed to go up against them every day."

Footnotes

Starting right guard Ron Leary sat out with a groin injury. He might practice Thursday. Billy Turner worked in his place on the first team for most of the practice. ... Left tackle Garrett Bolles received plenty of run with the first-teamers. Donald Stephenson is also getting reps on the left side with Ty Sambrailo switching to the right. Sambrailo, lacking confidence it appears, remains in a fight to make the team. ... Running back De'Angelo Henderson and Stevan Ridley continue to impress. Henderson runs downhill and Ridley is performing with urgency. It will be interesting to see if Ridley gets into a groove if he becomes a threat to Jamaal Charles' position. Again, it's early. Charles, for his part, began work on 7-on-

7 drills, showing burst on some passing plays. ... Center Matt Paradis remains bullish on this offense: "We are going to score a lot of points." He is impressed with Bolles, even if the rookie works too hard at times. "He's flying around. I don't know if you saw the pick six when he sprinted all the way to the end zone. A rookie move." ... Tight end Jeff Heurman is quietly enjoying a strong camp. After two lost seasons, he needs to translate it to the games, but the former Ohio State standout is off to a good start. ... Connor McGovern's physical style and versatility are turning heads. He can play center and guard, useful on game days with minimal active roster spots. ... Receiver Kalif Raymond faces an uphill battle to make the roster following the drafting of Isaiah McKenzie. However, he is demonstrating NFL speed in the return game, and running sharp routes. If he's not here, he could be with another team with the way he's performing in practice. ... Von Miller likes the idea of Bolles calling him the Chinese dragon. It's an compliment on the way Miller bends his body. "If you look at it, that's what any great pass rusher tries to be. You try to be predictable and still have force and movement at the same time."

Broncos' Von Miller becomes face of franchise at training camp

By Troy Renck
KMGH
August 3, 2017

Down in the corner of the practice field, 20 minutes before the start of practice, Von Miller pulled at the tape on his wrist, bobbed his head and settled under the football. Fielding kicks features players who are trying to accelerate their learning curve or provide a glimpse of potential that might help them make the team.

This is no place for a three-time All-Pro outside linebacker. But truth is, Miller fits everywhere. He catches punts, runs upfield on kicks, and, in his full-time job, bends his body like *The Matrix*, his elusiveness leaving tackles grasping at air.

"Same ol', same ol'," Miller insisted. "Nothing has really changed."

Yet, everything feels different. In Year 2 AP (After Peyton), Miller has emerged as the undisputed Face of the Franchise. Don't believe it. Don't watch Miller. Watch the fans. See how they interact with him. Listen to how they cheer his every move. The NFLPA released jersey sales figures on Tuesday, and Miller ranks 13th in the league, and first among defenders.

He transcends football. He has become an organic celebrity, which seemed a dangerous proposition three years ago, but now fits his personality like the gloves he wears to rip through opposing linemen.

"I guess people are starting to see it a little more. Every year we have the crowd out here, I love interacting with them. Spraying water on them. I should bring a water gun. They come a long way just to see us practice for two years. They get here at 7:30 in the morning before we even get here," Miller said. "When they come all the way out here, I have to give them something."

At 28, Miller enters his prime poised to make the Hall of Fame. His 73.5 sacks are the sixth most in NFL history through six seasons. He's not in Canton, but he can see it from here, especially after he rededicated himself this offseason. No longer burdened or distracted by contract talks -- he signed a six-year, \$114.5 million deal with \$70 million guaranteed last July -- Miller tightened the vice. He improved his diet, checking in at 6.3 percent body fat. He added muscle created from torturous workouts designed to shock the system. His Instagram page documented his runs through the sand, and relentless climbing.

Broncos Training Camp Day 6 Takeaways: Matt Paradis gets back into team-period work

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
August 3, 2017

Dripping with sweat, Matt Paradis was beaming as he left the practice field just before midday Wednesday..

He'd only had a handful of snaps during the Broncos' sixth training-camp practice. But they were his first ones with the team since he underwent two offseason hip surgeries, and they represented a crucial step in his bid to be ready to play and resume his ironman streak of playing every regular-season snap, which dates back to the first game of the 2015 season.

"I'm feeling really good," Paradis said. "The more we progress, the more we're starting to do things. It's been going really well."

Until Wednesday, Paradis' repetitions were limited to individual periods and "mental repetitions," as he watched second-year veteran Connor McGovern work in his place from the sideline.

As he watched, the offensive line changed around him. Ron Leary started off working at left guard, then moved to right guard, with Max Garcia shifting back to the left side.

Depending on how the competition at left tackle ends, Paradis could walk up to the line of scrimmage in Week 1 bracketed by newcomers at 75 percent of the other spots on the offensive line.

The dynamic has changed -- and so has the energy.

"I also think that's something that the new guys have brought, too," Paradis said. "It's a lot easier to have that energy and set that tone when you have a bunch of guys with you. The guys we have in the room really are all about that."

1. McGOVERN STAKES HIS CLAIM

McGovern's first-team repetitions are likely to drop from here, given that Matt Paradis saw his first team-period repetitions of training camp Wednesday.

But since the start of OTAs, McGovern filled in capably for Paradis, gained experience working on the first team and built chemistry with some of the players likely to be in the starting lineup in Week 1.

That came in handy when Paradis stepped into the lineup Wednesday. McGovern shifted to right guard in place of the injured Leary and the offense didn't miss a step. When Paradis went back to the sideline, McGovern moved back to center.

In working throughout the offseason at center, McGovern made his case to be the primary swing interior backup on the offensive line.

"Now he's making the calls, he's dialed [in] on the offense," Paradis said. "He's not messing up. He's doing very well. I've been very impressed with him. Then he can step over seamlessly to guard."

2. BARBRE WILL REMAIN AT LEFT GUARD

Although Donald Stephenson and Ty Sambrailo exchanged tackle spots -- with Stephenson moving to left tackle to share first-team work with Garrett Bolles -- Head Coach Vance Joseph opted to keep status quo at the guard spots, leaving new acquisition Allen Barbre at left guard behind Max Garcia.

"He's going to stay [on the] left [side]," Joseph said. "Left guard, left tackle -- it's like corner[backs]. Their footwork and their eye placement, some guys just like playing left."

