

# Broncos best Bears in preseason opener

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
August 11, 2017

In the center stood a young girl donning an orange No. 18 Peyton Manning jersey. At her side was an older man wearing John Elway's No. 7. There was no No. 13. No 12, either. No sign of the Broncos' future.

Thursday's preseason opener — a 24-17 win over the Bears — put them one step closer to finding him.

Siemian, as planned by first-year head coach Vance Joseph, started and played 19 plays before handing the reins to Lynch midway through the second quarter. Kyle Sloter closed out the final quarter and was the only of the three quarterbacks to throw a touchdown pass.

"I was satisfied," Joseph said. "Trevor was solid. He made some nice plays in the pass game. Paxton had some nice plays but we had so many penalties. ... It hurt his drives. That's why he played more. But overall it was a solid performance."

While eyes were on the quarterbacks, the victory highlighted many persistent issues on offense for Denver — protection problems, penalties and general inefficiency — with only 144 net yards and a 13 percent conversion rate on third downs when Siemian and Lynch played.

Siemian began with a seven-point cushion, thanks to Chris Harris' pick-six on the third play of the game, and went 6-of-7 passing for 51 yards and no touchdowns or interceptions for a passer rating of 97.7. He was sacked once — on the first play — as Leonard Floyd flew around right tackle Menelik Watson for the takedown as protection issues and penalties littered Siemian's three drives.

Both teams racked up a total of six flags on Denver's opening drive, but Siemian held his own, connecting with Demaryius Thomas for a conversion on third-and-11 and setting up a 38-yard field goal by Brandon McManus.

Siemian's second drive was a three-and-out, and his final go was a seven-play, 37-yard drive that included two completions to Cody Latimer. One of those, however, was nullified by penalties. The drive ended on a run by Stevan Ridley on third-and-1 that resulted in a loss of 3 yards.

Where Siemian appeared in control under pressure, Lynch struggled early with his reads and reacting quickly to the defense. He took over with 7:41 left in the second quarter and played four series, going 6-of-9 passing for 42 yards and a 77.1 rating, while adding 11 yards on four carries. carries for 11 yards. He closed the first half with back-to-back three-and-outs, often tucked the ball and scrambled to evade pressure. To compensate for his late reads, he appeared to throw harder, affecting his accuracy.

Lynch showed flashes of potential, though, as he connected early and often with Latimer and, in the third quarter, hit Jordan Taylor for a 14-yard completion and first down.

Sloter played the entirety of the fourth quarter and found rookie receiver Isaiah McKenzie for a 47-yard touchdown and then handed off to De'Angelo Henderson for a 41-yard go-ahead score.

Joseph and offensive coordinator Mike McCoy said before to the game that while the preseason performances count the most for the quarterbacks, the race will be decided by the players' full body of work since April. Decision-making will weigh heavily.

"It's an ongoing battle," Joseph said. "Next week Paxton is going to be with the first team for the first quarter and a half. ... Right now we're still competing. We're all learning the offense still. So after next week we can sit down and talk about if there's separation."

Siemian arrived in Chicago with an edge, showing more consistency and comfort in practice and owning more game experience. He left with a firmer grip on his position, but the competition isn't over.

Next week, following joint practices with the 49ers in Santa Clara, Calif., Lynch will get his turn as the starter.

The games may be "meaningless," but a more significant race is underway.

# Broncos' new offense, QBs uninspiring in preseason opener

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
August 11, 2017

An hour before kickoff Thursday, Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch trotted out onto Soldier Field to warm up, setting up shop at the 20-yard line in front of a swath of fans who quickly pulled out camera phones and dangled photos for signatures.

In the center stood a young girl donning an orange No. 18 Manning jersey. At her side was an older man wearing John Elway's No. 7. There was no No. 13. No 12, either. No sign of the Broncos' future.

Thursday's preseason opener — a 24-17 win over the Bears — put them one step closer to finding him.

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While eyes were on the quarterbacks, the victory highlighted many persistent issues on offense for Denver — notably protection problems and penalties (10 total) — with only 144 net yards and a 13 percent conversion rate on third downs when Siemian and Lynch played.

Siemian began with a seven-point cushion, thanks to Chris Harris' pick-six on the third play of the game, and went 6-of-7 in passing for 51 yards and no touchdowns or interceptions for a passer rating of 97.0. He was sacked once — on the first play — as Leonard Floyd flew around right tackle Menelik Watson for the takedown as protection issues and penalties littered Siemian's three drives.

"It's the preseason, so we've been doing all of our things we want to do in the regular season," said rookie tackle Garrett Bolles. "We're just trying to be consistent, run plays we know we can run and continue to get better. It was a good start. There are things we need to work on, definitely, but I feel like everyone is out there playing with their heart tonight."

Both teams racked up a total of six flags on Denver's opening drive, but Siemian held his own, connecting with Demaryius Thomas for a conversion on third-and-11 and setting up a 38-yard field goal by Brandon McManus.

Siemian's second drive was a three-and-out, and his final go was a seven-play, 37-yard drive that included two completions to Cody Latimer. One of those, however, was nullified by penalties. The drive ended on a run by Stevan Ridley on third-and-1 that resulted in a loss of 3 yards.

"I thought I did some good things, I thought Paxton did some good things," Siemian said. "There is definitely some stuff we're going to watch and clean up. I can't really give a reaction right now without watching the tape, but I thought everybody did something good tonight."

Where Siemian appeared in control under pressure, Lynch struggled early with his reads and reacting quickly to the defense. He took over with 7:41 left in the second quarter and played four series, going 6-of-9 passing for 42 yards and a 77.1 rating, while adding 11 yards on four carries. He closed the first half with back-to-back three-and-outs, often tucked the ball and scrambled to evade pressure. To compensate for his late reads, he appeared to throw harder, affecting his accuracy.

"I thought I did pretty good. Before we went to halftime I think we struggled a little bit moving the ball. Missed some third downs that we should have converted and had a lot of penalties," Lynch said. "That kind of set us back. We came out of the locker room at halftime and I thought we did a really good job of moving the ball. But like coach Joseph said, it was just too many penalties to keep us from the moving the ball downfield and get in scoring position."

Lynch showed flashes of potential, though, as he connected early and often with Latimer and, in the third quarter, hit Jordan Taylor for a 14-yard completion and first down.

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# Will Kyle Sloter get to vie for Broncos' starting QB job?

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
August 11, 2017

Of the Broncos' three active quarterbacks, only one threw a touchdown pass Thursday in the team's preseason opening victory against the Bears.

It and it wasn't one of the two contending for the starting gig.

Kyle Sloter, an undrafted free agent out of Northern Colorado, was added to the Broncos' roster for camp competition and depth, but proved he could be much more in Chicago. In his lone quarter of play, Sloter completed five of six passes for 94 yards, including a 47-yard touchdown to rookie receiver Isaiah McKenzie. On his final series, he led the Broncos on a four-play drive that was capped by a 41-yard go-ahead touchdown run by De'Angelo Henderson.

Sloter's passer rating? A perfect 158.3.

"It was awesome," he said. "That's everything you dream of as a kid. Dropping back and throwing a touchdown in the National Football League and leading another one. It was just a blessing to have an opportunity and be in this position."

His performance raised eyebrows — and the question of whether he should be included in the Broncos' QB race.

"As a starter for us?" Joseph said, seemingly baffled by the question. "No. We've got Trevor (Siemian) and we've got Paxton (Lynch), who we're satisfied with. They're both playing good football. Outside of the penalties tonight I was impressed with both guys. So, no."

What about giving Sloter some second-team reps?

"No," Joseph said. "It's Trevor's and Paxton's job, first and second team."

# Von Miller sits out Broncos' preseason opener; Billy Winn injured

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
August 11, 2017

The Broncos opened their preseason Thursday night against the Bears without Von Miller. Coach Vance Joseph decided to keep Miller out of the first contest to preserve his team's star pass rusher amid a rash of injuries to the Broncos' defense, especially on the edge. Shane Ray tore a ligament in his wrist early in training camp and Shaquil Barrett is recovering from a hip strain.

With Miller out, rookie DeMarcus Walker and veterans Kasim Edebali and Vontarrius Dora received extended time.

Inside linebacker Todd Davis (shoulder sprain) and safety T.J. Ward (hamstring) were ruled out earlier in the week, along with center Matt Paradis and running back Jamaal Charles.

Corey Nelson started in place of Davis and Connor McGovern started at center, anchoring a line that included Garrett Bolles at left tackle, Max Garcia at left guard, Ron Leary at right guard and Menelik Watson at right tackle.

**Winn hurt.** Defensive lineman Billy Winn went down hard in the final minute of the first quarter and had to be carted off the field with a knee injury. Winn, who didn't put any weight on his right leg as he hobbled onto the cart, appeared to be in significant pain as his teammates rushed over to support him and pat him on the helmet.

Winn was ruled out for the remainder of the game and is scheduled to have an MRI on Friday to determine the severity of the injury.

**CFA shines.** At least one rookie college free agent has made the Broncos' final roster out of training camp in 12 of the past 13 years. Safety Jamal Carter made a strong case to be the latest. Through three quarters, the safety out of Miami recorded three total tackles, one quarterback hit and a fumble recovery.

**Footnotes.** Kicker Brandon McManus tested his range in warm-ups Thursday afternoon, nailing a 70-yarder. He hit from 73 yards earlier in training camp. ... Receivers Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders, cornerback Aqib Talib, defensive end Derek Wolfe and kicker Brandon McManus were captains.

# Gone in 60 seconds: Broncos starting defense makes statement in short, sweet outing

By Nick Kosmider  
Denver Post  
August 11, 2017

Von Miller watched his teammates on the Broncos' starting defense trot onto Soldier Field on Thursday night for the preseason opener as he remained on the sideline.

The Broncos saw no reason to place undue risk on their franchise player with the start of the regular season still one month away. The good news for Miller? He has only played 60 fewer seconds this preseason than the other stars on the Denver defense.

After Chris Harris intercepted Chicago starting quarterback Mike Glennon on the third play from scrimmage and returned it 50 yards for the game's first touchdown, most members of the defense's top unit were done for the night.

"Man, we were just trying to get done," Harris said. "We were doing whatever we could to get out of the game, and I just happened to make a play."

It was a swift statement for a defense that has been among the NFL's best each of the last two seasons and shows no signs of relinquishing that mantle. Members of the first and second units held Glennon — signed by the Bears to a three-year, \$45 million contract this offseason — to 2-of-8 passing for 20 yards and a 0.0 rating in three series, providing a glimpse into the difficult task faced daily in training camp by Broncos quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch.

Mark Sanchez, Chicago's second-string quarterback, fared no better, completing 1-of-4 passes for 4 yards. The Broncos didn't surrender a score until rookie quarterback Mitchell Trubisky marched the Bears 50 yards for a touchdown in the final two minutes of the second quarter.

"That's a great start," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said. "We had two turnovers on the first three drives. I was impressed with those guys."

While Harris provided the game's biggest highlight in its opening minute, Thursday was never about analyzing a proven all-pro. New editions made for more intriguing evaluations, and several players making their Broncos debuts impressed.

