

# The Broncos have a problem, and they couldn't be happier about it.

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
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The Broncos have a problem that started with the NFL draft in April and was complicated by a pair of phone calls in the ensuing months, first to Kansas City and then to Natchez, Miss.

It's a welcome problem — one that teams strive to have and one the Broncos are cherishing for the remaining days of training camp and the preseason. But it's one they soon will have to solve.

With the selection of sixth-round draft pick De'Angelo Henderson, the signings of veterans Jamaal Charles and Stevan Ridley and the returns of C.J. Anderson, Devontae Booker (when healthy) and Juwan Thompson, the Broncos' once-dormant running game has seemingly been revived with a unique blend of talent.

The preseason opener at Chicago on Thursday was a test of patience as the Broncos continue to work through the kinks of a new scheme and search for the starter at multiple positions, none more significant than quarterback. But among the more promising aspects was their ground game, which gained 106 yards (4.1 per-carry average) against the Bears and included the winning 41-yard touchdown run by Henderson late in the fourth quarter.

"What we saw tonight is what he's been since we drafted the guy in the spring," first-year Broncos head coach Vance Joseph said of Henderson after the 24-17 victory over the Bears. "So I'm not surprised to see that tonight."

For the past two years, the Denver running game has failed to launch in the way general manager John Elway envisioned. But this season — thanks in large part to a remade offensive line whose pride is tied to run blocking — sure has the potential to be the charm and the key to supporting Denver's quarterbacks and still-developing offense.

"From what I watched on film to what I see now, it's a different attitude," Joseph said. "In my opinion, it's the offensive line that has made the most improvement. Now, running back-wise, adding Jamaal Charles and adding a guy like Ridley, that obviously makes you better. It makes the competition tough in that room."

## Subway and second chances

Training camp opened with a setback. Booker, Denver's No. 2 running back who had been pushing to be No. 1, suffered a fractured wrist. A pair of screws would fix him, but the Broncos couldn't fill his void on the field for the remainder of camp and the preseason.

Enter Ridley, a free agent who spent four years with the New England Patriots and topped 1,200 yards rushing in 2012 but started only six games over the last three years because of injuries. His shot at a career revival was offered July 27.

“I told my mom about it at Subway,” he said with a laugh. “A small country town in Natchez, Miss., there’s not too many options. You’ve got Wendy’s, McDonald’s and pretty much Burger King, so Subway takes it.”

Then he drove three hours to New Orleans, boarded a plane to Denver and worked out for Joseph, offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and running backs coach Eric Stutesville inside the Broncos’ field house. Then he signed on a dotted line, suited up in a No. 47 practice jersey and took the field for his first walkthrough.

All in a day’s work.

The next morning, Ridley announced his arrival after throwing on shells and a helmet. He “flashed” — a term Denver coaches have used often to describe their rushers — showing his ability to find his holes at the line and power through them.

Ridley said he wanted to provide “stability” to the running backs room, but he has been a welcome disruption — and a contender for a coveted roster spot.

“He’s a pro,” Stutesville said. “He approaches this the professional way. And he knows the great opportunity that’s sitting here. We’re very excited about him.”

The Broncos also are excited about Charles, once an AFC West nemesis as a Kansas City Chiefs star who signed a one-year contract in May to fit with Joseph’s theme of infusing the offense with speed. Charles didn’t play Thursday against the Bears, but he is expected to take the field at some point in preseason as he eases his way back from knee surgeries that hindered his last two years in the league.

He says his troublesome knees no longer are a concern. The Broncos hope he’s right.

“I don’t feel rusty. I feel good,” Charles said after two days of camp. “I told the guys in the locker room, when I see one of you kids beat me, it’s time for me to give it up.”

So far, that kid testing Charles is Henderson, a 5-foot-7 speedster from Coastal Carolina who has given the Broncos a weapon on the ground and in the passing game.

“Speed kills. That ain’t my game,” Anderson said. “So, No. 28 (Charles) or No. 33 (Henderson) can go out there and they’re fast. If it’s time to bulk some muscle and hit somebody in the mouth, call No. 22.”