"Like Max, he likes playing left. Allen has been a left guard. You may say that's not important, but your footwork, your eye placement, your power hands and power feet -- it matters for some guys, so he's going to stay at left."

3. MORE DUSTUPS AT PRACTICE

Two days after a fight between Sambrailo and ILB Zaire Anderson, three different scuffles broke out among the third-teamers.

Joseph did not call the team together for an in-practice gathering as he did Monday, but he reiterated his point about not wanting to see fights, given the consequences they have in game situations.

"We don't want that because the game's not played that way," Joseph said. "I understand guys are competing. We don't want cheap shots because this is our teammates. Practicing the right way and competing the right way is important to me."

Nevertheless, the intensity revealed by the exchanges is what Joseph wants to see.

"It's a physical sport, things happen," TE Virgil Green said. "If we didn't have guys that had their adrenaline running out here every day, then you really don't trust the guys in the locker room. We want to have tough guys on both sides of the ball."

Broncos Training Camp Quick Hits: Day 6

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
August 3, 2017

The skies were clear above UHealth Training Center on a gorgeous Wednesday morning, but when it comes to the quarterback competition, the forecast is a bit more hazy -- which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Right now, it's even," wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders said. "They're battling."

Wednesday, it was Paxton Lynch's turn to get the first team-period repetitions. As has been the case, the two exchanged first-team periods. Lynch had perhaps the day's nicest pass, dropping a picture-perfect pass to tight end Austin Traylor for a touchdown, but also threw a late interception. Trevor Siemian's day started slowly, with five incompletions in his first five team-period attempts, but he rebounded and led the offense on a drive to a field goal late in practice.

The quarterbacks have struggled with consistency, but that has been the case for players throughout the roster, Head Coach Vance Joseph noted.

"I think every player is going through some of that in training camp. Obviously, the quarterback is the big discussion, but every player, if you grade the film, has had good plays and bad plays," Joseph said. "But the quarterback's bad plays -- everybody sees them and it's an interception. That's the position. But I'm OK with that, because we're learning, we're teaching and we're competing."

... Making life rough for the quarterbacks was the defensive line, which was active at the line of scrimmage. Zach Kerr knocked down a pair of passes at the line of scrimmage. Jared Crick and Derek Wolfe also batted down passes.

... A heavy rush led to Siemian's interception midway through practice. Forced to deliver the football quickly because of a corner blitz, Siemian fired an off-target pass to the left side that ILB Brandon Marshall bobbled, then brought in. Marshall sprinted downfield, with rookie Garrett Bolles giving chase to try and prevent what would have likely been a touchdown in game conditions.

"It took long enough," Marshall said, smiling.

... RB Juwan Thompson was one of the standouts of the 9-on-7 period, twice bursting through the line for runs that would have been touchdowns under game conditions.

... The offense and defense emerged from a two-minute, move-the-ball period near the end of practice with a split.

In the first-team duel, the defense got the better of the Lynch-led offense when Aqib Talib jumped in front of a Lynch pass for Sanders on fourth-down, ending the drive. Siemian led the second team into range of a game-winning field goal via three completions, including a pair of passes to Jordan Taylor that covered 17 and 24 yards, moving the offense to the defense's 20-yard line.

... After working the first five days of training camp at right tackle, Donald Stephenson moved to the left side for Wednesday's work, sharing first-team work with Garrett Bolles. Ty Sambrailo moved to right tackle, working behind first-teamer Menelik Watson, handling the work that Stephenson took care of in the first five days.

"We switched Stephenson and Ty [Sambrailo] to get Stephenson some first-team tackle reps along with Bolles," Joseph said. "That hasn't been settled. It's still those three guys battling for the left-tackle spot.

"Stephenson has done some good things in training camp, so we gave him a chance to go over to left [tackle] to jump into that competition."

... Rookie RB De'Angelo Henderson continues to show outstanding burst and explosiveness when he receives opportunities, and his work has caught the notice of Sanders.

"Man, he can find a hole," Sanders said after practice. He always seems to find a way to get to the end zone.

"We're looking for playmakers on the offensive side of the ball," Sanders added, "so hopefully he can bring that to us."

PARTICIPATION REPORT:

... C Matt Paradis returned to team-period action for the first time since his two offseason hip surgeries, working a handful of snaps during team periods midway through practice.

"Matt looked good," Joseph said. "We're going to go slow with Matt, but obviously, having Matt out there is a huge deal for us."

... RG Ron Leary missed a second consecutive day because of a groin injury. He is expected to practice Thursday.

... RB Jamaal Charles saw his first team and seven-on-seven work Wednesday, getting some limited repetitions after seeing only individual work in the first five days of training camp.

"That was the plan for Jamaal after the first off-day, to kind of give him more team reps early on, and more seven-on-seven reps, also," Joseph said, adding that he would work Charles at a similar pace to Paradis.

... DE Derek Wolfe returned to practice Wednesday after dealing with a stinger Monday. "He's having a hell of a camp," Joseph said.

... DE Adam Gotsis saw his first team-period repetitions of training camp during Wednesday's session.

... CB Marcus Rios missed a second consecutive practice because of a groin injury.

... RB Bernard Pierce continued to sit out due to a hamstring injury.

WEATHER REPORT: The Broncos practiced under blue skies, with temperatures that rose from 71°F to 83°F during the session.

ATTENDANCE: 4,657.

The Pick Six: Hall of Famer Terrell Davis says 'Sesame Street' appearance is top on his resume

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
August 3, 2017

1. What kind of addition do you think Jamaal Charles can be, and what would it take for him to get there?

"It's not difficult. It's really just health. If he's healthy, and I think he's in shape, I think he's trained for it, then I think you know what we can get — and I say 'we' as the Broncos, I know [what] the Broncos can get — because he's an exciting running back. I don't know if he's going to be a high-volume guy. I wouldn't see him getting 15-plus carries a game or touches, so I see him probably as an eight-to-10-touch guy until later on when they can say, 'OK, he's healthy.' But you still have C.J. Anderson, you still have [Devontae] Booker when he comes back. So it's really one ball to go around with a lot of backs. But health is a key for that position, big-time."

2. This is obviously an exciting time for you with the Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremony coming up in a few days. Recently you got your gold jacket and before that, you had your bust made. What's it like being in the room while this sculptor shapes a mold in your likeness?