Kasim Edebali, whom the Broncos signed as a free agent in the offseason, has continued to answer the bell at an outside linebacker spot depleted by injuries to Shane Ray and Shaquil Barrett. It was his pressure on Glennon that forced the quarterback to throw high into Harris' waiting arms.

"He's been really sharp and he plays hard," Joseph said of Edebali. "I've been impressed with him the past couple weeks."

Jamal Carter, an undrafted rookie out of Miami, forced Glennon into a hurried throw early in the first quarter and then recovered a fumble after a snap sailed over Glennon's head.

The Broncos did suffer a blow to the defense when nose tackle Billy Winn was carted off the field with an apparent knee injury. Denver is thin at the spot. Behind veteran Domonta Peko, only college free agent Tyrique Jarrett is healthy in the wake of Winn's injury.

Winn, who was on crutches as he exited the locker room, will have an MRI on Friday.

# Three up, three down in Broncos preseason opener against Bears

By Nick Kosmider  
Denver Post  
August 11, 2017

## THREE UP

**Cody Latimer:** Battling for the No. 3 wide receiver spot on the roster, Latimer made the most of his opportunities Thursday, making catches on all seven of his targets for 54 yards.

**Jamal Carter:** The college free-agent safety out of Miami had a quarterback pressure, a fumble recovery, three tackles and was tight in coverage on a key third-and-goal stop in the fourth quarter.

**Chris Lewis-Harris:** The cornerback made three tackles, broke up a third-down pass and made a tackle on special teams as he fights to make the roster.

## THREE DOWN

**Menelik Watson:** The Broncos right tackle, signed by the team in free agency, allowed a sack on his first play and was flagged for an illegal hands to the face penalty later in the opening drive.

**Run game:** The Broncos struggled to open up holes in the run game, tallying only 40 yards on 15 carries in the first half, an average of just 2.7 yards per carry.

**Penalties:** There was little offensive rhythm to be found for the Broncos for much of the game, and penalties did them no favors. They were penalized seven times for 46 yards in the first half alone, miscues that consistently stunted drives.

# Sloter shines, but remains No. 3 QB

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 11, 2017

Gee, coach. What a buzzkill.

Couldn't Vance Joseph play along with the naïve reporter for at least an hour or two?

Not taking strength of opponent into account, the best of many quarterbacks who played Thursday in the Broncos' 24-17 win against the Chicago Bears was Kyle Sloter.

Bears rookie quarterback Mitch Trubinsky was a close second. Sloter and Trubinsky are rookies. Sloter is an undrafted camp arm, a converted backup receiver and one-year starting quarterback for the Northern Colorado Bears who is only getting the occasional practice rep because Broncos seventh-round rookie Chad Kelly is hurt.

Trubinsky was the No. 2 overall pick in the 2017 NFL Draft who is projected as John Fox's franchise quarterback.

Trubinsky brought the Bears from 10-0 down to 17-10 up. Good stuff. Sloter then came in with 9:46 left in the game and led the Broncos to two touchdowns in two tries.

The first was a 47-yard touchdown heave to his training camp roommate Isaiah McKenzie.

"Everybody on the team talks about him," said McKenzie, a fifth-round rookie with blazing speed. "He's a hidden talent, our secret weapon. I love Sloter and everybody else loves Sloter. He's a great kid."

That made it, 17-17.

"We had a deep-in where we were trying to convert a third-and-long," Sloter said. "I just saw the safety didn't carry him though the middle. We had never thrown that ball in practice. We had always thrown the under route, the 18-yard in, but I saw it was a little congested there and something seemed a little bit off so when I saw the safety didn't carry and my guy was scot-free down the field, I just stepped up in the pocket and got a touchdown.

"That's what you dream about as a kid, being able to throw touchdowns in the NFL. It's a little surreal."

On his next drive, Sloter was facing first and 20 from his own 47 when he hit Kalif Raymond down the left sideline for a 24-yard gain and a first down.

At the 2-minute warning, Sloter had just been sacked, knocking the Broncos out of field goal range. It set up third-and-22 at the 41. An inside zone handoff to rookie De'Angelo Henderson was the perfect call. Henderson burst up the gut for a touchdown.

Broncos win 24-17, although only after Trubinsky ran out of time at the Broncos' 22.

With the Broncos' first two quarterbacks, Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch, producing just 3 points in three quarters, does Sloter have a chance to join the Great Quarterback Competition?

"As a starter for us?" said Broncos head coach Vance Joseph, seemingly incredulous that anyone would actually ask (cough! cough!) such a question. "No. We've got Trevor and we've got Paxton. They're both playing good football."

Yes, coach, but Sloter completed 5 of 6 for 94 yards. All he does is complete passes in practice, too, even if it is against the third team.

"He makes plays every day," said Broncos' first-team cornerback Chris Harris Jr., whose pick six on the third play of the game against Bears' quarterback Mike Glennon gave Denver a quick, 7-0 lead. "But I'd love for him to come up against a couple days."

Can Sloter at least mix in some second-team reps?

"No," Joseph said. "It's Trevor or Paxton with our first and second team."

Fine, coach, fine. But it will take more than direct honesty to spoil Sloter's night.

"Crazy," Sloter said. "That's a once in a lifetime experience. Like my coach was telling me out there, we're hoping that's just a stepping stone and we'll continue to get better. Just get ready for San Francisco next week."

What about coach Joseph saying the starting job remains between Siemian and Lynch?

"Yep, that's not my job to make those decisions," Sloter said. "All I can do is do my best. That's the approach that I take. Whether I'm the No. 3, or starter, or clipboard holder, I'm going out there with a starter's mentality. I'm going to play my best and not worry about those decisions."

Chris: "I think I love the format we have. We have more zone. I get to read more. I get to read the quarterback more."

"Scrimmage living my man, jumping same route."

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Paxton and Siemian: "Yep. That's not my job to make those decisions. All I can do is do my best. That's the approach that I take. Whether I'm the 3 or starter or clipboard holder I'm going out there with starter's mentality. I'm going to play my best and not worry about those decisions."

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# Harris, rookie Slotter lead Broncos past Bears, 24-17 in preseason opener

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 11, 2017

Sometimes, you can tell in three plays.

Three plays are all first-year Denver Broncos' head coach Vance Joseph needed to realize he inherited a really good defense. Three plays are all the Denver defense and the No Fly Zone needed to show their old coach John Fox the Chicago Bears' new quarterback had no shot.

On the third play of the Broncos' opening preseason game, Bears quarterback Mike Glennon dropped back in the pocket, was harassed by outside linebacker Kasim Edebali, who was starting in place of Von Miller, and simply threw it up for grabs in quadruple coverage.

Broncos cornerback Chris Harris Jr., a three-time Pro Bowler and defending first-team All Pro selection, caught the pop-up pass at midfield and ran untouched to the end zone for a 50-yard interception return.

The Broncos were up 7-0. Take the rest of the night off, guys.

"I said, "We're done, coach, I'm out of here," Harris said, smiling. "No, coach said, that's it, you're done."

The Bears went ahead thanks to rookie quarterback Mitch Trubisky but the Broncos had their own rookies in quarterback Kyle Slotter and running De'Angelo Henderson to rally back for a 24-17 win in the preseason opener for both teams before only 43,946 at Soldier Field.

The second half became an impressive battle of two rookie quarterbacks: Trubisky, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2017 NFL Draft, and Slotter, an undrafted afterthought from Northern Colorado.

Trubisky rallied the Bears from a 10-0 deficit to 17-10 fourth quarter lead by completing 13 of 14 for 123 yards at one point. Slotter followed by completing 4 of 5 for 70 yards including a game-tying, 47-yard touchdown to wide-open rookie Isaiah McKenzie.

On third down and the Broncos just trying to get in long field goal position for Brandon McManus, Henderson burst up the middle for a 41-yard touchdown inside the 2-minute warning.

"It was an inside zone read play," Henderson said. "It opened up pretty good -- the defenders were playing pretty deep. After I got the ball I knew I had a chance to make something happen. Got it, saw a little crease, hit it."

In The Great Quarterback Competition, Trevor Siemian completed 6 of 7 passes for 51 yards. He generated 3 points in three possessions. Paxton Lynch was 6 of 9 for 42 yards with no points in four possessions. Lynch also scrambled four times for 11 yards.

Can Sloter get some love? Perhaps, on the practice squad he can if he makes it that far. Sloter has done nothing but complete passes during his rare, third-team reps in the offseason and training camp and he stepped it up when the lights were on Thursday night.

Denver's second-string defense continue to apply pressure on Glennon and Mark Sanchez, holding the Bears scoreless late in the second quarter when Trubisky engineered a 50-yard touchdown drive in the final 1:42 of the game.

Trubisky was 4 of 4 for 24 yards in his opening series, including a 2-yard touchdown flip to a wide open Victory Cruz, the former New York Giants' star.

Siemian, the Broncos starting quarterback, overcame his own protection breakdowns to engineer a 10-play, 60-yard drive before settling for a Brandon McManus field goal on the Broncos' first offensive possession.

The drive started with Siemian hanging on to the ball a tick longer than usual off a play fake and as he looked for an open receiver and Bears' edge rusher Leonard Floyd beat new Broncos right tackle Menelik Watson for a 7-yard sack.

"A horrible first play, obviously," Watson said. "Used the wrong technique in that situation. He got slippery. I tried to re-set, missed it. Really, disappointed. When you have a bad play like that at the start, it dampens everything else. But after that we started running the ball, knocking the guys back five, six yards."

But C.J. Anderson, who had a nice opening drive, got 6 yards back on his first carry and then Siemian drilled a hook pattern to a well-covered Demaryius Thomas for 11 yards and the first down.

The drive reached the Bears' 20, but on third-and-7, Siemian was lucky to get rid of the ball in the face of a fierce pass rush and McManus booted a 38-yard field goal.

Anderson rushed for 21 yards on five carries on the opening drive. He came out and was replaced by Stevan Ridley.

# Offense struggles but Harris pick six gives Broncos, 10-7. halftime lead vs. Bears

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 11, 2017

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The Broncos were up, 7-0. Take the rest of the night off, guys.

The Broncos led 10-7 at halftime in the preseason game played at Soldier Field. In The Great Quarterback Competition, Trevor Siemian completed 6 of 7 passes for 51 yards. He generated 3 points in three possessions. Paxton Lynch was 1 of 3 for 10 yards with no points in two possessions. Lynch also scrambled twice for 4 yards.

Denver's second-string defense continue to apply pressure on Glennon and Mark Sanchez, holding the Bears scoreless late in the second quarter when rookie Mitchell Trubisky, the No. 2 overall draft pick, engineered a 50-yard touchdown drive in the final 1:42 of the game.

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To review the first half for the Broncos: Their offense sputtered and their defense was superb until the Bears took advantage of great field position at the end of the half.

# Von Miller will not play tonight against Chicago

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 11, 2017

On second thought, Von Miller will not play tonight in the Denver Broncos' preseason opener against the Chicago Bears, according to multiple sources.

All other healthy Broncos starters will play, if only for a series or two. The primary reason Miller won't play is the Broncos are already down at their outside edge pass-rush positions because of the injuries to Shane Ray and Shaq Barrett.