### **No longer a one-guy position**

If Joseph had his way, the depth chart that was announced last week wouldn’t exist. With multiple position battles underway and many lines blurred because of scheme, the depth chart is misleading and temporary.

It could change — as quickly as the Broncos’ running backs room changed.

But for now, Anderson is No. 1. For now, Booker — despite his wrist injury — is No. 2. For now, Charles, Ridley, Henderson, Thompson and Bernard Pierce are lumped together in the No. 3 slot.

“The running back position — you need two or three guys that can carry the load,” Joseph said. “It is no longer a one-guy position.”

The competition could prompt the Broncos to take on another tailback and sacrifice depth elsewhere, especially as the backs flaunt a dynamic few other NFL teams can match.

“I also think the way we’re used in the passing game is that other extension of the running game,” Anderson said. “So if we’re not running the ball well, but catching the ball out of the backfield and keeping the defense honest, we’ll still open up some lanes for us to run the ball.”

It’s a Denver problem that could make for tough decisions Sept. 2, when rosters across the league must be pared to the final 53.

“Tough? No,” Stuedesville said with a smile. “Tough is when you don’t have anybody.”

# **Broncos rookie WR Carlos Henderson to have thumb surgery**

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
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Injuries on both sides of the ball continue to pile up for the Broncos.

Broncos rookie receiver and kickoff returner Carlos Henderson suffered a thumb injury in Thursday's preseason game at Chicago and will undergo a procedure Sunday to determine the severity and repair it, an NFL source confirmed. The team will not know a timetable for his return until after the procedure.

9News first reported Henderson's injury.

Henderson injured his thumb early in the win over the Bears and though he tried to play through the pain, it affected his play.

He played eight snaps at receiver and had one catch for 7 yards. He also played 12 special teams snaps and returned three kickoffs for 47 yards.

Henderson did not practice Saturday or participate in the Broncos' afternoon walkthrough as he underwent further evaluation on his thumb.

# Broncos fans set training camp attendance record in 2017

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
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Broncos fans set a training camp attendance record this year with an average of 4,910 in the 11 workouts open to the public, besting last year's average of 4,364. All told, 54,013 fans showed for camp in 2017.

The crowd topped 6,000 on three different occasions, including a record a 7,085 fans on Aug. 5, when the Broncos held a scrimmage.

"We need it — from the first day to the last day," cornerback Aqib Talib said. "You're going to play a little bit harder if you've got people watching — if you've got 5,000 people watching. That extra juice that we need towards the end of camp, the fans definitely bring it for us."

## Fan Love

Training camp attendance averages at the Broncos' UCHealth Training Center over the years:

**2005:** 812  
**2006:** 838  
**2007:** 1,438  
**2008:** 653  
**2009:** 975  
**2010:** 1,410  
**2011:** 1,597  
**2012:** 2,872  
**2013:** 2,795  
**2014:** –  
**2015:** 4,178  
**2016:** 4,364  
**2017:** 4,910

# Broncos DE Derek Wolfe carted off practice field, suffers ankle sprain

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
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About 36 hours after they lost defensive end Billy Winn to a season-ending knee injury, the Broncos received a scare when Derek Wolfe went down in practice Saturday with a serious ankle sprain.

The sixth-year veteran was carted off the field after getting caught up in a pile with offensive tackle Menelik Watson in 11-on-11 drills early in the workout. Wolfe was visibly upset by the injury and didn't put any weight on his right leg as he hobbled back to the locker room with the help of trainers. Testing revealed the injury was less severe than the Broncos had feared and Wolfe said he expects to be ready for Week 1 of the regular season.

"Appreciate the love," he tweeted Saturday afternoon. "Dodged a bullet."

He later posted a photo of his ballooned ankle and added: "Just a little swelling."

Although Wolfe will miss practice time and preseason reps, the Broncos avoided a tremendous blow to their already depleted defense.

In their preseason opener at Chicago on Thursday, Winn tore his ACL and suffered damage to other ligaments in his right knee. The team placed him on injured reserve Saturday morning and signed rookie undrafted free agent Nelson Adams, a 6-foot-3, 287-pound lineman who was released from the Steelers last week after competing in their training camp.