"It's weird because he's staring at you the whole time, so you've never been stared at like that in your life, but you know what it represents and you know what's about to happen. So you kind of tune in and out of consciousness in terms of the awareness of what it means. And he's there eight hours, so one minute you're watching him and you're thinking to yourself, 'It's incredible, like this guy is actually making this bust that's going to be in the room forever, and it's going to be stationed among all the other Hall of Famers,' so then you start to think about it. You're like, 'Wow, this is incredible.' And then you kind of get off that for a minute. You might watch some TV and then you get back to it and all of a sudden you get another idea of how incredible it is. Like, there's only 310 of these things made. So anytime there's sort of a landmark or something that happens, whether it's the jacket or the bust, it just reminds you that this is incredible. There's no other way to describe it. And if I tried to describe it, I think I would do it an injustice because it's hard to. There's no other feeling I could compare it to, people say your wedding, they say winning a Super Bowl, there's nothing else I could compare it to."

3. Now I'm going to go back a little ways to "Sesame Street."

"Oh, yeah, you went back. You went back."

What was that experience like to be on set with them to film a show?

"It's great. It was fun. As a kid, you grew up and that's something that ... who didn't watch 'Sesame Street?' And it was the one thing I remember that my agent, when he brought it to me, it was one of the few things that I was like, 'I'm doing it.' Everything else he would bring to me, I'm like, 'OK, let's talk about it.' But the minute he said, 'I'm trying to get you on "Sesame Street,"' I was like, 'Dude, I'm on it.' I was pumped for it."

"But I don't know if you remember what happened. We were undefeated and we lost to the Giants. I was supposed to do 'Sesame Street' on Monday right after the game in New York. But [former head coach] Mike [Shanahan] didn't let me stay. So I had to fly back to Denver, do a workout on Monday, fly back on Monday night to New York and they were gracious enough to move the show to Tuesday for me. So I did the shoot on Tuesday, flew back on Tuesday night and I was back here for practice on Wednesday. So I went out of my way to go back and shoot that thing with 'Sesame Street.' And to this day, what is great about that, it lives forever. So my children now get to see their dad with Elmo and the Count and all those other characters, which were great."

4. And as I understand it, it was a pretty big moment for your mom, too, right?

"Yeah. That was one of the things, as a parent, you don't think about your kids ever being on 'Sesame Street.' No one thought about that. And I wasn't a kid at the time, but still. To her I'm always going to be her kid. But we never thought about me being on that show and having a chance to be that close to the characters. It was the one thing I'm always going to cherish. I'm always going to use that on my resume. How many people can say they were on 'Sesame Street?'"

So it's going to go NFL Network, "Sesame Street," Denver Broncos on your resume.

"Yeah, 'Sesame Street' might be up there. That might be number one. 'Sesame Street,' then the Hall of Fame, then the other stuff."

5. During your visit, you did the Mile High Salute with Big Bird. Is that the coolest person — bird? — you've done the salute with?

I've done it with a lot of people. He's one of them. It's incredible how many people know me from that, and whether it's Denzel Washington —

You've done the salute with Denzel.

Yeah, I got a salute from Denzel, which was cool. You don't realize how many people were actually watching you or who were fans of yours until they salute or they sit there and rattle off your stats or [say], 'Yeah, when you guys beat the Packers, I was here.' Football is powerful, man.

6. I saw your oldest son is going into first grade. What's it been like for you, seeing him grow up, find his own personality and go off to school?

That's been the best thing. I'm more proud of that [than football] — and it's such a joy to watch him grow, because you're curious about how your son is going to turn out. Does he have any athletic ability? Is he going to be good in sports? Does he even want to play sports? But my oldest son, Jackson, he's gravitated toward sports. He loves football, he loves basketball and he loves golf, now.

I watched him in his first game. In his first game where he broke off his first touchdown in a flag football game, I'm on the sideline and of course everybody's looking at me as he gets the ball. I'm going nuts on the sideline. I'm going completely nuts because he came this way, reversed fields and came back the other way and he scored, like, a 60-yard touchdown. And I am going nuts and I have to remind myself these are all 6-year-olds, 6- and 7-year-olds. You can cheer but you can't just be 'YEAHHH, GO!' and I was over the top. The coach, he came over afterwards and he was like, 'Hey, parents. I know you guys are

excited but we've got to just kind of, you know, it's little league.' I'm like, 'Man, speak for yourself, I'm going to cheer when my son scores.'

Von Miller considers possibility of 30-sack season

By Aric DiLalla

DenverBroncos.com

August 3, 2017

Michael Strahan's single-season sack record has stood for 15 years.

His 22.5-sack output may not be the standard forever, though, if you ask outside linebacker Von Miller.

And if it does fall, Strahan's mark could be left far behind. Following Wednesday's practice, Miller entertained the thought that a player could reach 30 sacks, and he broke down the path to that number for a player of his or Oakland's Khalil Mack's caliber.

"Thirty? I think it is [attainable]," Miller said. "First off, you've got to come out -- let me think about it. You've got to get 10 in that first month. You've got to get 10 your first month, which is doable. You get two-and-a-half, you get two-and-a-half the next game, two-and-a-half the next game after that. You might miss one game, but then you get two-and-a-half [the next game]."

"So then you've got 10 in five games right there. If you get three, two, three [in a stretch], it's definitely doable."

Miller, who is either quick on his feet or has previously thought about the 30-sack mark, has tailored his plan down to individual snaps. And while "the gospel" says teams will chip elite pass rushers, Miller has decided there's a path if someone can perform with high efficiency.

"You've got to take advantage of your pass rush opportunities," Miller said. "If you get five open rushes, you've got to win all five of those rushes. Out of those five rushes, you might get two or three sacks off those. That's the math that I have on it."

"Out of those five plays — you've got to get home on those plays to make it happen."

Paul Klee: What, the Broncos worry? They should — about the struggling quarterbacks

By Paul Klee
Colorado Springs Gazette
August 3, 2017

What, Von Miller worry?

"I'm thinking more about my Instagram than my preseason snap count," the One-and-Only said Wednesday.

The rest of you? Make like a wart and worry.

The Broncos quarterback competition has reached a stalemate — emphasis on stale.

"My take right now is it's even," wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders said.

Before the Broncos have even played a preseason game, the QB conundrum is threatening to waste another year of Vonnie Football and the "No Fly Zone." One was enough, thank you.

How serious is Tony Romo about retirement?