Ray is expected the first game or two of the regular season because of a torn ligament in his right wrist that required surgery. Barrett will miss the first month or so to recover from an offseason hip injury.

The Broncos will take a long look at rookie DeMarcus Walker, second-year player Vontarrius Dora and veteran Kasim Edebali at the outside linebacker position tonight against the Bears.

Miller is expected to play in either preseason game No. 2 at San Francisco or game 3 against Green Bay, or both, as he does need to fine-tune his play. But he is the Broncos' best player and arguably the best defensive player in the NFL so it makes sense to minimize risk in the preseason.

# Elway on McCarron rumor: Flat out not true

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 11, 2017

A passionate John Elway reinforced his support of his own Broncos quarterbacks Thursday by emphatically refuting a report that had him seeking a trade for Cincinnati Bengals backup quarterback AJ McCarron.

During the Denver Broncos pregame show on Channel 20, Elway was asked why he felt compelled to strongly denounce the report of his interest in McCarron, even using the phrase, “fake news.”

“Because it was not true,” he said. “It’s flat out not true. We have not talked to anybody in Cincinnati. That has not been on our radar screen at all. Any time reports come out like that that are absolutely not true, they have an effect on our football team. I want to make sure that everyone understands that that’s not true so that’s why we came out as hard as we did.”

Elway added he also wanted to make sure his two quarterbacks, Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch, understand management has not lost confidence in them.

“I’m excited about Trevor and Paxton and the way they’ve been working,” Elway said. “We feel good about them. We’re still in the process of what we talked about, what our plan was to get them through the preseason and then see what we have there.

“When those things come out like that, those are the type of things that can get on your football team, especially those two guys and we wanted to let them know we’re happy with their progress.”

After the report surfaced Wednesday, Elway took to Twitter and stated: “Rumor of us being interested in anyone other than the QBs we have is another example of irresponsible, fake news!!”

*Rumor of us being interested in anyone other than the QBs we have is another example of irresponsible, fake news!!— John Elway (@johnelway) August 9, 2017*

Siemian appears to be leading the competition for starting quarterback in the Broncos’ regular-season opener, Sept. 11 against the Los Angeles Chargers.

“He’s very cerebral and very smart,” Elway said. “There’s always a transformation coming from an old offense to a new one and it takes a long time. Especially as we get into training camp and more is put on the plate for these players.”

As for Lynch, it was put to Elway directly: The second-year former first-round draft pick seemed to be struggling in training camp, although he would get a chance to redeem himself in the preseason opener Thursday against the Chicago Bears.

“He’s young,” Elway said. “His first year, he played in two games last year. I’m telling you, as a young quarterback it’s not easy coming into this league, especially as a first rounder and trying to live up to expectations. He’s worked his tail off. He’s done a good job.

“It’s hard to tell in camp practice what you have because a lot of times Paxton will be the guy who will get out and make a play with his legs and those get blown dead in practice. That’s why it’s great we’re starting preseason tonight and we’ll see how far he’s progressed.”

# Some of the youngest Broncos show youth will be served in roster decisions

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 11, 2017

"We made some plays late in the game, that was fun to see," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said.

First Kyle Sloter, an undrafted rookie who has been the No. 3 quarterback in training camp because rookie Chad Kelly (a seventh-round pick) is recovering from knee and wrist injuries, tossed a 47-yard touchdown pass to rookie wide receiver Isaiah McKenzie with 6:01 remaining to tie the game at 17-17. Then rookie running back De'Angelo Henderson popped through the Bears' front and showed the speed that made him one of the fastest running backs at the scouting combine this past February.

Henderson outran the Bears' reserves for a 41-yard touchdown run with 1:49 to play that gave the Broncos the win. Rookie undrafted safety Jamal Carter, who was put into the game early in the first quarter, recovered a fumble and was consistently around the ball in what was one of the most extended looks for any player on the night. Rookie defensive end DeMarcus Walker, who was the Broncos' second-round pick, was used at both defensive end and outside linebacker.

And rookie left tackle, Garrett Bolles, who was the Broncos' first-round pick this past April, started the game.

There is still plenty of time for things to shake out differently, but it's clear Bolles, McKenzie and Henderson have already grabbed the attention of those who make decisions and will impact the depth chart next month. Immediately after Thursday night's game, Joseph referred to both McKenzie and Henderson as "special" while Bolles is expected to be in the starting lineup when the Broncos open the season Sept. 11 against the Los Angeles Chargers.

Joseph had already declared McKenzie as the team's top punt returner a week ago, but his work as a slot receiver in practice has quickly put him in the mix on offense. McKenzie can also work out of the backfield as a runner, so his versatility might be an option for offensive coordinator Mike McCoy.

And Henderson is the fastest running back on the roster in an offense that wants to see more big plays from the backfield.

"De'Angelo, very, very fast through the hole, a tough runner, great ball skills in the pass game," Joseph said. "What we saw is what he's been since we drafted the guy in the spring."

For his part Sloter has made the most of his chance to show his potential to be a developmental quarterback. He's flashed some arm strength in camp, and the Broncos like the way he has competed in a variety of situations.

He's likely trying to convince the Broncos to keep him on the practice squad and figures to get his most substantial playing time in the Broncos' fourth preseason game on Aug. 31 against the Arizona Cardinals. Sloter finished Thursday night's game 5-of-6 passing for 94 yards and the touchdown pass.

Joseph even had to tamp down a little preseason enthusiasm after the game when he was asked if Slotter had earned a look to be the starter or get some second-team work in practice.

"No, no, we've got Trevor [Siemian], we've got Paxton [Lynch] ... it's Trevor or Paxton's job," Joseph said.

# Rookies, starting defense shine in Broncos' preseason win

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 11, 2017

With a new playbook, a remade line and a quarterback competition in full bloom, the Denver Broncos offense showed itself to be a work in progress until the team's rookies saved the day late in a 24-17 win against the Bears in the preseason opener in Chicago.

**QB depth chart:** The game mirrored the last week's worth of training camp practices, as Trevor Siemian, who started the game, looked more comfortable overall but didn't push the ball down the field save for one throw to Emmanuel Sanders that resulted in a Bears penalty. Siemian was 6-of-7 for 51 yards with one field goal drive against the Bears' starters. Paxton Lynch was erratic early before he settled in at least some in the third quarter and finished 6-of-9 for 42 yards. Neither quarterback manufactured a touchdown drive.

**When it was starters vs. starters, the Broncos looked ...:** A lot like the Broncos of 2016, with an elite defense and an offense that needs to pull a little more weight. Cornerback Chris Harris Jr. returned an interception for a touchdown early in the first quarter for a Denver touchdown. The Broncos gave linebacker Von Miller the night off, but still showed plenty of teeth with the defensive regulars in the game.

**One reason to be concerned:** The Broncos are in their first training camp with Brock Olivo as their special teams coach, and it was a choppy start for the group. Kalif Raymond did quality work late with a 41-yard kickoff return, but the Broncos also surrendered a 17-yard punt return to go with a 44-yard kickoff return and Denver rookie Carlos Henderson dropped two kickoffs.

**That guy could start:** The Broncos are in search of an outside linebacker to help fill the void while Shane Ray recovers from surgery to repair a torn ligament in his left wrist. And Kasim Edebali, whom Denver signed in free agency, made the most of his snaps. He created pressure on Mike Glennon on the throw that was intercepted by Harris and returned for the Broncos' first touchdown, and he consistently put the Chicago lineman across from him under duress.

**Rookie watch:** Undrafted rookie safety Jamal Carter, from Miami, got a long look, as he was in the game in the first quarter and still on the field deep into the fourth. The Broncos used Carter in a variety of situations as a hybrid safety/linebacker, both in the pass rush and deep down the field. He was consistently around the ball and had a fumble recovery in the first quarter. Second-round pick DeMarcus Walker got a long look as well and played both standing up as an outside linebacker and down in a three-point stance at defensive end. Quarterback Kyle Sloter hit rookie wide receiver Isaiah McKenzie for a 47-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter, while running back De'Angelo Henderson also offered a glimpse of what he could bring to the offense with a 14-yard run in the fourth quarter that was wiped away by a holding penalty, and also a 41-yard touchdown run that turned out to be the game-winner.

**Billy Winn injured:** Winn was a regular in the defensive line rotation last season and has had some quality moments in training camp. He's in a tight battle for what is expected to be six roster spots.

However, he suffered a knee injury in the first quarter and was carted off the field. He will be further evaluated Friday.

**Opening night jitters:** The Broncos have high hopes in their run game and they certainly didn't leave the starters in for very long. But overall they didn't create much room up front, they had just 58 yards rushing by the end of the third quarter and their longest rushing play was 8 yards in that time frame.

# Broncos QBs 'solid' in first preseason outing, combine for one field goal drive

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 11, 2017

The Denver Broncos' quarterback competition entered its first game-day phase Thursday night with the preseason opener in Chicago. Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch have split the first-team workload as close to 50-50 as possible through the offseason and training camp, and they took roughly the same number of plays against the Chicago Bears as each played about a quarter and a half.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph has repeatedly said no decision would be made after one preseason outing and because Siemian got the start Thursday night against the Bears, Lynch will get the start Aug. 19 against the San Francisco 49ers. The Broncos also have two days' worth of joint practices against the 49ers next week leading up to that game.

Siemian, as he has shown in practice thus far, looked slightly more comfortable with the new playbook, at least to this point of the preseason. Siemian was sacked on his first dropback, but closed out his evening at 6-of-7 passing for 51 yards.

Siemian put a ball on Emmanuel Sanders' outside shoulder for his most aggressive play of the night as Sanders drew a pass-interference penalty on the play. Siemian also led a field goal drive.

Lynch was 6-of-9 passing for 42 yards. He was 1-of-3 before halftime, but looked more settled to start the second half as he hit his first two throws -- one to Cody Latimer, one to Jordan Taylor.

Lynch played through the end of the third quarter before giving way to rookie Kyle Slotter. In a halftime interview with KUSA, the team's local broadcast partner, Joseph called both quarterbacks "solid, nothing glaring."

During the game broadcast, former Broncos quarterback Brian Griese called it a "good outing" for Siemian and offered that Siemian "had a little better command and control" of the offense, but added later "neither one of these guys put the ball in the end zone."

# Thursday's best from NFL preseason: What you need to know

By Staff

ESPN

August 11, 2017

Rookie quarterback Mitchell Trubisky had a spectacular debut for the Bears, completing his first 10 passes against the Broncos. Elsewhere, the projected starter at middle linebacker for the Dolphins was injured.

NFL Nation reporters recap the day with what you need to know from training camps and preseason games across the league:

## Denver Broncos

Both Broncos quarterbacks gave played like I've seen guys in quarterback competitions play over the years -- they take the completions, often too quick to check down, instead of waiting for the routes downfield to develop. It's a natural reaction to try to win the job and Paxton Lynch really in that mode on the last possession. The guy who relaxes first might win the job.

Jeff Legwold, ESPN Senior Writer

FINAL: Broncos 24, Bears 17. The Broncos rookies -- quarterback Kyle Sloter, Isaiah McKenzie and running back De'Angelo Henderson powered a 14-point fourth for the Broncos to get the win. Sloter hit McKenzie for a 47-yard touchdown pass after the Bears busted a coverage to tie the game and Henderson then scored the game-winner with a 41-yard run.