"Anytime you lose a guy like Winn, who has played really, really well for us, that's a concern, absolutely," Joseph said. "But we have guys behind him who have to step up. But you lose guys, that's a concern."

Winn was the No. 2 nose tackle on the Broncos' depth chart behind veteran Domata Peko. Sitting at No. 3 is Kyle Peko, who injured his foot in June and has been on the physically unable to perform list. Peko can come off PUP at any point, but the call is dependent on his health.

"Kyle had X-rays (Sunday) and it was pretty good, so he's healing fast," Joseph said. "But until he's healthy, we won't know that."

While Winn was lost for the season, outside linebackers Shane Ray (wrist) and Shaquil Barrett (hip) will miss the entirety of preseason to recover from injuries. Both are projected to return within the first few weeks of the regular season.

"Everything is healing fine," Ray told The Denver Post on Friday. "The doctor says my hand is healing well. My stitches, when they came out the scars looked good, so I'm just excited. I look at it as they gave me four extra weeks to train."

The Broncos signed veteran Zach Kerr in free agency to spell Wolfe at defensive end and he, along with second-year player Adam Gotsis, will likely see more time in preseason as Wolfe recovers.

"I'm wherever they want me to play," Kerr said. "I went into the game as the second end and then played the majority of snaps at nose when Billy went down. I'm cool with being a gadget man."

# Aqib Talib talks HOF, Broncos add new face to DL, jobs still open on O-line

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
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Broncos cornerback Aqib Talib enters his 10th NFL season in rare company. He leads all cornerbacks in interceptions (33) since 2008, when he entered the league, and is tied for fourth all-time in career pick-sixes (nine). Standing alongside him at No. 4 on the list are Hall of Famers Deion Sanders, Ken Houston and Aeneas Williams.

Talib's name has been floated in Hall of Fame discussions. And he has heard the talk.

"Definitely," he said. "You don't think Hall of Fame until you get to year nine or year 10 and you compare your numbers to other guys and you see you're on the right path. All those guys played 14, 15 years plus. So I just feel like I'm on the right path. Now I have to just finish. I have to finish out my career strong and maybe I'll have a chance.

"If I'm going to do what Deion and Charles (Woodson) and the rest of those guys did, I got a long way to go."

## **New face on DL**

The Broncos on Saturday placed defensive end Billy Winn on season-ending injured reserve and signed rookie defensive lineman Nelson Adams.

Adams, a 6-foot-3, 287-pound undrafted rookie out of Mississippi State, compiled 80 total tackles, four sacks, four pass breakups and one fumble recovery in his four years with the Bulldogs. He signed with the Steelers in May, but was cut last week.

Winn, who re-signed with the Broncos in May, tore his anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during Thursday's preseason opener at Chicago and was ruled out for the remainder of the season. On the team's preliminary depth chart, he was listed as their No. 2 nose tackle behind Domata Peko.

## **Happy to be No. 3**

Third-string quarterback Kyle Sloter shined in the preseason opener, but coach Vance Joseph quickly shot down any notion of the undrafted free agent getting a chance to vie for the starting job. The job, Joseph said Thursday evening, will be won by either Trevor Siemian or Paxton Lynch.

The comments, while direct, were not surprising to Sloter.

"Nah, it's something I went into knowing when I came here that it was going to be a Paxton and Trevor show," he said Saturday. "I'm fine with that. I don't get paid to make those decisions. My job is just to go out there and do the best I can and put the team in a position to win."

## **O-line shuffle**

Veteran Allen Barbre received first-team reps in practice and could see time with the ones in next Saturday's preseason game as he vies for the starting job at left guard.

"That guard position, it's an open competition there between three or four guys," Joseph said. "The best guy is going to play, so it's fair that he's getting some (first-team) reps."

Max Garcia started the first preseason game at left guard and is No. 1 on the depth chart. Michael Schofield is No. 3, but came through with a key block that opened a lane for De'Angelo Henderson in his game-winning touchdown run Thursday.

The offensive line remains in flux but the priority, Joseph said, is finding a cohesive group with players who can play multiple positions along the line.