Through one week of training camp, the question at UHealth Training Center isn't, Which QB has been better? Trevor Siemian's been the better quarterback than Paxton Lynch for over a year now. The question is what the Broncos are living for — now (Siemian) or on a prayer (Lynch)?

Neither has separated himself from the other. I departed Dove Valley on Wednesday thinking the Broncos' quarterback in 2018 might not be on the roster. But if he is, it's Siemian, not Lynch. Trevor was better then (with Gary Kubiak), and now (with Vance Joseph). As for the future? No clue. The joint practices with the San Francisco 49ers on Aug. 16 and 17 will tell a ton.

"I think every player is going through that," Joseph said Wednesday when asked if he, too, is worried about the "inconsistent" quarterback play through one week of training camp.

"V.J." is playing nice. Not every player threw one of the worst interception I've ever seen, like Lynch did. It happened directly in front of Joseph and John Elway — the two men who, it's safe to say, have the final say on this QB decision. Shoot a bullet into his leg, and Aqib Talib still could have made pick. The pass was a head-scratcher, as if Talib was the intended target.

Not every player is going 0 for 6 on his first six passes like Siemian. A few days ago, the quarterback struggles of both led Joseph to lament "I didn't like what I saw today, to be honest." I'm not arrogant enough to think I know where this quarterback competition stands in the eyes of the Broncos. They see things — on the field, in film study, in dreams — the rest of us don't.

But we can listen like pros. And the new stadium name should be Faint Praise Field at Mile High.

“Every player, if you grade the film, has had good plays and bad plays,” Joseph said.

“Both of them got the potential to start right now,” wide receiver Demaryius Thomas said.

“We’re going to see when the lights go on,” Sanders said. “What are you going to do in games?”

Because it’s not happening in practice.

The good news, so far: the stars entered training camp on a mission. Von looks bigger and quicker than a year ago, when he finished second in the NFL’s Defensive Player of the Year voting. The others — Thomas, Talib, Chris Harris Jr., T.J. Ward, etc. — took this missed-the-playoffs things seriously.

“I put a weight room in my house in Houston,” Sanders said. “It’s 2 o’clock in the morning, I’m working out.”

The bad news, by far: the quarterbacks haven’t gotten hit yet, and they haven’t been good enough, yet. Confirmation bias rules the day. If you were Team Paxton before this training camp, you remain Team Paxton. If you were Team Trevor before this camp, you remain Team Trevor. Neither looks better or worse, more like the same — and that says more about Lynch than Siemian, since the Broncos overhauled the coaches and playbook, in part, to fit Lynch.

When choosing the quarterback, the schedule must be considered. The Broncos open with the Chargers (home), Cowboys (home, though Mile High will feel neutral with Texas in town), Bills (road) and Raiders (home). In order, those are toughies against Philip Rivers (who loves "Monday Night Football" and has had some success here, you’ll recall), the NFC’s reigning No. 1 seed (in the Cowboys), the man who coordinated the Broncos offense last year (and these two quarterbacks, in Rick Dennison) and the Raiders.

To feel good about their playoff chances, the Broncos should start 3-1, at the least. The bye is in Week 5. In the quarterback controversy that most closely resembles this one, the 2011 Broncos had a bye in Week 6. They switched from the incumbent (Kyle Orton) to the upstart (Tim Tebow). They made the playoffs. The first choice is not always the season-long choice.

Denver Broncos Fantasy Football 2017 Preview: Demaryius Thomas Is Best Bet

By Pat Fitzmaurice
Sports Illustrated
August 3, 2017

It was less than four years ago that the Broncos beat the holy hell out of the Ravens in a nationally televised Thursday-night season opener, but it seems as if an epoch has passed since Denver's 49-27 victory on Sept. 5, 2013. The Broncos have appeared in two Super Bowls since then, losing one and winning one. Peyton Manning, who torched the Ravens for seven touchdown passes in that game, would soon decline precipitously, then retire. Wes Welker, who had two TD catches against Baltimore, has also retired. Julius Thomas, who had five catches for 110 yards and two TDs in that game, left Denver and has scarcely been heard from since. The three running backs who ran the ball for Denver that night—Knowshon Moreno, Montee Ball and Ronnie Harmon—are all out of football.

The Denver offense, a finely tuned machine in 2013, is now rusting and badly in need of fresh oil. From a fantasy perspective, the 2017 Broncos offer little juice. The team is punchless at the quarterback and tight end positions. Multiple running backs will compete to take handoffs behind an offensive line that Pro Football Focus projects to be the league's eighth worst. Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders figure to be useful assets, but there probably isn't room for any of the other Denver wide receivers to make meaningful contributions.

WIDE RECEIVERS

Thomas and Sanders have accounted for 51.3% of the Broncos' targets and 49.5% of team receptions over the last two seasons – an extraordinarily huge share. Thomas has had 90 or more receptions and 1,000-plus receiving yards for five consecutive seasons, though he posted five-year lows in catches, receiving yardage and touchdowns last year. Still, his 90-1,083-5 stat line was good for a fantasy finish of WR19. Denver's problematic quarterback situation is a Tupperware lid on Thomas's ceiling, but his fourth-round Fantasy Football Calculator ADP of WR18 reflects that, and his sturdy floor is made of Italian marble. Thomas is a solid buy.

Sanders is on a three-year run of 1,000-yard seasons and has outperformed Thomas on a per-target basis in each of the last two years. I confess that I've been slow to come around on Sanders. I felt as if I didn't have a good handle on what sort of player he was, and whenever a player confuses me, I'll stand back and let others take the plunge. That was a mistake. Sanders has finished WR18 and WR21 over the last two years but carries a modest ADP of WR35. Cut out that Emmanuel Sanders coupon and take advantage of the terrific value.

The candidates to abscond with whatever crumbs Thomas and Sanders leave behind include rookie third-rounder Carlos Henderson, rookie fifth-rounder Isaiah McKenzie and veterans Cody Latimer, Bennie Fowler and Jordan Taylor. McKenzie will probably be used exclusively on kick returns, but Henderson has at least an outside chance of gaining fantasy relevance as a rookie slot man after rolling up 1,535 receiving yards and 19 TD catches in his final season at Louisiana Tech. He should be a substantial upgrade over the departed Jordan Norwood, who played 51% of Denver's offensive snaps

last season. Fowler, Latimer and Norwood all played a little over a quarter of the Broncos' offensive snaps last year, and none of them could eke out even 250 receiving yards. Their battle for roster spots might help keep Broncos preseason games interesting.