Jeff Legwold, ESPN Senior Writer

## Chicago Bears

The Broncos scored a late touchdown to beat the Bears 24-17.....but who cares, the night belonged to Mitchell Trubisky. The Bears rookie quarterback led Chicago to three consecutive scoring drives and finished 18-for-25 for 166 yards and one touchdown pass to veteran receiver Victor Cruz. The Bears aren't going to change quarterbacks -- Mike Glennon had a terrible night with a pick-6 -- but Trubisky will continue to be the most talked about football player in Chicago.

Jeff Dickerson, ESPN Staff Writer

The only positive development so far for the Bears is that former first round pick Leonard Floyd recorded a sack. Floyd had seven sacks as a rookie.

Jeff Dickerson, ESPN Staff Writer

## **Seattle Seahawks**

Overheard at camp: "Jimmy's really healthy right now." Russell Wilson talks about what he's seeing from Seahawks TE Jimmy Graham at training camp.

## **Atlanta Falcons**

Biggest takeaways: The Falcons looked sharp on both sides of the ball with their first team offenses and defenses in a 23-20 exhibition loss to Miami. And newcomer Andre Roberts made an immediate impact in the return game. But there will be a lot of conversation about CB Jalen Collins, the second-round draft pick who was recently suspended without pay for the first 10 games of the regular season for again violating the league's policy on performance-enhancing substances. Collins, who is allowed to practice now and play in the preseason, got beat for a 99-yard TD late and made a few other mistakes. You wonder if the Falcons will cut ties with Collins and allow another cornerback to emerge to provide depth.

Vaughn McClure, ESPN Staff Writer

## **Miami Dolphins**

Rookie Raekwon McMillan, who was projected to start at middle linebacker, suffered a knee injury on punt coverage in the opening moments of the Dolphins preseason win against to the Falcons. McMillan left the Miami Dolphins locker room on crutches with a brace on his right knee. Behind him at middle linebacker is Mike Hull, an undrafted player with one career start in his first two seasons.

Heather Burns, ESPN.com

## **Minnesota Vikings**

Final score: Vikings 17, Bills 10: Minnesota's heralded defense set the tone early, finished with three sacks and a number of pressures. Offense had some hiccups, although Stacy Coley had 3 catches for 67 yards.

Roman Modrowski, ESPN.com

## **Buffalo Bills**

The Bills dropped their preseason opener, 17-10, to the Vikings on Thursday night. RB LeSean McCoy dressed but did not play, while QB Tyrod Taylor played the first three offensive possessions. Taylor dodged injury on a sack after which he came up gimpy and was evaluated by trainers on the sideline. He returned for the next series.

Mike Rodak, ESPN Staff Writer

## **Dallas Cowboys**

Play of the day at camp: Dez Bryant retired this award today by jumping over Orlando Scandrick to make a one-handed, lefthanded grab of a Dak Prescott fade for a touchdown. Bryant playfully tossed the ball back at Scandrick and then did a chest bump with left tackle Emmett Cleary. Bryant leaped as high on the chest bump as he did for the touchdown catch.

Todd Archer, ESPN Staff Writer

Ezekiel Elliott getting ready for practice with his normal ball security drills with running backs coach Gary Brown.

## **Jacksonville Jaguars**

Leonard Fournette had a solid debut for the Jacksonville Jaguars in their 31-24 victory over New England on Thursday night. The rookie ran for 31 yards and a TD and showed off his power between the tackles as well as a surprising spin move. Granted, the Patriots did not play a single starter on either side of the ball, but the important thing was that Fournette did what he was supposed to do on his nine carries. The fourth overall pick's next test is two days of joint practices with Tampa Bay on Monday and Tuesday.

Michael DiRocco, ESPN Staff Writer

## **New England Patriots**

Of the two primary storylines from the Patriots' preseason opener, one came on the field (Jimmy Garoppolo) and the other came off the field (Roger Goodell). Garoppolo was excellent despite playing without almost all of the team's top skill-position players, while Goodell showed up at the game and said hello to owners Robert Kraft and Shad Khan before leaving by halftime. It was Goodell's first visit to Gillette Stadium since the playoffs following the 2014 season. Goodell plans to return for the NFL opener.

Mike Reiss, ESPN Staff Writer

## **New York Jets**

Jets DL Leonard Williams likes what he sees from the defensive line, easily the most talented position group on the team.

## **New Orleans Saints**

The Saints lost their 10th straight preseason game when they couldn't hold on to a late lead against the Browns and rookie QB DeShone Kizer. But there were still reasons for encouragement in the 20-14 loss, which saw stars like Drew Brees, Adrian Peterson, Mark Ingram and Cameron Jordan taking the night off. Rookie running back Alvin Kamara started the game with two explosive runs on the first two series (a 12-yarder and 22-yarder). And the Saints' embattled defense forced three straight 3-and-outs to start

the game when the starters were in. Safety Kenny Vaccaro, edge rusher Hau'oli Kikaha, cornerback P.J. Williams and defensive tackle David Onyemata were among those with multiple highlights.

Mike Triplett, ESPN Staff Writer

### **Cleveland Browns**

Let the discussion resume: DeShone Kizer threw a game-winning 45-yard touchdown pass with 1:52 left as the Browns beat New Orleans 20-14 in the preseason opener. Kizer also had a 52-yard throw, and 184 yards passing in the second half. He faced backups and third-teamers, but the rookie from Notre Dame took full advantage of a huge opportunity provided by coach Hue Jackson.

Pat McManamon, ESPN Staff Writer

### **Washington Redskins**

The Redskins lost the preseason opener, 23-3, to the Baltimore Ravens in a game that featured poor offensive play much of the night. The Redskins managed just eight first downs and 138 total yards with no points by the first or second offenses. The blocking in both the run and pass game was not to the level Washington will need if it wants to contend for the NFC East title this season.

John Keim, ESPN Staff Writer

### **Baltimore Ravens**

Ravens defense dominated the Redskins' first-team offense up front. Baltimore forced Kirk Cousins into three-and-outs on only two drives of the night, holding Washington to minus-one yard on six plays.

Jamison Hensley, ESPN Staff Writer

Ravens 23, Redskins 3: The preseason opener resembled what's been happening in training camp. Ryan Mallett struggled to hit receivers, finishing 9 of 18 for 58 yards (57.2 passer rating) in one half of work. Baltimore's defense looked just as strong as it has all summer, dominating Kirk Cousins and the Redskins first-team defense.

Jamison Hensley, ESPN Staff Writer

### **Philadelphia Eagles**

Eagles first-round pick Derek Barnett is having a very strong debut. He has a pair of sacks in the first half against the Packers. On the first one, he put a nice inside move on tackle Jason Spriggs before tracking down QB Brett Hundley.

Tim McManus, ESPN Staff Writer

## **Pittsburgh Steelers**

The Steelers are applying more public pressure on Le'Veon Bell sitting out camp. It started July 27 with coach Mike Tomlin saying there could be untold 'consequences' with Bell missing significant time, and now GM Kevin Colbert tells the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette that Bell has nothing to gain from his absence. That likely won't change Bell's plan. Signs point to a mid-to-late-August return to the team.

Jeremy Fowler, ESPN Staff Writer

## **Indianapolis Colts**

A change at quarterback? No, it's not time for quarterback Andrew Luck to return yet. And coach Chuck Pagano has already said Scott Tolzien will start at quarterback against the Lions in the preseason opener on Sunday afternoon at Lucas Oil Stadium.

But there could be changes when it comes to who backs Tolzien up. Undrafted rookie Phillip Walker out of Temple has appeared to move ahead of Stephen Morris, who is in his third season with the team, on the quarterback depth chart, as he's been getting the bulk of the snaps with the second unit.

The Colts say they haven't determined the rotation behind Tolzien on Sunday, but Pagano did acknowledge that Walker has seen increased snaps.

"He's done a nice job and he's performed well," Pagano said. "We're taking a really good look at him."

Mike Wells, ESPN Staff Writer

## **Oakland Raiders**

Raiders Rookie Report: First-round draft pick Gareon Conley disputed on Twitter GM Reggie McKenzie's claim that the cornerback was suffering from shin splints. "I don't have shin splints lol," Conley Tweeted. Conley, who was accused of rape but charges were never filed, has yet to practice with Oakland. He signed his rookie contract the day before training camp began.

Paul Gutierrez, ESPN Staff Writer

Derek Carr is a draw for the crowd before Raiders practice here in Napa on Thursday.

## **Detroit Lions**

Lions coach Jim Caldwell told reporters in Indianapolis that RT Rick Wagner suffered an injury during joint practices with the Colts, but called it "a little issue," according to the Detroit Free Press. If he's out for any length of time, that would knock out both of Detroit's starting tackles, Wagner and Taylor Decker. Detroit has had offensive line injury issues all camp long.

# Trubisky shines for Bears in preseason loss to Broncos

By Andrew Seligman  
Associated Press  
August 11, 2017

Mitch Trubisky might have created a quarterback controversy in Chicago.

Trubisky threw for 166 yards and led three scoring drives after Mike Glennon struggled, only to have the Denver Broncos score two long touchdowns in the closing minutes to beat the Bears 24-17 in the preseason opener on Thursday night.

Though the team has insisted Glennon is the starter, the prized rookie did his best to ramp up the debate.

"Our depth chart is not going to change after one game, particularly a preseason game," coach John Fox said. "That's a really good defense our first unit went against, probably one of the top three defenses in the league.

"You have to look at a lot of different things. I can understand how you guys might think, but we're not going to change a whole lot after one game."

Denver's Trevor Siemian did nothing to hurt his standing as the apparent leader for the starting quarterback job, while Paxton Lynch did little to close any ground.

"It's an ongoing battle," coach Vance Joseph said.

Kyle Sloter threw a 47-yard touchdown pass to Isaiah McKenzie with about six minutes left in the game, and De'Angelo Henderson ran for a 41-yard score with just under two minutes remaining to put the Broncos on top 24-17.

But the biggest development in this game was Trubisky showing exactly why general manager Ryan Pace traded up a spot with San Francisco to draft him with the No. 2 overall pick.

"It was important for me to not just let this moment go by," he said. The North Carolina product completed 18 of 25 passes in his first pro appearance after making just 13 college starts.

Trubisky replaced veteran Mark Sanchez late in the second quarter and completed his first 10 passes while leading Chicago to touchdowns on his first two possessions and a field goal on the next one. That gave the Bears a 17-10 lead.

Glennon had a rough time in his first appearance for Chicago.

Signed to a three-year contract after the Bears parted with Jay Cutler, he was 2 of 8 for 20 yards with a zero QB rating. Chris Harris Jr. intercepted an overthrown pass on the game's third play from scrimmage and returned it 50 yards for a touchdown.

TRUBISKY SHINES

Things didn't get much better for Chicago's offense until Trubisky came in with 1:55 left in the half.

He completed four passes on a 50-yard drive, connecting with Victor Cruz from the 2 to cut it to 10-7 with 13 seconds left.