**Footnotes.** Todd Davis returned to practice after missing time because of a shoulder sprain. ... Safety T.J. Ward (hamstring) did not practice.

# Timeline for veteran RB Jamaal Charles' Broncos debut still unclear

By Nick Kosmider  
Denver Post  
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Injuries on both sides of the ball continue to pile up for the Broncos.

Jamaal Charles did not play in the Broncos' preseason opener at Chicago on Thursday. And it is unclear if the veteran running back will suit up Saturday at San Francisco.

"I'm not sure yet," coach Vance Joseph said when asked if Charles would play against the 49ers.

Charles, signed to a one-year contract by the Broncos in the offseason after spending his first nine seasons with AFC West rival Kansas City, remains one of Denver's biggest question marks as the team enters its final month of preparations before the Sept. 11 regular-season opener against the Los Angeles Chargers.

Though his full-team repetitions have been elevated during the past week, Charles has still seen limited action as he continues to recover from multiple knee surgeries the last two years.

The man who has rushed for at least 1,000 yards in a season five times insists he is not feeling pressure as roster decisions creep closer.

"I don't think I have to prove anything," he said. "... People know what I can do. I feel confident. Whatever Coach Vance (Joseph) and the trainers say, that's their direction. I'm just out here every day just getting healthy and getting my craft ready and preparing to play whenever."

Joseph said the Broncos will "probably" need to see Charles, whose one-year deal could reach \$3.75 million with incentives, play in the preseason before making a roster decision with the running back.

"He'll eventually play," Joseph said. "It depends on the (doctors) and how he's feeling."

Charles said he has experienced no setbacks as he's gradually participated more in practice this month. He has made a concerted effort, he said, to run on his right side and cut off the knee that has been wrapped in a brace and was operated on as recently as November.

"I'm out here," he said. "Whenever they throw me in the fire, I'm going to be ready."

# Broncos rookie Carlos Henderson to undergo thumb surgery

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 13, 2017

Rookie receiver Carlos Henderson will undergo a surgical procedure to repair an injured thumb, sources told 9News.

No timetable has been determined on Henderson's return, although he will likely miss the rest of preseason and possibly the early part of the regular season.

Henderson suffered the injury early in the Broncos' preseason game Thursday night against the Chicago Bears. He tried to play through the injury without notifying the training staff, but it was obvious through the two kickoffs he dropped that the thumb was affecting his play.

He did not practice Saturday as he was undergoing tests to determine the severity of his thumb injury.

Henderson was the first of the Broncos' two, third-round draft picks this year, No. 82 overall. He had 82 catches for 1,532 yards and 19 touchdowns as a junior at Louisiana Tech last year and added two more rushing touchdowns and two more scores off kickoff returns.

# Wolfe has ankle injury Broncos do not believe to be serious

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 13, 2017

It was the type of injury scare that could have spoiled a season before it began.

Broncos starting defensive end Derek Wolfe – one of the team’s best players – was down for several minutes with a right leg injury.

Wolfe was helped onto a cart, driven off the practice field, and helped into the trainer’s room while putting no weight on his right leg.

As it turned out, Wolfe had an ankle injury that the Broncos initially didn’t believe to be serious, although the team was still conducting more tests.

“Great news,” said Broncos cornerback Aqib Talib. “I was praying as soon it happened that it was just a sprain or something like that and nothing serious. Hopefully, it’s not serious and it’s just a sprain.”

Still, the injury looks pretty ugly, as we got to see on social media when Wolfe tweeted out a picture of his swollen ankle.

The vaunted Denver defense cannot afford to absorb any more serious injury blows.

The Broncos’ defense is already without starting outside linebacker Shane Ray for one or two regular season games with a torn right wrist ligament. His backup Shaq Barrett will miss more time because of a hip injury. Backup defensive lineman Billy Winn is out for the year with a right knee injury and defensive tackle Kyle Peko is also mending a broken foot. Strong safety T.J. Ward has been out with a hamstring injury.

Wolfe’s injury occurred early in the team’s 11-on-11 drill. The Broncos were practicing in full pads Saturday.