TIGHT ENDS

Denver's tight end position is an arid fantasy wasteland. Rookie Jake Butt, a fifth round pick from Michigan, is considered a good two-way TE prospect, but he scored only 11 touchdowns in four years in Ann Arbor and is still recovering from a torn ACL. Longtime sleeper Virgil Green has never panned out and has graduated to sleeper emeritus status. A.J. Derby and Jeff Heuerman will also compete for your lack of attention.

QUARTERBACKS

Quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch have ADPs in the low 30s, and justifiably so. If you watched Siemian play quarterback for the Northwestern Wildcats, you're as shocked as I am that he started 14 NFL games last season and is a candidate to start more. Siemian's completion percentage (59.5%), yards per attempt (7.0) and TD-INT ratio (18-10) with the Broncos last season were actually improvements over his career numbers at Northwestern. That suggests Siemian was playing well over his head in 2016 just to qualify as a mediocre NFL starter.

At some point, the Broncos will turn to 23-year-old Paxton Lynch, whom they traded up to take with the 26th overall pick in the 2016 draft. The rangy Lynch can become the greatest quarterback of the Super Bowl era 6-foot-7 or taller merely by besting the career accomplishments of Dan McGwire, Mike Glennon and Brock Osweiler, and any competent pole vaulter should be able to clear a bar set at 6 feet, 7 inches. Lynch's long frame can generate a great deal of velocity, and he's surprisingly nimble for a quarterback of his size. The problem is that Lynch is as raw as sashimi-grade tuna. As someone who bet on Memphis in Lynch's final college game, then watched him complete 16 of 37 passes for 106 yards in a 37-16 loss to Auburn, I'm pessimistic about Lynch's NFL future. (Sorry, but my wallet holds grudges.)

RUNNING BACKS

Denver's running back situation is hard to discern, and I'm not sure how much effort we should put into the divination of these chicken bones, considering how shabby the Broncos' run blocking was last season. But perhaps the drafting of first-round offensive tackle Garrett Boles and the power-running scheme being installed by offensive coordinator Mike McCoy will open up holes that didn't exist in 2016.

The enigmatic C.J. Anderson is the incumbent starter, though his grasp on the job seemed to be loosening just before a torn meniscus ended his season in October. Anderson has a career average of 4.6 yards per carry, but he hasn't ever rushed for more than 849 yards in a season and has done his best work as part of a rotation. His fifth-round ADP is reasonable, but CJA might struggle to provide an adequate return on such an investment if he serves in a two- or three-man committee. I rank him RB20, but please don't misinterpret that as enthusiasm; it's more about the lack of quality at the position.

Drafters often throw caution to the wind when it comes to an accomplished performer returning from injury, but the public has stayed relatively sober on Jamaal Charles, whose current ADP is RB40. Charles has had four surgeries on his knees, which are creakier than cemetery gates. The Broncos signed him to an inexpensive, incentive-laden one-year deal, so the team isn't investing much more than the fantasy

owners who are willing to spend a mid-round pick on a once-great running back. Charles is obviously a health risk, but “risk” is a relative term. At Charles’ current price, I might be willing to throw a dart or two, though I’ll limit my exposure. Just realize that Charles’ ADP could quickly spike on any morsel of positive news.

Devontae Booker’s rookie season started well enough, with flashes of potential in a change-of-pace role behind Anderson. When Anderson went down, a lot of fantasy owners exhausted their waiver budgets to acquire Booker, but that money would have been better spent on a handful of magic beans. In nine starts, Booker averaged 40.9 rushing yards per game and 3.0 yards per carry. In his defense, he squeezed out four touchdowns over that span and was useful in the passing game (22 catches). An ADP of RB63 suggests that drafters have already soured on Booker. It’s too early to write him off, though, and I’ll make it a point to get at least one share of him in one of my deeper leagues. (Note: Booker recently had surgery for a fractured wrist, but the Broncos expect him to be ready for Week1.)

Sixth-round draft pick De’Angelo Henderson is a potential party crasher. He averaged 1,786 yards from scrimmage and 20 touchdowns over his final two seasons at Coastal Carolina and bears watching in the preseason.

Terrell Davis' playoff prowess should have made him a Hall of Famer long ago

By Frank Schwab

Yahoo! Sports

August 3, 2017

Super Bowl XXXII is the reason Denver Broncos running back Terrell Davis made the Hall of Fame. Super Bowl XXXII should have been the reason Davis made the Hall of Fame a decade ago.

We're in a weird place when it comes to watching and analyzing the NFL. To many, if you're not a quarterback, you don't matter. Blame the culture of "quarterback wins," the single dumbest "stat" that still gets used. We've gone from giving the quarterback too much credit when his team succeeds and too much blame when it loses, to giving the quarterback all the credit or all the blame.

As such, we turn above-average quarterbacks who have never sniffed an All-Pro team or ever gotten a single league MVP vote into legends if their team wins a Super Bowl. Yet, Davis put together a nearly impeccable postseason résumé and had to wait 10 years to get inducted into the Hall of Fame. If Davis was a quarterback with a comparable playoff history, the voters might have waived the five-year waiting period to rush him into the Hall.

In eight playoff games, Davis rushed for 1,140 yards and 12 touchdowns on 204 carries, a ridiculous 5.6-yard average. If you quickly double that, it's 2,280 yards and 24 touchdowns over a 16-game pace, and that's obviously all against playoff competition. Davis rushed for 91 yards in his first playoff game, and Denver lost. Davis rushed for more than 100 yards in each of his last seven playoff games, and the Broncos went 7-0 with two Super Bowl titles. Among non-quarterbacks, you could argue only Jerry Rice has a better playoff résumé. Rice is considered by many the greatest player ever.

Even on Davis' greatest day, at Super Bowl XXXII, he had to watch as Broncos owner Pat Bowlen grabbed the Lombardi Trophy and proclaimed, "This one's for John!" Nobody was bothered, because John Elway was a legendary quarterback who had to wait a long time to win a Super Bowl. But he needed Davis to get him one. Elway completed just 12 passes for 123 yards in that Super Bowl win over the Green Bay Packers. Davis had 157 rushing yards and three touchdowns.