Trubisky then led Chicago on a 75-yard drive early in the third, going 5 for 5 for 50 yards before Benny Cunningham ran it in from the 1 to give Chicago a 14-10 lead.

#### STARTING STRONG

The Broncos' defense took the ball away on two of the game's first three possessions. Denver gave Joseph a win — albeit a preseason win — in his first game on the sideline.

As for the quarterbacks?

Siemian — a surprise successor to Peyton Manning last season — completed 6 of 7 passes for 51 yards and led a field-goal drive.

Lynch came on early in the second quarter and was 6 for 9 for 42 yards. He is scheduled to start next week.

#### QUOTABLE

Broncos: "I don't really look at it like that," Siemian said when asked if he added distance between himself and Lynch. "I did some good things. I thought Paxton did some good things."

Bears: "When you take a guy that high I immediately knew there could be something stirred up," Glennon said about a potential QB controversy. "But I'm not going to focus on the outside world, I'll focus what's going on in the locker room and the coaches."

#### INJURY UPDATE

Broncos: The Broncos held out five-time Pro Bowl linebacker Von Miller and were missing S T.J. Ward (hamstring), LB Todd Davis (shoulder), C Matt Paradis (hip) and RB Jamaal Charles (knee). ... DE Billy Winn left the field on a cart late in the first quarter with a right knee injury. He was at the bottom of the scrum following a Chicago running play and is scheduled for an MRI on Friday.

Bears: G Kyle Long (ankle) and LB Lamarr Houston (knee) — both working their way back from surgery — topped the list of players held out by Chicago. RB Jeremy Langford (ankle) was not in uniform. ... RB Ka'Deem Carey left with a quad injury.

#### UP NEXT

Broncos: Visit San Francisco on Aug. 19.

Bears: Visit Arizona on Aug. 19.

# Broncos defense sets tone, steals thunder from quarterbacks

By Troy Renck  
KMGH  
August 11, 2017

At the north entrance of Solider Field, 90 minutes before kickoff, Trevor Siemian and Matt Paradis walked toward the locker room. They laughed at a description of an onlooker's shoes and disappeared into the tunnel.

Siemian arrived in Chicago Thursday with his career again at crossroads, and looked as calm as a lagoon. There remains part of his life that makes this NFL experience feel like house money lining his pockets. A year ago, he admitted he was this close to beginning a career in commercial real estate before the gravitational pull of football drew him back.

Siemian became the first Northwestern quarterback to make an NFL ripple since Otto Graham in 1955. He represented the nose is wet, underdog story. Now, he exists as a polarizing figure among a fan base that wants the first-round pick to play -- Paxton Lynch -- or for Siemian to play significantly better.

Siemian failed to answer all questions, but he maintained his lead in the quarterback derby with an efficient performance in the preseason opener against the Chicago Bears. Lynch rallied in his final drive with the second stringers, yet could not produce points. Therein lies the rub, the Broncos' top two quarterbacks combined for 37 plays and three points.

The only quarterback with a touchdown? Former Northern Colorado star Kyle Slotter on a 47-yard connection to a wide open Isaiah McKenzie in the fourth quarter.

The reminders of 2016 were slightly uncomfortable in Vance Joseph's coaching debut, but the ending proved satisfying.

Rookie De'Angelo Henderson's 41-yard run shoved the Broncos' to a 24-17 victory.

On a night when hope existed of separation, the best quarterback on the field was Chicago's first-round pick Mitchell Trubisky, who riddled the Broncos' second and third-stringers. This bore a striking resemblance to many Sundays last season -- offense lacking, defense shining with All-Pro cornerback Chris Harris Jr. providing the Broncos' only first-half touchdown with a 50-yard pick and score on Chicago's Mike Glennon.

As for Siemian, he provided an even outing. In three series, totaling 19 plays, he completed six of seven passes for 51 yards. Siemian converted two third downs, including a third-and-11 strike to Demaryius Thomas to extend the first drive as the Pro Bowler boxed out defenders. Siemian suffered a sack on his first play from scrimmage as new right tackle Menelik Watson missed his block. He completed a pair of passes on the 10-play drive, resulting in a 38-yard Brandon McManus field goal.

Sieman threw the ball accurately and on time outside the numbers. But there were no bold strikes sought by a fan base which watched the Broncos offense dissolve down the stretch a year ago.

Lynch, a former star at Memphis, failed to make a move in the competition, leaving him needing a huge week of practices against the San Francisco 49ers and solid work in his start to have any hope of unseating Siemian. Working behind the second-string offensive line, Lynch appeared indecisive, and prone to run. He nearly threw an interception on his first possession, airmailing a throw over tight end A.J. Derby.

On first read quick slants, Lynch found his comfort zone on passes to Jordan Taylor and Cody Latimer. But his overall numbers told a story that mirrored his recent practice sessions. Highlights, but consistency lacking. On 18 plays, Lynch went 6-for-9 for 42 yards, while rushing four times for 11 yards.

The Broncos' first string defense looked stout. Harris provided an exclamation point before many of the fans had even arrived. He read an errant pass, caught it cleanly and motored into the end zone. It marked the fourth time in his career with a pick six. The Broncos' first stringers played a series. And they did it without their best player Von Miller, who was a healthy scratch since exposing him to injury in the preseason is a dicey proposition.

"I couldn't," Miller told Denver7 when asked if he tried to talk himself into the lineup.

Denver's rush defense with its 1s appeared stronger in the snapshot. But any optimism was spoiled with the loss of a popular veteran. Defensive end Billy Winn suffered a leg injury and was carted off the field.

Positives surfaced among a parade of penalty flags. The offensive line showed attitude and a physical presence, but the mistakes must be cleaned up by Watson and left guard Max Garcia. Defensively, the Broncos stopped the run early, showing progress in an area that undermined the unit last season.

In the end, this game was about the quarterbacks. No one lost the derby -- at least not yet -- but it's fair to wonder if the starter has been found until points define production.

## **Footnotes**

Kasim Edebali was active on pass rushing downs as he bids to start opposite of Miller. ... Anderson rushed for 21 yards on five carries with the starters. ... Sloter has made huge jumps since OTAs. He is showing he has NFL potential, even if that means starting on the practice squad. ... Lorenzo Doss was being evaluated for a concussion during the game. ... Dillon Day, trying to stick as a backup Olineman, was flagged for two penalties, including taunting. ... Henderson has been a terrific story in camp, a bowling ball with legs. ... The Broncos captains: Derek Wolfe, Aqib Talb, Demaryius Thomas, Emmanuel Sanders and Brandon McManus.

# Vance Joseph makes Broncos coaching debut vs. Bears

By Troy Renck

KMGH

August 11, 2017

Butterflies become pterodactyls. Palms sweat. Pulses race.

Games raise emotions. Preseason games? Not so much. But this is not a normal exhibition. The Broncos, you might have heard, are searching for a starting quarterback in the competition between Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch. And their coach, Vance Joseph, is making his debut.

"Just to see our team," Joseph said, "to see our young kids play and to see our quarterbacks play, it's a huge, huge game for a lot of people on this football team including myself."

Joseph will direct traffic without the benefit of his best player. Von Miller is a healthy scratch as first reported by Denver7. It's not deemed worth the risk. Joseph left an out earlier this week when asked about the All-Pro outside linebacker. He used the term "as of now," when asked if Miller would play. There was always a chance he would not. That it could be raining at kickoff makes this an easy decision for a coach concerned about accidental injury.

Other players working out with Miller before the game who have been ruled out: center Matt Paradis (hips), inside linebacker Todd Davis (shoulder) and Jamaal Charles (knee). The starting defense is slated to play as little as one series and as many as three depending on performance and the length of the drives. Safety T.J. Ward (right hamstring) is also out, but could return to practice next week.

Joseph has earned high marks from players for his training camp. He brings energy, and a youthful vibe (particularly in the music selection).

Joseph has commanded respect, served as a captain and exuded a presence since the first time I met him at the University of Colorado as an option quarterback in the 1990s. However, he has never served as head coach at any level. Tonight is a terrific platform to audition. The coaching staff, too, needs to begin to mesh. Both coordinators, Mike McCoy and Joe Woods, will be on the sideline. They prefer it because of the communication it allows with players regarding nuances of the game.

So does Joseph. He has shown it practice. Now, he gets an opportunity under the lights.

"He is a player's coach. He understands what's going on," running back C.J. Anderson said. "He understands certain things that are going on in practice, where we need to be at the right time. It's just good to have someone out there like that."

With preseason games underway, take a look back at training camp in the 360-degree video below.

# What we learned: Broncos 24, Bears 17

By Andrew Mason  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

No-Fly Zone in effect in Chicago and other things we learned from the Broncos 24-17 win over the Bears.

A late surge allowed the Broncos to start their preseason on a positive note, with a 24-17 win over the Chicago Bears in the preseason opener for both teams Thursday night.

Here's some of what we learned from the Broncos' win:

## 1. The "No-Fly Zone" is its usual self

Chris Harris Jr., Aqib Talib and Darian Stewart were given the night off after three plays. They had nothing more to prove.

On the second play from scrimmage, Stewart collided with Bears WR Cameron Meredith, forcing an incomplection. On the third, Harris nabbed an errant Mike Glennon throw forced by pressure from OLB Kasim Edebali, returning it 50 yards for a touchdown.

Before most of the 43,946 had settled into their seats, the three Pro Bowlers were done, joining fellow safety T.J. Ward, who had the night off entirely because of a hamstring injury he suffered last Friday.

On the Broncos' sideline, quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch could only smile and nod. They knew better than anyone else in the stadium just what Glennon had learned: throwing on this secondary remains nearly impossible.

## 2. QBs up and down, but avoid big mistakes early, and cash in late

Neither Siemian nor Lynch was able to guide the Broncos to a touchdown, and the longest drive generated by Siemian with the No. 1 offense -- a 10-play, 60-yard march to a 38-yard Brandon McManus field goal -- was aided by three Chicago penalties for 34 yards that moved the Broncos into the Chicago red zone.

Siemian shook off an early sack and settled into a groove, completing six of his seven attempts for 51 yards. Perhaps his most impressive pass was an 11-yard strike to Demaryius Thomason a third-and-11 play, when he fired just as Thomas broke back, completing the pass despite tight coverage.

Lynch struggled early; his first two series ended in three-and-outs. He found some momentum after halftime with a series of quick, short-to-intermediate passes: 14 yards to Jordan Taylor, 4 yards to Cody Latimer, 6 yards to Latimer and two more 4-yard strikes to Latimer.

While Siemian and Lynch eventually found their rhythm, neither stretched the field and generated explosive plays, something that Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy said would be a priority. The longest completion for either quarterback was 14 yards.

Kyle Sloter entered in the fourth quarter and capitalized on some breakdowns in Chicago's secondary. He tied the game at 17-17 with a 47-yard strike to a wide-open Isaiah McKenzie, then helped set up another touchdown with a 24-yard pass to Kalif Raymond after rolling left, then spotting Raymond flashing open downfield.

Collectively, the Broncos' quarterbacks completed 17 of 22 passes, finishing with a completion percentage of 77.3 percent -- 66.7 for Lynch, 83.3 for Sloter and 85.7 for Siemian.