Wolfe was a key player on the Broncos’ Super Bowl 50 team as he was a force against the run and as an inside pass rusher. Wolfe posted 5.5 sacks each of the past two years.

He is in the second year of a four-year contract that will pay him \$6.05 million this year.

Should Wolfe miss the rest of the preseason, the 3-4 defensive ends next in line for the Broncos are Adam Gotsis, Zach Kerr and Shakir Soto. The team could also consider moving second-round rookie DeMarcus Walker back to defensive end, although head coach Vance Joseph said he could him at outside linebacker for now.

Jared Crick is a returning starter at the other defensive end position.

# De'Angelo Henderson stays low, runs big

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 13, 2017

All rookies have been rookies before.

They just called them freshman back in college.

This is the mindset De'Angelo Henderson is taking as a rookie running back for the Denver Broncos. He is going back to the 2013 season at Coastal Carolina, where after a greyshirt year in 2011, and a redshirt year in 2012, Henderson as a redshirt freshman broke in with 599 yards rushing on a robust 7.3 yards per carry.

"Definitely, this goes back to my freshman year in college," Henderson said after his 41-yard touchdown burst on the first play after the 2-minute warning lifted the Broncos to a 24-17 win against the Chicago Bears. "Even my freshman year in high school. You've got to prove yourself to the vets, show that you belong, show that you can compete. That you're not afraid of the challenge."

The score tied, 17-17 with 1:58 remaining and facing a third-and-22, Broncos offensive coordinator Mike McCoy called a perfect play against the Bears' extremely soft, prevent defense.

"It was a simple inside zone play," Henderson said. "The defenders were playing off pretty deep and once I got the ball I knew I would have a chance to make something happen because they were playing off so far. Got it, hole opened up, burst through."

Left guard Michael Schofield opened the hole with a pancake block on a defensive tackle. Once Henderson got through the line, there was no Bear defender in the second level. He met safety DeAndre Houston-Carson at the third level, but sped past with a cut right.

It was the type of run where Henderson assuredly opened the eyes of the Broncos' football decision makers.

"I'm hoping I did," he said. "Got to take everything day by day and one game at a time but I'm hoping I did just to show I can compete. I'm a little bit smaller, a little bit shorter – I'm not small, short. But I can compete, it doesn't matter my height. I can compete."

In fact, Henderson's 5-foot-7 stature may have helped him on the run as he's not easy to pick up until he's at top speed.

Henderson finished with 54 yards on seven carries. A skeptic might note he only had 13 yards on six carries until his big run. An optimist would point out Henderson had three other carries for 25 combined yards that were called back by penalties.

From the team perspective, the only problem with preseason performances like the one Henderson had is they diminish the option of sliding him to the practice squad. The Broncos' running back room is crowded with C.J. Anderson, Jamaal Charles, Devontae Booker, Stevan Ridley, Juwan Thompson and

Henderson, plus fullback Andy Janovich. Bernard Pierce has missed virtually the entire training camp because of a hamstring strain.

The Broncos may only keep four from this group on their 53-man roster, possibly five.

# Kalif Raymond "playing angry" in attempt to win job

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 13, 2017

Somebody must have forgot to tell Kalif Raymond the Denver Broncos drafted Isaiah McKenzie.

Because Raymond isn't playing like a guy who knew the Broncos seemingly took his job away by taking the diminutive, speedy McKenzie in the fifth round.

"Through thick or thin – good, bad or indifferent – I'm always going to play with a chip on my shoulder," Raymond said.

After essentially missing the entire offseason with a torn ligament in his hand that came from diving for a pass, Raymond has brought intensity and energy to every training camp practice.

And then in the Broncos' preseason opener Thursday against the Chicago Bears, Raymond exploded with trifecta excitement, returning a punt for 34 yards, a kickoff for 41 yards and converting a first-and-20 with a 24-yard reception off a Kyle Slotter pass during the final-minute, game-winning drive.

After finishing the 2016 season as the Broncos' returner, Raymond could have gone one of two ways after the Broncos took a near-identical player in McKenzie. He could have felt sorry for himself and gone in an emotional funk. Or he could have got a little ticked off and showed management and the coaches they made a mistake by not believing he could handle the returner/slot receiver job on a full-time basis.