What has been somewhat forgotten, in the endless loops of Elway's 8-yard "helicopter" run (Davis on that drive: eight carries, 31 yards and a touchdown), is that Davis practically played just three quarters of that game. Davis suffered from migraine headaches, but had medication to control them. He'd take the medication before pre-game warmups, and be fine to play.

Then, on Super Bowl Sunday of all days, he forgot to take his medicine. Early in the game he took a knee to the helmet and suddenly he was dealing with a migraine.

"I remember it was just like a blunt force like 'bam!' and it just kinda rocked my world," Davis told Fox Sports.

Davis didn't get a carry in the second quarter as he sat out with the migraine, though he did appear for one play as a decoy. In a clip immortalized by NFL Films, Davis told Broncos coach Mike Shanahan he

couldn't see. Shanahan told Davis he didn't have to see on the goal-line play, he just had to carry out a fake while Elway ran a naked bootleg. It worked, and Elway scored. Still, there was concern at halftime Davis might not play at all in the second half.

Denver would not have won Super Bowl XXXII without Davis in the second half. The Broncos built their game plan around Davis. A major part of it was lining tight end Shannon Sharpe up on one side and having Davis run to the other, to minimize the impact from Packers star strong safety LeRoy Butler. Thankfully for the Broncos, Davis' migraine cleared up at halftime and he controlled the second half. Because the Broncos were so good the following season, in 1998 – with Davis rushing for 2,008 yards, 21 touchdowns and winning NFL MVP – it might get lost a bit how big of an upset Super Bowl XXXII was. Few believed heading into the game that Denver could knock off Green Bay, which won the previous Super Bowl. In a game with future Hall of Famers like Reggie White, Brett Favre, Shannon Sharpe, Gary Zimmerman and Elway, Davis was clearly the best player on the field.

Super Bowl XXXII was Davis at his best: incredible vision, ruthless efficiency with a great combination of power and speed, and an underrated ability to carry the ball play after play without tiring. Davis rushed for 93 yards on 21 carries after halftime against the Packers. Davis touched the ball 22 times on Denver's 35 second-half plays, not counting a kneel-down at the end. Maybe that win was for John, but Davis did almost all of the work. Davis' final carry was the game-winning touchdown with 1:45 left. He was named Super Bowl MVP.

Davis was far from Timmy Smith, who exploded in a Super Bowl for the Washington Redskins but did little else. Davis was a three-time All-Pro and a league MVP, one of five non-quarterbacks to win the award over the last 20 years. Davis averaged 97.5 rushing yards per game in his career, more than Adrian Peterson, Walter Payton, O.J. Simpson, Earl Campbell or many other all-time greats. Through NFL history only Jim Brown and Barry Sanders averaged more rushing yards per game than Davis.

Davis didn't have a long career and that's a major reason he was kept out of the Hall of Fame for 10 years, though players with shorter careers have made it in. In 1999, Davis hurt his knee while trying to make a tackle after an interception, and he was never the same after that. He retired after 78 career games, and as he waited for the Hall of Fame to vote him in, he wondered if a lack of longevity would keep him out.

"I had a lot to lean back on and look back and say, 'Hey, it was great even though it was short,'" Davis said. "But yeah, now that (being elected to the Hall of Fame) has happened, I don't ever have to worry about that being an issue anymore."

In the NFL, we celebrate being clutch. We usually only do that for quarterbacks anymore, but Davis is going to the Hall of Fame because in the biggest games, he was absolutely dominant. His greatest moment brought the Broncos their first championship.

NFL's top six pass-rushing duos entering 2017 season

By Gregg Rosenthal

NFL.com

August 3, 2017

Melvin Ingram attacks an interview with the same intensity with which he bull rushes. So pity the fool who suggests he and Joey Bosa are on the way to emerging as a premier pass-rushing combination.

"We don't feel like we have a chance to be the best duo. We feel like we are the best duo. Point blank. Period," Ingram told me Monday in Costa Mesa, California, eyes aflame.

It's not as bold a claim as it sounds. Bosa's introduction to the NFL ranks alongside those of Ndamukong Suh, J.J. Watt and Von Miller as the most impressive defensive rookie campaigns of the decade. Only three outside linebackers had more pressures than Ingram over the last two seasons, according to Pro Football Focus.

Ingram's boast inspired me to compare the Chargers to the rest of the best pass-rushing duos below. It's a list so deep that outstanding pairs like the Giants' Jason Pierre-Paul and Olivier Vernon, Miami's Cameron Wake and Suh and Philadelphia's Brandon Graham and Fletcher Cox just missed the cut.

These are the tandems I expect to do the most damage in the 2017 season:

1) J.J. Watt and Jadeveon Clowney, Houston Texans

My foremost request to the Football Gods in 2017: Give us just one season of Watt and Clowney, fully healthy and in their primes, playing together. Even Clowney sounds exasperated about it not happening yet.

"Either I'm injured, he's healthy, or he's injured and I'm healthy, or we both not on at the same time," Clowney told reporters last week.

Clowney's breakthrough 2016 season was capped by a starring role in a playoff victory that left teammates dreaming of a day where Clowney and Watt are rolling at the same time. That day is here. Texans coach Bill O'Brien complained that the team couldn't block Clowney early in camp. Watt has returned from back surgery looking fresh.

The top ranking is a testament to the incredible athleticism and energy both players display every snap, because they aren't prototypical edge rushers. Clowney still mostly wins with strength and hustle more than pass-rush savvy. No defensive player drafted this century dominated their first five NFL seasons like Watt. There just aren't many offensive lines that will be able to handle this duo -- if healthy.

2) Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram, Los Angeles Chargers

Bosa and Ingram insist that the transition to coordinator Gus Bradley's 4-3 defense is hardly a transition.

"I was pretty much a defensive end last year," Bosa told me Monday.

"We're doing the exact same thing," Ingram said. "Getting after the quarterback."

Bradley gave credit to Ingram this week for making some adjustments, however, noting that he will play in a two-point stance more often, similar to the role Cliff Avril plays in Seattle.

If Ingram is playing the Avril role for the Chargers, Bosa is the team's answer to Michael Bennett, strong enough to play inside on passing downs for maximum havoc. Bosa is a great problem solver. On one QB takedown in his second career game, his trademark inside swim move didn't work, so he pivoted to a spin move and then somehow saw Broncos QB Trevor Siemian escaping before cutting upfield and corralling him. His ability to change gears and react to the ball is a knack that's difficult to teach.