### **3. Gashed on the ground after the first quarter**

After a promising start, Denver's run defense struggled, particularly after after DE Billy Winn was lost to a right knee injury late in the first quarter. Prior to Winn's injury, the Broncos held Chicago to just 2.9 yards per carry and just one first down on 10 rushing attempts.

After that, Chicago racked up 5.5 yards per carry, slicing through the Broncos for 144 yards on 26 attempts. Worse, they moved the chains once every 2.9 attempts, allowing them to keep the offense on schedule with the running game alone.

### **4. Short-yardage offense still a work in progress**

Last year, the Broncos struggled on third and fourth downs, converting just 50 percent of their third- and fourth-down plays with one or two yards to gain -- the worst percentage in the league. It was a figure 13.1 percentage points below the league average.

Thursday, those struggles continued in the first three quarters. Denver failed to convert a third-and-1 and a fourth-and-2. On the third-and-1, Stevan Ridley was stuffed for a 3-yard loss; on the fourth down, Juwan Thompson gained just one yard, leading to the turnover on downs.

Neither of the first two attempts came with the first-team offensive line, but given that the second-team line Thursday included four players who started at various points in the NFL last year -- Ty Sambrailo, Donald Stephenson, Billy Turner and Allen Barbre -- a lack of experience is not an excuse and the result is a disappointment.

De'Angelo Henderson did convert a third-and-1 in the fourth quarter working behind the third-team offensive line, giving the Broncos something positive to point to in short yardage, but in general, this remains an area they will want to improve.

### **5. DeMarcus Walker still learning the ropes**

In his first extensive work at outside linebacker since high school, Walker was whistled for two offside penalties, one of which was declined after Bears QB Mitchell Trubisky scrambled for 12 yards. But Walker also finished with a tackle for a loss in the third quarter, which was the Broncos' only tackle for a loss in the first three quarters.

# Goals of the game: Broncos-Bears

By Andrew Mason  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

What do the Broncos want to get out of their preseason opener?

Thursday night's preseason opener against the Bears will mark Vance Joseph's first game as a head coach, but with so many questions circling around the Broncos as the preseason opens, the sense of occasion is well down the priority list.

There are plenty of goals for the first game, starting with these five:

## **1. Get some clarity on the quarterbacks**

The battle between Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch will not be decided Thursday night. At this point, all that is certain is that Siemian will start against the Bears and Lynch will start against San Francisco on Aug. 19.

But with each quarterback set to play anywhere from a quarter to a quarter and a half apiece, each should have time to settle down and find their form. Their success equation could be different. For Siemian, it might involve quicker drops; for Lynch, it could involve scrambles. But for both, consistency and good decision-making are the paramount priorities.

## **2. Find an offensive rhythm**

Much of that can come from the quarterbacks, but it also must stem from the reshuffled offensive line, its ability to create holes for the running backs and the runners' ability to shoot through the gaps, just as they have for one solid gain after another during practice.

Preseason success is no guarantee of regular-season performance, but last year, signs of the inefficiency to come were evident in August. A better start will offer a glimpse that this year's offense will provide the consistency that the 2016 attack lacked.

## **3. Learn about the run D**

Inside linebacker Todd Davis will not play; Corey Nelson will start in his place. But Joseph regards Nelson as a starter and expects no drop-off as he joins the rest of the five-man core of the interior run defense that includes fellow ILB Brandon Marshall and defensive linemen Derek Wolfe, Domata Peko and Jared Crick.

Denver's first- and second-team defense excelled at stopping the run during last week's scrimmage. If it has similar success against the Bears, there will be reason to believe that the Broncos should have drastic improvement from last year's 28th-ranked run defense.

## **4. Test the rookies' potential**

What can left tackle Garrett Bolles handle in his first start? How will DeMarcus Walker handle the various aspects of his new workload at outside linebacker -- particularly in pass coverage, a discipline for which he said he sought the advice of All-Pro cornerback Aqib Talib? Is Brendan Langley ready to be the No. 4 cornerback, putting him in a role that would leave him just one injury away from extensive playing time in sub packages? How will Isaiah McKenzie handle punt returns? Can De'Angelo Henderson run with the same kind of authority in game conditions as he has in practice? These represent just some of the questions that Denver's rookies will be asked to answer starting Thursday night.

The Broncos could rely heavily on their rookie class this year. The extent to which they can lean on their draft picks could be determined by their preseason performance.

## **5. Avoid injuries**

Obviously, this one is largely beyond the Broncos' control, but this is also the top priority. You can live with coming up short in all of the other areas if all of the core players who are key to the team's 2017 hopes emerge from this game none the worse for the wear.

# From the pocket: Knocking the rust off

By Ben Swanson  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch each felt their own performance had shining moments, and each thought their counterpart's did, too.

The first play could have gone better, but Trevor Siemian still appreciated it.

It's hard to like getting sacked, and it's certainly not something he wants to make a habit of, but Siemian welcomed the chance to feel some contact that he was protected from in offseason and training-camp practices.

"It was good to kind of knock the rust off, you know," Siemian said. "I was joking around in training camp: You forget you can get hit because we're wearing an off-color jersey and nobody can touch us."

After that 7-yard sack to start the game, though, Siemian settled in, leading the first-team offense into Bears territory on two of his three drives under center. But those two possessions fizzled out. The first ended with a 38-yard Brandon McManus field goal, and on the second, the Broncos were forced to punt after a loss knocked them back out of Chicago's side of the field.

"Ideally, right, you want to score every time, but getting the ball that deep on your first drive and moving it down the field and kicking a field goal, on the road especially — if you look at the grand scheme of things — that's probably a pretty good first drive of the game," Siemian said. "And we only got a couple tries out of it with that first group, so I thought there were some really good things there."

After the third drive, Siemian's day was done. He finished with 51 yards on 6-of-7 passing.

At that point, Paxton Lynch entered the game. But the beginning of his night also had its own bumpy start due to penalties.

"Before we went into halftime, I think that we struggled a little bit moving the ball, missed some third downs that we should have converted on, but also had a lot of penalties that kind of set us back," Lynch said. "When we came out of the locker room at halftime, I thought we did a really good job moving the ball, but just like [Head] Coach [Vance] Joseph said, it was just too many penalties to keep us from moving the ball downfield into scoring position."

Thursday night's 24-17 win over the Bears also represented the first time the team could test the foundation of its new offensive scheme against another team. Though points were hard to come by early on, the two quarterbacks agreed that they and their teammates had a good grasp on Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy's offense.

"I think everybody is on top of it, but just like I said, the first preseason game, you don't really get to game-plan as much as you wish you could," Lynch said. "So it's just kind of our base stuff, going out

there and executing that and playing fast, which I thought we did a good job of, but again the penalties hurt us from moving the ball down the field like I wish we could have."

Though the beginnings of their stints under center Thursday had their disappointments, Siemian and Lynch each felt their own performance had shining moments, and each thought their counterpart's did, too.

"I thought I did some good things, [and] I thought Paxton did some good things," Siemian said. "There's definitely some stuff I know we're going to watch and clean up. I can't really have a reaction right now without watching the tape and stuff like that, but I thought everybody did something good tonight."

# Defining moments: Broncos 24, Bears 17

By Aric DiLalla  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

These plays helped define Thursday's preseason opener against the Chicago Bears.

The Broncos pulled off a 24-17 comeback win over the Bears in the 2017 preseason opener.

These were the defining moments of Thursday's game:

## *Harris opens his season in style*

In his first game since being named a first-team All-Pro at the conclusion of the 2016 season, Chris Harris Jr. picked up where he left off.

On the Broncos' first defensive possession, Harris stepped behind an off-target Ike Glennon throw into triple coverage. Once Harris tracked the third-down pass, which was intended for tight end Zach Miller, he was off to the races.

For the first 20 to 30 yards of his return, Harris saw nothing but open space. As he approached the end zone, he dodged a would-be tackler and snuck in by the right pylon.

His recognizable "No-Fly Zone" celebration soon followed.

## *Jamal Carter makes a play*

In 12 of the previous 13 seasons, at least one college free agent has made the Broncos' opening day roster.

Safety Jamal Carter began to make his case Thursday that he should be the one to continue that trend.

Carter had six tackles on the evening, but his biggest play came on a botched snap that nearly went over Glennon's head.

After the football bounced off several players' hands, Carter was the one to secure the rock and give the offense great field position.

## *Putting up points*

Trevor Siemian led the starting offense's only scoring drive of the evening with a 10-play, 5:33 series that covered 60 yards.

Aided by 34 penalty yards, Siemian pushed the Broncos to the Chicago 20-yard line before the drive stalled.

Brandon McManus came in for his first field goal attempt of the year to knock in a 38-yard try.

### *Rookie connection*

Just when it appeared the Broncos would leave Chicago with a loss, rookie Kyle Sloter found a wide-open Isaiah McKenzie for a 47-yard touchdown.

On third-and-17, the Bears lost track of McKenzie, who split two defenders and streaked down the middle of the field. Sloter stepped up in the pocket, located McKenzie and delivered the ball on target.

The score tied the game at 17-17, and after a defensive stop on the next possession, the Sloter-led offense got the ball back with a chance to win.

### *Last-minute heroics*

A Kalif Raymond punt return got the game-winning drive going.

He caught the ball at the 8-yard line and weaved his way for 34 yards to the 42-yard line. An unnecessary roughness penalty added another 15 yards for the Broncos, and the drive began at the Chicago 43-yard line.

Just a few plays later, rookie De'Angelo Henderson rumbled through an open lane for a 41-yard touchdown run that put the Broncos ahead for good.

# Even in the preseason, 'winning is winning'

By Aric DiLalla  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

Head Coach Vance Joseph stressed that the Broncos went to Chicago to win.

The Broncos won't get a leg up in the AFC West standings after Thursday's 24-17 win over the Chicago Bears, and that's OK.

In the preseason, execution and evaluation matters much more than the actual result.

Still, as Head Coach Vance Joseph took the sideline Thursday night, he looked to maintain the culture of winning in Denver.

So while the seven-point comeback won't be anything more than a footnote when looking back at the preseason, it sure beats the alternative.

"Winning is winning, guys," said Joseph after his first win as a head coach. "It doesn't matter if it's preseason or not. We came here to win. We made some plays late in the ballgame to pull it out, so that was fun to see."

The comeback began with 9:46 in the fourth quarter with a 41-yard kick return by Kalif Raymond.

Over the course of the next four minutes, the Broncos didn't have to move the ball far.

Quarterback Kyle Sloter found Carlos Henderson for 7 yards and Marlon Brown for 15 yards.

Then, on a third-and-18, Sloter made the first big play of his NFL career.

A streaking Isaiah McKenzie found the gap between two Bears players -- who both decided to let him run free -- and Sloter maneuvered his way forward in a crowded pocket.

Sloter delivered a solid throw, McKenzie hauled it in, and the Broncos were within seven after an extra point.

"It was awesome," Sloter said afterward. "That was everything you dream of as a kid: ... dropping back and throwing a touchdown in the National Football League. And then leading another one. It was just a blessing to have this opportunity and be in this position and my teammate's did a great job putting me in that position."