"I'm playing mad," Raymond said. "I'm playing like I haven't done anything, yet, and I haven't. I'm fired up, I'm playing angry like you said. I feel good. I feel way more comfortable back there."

Undrafted out of Holy Cross, the 5-foot-9, 182-pound Raymond played in four of the Broncos' final five games last season. He returned 11 punts for a 10.1-yard average and six kickoffs for 22.8-yard average.

The biggest concern was in his decision making – when to catch a punt or kickoff, when to let them go. Rookie things.

And so the Broncos drafted three players who were successful returners in college: McKenzie, Carlos Henderson and Brendan Langley. McKenzie has already been declared the Broncos' punt returner by head coach Vance Joseph.

Raymond, though, has a chance to make the Broncos' 53-man roster if the team keeps seven receivers.

"I'm trying to build that resume and show people I can do a lot of things," he said. "I only played four game last year so I still have to show people what I can do."

# Rookie receiver Carlos Henderson could miss time with thumb injury

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 13, 2017

Rookie receiver Carlos Henderson could miss some time after he suffered a thumb injury early in the Broncos' preseason game Thursday night against the Chicago Bears.

Henderson tried to play through the injury without notifying the training staff, but it was obvious through the two kickoffs he dropped that the thumb was affecting his play.

He did not practice Saturday as he was undergoing tests to determine the severity of his thumb injury.

Henderson was the first of the Broncos' two, third-round draft picks this year, No. 82 overall. He had 82 catches for 1,532 yards and 19 touchdowns as a junior at Louisiana Tech last year and added two more rushing touchdowns and two more scores off kickoff returns.

He has so far struggled with the transition to the NFL as most rookie receivers do.

# Third-string QB Sloter low keys newfound fame

By Mike Klis

9 News

August 13, 2017

Meet the talk of the town. Broncos third-string quarterback Kyle Sloter.

He's not exactly Mr. Excitable. Which is a good thing when you enter your first NFL game in the fourth quarter against the Bears in Chicago.

"Good: I think I can step up in the pocket and throw it 50 yards wide open to a guy," the understated Sloter said when asked to assess his 158.3 passer rating performance against the Bears. "Bad: I've just got to refine the footwork and fix the timing and all of that stuff."

A one year starter at Northern Colorado, it wasn't a surprise Sloter went undrafted, although he started hearing late in the process he might sneak into a late round. Broncos general manager John Elway got him with a mere \$3,000 signing bonus, which indicates there wasn't heavy competition from other teams.

"I had heard a bunch of different things," Sloter said. "At one point, towards the end of the process as the draft was starting, I was hearing that I was in that 10th to 14th quarterback taken range. They were saying anything from sixth to seventh round to possibly undrafted, which is what happened.

"The Broncos called me; they showed a lot of interest and they were one of the first teams to contact me in free agency and that meant a lot to me. Also, being able to come home in a sense—I'm from Atlanta but I went to school out here. It was kind of a home feeling and what more could you want being under a guy like John Elway and getting to learn some things from him, picking his brain a little bit as a quarterback."

Sloter came along at the right time Thursday night. The first 2 quarterbacks, Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch, struggled to score 3 combined points in three quarters.

Sloter came in and put up 14 points in two drives.

A preseason star was born. Only don't get any ideas. The Great Quarterback Competition is still between Siemian and Lynch, Lynch and Siemian – and no more.

"It's something that I went into, knowing when I came here, that it was going to be a Paxton and Trevor show," Sloter said. "I'm fine with that. I don't get paid to make those decisions, that's up to them. My job is just to go out there, do the best that I can and put the team in a position to win."

Sloter is somewhat reminiscent of Siemian from two years ago. Siemian was one of the last guys drafted in the seventh and final round in 2015. He then showed smarts and a slow heart beat during an impressive preseason to make the 53-man roster.

Sloter is actually the Broncos' No. 4 quarterback – Chad Kelly was drafted in the seventh round but is out with injuries – so barring any more physical setbacks there are no plans to put him on the 53-man

roster. Still in a couple years, don't be surprised if Sloter has a chance. And credit offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and quarterbacks coach Bill Musgrave for coaching up every player at their position, not just the top guys.