People around the Chargers marvel at Bosa's one-track mind and snap-to-snap consistency.

"I'm just competing with myself every day," Bosa said. "I hate losing. I hate getting blocked. So when I have a bad day, or a bad rep, I go and try to make the next one the best."

Bosa and Ingram made it difficult for the Chargers' offense to operate on the day I watched practice, winning their battles up front repeatedly. With Ingram having signed a four-year contract this summer, it's a tandem that is just getting started.

"Me and him are a match made in heaven," Ingram said. "We just complement each other when we don't even try to."

3) Khalil Mack and Bruce Irvin, Oakland Raiders

Mack has so many moves. His pure strength is like a 100 MPH fastball that makes all of his other tricks so much harder to deal with, whether it's his footwork, quickness or edge-bending speed. Offensive linemen get pushed back right off the snap enough times against Mack that they begin to expect it. Mack led the NFL with 96 total pressures last season, according to PFF.

Irvin is a fantastic all-around player and creates a lot of havoc with relentless pursuit from the back side of plays. He doesn't quite stack up as a pure pass rusher with many of the names on this list, but his endurance gives him bonus points. Like JPP and Vernon in New York, this duo rarely leaves the field.

4) Michael Bennett and Cliff Avril, Seattle Seahawks

Two of the best free-agent signings of the decade were executed one day apart, by the same team, on contracts that totaled less than \$20 million combined. Bennett and Avril have signed three more contracts overall since then, yet they have still been underpaid for what they've accomplished.

Bennett's versatility makes him a great pass rusher on the edge on early downs and an even better disrupter when the team moves him inside. Avril has essentially defined the edge-rusher "LEO" position in Pete Carroll's defense, to the point where Carroll's acolytes like Gus Bradley and Dan Quinn look for their own versions of Avril.

The Seahawks have the defining defense of the era, and I'd submit Bennett has been the most valuable single piece. As terrific as the "Legion of Boom" has been, this run under Carroll never happens without those two free-agent signings one day apart.

5) Von Miller and Shane Ray, Denver Broncos

Ray's recent wrist surgery sends this tandem tumbling down the list. The Broncos hope Ray can return by mid-September, but NFL Network Insider Ian Rapoport reports that he might have to wear a cast when he first gets back. That's a concern for a player not known for his strength -- and one who has never played a full complement of snaps as a season-long starter.

Miller missed out on the Defensive Player of the Year award by one vote last season, the rare player to get even better after a Super Bowl MVP award and life-changing contract. Players are often known for their first step, but Miller must have the fastest last step in the league, closing on quarterbacks before they know what happened.

6) Aaron Donald and Robert Quinn, Los Angeles Rams

Donald followed up a Rookie of the Year award with back-to-back seasons ranked as PFF's top defensive player. On this list of tough guys, Donald wins my vote as the strongest. He also ends more plays with immediate pressure from his quick first step than anyone else in the league, plays that usually don't end up in the box score. Now, Donald, who is currently holding out for a new contract, will get to join forces with one of the greatest coordinators in league history in Wade Phillips.

Donald's contract should get settled in time for the season, like most holdouts do. When he returns, it will be a lot harder to constantly double-team Donald if Quinn can stay on the field.

"Don't worry. [Quinn's] already coming," Phillips told me this June. "He looks good. He's tremendously quick off the ball."

Quinn was perhaps the best pure pass rusher in football in 2013 and my choice for Defensive Player of the Year that season. He has struggled to stay healthy since, the only reason why the Donald-Quinn duo ranks this low. Judged on peak potential, they rank ahead of any tandem on this list except Clowney-Watt.

Rookie Spotlight: Garrett Bolles Will Bolster Denver's Offensive Line

By Kevin McGuire

CBS Las Vegas

August 3, 2017

The value of a good offensive line cannot be taken for granted in the NFL. That is why the Denver Broncos should feel good about the outlook with rookie offensive tackle Garrett Bolles finding his way into the mix this summer leading up to the fall. Bolles is already making a case to be considered for a starting job in Denver, so everything appears to be going according to plan for the Broncos in a year that will see some changes on the offensive line.

Bolles is coming off a very successful 2016 season with the Utah Utes of the Pac-12, and he continues to grow from that experience with the work already completed in mini-camps for the Broncos. A First-Team All-Pac-12 player last year for the Utes, Bolles has proven he is a capable blocker at a key position.

Bolles is a bit older than your typical rookie. The 25-year-old previously served a two-year mission before attending Snow College and played two seasons of football. He then transferred to Utah for his final year of college football before turning pro. Bolles declared early, capitalizing on his successful season at Utah and opting not to risk playing another year before getting to the NFL. He has learned a lot in that time out of high school, and the maturity that comes from having served a two-year mission gives Bolles more of a sense of responsibility and preparation for what is asked of him.

His work ethic was recognized quickly by NFL Scouts, resulting in an invitation to the NFL Scouting Combine as one of the top offensive tackles on the big board. And clearly, the Broncos walked away impressed with what he could do. Otherwise, the Broncos would not have spent a first-round draft pick on the offensive lineman. There is always a risk in taking a lineman in the first round, but if it works out for a team then that likely helps build a stable offensive line that can protect a franchise quarterback and open up room for the running game. Coming from Utah, Bolles will bring with him a physical approach to the line that has previously been used to help the running game.

Terrell Davis' winding journey leads to happy Hall ending

By Kevin Acee

San Diego Union Tribune

August 3, 2017

Terrell Davis can't stop smiling.

He knows he belongs here with the other greats alongside whom his likeness will now sit cast in bronze for thousands of years.

But knowing you belong and believing you will belong can be different, and that difference can make you smile without end.

"When I look back, this wasn't even an option," Davis said recently. "This wasn't even in any thought process. I just look up and laugh. It's funny."

Davis on Saturday will become one of just 310 members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

And his being among the 19 true running backs from the modern era (post-1970) to be thus immortalized is something so much more than "funny."

It's amazing is what it is.

It's a story that has been told many times and is so extraordinarily unlikely that it must be revisited at this time.

Oh, the debate about whether Davis belongs in the NFL is settled.