And then he led another touchdown drive.

Raymond again kick-started the scoring chance with a long return. This time, he took a punt back 34 yards and also benefitted from a 15-yard unnecessary roughness penalty.

For the second time, Sloter made a play through the air, hitting Raymond on a 24-yard pass to the Bears 29-yard line.

A holding penalty and sack followed, but that would only increase De'Angelo Henderson's degree of difficulty.

On third-and 22, the sixth-round pick shot straight through a lane in the middle of the offensive line and cut back to his right.

The Bears came close to bringing him down, but the rookie just managed to sneak into the end zone for a 41-yard score.

First-round pick Garrett Bolles, who joined the first-team offensive line on the sideline for most of the night, was among those most excited about that drive to put the Broncos ahead for good.

"My rookie class is amazing," Bolles said. "We've got a lot of great athletes. ... They held it down. The threes came in the game and took care of it. At first, I rallied up my rookies and I told them, 'It's time to play football, man. Just let everything go away.'

"We came out after halftime, and it was like, 'OK, let's go.' The defense just picked it up. I'm just so proud of everyone who contributed tonight to help us get the win."

Sloter certainly wasn't the only player to make the comeback possible, but the Northern Colorado product will earn headlines after he finished 5-of-6 for 94 yards, one touchdown and a 158.3 quarterback rating.

"It was definitely a fun game," Sloter said. "Fun to be a part of. My team did a great job putting me in position to win. They got open for me, I was protected, so I can't really chalk that up to myself. It's more guys putting me in the right position."

And even in preseason, that meant something.

# Injury updates vs. Bears: Billy Winn out with knee injury

By Aric DiLalla  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

Injury updates from the Broncos' preseason opener against Chicago.

Defensive end Billy Winn exited the Broncos' preseason opener with an apparent right knee injury.

Winn suffered the injury with 39 seconds to play in the first quarter on a Bears running play.

Trainers attended to him on the field for several minutes before he was helped up and onto a cart.

The Broncos announced Winn would be out for the remainder of the game.

UPDATE (9:11 p.m. CDT): The Broncos provide an update on Orion Stewart's injury status.

*Patrick Smyth @psmyth12*

*Injury update for the Broncos: S Orion Stewart (neck) is questionable to return.*

*8:10 PM - Aug 10, 2017*

*5 5 Replies 25 25 Retweets 56 56 likes*

# Von Miller will not play in preseason opener vs. Chicago

By Aric DiLalla  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 11, 2017

The seventh-year pro will be held out against the Bears.

All-Pro outside linebacker Von Miller will not play in Thursday night's game against the Chicago Bears.

As Shane Ray and Shaquil Barrett recover from injuries, keeping Miller healthy is of paramount importance for the Broncos.

Miller, who tallied 13.5 sacks and three forced fumbles in 2016, is expected to play later in the preseason.

Kasim Edebali, Vontarrius Dora and rookie DeMarcus Walker should see extensive playing time in Miller's place.

Miller underwent a workout on the Soldier Field grass a few hours before kickoff.

The rest of the Broncos' starting defense, which will also be without T.J. Ward and Todd Davis, will play three series, at most.

Head Coach Vance Joseph said ahead of Thursday's game that a dominant series against the Bears' first-team offense could result in even fewer snaps for the unit.

The Broncos' No. 1 offense is likely to see more playing time.

# Broncos launch new interactive Bingo presented by Coca-Cola Zero Sugar

By Staff

Denverbroncos.com

August 11, 2017

Sideline Sports, Inc. and the Denver Broncos announced a partnership for the 2017 NFL season. The Broncos will activate Sideline Sports' highly interactive digital product — Broncos Bingo — for all 20 games, 10 at home and 10 on the road.

The Broncos Bingo game will be integrated in the Denver Broncos 365 app presented by Verizon, and will be available to fans both inside and outside the stadium, during both home and road games.

“By adding Sideline Sports’ bingo to our app and partnering with Coca-Cola we’re excited to give our fans the opportunity to win prizes and engage with our games as they happen on the field,” said Ben Hunt, the Broncos' director of digital media.

"Coca-Cola has been collaborating with the Broncos to connect our brands with Broncos Fans and enhance their fan experience," said John Sprogis, regional marketing director for Coca-Cola North America. "One of our objectives this season with the Broncos was to find ways to enhance social and digital engagement with Broncos fans. We are very excited to collaborate with the Broncos on this digital bingo game."

Broncos Bingo will be available for fan play starting on Thursday, Aug. 10, 2017, for the Broncos first preseason game against the Bears (6 p.m. MDT).

Prizes include:

- 1 - \$500 winner per game
- 1 - Autographed Broncos item per game
- 50 - Personalized Coca-Colas from shareacoke.com per game

How to play Broncos Bingo:

Download the Broncos 365 app presented by Verizon for your mobile device and open the app.

1. Tap on either the "Featured" tab or the Fans icon.

2. Tap the Broncos Bingo card\*

If Broncos 365 is not logged into Facebook follow the log in steps below.

2b. Log in with Facebook and tap OK\*\*

If you receive a Facebook error message: go to your device settings, find Facebook settings and turn allow Broncos 365 permissions by selecting ON.

3. Choose Broncos Bingo

4. Have fun!

# Ramsey Rapid Reaction: Broncos crawl to victory over Bears

By David Ramsey  
Colorado Springs Gazette  
August 11, 2017

Trevor Siemian supporters wanted him to make a statement. Paxton Lynch believers wanted the same thing.

The Bronco quarterback situation was cloudy at kickoff Thursday night at Soldier Field.

It remained cloudy when the game ended.

Three things to remember from an exhibition game that nobody – well, almost nobody – will remember in October.

## **One – Siemian and Lynch were all right, at best.**

The duo completed 12 of 16 passes, which sounds encouraging.

But those passes gained only 93 yards, which drains all encouragement.

Mike McCoy is an offensive genius. That's a truth that can't be altered by a sluggish effort on a cloudy night on the south end of downtown Chicago.

But, make no mistake, McCoy displayed none of that genius on Thursday night. McCoy and Vance Joseph kept Siemian and Lynch on a short leash. The coaches didn't ask their quarterbacks to do much, and the quarterbacks responded by not doing much.

## **Two – Chris Harris can play**

Chris Harris made a cameo appearance, but it was some kind of cameo. His 50-yard touchdown return one minute into the game was the night's most exciting, and revealing, moment.

Harris revealed, once again, that he's one of the NFL's premier defensive players. And Mike Glennon revealed to John Fox and everyone else that he's not a high-quality NFL starter.

## **Three – The running game needs Jamaal Charles**

Jamaal Charles, the former Chiefs superstar, was scheduled to make his first Bronco appearance in this game, but at the last minute Vance Joseph canceled the debut.

That's too bad. The Bronco running game needs the spark that Charles could provide, despite his age and despite his recent trouble with injury.

# **Bronco Chris Harris displays skills in cameo appearance vs. the Bears**

By David Ramsey  
Colorado Springs Gazette  
August 11, 2017

Chris Harris has spent the past few weeks frustrating quarterback Paxton Lynch.

On Thursday night, Harris quit frustrating his teammate and turned to frustrating Bears quarterback Mike Glennon.

Harris made a cameo appearance, but it was some kind of cameo. His 50-yard touchdown return on an interception one minute into the game was the night's most exciting, and revealing, moment.

Harris revealed, once again, that he's one of the NFL's premier defensive players. And Mike Glennon revealed to coach John Fox and everyone else that he's an iffy candidate to start at quarterback.

"Chris Harris makes a play he's made in camp the last couple weeks," said Bronco coach Vance Joseph. "So, I wasn't surprised."

Lynch laughed as he considered the Harris touchdown. Harris has often confounded him during practices.

"It was good," Lynch said, "to see it happen to somebody else."

Joseph did not throw the full might of the Bronco defense against the Bears in the 24-17 win. Harris was gone early in the first quarter, and linebacker Von Miller did not make an appearance. Joseph said he did not want to risk an injury to Miller.

# David Ramsey: Neither Denver Broncos quarterbacks delivers a decisive moment

By David Ramsey  
Colorado Springs Gazette  
August 11, 2017

A moment.

That's what we were expecting. That's what we were awaiting.

We wanted a moment when one of the Bronco quarterbacks showed he's a worthy, dangerous NFL starter. We wanted a football adventure. We wanted a pass that stretched the imagination.

Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch never delivered that moment, or anything close to it. They remain in a close race, too close to call, for the starting job. But remember this: They are both running slowly.

Yes, the duo suffered from poor protection and an ultra-conservative offensive game plan, but elite quarterbacks slice through excuses, and defenses.

The Bronco quarterback situation was cloudy at kickoff Thursday night at Soldier Field. It remained cloudy when the game ended.

"It's an ongoing battle," coach Vance Joseph said after the Broncos struggled to a 24-17 victory over the Bears.

But he knows the battle will end soon.

Offensive coordinator Mike McCoy is a borderline genius. That's a truth that can't be altered by a sluggish effort on a cloudy night on the south end of downtown Chicago.

But McCoy displayed little of his genius on Thursday. McCoy and Joseph kept Siemian and Lynch on a short leash. The coaches didn't ask their quarterbacks to do much, and the quarterbacks responded by not doing much. They completed 12 passes for a measly 93 yards.

"We didn't take as many shots as would have liked tonight," Lynch said.

A few minutes after the victory, Joseph responded to several specific questions about Lynch and Siemian by talking about penalties. In Joseph's view, penalties were all that prevented Lynch and Siemian from offering a worthy imitation of Peyton Manning in his prime.

"They're both playing good football," Joseph said. "Outside of the penalties, I was impressed."

Joseph talked blandly instead of frankly because he doesn't want to risk adding to the pressure that already burdens his young quarterbacks.

If you're looking for the most frustrating play of the game, here it is: Early in the third quarter, Lynch retreated into the pocket and lofted a soaring pass to Jordan Taylor.

This was Lynch's chance to make a statement. This was the rare time when the Broncos actually challenged the Bears' defense. This was the moment all those Siemian doubters had been thirsting for the entire offseason.

Lynch missed Taylor, who had gained a step and was open. It was a tough throw into double coverage, but not an impossible throw. It was the throw Lynch must make if he wants to unseat Siemian.

"It really felt good to go against a defense that wasn't our own," Lynch said in a rare moment of candor.

I understand what he means. His own defense has been frequently intercepting his passes at Dove Valley.

There's a reason for the obsession about the identity of the Bronco starting quarterback for 2017. No position in sport is more difficult than quarterback in the NFL. And no position is more vital to a franchise's success.

With John Elway and Peyton Manning at quarterback, the Broncos grabbed seven AFC titles and won three Super Bowls. During the 1999 to 2011 era when the Broncos lacked a franchise quarterback, the franchise never won the AFC.

It was a time of wandering in the NFL wilderness. Get ready: It looks as if the wandering will return in 2017.

# Vance Joseph: Too early to talk about separation in Broncos' QB race

By Staff

USA Today

August 11, 2017

Vance Joseph isn't ready to declare a leader in the Denver Broncos' quarterback race.

After saying both Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch were solid Thursday night in their preseason debuts against the Chicago Bears, the Broncos coach noted he wasn't prepared to make too many determinations until the two flipped roles next week.