Without Davis, the Denver Broncos are not the Broncos we know. John Elway doesn't have a Super Bowl ring without him, let alone two.

But Davis could have become a different kind of statistic at any one of so many points along the way to the moment when he stands on a dais in a gold jacket and unveils the bronze bust of his likeness.

The kid who got his start playing in the Valencia Park Pop Warner League at Martin Luther King Park in Southeast San Diego did not play high school football until his junior year and didn't play all that long in the NFL.

Davis' father died during Davis' freshman year at Morse High.

"I was done with football," Davis said this week of the "tailspin" Joe Davis' passing launched. "... I got lost. I lost my way. I lost my purpose. I got into some bad stuff."

His speech at Saturday's induction ceremony will address what he calls his "wake-up call."

At some point before his junior year, Davis ran into Frank White, a former Pop Warner coach. White found out Davis had quit football.

“Oh no, oh no, you can’t,” White recalled telling Davis. “You’ve got to go back. You’re gifted. God gave you something others don’t have. You have to go back.”

White paused and said: “He went to Lincoln, and the rest is history.”

Yes, Davis will join fellow Lincoln High graduate Marcus Allen in the Hall. With Junior Seau, they are the only native San Diegans in the Hall.

But the path to history wasn’t quite so straight for Davis.

Unlike Allen, Davis was not a huge star after arriving late to the talented Lincoln program.

Davis was a nose guard and fullback at Lincoln and got a scholarship to Long Beach State largely because his brother was already there. When Long Beach shut its program down after Davis’ second year there, he transferred to the University of Georgia, where he backed up Garrison Hearst, clashed with the head coach and suffered a hamstring injury that lingered.

Davis was the Denver Broncos’ sixth-round draft pick in 1995 and surprisingly made the team after a preseason that included a now-infamous special teams tackle he made that impressed Broncos coaches.

“I didn’t think I’d be playing professional football,” Davis said last week. “One opportunity led to another, and I took advantage of it.”

Even after doing so — after the Super Bowl MVP and regular season MVP awards and two Broncos championships — his quick trip to Canton was waylaid by a severe knee injury suffered in 1999 when he tried to make a tackle after an interception.

“If that injury hadn’t happened, if he had been able to go another two or three years strong, he’d have had records that were unimaginable,” said White, a lifelong confidant who still manages some of Davis’ business interests and is in Canton this week.

There is no question that from 1995-98 Davis compiled numbers that belonged on a Hall of Fame resume. His 6,413 yards and 56 touchdowns in that span are more than any running back ever in the first four seasons of an NFL career. He also ran for more than 100 yards in seven of his eight postseason games, more than all but Emmitt Smith (who appeared in twice as many playoff contests).

But the numbers were considered by many to just not be enough. Essentially, with 17 games over his final three seasons, his was just a four-year career. Arguably, longevity is a facet of greatness.

This past February was Davis' third year as a Hall finalist. His attitude going into each time was that he was playing with house money..

“People always come up to me (and say), ‘Sorry your career ended short,’ “ Davis said. “... I tried not to have that attitude about ‘what-ifs.’ I tried to always lean on the stuff that happened that was great – the

championships, the relationships I built, the 2,000-yard season (in 1998). I had a lot to lean on and look back and say it was great. Even though it was short, it was a blessed career.”

There might have been no one more surprised than Davis when he found out he would be part of this Hall class, which includes former Chargers running back LaDainian Tomlinson.

“I felt there was no way they were putting two backs in the same class,” Davis said the night of his election.

Now, with he and Tomlinson becoming the first backs enshrined together in 40 summers, Davis’ unlikely journey is complete and cannot be questioned.

“Now that this has happened,” he said, “I don’t ever have to worry about that being an issue anymore. It was in the back of my mind that maybe I didn’t play long enough. I feel great I no longer have to answer that.”

And he doesn’t have to stop smiling.

Von Miller thinks 30 sacks in a season is “definitely doable”

By Josh Alper
Pro Football Talk
August 3, 2017

Raiders quarterback Derek Carr said recently that he thinks teammate Khalil Mack could get 30 sacks in a season if officials called holding “like they should.”

Mack brushed up on his pass rushing skills at a summit held by Broncos linebacker Von Miller this offseason and he was asked about the possibility of a player getting to 30 sacks in a season on Wednesday. Miller, who had a career-best 18.5 sacks in 2012, believes that it can be done.

“Thirty? I think it is [attainable],” Miller said, via the team’s website. “First off, you’ve got to come out — let me think about it. You’ve got to get 10 in that first month. You’ve got to get 10 your first month, which is doable. You get two-and-a-half, you get two-and-a-half the next game, two-and-a-half the next game after that. You might miss one game, but then you get two-and-a-half [the next game]. So then you’ve got 10 in five games right there. If you get three, two, three [in a stretch], it’s definitely doable.”

In order to pile up those numbers and eventually break the single-season sack record of 22.5 set by Michael Strahan, Miller says pass rushers have to maximize their opportunities when they get open rushes. It seems likely that opposing teams would do all they can to ensure those opportunities don’t come if a player gets off to the kind of start that Miller is talking about, but even the first part of the equation would go down as an impressive feat for Mack, Miller or any other pass rusher.

John Bowlen faces probation violation allegation

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
August 3, 2017

With John Bowlen facing DUI charges in California while allegedly driving more than 100 miles per hour, the son of Broncos owner Pat Bowlen has a separate legal entanglement in his home state of Colorado.

Via 9news.com in Denver, the DUI situation has triggered an allegation that John Bowlen violated the terms of the probation arising from his 2015 domestic violence arrest.

Lawyer Harvey Steinberg, per the report, has challenged an arrest warrant, claiming that John Bowlen never was officially told that his probation had begun when the Colorado Supreme Court refused to take up an appeal of his conviction earlier this year.

It's unclear when or how John Bowlen, 31, believed the probation period began, but the arrest warrant outlines various deficiencies suggesting that he didn't behave as if the probation period had begun, from failing to contact his probation officer to failing to perform his community service to failing to pay all fines arising from the domestic violence case to failing to undergo counseling to failing to obtain permission to leave Colorado.

So maybe he's actually innocent. Or maybe he's just an entitled rich kid who thinks the rules that apply to the rest of us don't apply to him and when they do there's always a way to buy his way out of trouble.

Either way, he'll now be trying to buy his way out of trouble in two different jurisdictions.