Siemian started Thursday, completing 6 of 7 passes for 51 yards. Lynch, who is set to start next Saturday against the San Francisco 49ers, threw for 42 yards on 6-of-9 passing.

"It's an ongoing battle ... right now we're still competing," Joseph said. "We're all learning the offense still. After next week we can talk about if there's separation between two guys."

Joseph said that he was satisfied with both players' performances but that it was difficult to evaluate them given the flow of the game.

"I was satisfied," Joseph said. "Trevor was solid. He made some nice plays in the pass game. Paxton had some nice plays but we had so many penalties. ... It hurt his drives. That's why he played more. But overall it was a solid performance."

# What we learned from Thursday's preseason games

By Gregg Rosenthal

NFL.com

August 11, 2017

Trevor Siemian took another step toward winning the starting job in Denver. Mitchell Trubisky did his best to ignite a quarterback battle in Chicago. In Cleveland, confusion remains on top of the depth chart.

On the first heavy night of action this preseason with six games, there was thankfully a scarcity of major injuries and plenty of opportunity for overreaction. Here are the stories that should stick, starting with all the quarterback intrigue:

1. Broncos quarterback Siemian looked like a competent, unspectacular starter as usual for his three drives Thursday night, completing 6-of-7 passes for 51 yards. His only incompleting came on a nice deep throw that Emmanuel Sanders couldn't come down with. While Siemian hardly lit up the scoreboard, he made quick, smart decisions with the ball.

Paxton Lynch, on the other hand, repeatedly held on to the ball too long and misfired on a few open throws. He was lucky to avoid a fumble on one scramble. His final stats didn't look that much different than Siemian, but he only led the Broncos to three first downs in four drives.

This uninspiring "Siemian wins by default" storyline mirrors the reports coming out of training camp. It was a dark enough night that reporters asked coach Vance Joseph if little-known third-stringer Kyle Slotter is a legitimate option to start. Lynch will need a big performance when he starts next week or Siemian figures to start getting all the starting reps in practice.

2. Mitchell Trubisky was Thursday night's biggest winner. Sure, he was facing third-string Broncos defenders who were only playing man coverage. But a few of his pinpoint throws on the run and one third-and-17 conversion from the pocket with pressure in his face were impressive no matter the scenario.

The Bears didn't score a point, gaining only four first downs in six drives with Mike Glennon and Mark Sanchez running the show. Glennon threw an ugly pick-six on his first drive, his lack of pocket presence notable when he threw a pass while getting hit. Trubisky, meanwhile, led the Bears on a two-minute touchdown drive in his first NFL action. He led the Bears to 17 points and 14 first downs on his first three drives before stalling some in the fourth quarter.

If nothing else, this result should inspire coach John Fox to eventually stop wasting second-team snaps on Sanchez. Glennon remains a strong bet to start Week 1, but every positive Trubisky performance will increase public pressure and eat into Glennon's regular season job security.

"Our depth chart is not going to change after one game, particularly a preseason game," John Fox said after the game in the most John Fox way possible.

3. Thursday night started with Brock Osweiler getting his chance to grab the Browns' starting quarterback job. It ended with rookie DeShone Kizer completing a pair of Roethlisbergeriffic vertical

throws to lead the Browns to a victory. Kizer showed great pocket movement and raw skills that Osweiler and Cody Kessler simply can't match. They were the type of "AFC North" plays Hue Jackson has spoken of wanting from his quarterback.

Osweiler finished with only 42 yards on 14 attempts after starting the game with three straight three and outs, chastising himself after the game for his lack of accuracy.

"I'm pretty sure that no ball has ever been completed that is thrown out of bounds," Osweiler said.

It would be shocking if Kizer doesn't get more time with the starters next week.

4. Browns No. 1 overall pick Myles Garrett looked the part early for the Browns, creating havoc in the running game.

5. All that hype about Browns running back Duke Johnson becoming the team's slot receiver is being borne out. He might very well be listed as a wideout on the official team roster before this season is up.

6. Bills quarterback Tyrod Taylor sent a message early by throwing his first three passes to Sammy Watkins. They all went for completions. Watkins, finally looking healthy, caught four passes for 39 yards.

7. The Vikings sent a similar declaration of intent by giving running back Dalvin Cook eight touches on the team's first 13 plays. Cook finished with 43 yards from scrimmage in limited work, showing some power and looking comfortable in the passing game as a receiver and pass catcher.

8. LeSean McCoy's primary backup Jonathan Williams showed great burst before leaving with a hamstring injury. It's a concerning setback for a Bills team already thin at running back.

9. The Colin Kaepernick buzz in Baltimore isn't going to slow down after Ryan Mallett's night. He completed only 9-of-18 passes for 58 yards in one half of work.

10. Vikings starting cornerback Trae Waynes left Thursday's game early with a shoulder injury, although coach Mike Zimmer didn't show much concern about it after the game.

11. Dion Lewis ran strong for the Patriots on Thursday night, showing some of the quickness and tackle-breaking ability that defined his 2015 season. He is too talented for the team to cut, even at a deep position, if he continues to play like this.

12. Foxborough training camp hero Austin Carr made good on all his rookie buzz with the catch of the night against Jacksonville. The Northwestern rookie is making it hard for the Patriots to cut him, even at their deep receiver position.

13. Second-year Bears pass rusher Leonard Floyd, who has enjoyed a standout training camp, made Broncos free agent pickup Menelik Watson look bad on an early sack. The Broncos' offensive line has a long way to go to put last year behind them.

14. Packers running back Ty Montgomery lost a fumble against the Eagles, continuing a trend from training camp. That could help rookie Jamaal Williams cut into his playing time.

15. Saints rookie running back Alvin Kamara built on his camp buzz by lining up all over the field and showing great balance on the way to 35 yards on four carries. He's absolutely going to earn major playing time in a backfield that includes Adrian Peterson and Mark Ingram.

16. Dolphins rookie second-round linebacker Raekwon McMillan suffered a knee injury which appeared to be serious. He left the stadium on crutches. Packers cornerback Damarious Randall (concussion) and Broncos defensive lineman Billy Winn (knee) were also among the notable injuries.

# Broncos offense looks no better than last season as QBs spin wheels

By Charean Williams

Pro Football Talk

August 11, 2017

While Mitchell Trubisky was stealing the show in Chicago, the quarterbacks on the other sideline will continue their competition with no clear leader.

The Broncos ranked 27th in total offense and tied for 28th in scoring last season and looked no better in their first preseason game with their top-two quarterbacks.

Trevor Siemian started and led the Broncos to a field goal on a 10-play, 60-yard drive on the team's first series. He played two other series before giving way to Paxton Lynch.

Siemian finished 6-of-7 for 51 yards and 97.0 passer rating. Lynch completed 6 of 9 passes for 42 yards and 77.1 passer rating, failing to lead the Broncos to any points before leaving in the fourth quarter.

The Broncos defense, with a pick-six on the third play from scrimmage, outscored the Broncos offense until third quarterback Kyle Slotter threw a touchdown pass in the fourth quarter. Denver added another touchdown late in the fourth quarter.

Broncos General Manager John Elway said, via Mark Kiszla of The Denver Post, that the results of the Siemian-Lynch competition would be "seen by everyone." He added, "It's going to show up."

So far, though, there has been nothing to see here.

# Von Miller won't play on Thursday night

By Josh Alper  
Pro Football Talk  
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John Fox saw a lot of Von Miller sacks while he was the head coach of the Broncos, but he won't have to worry about the linebacker dropping any Bears quarterbacks on Thursday night.

Mike Klis of KUSA reports that Miller will not play in Denver's preseason opener. There's no injury that the Broncos are being cautious about, but a couple of other injuries are related to the decision.

Klis reports that the absence of Shane Ray and Shaq Barrett helped lead the Broncos to sit Miller on Thursday night. Ray is recovering from a torn ligament in his wrist and Barrett is coming back from a hip injury, which might not make keeping Miller healthy any more important given his already vital role on defense but it does leave the team with a need to see what others can do off the edge since Ray and Barrett could be out into the regular season.

DeMarcus Walker, Vontarrius Dora and Kasim Edehali are expected to get a lot of action at outside linebacker against the Bears.

# Key & Peele paid Von Miller's three-pump fine

By Mike Florio  
Pro Football Talk  
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NFL players must pay their own fines. But that doesn't stop people from giving them money separately.

When Broncos linebacker Von Miller drew a fine in 2015 for post-sack pelvic thrusting, comedians Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele made an equivalent contribution to Miller's foundation.

Key explained that the payment was made during a Thursday in-studio appearance on the Dan Patrick Show, out of respect for the homage to their popular Hingle McCringleberry "three pumps" sketch.

The precise amount of the fine was \$11,567, and it's possible that Key & Peele will be removing more bills from their bankroll to make similar contributions in the future. Despite the relaxation of the celebration rules, pelvic thrust remain prohibited.

Key, by the way, was promoting his new Netflix series Friends from College. Which I personally recommend, along with Last Chance U. Which I now recommend even more strongly because Stats now hates it without ever having even watched it, because he's afraid to admit that it may be better than Hard Knocks.

# Third-string quarterback helps Broncos beat Bears, 24-17, in preseason opener

By Joe Dahlke  
Fox 31 Denver  
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The Broncos opened the preseason with a 24-17 win over the Bears at Soldier Field in Chicago on Thursday night.

All the focus was on Broncos quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch as they continue to compete for the starting job.

Siemian got the start, but it was the defense that got the first score of the night.

On the first drive, Bears quarterback Mike Glennon was picked off by Chris Harris Jr., who took it the distance to give the Broncos a 7-0 lead just one minute into the game.

Siemian finished 6 of 7 passing for 51 yards after getting sacked on his first play. Siemian got all of the first-quarter snaps and one second quarter possession.

He led a drive that resulted in a 38-yard field goal from Brandon McManus in the first quarter to make it 10-0.

Lynch came in after that and his first two drives were three-and-outs.

Lynch was back in to start the second half and kicked things off with a 14-yard pass to Jordan Taylor on first down. The drive ended in another punt for the Broncos.

Lynch finished 6 of 9 for 42 yards.

Bears rookie quarterback Mitchell Trubisky looked more like a franchise quarterback as he led Chicago to a touchdown on his first drive before the half and then another scoring drive to open the second half to make it 14-10.

Trubisky continued to beat down the Broncos third-string defense early in the fourth quarter as the Bears marched down for a field goal to increase their lead to 17-10.

Trubisky was the second overall pick in the draft.

The first offensive touchdown for the Broncos didn't come until late in the fourth quarter when third-string quarterback Kyle Sloter finished his first drive with a 47-yard throw to Isaiah McKenzie, who was wide open, to tie it, 17-17.

It completed a seven-play, 64-yard drive. Sloter played quarterback at the University of Northern Colorado.

The Broncos' third-string offense continued to look good as running back DeAngelo Henderson ran 41 yards on third-and-long for a touchdown to make it 24-17.

Sloter finished 5 of 6 for 94. Lynch will start when the Broncos face the San Francisco 49ers in Santa Clara, California, on Aug. 19.