"He's been impressive for a young free agent quarterback," said Broncos' head coach Vance Joseph.

"He's been impressive, he's poised, his ball placement's really good—in games and in practice. I wasn't surprised to see him play well in that game on Thursday night."

# Broncos' Derek Wolfe: I 'dodged a bullet' on ankle injury

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 13, 2017

Denver Broncos defensive end Derek Wolfe took to social media on Saturday to say he "dodged a bullet" with a right ankle injury after he had been carted off the field during practice.

- Denver Broncos defensive end Derek Wolfe took to social media on Saturday to say he "dodged a bullet" with a right ankle injury after he was carted off the field during practice.

Wolfe found himself in a pile during a running play during a team drill early in practice and stayed down. Trainers helped Wolfe onto a cart, and he was taken to the locker room. Tackle Menelik Watson limped, flexing his own right leg following the play.

Wolfe later expressed on Twitter his relief that the injury wasn't as serious as it initially appeared when trainers helped him into the Broncos' complex, as he couldn't put weight on his right leg.

Wolfe also posted a picture of his swollen ankle after he had an MRI. In a text to ESPN's Josina Anderson, Wolfe said the injury was a sprain but he would be ready for the Sept. 11 regular-season opener against the San Diego Chargers.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph said following the team's practice that the preliminary exam by the medical staff showed "the first look. It wasn't serious."

Wolfe suffered a stinger early in training camp and was removed from drills for the remainder of that practice, but he returned to practice quickly in the days that followed.

Like the rest of the Broncos' starting defense, Wolfe didn't get much work in Thursday night's preseason opener in Chicago. Wolfe played just three plays in the Broncos' 24-17 victory at Soldier Field.

The starting defense played the opening three plays but was taken out of the game after cornerback Chris Harris Jr. returned an interception 50 yards for a touchdown on the third play of the game.

The Broncos have wrestled with some high-profile injuries so far in camp. Running back Devontae Booker (left wrist) and linebacker Shane Ray (left wrist) will miss the entire preseason. Defensive end Billy Winn suffered a season-ending knee injury in the win over the Bears; he tore his right ACL.

The Broncos signed defensive lineman Nelson Adams, who had recently been waived by the Pittsburgh Steelers, when Winn was formally moved to injured reserve.

# Vance Joseph: Jamaal Charles will play in preseason before roster decided

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 13, 2017

Denver Broncos coach Vance Joseph said Saturday the team would probably have to see Jamaal Charles play in a game to make a decision about the running back when rosters league-wide go to 53 players before the regular season.

Charles, who has played in just eight games in the last two years because of multiple knee surgeries, did not play in the Broncos' preseason opener Thursday night in Chicago. Charles did not take part in team drills as training camp opened but has been worked steadily into practice a little more with each passing week.

The Broncos see Charles, a four-time Pro Bowl selection in his nine seasons with the Kansas City Chiefs, as a potential situational player who could get 10-12 snaps a game if they determine his knees will hold up to the work. Joseph said Saturday he had not yet decided if Charles would play next Saturday against the San Francisco 49ers, but Joseph did concede the team's decision-makers would likely have to see Charles play in a game before they make their roster decisions.

"Probably, yes," Joseph said. "We've got San Fran this week, we've got Green Bay, and even Arizona Week 4. He'll eventually play; it depends on the docs and how he's feeling."

The Broncos face the Green Bay Packers Aug. 26 and then close out the preseason Aug. 31 against the Arizona Cardinals. The Broncos have a crowded depth chart at running back, especially with the emergence of rookie De'Angelo Henderson and with what Stevan Ridley has shown in practice; he was signed after Devontae Booker had surgery to repair a fracture in his left wrist as training camp opened.

Joseph has said Henderson's speed and elusiveness makes him "special" and Henderson is the fastest back on the roster. Joseph has also praised Ridley's work ethic and Ridley has shown himself to be a consistent receiver in drills.

Booker is expected back for the start of the regular season. In his absence, C.J. Anderson has taken most of the work with the starting offense.

# De'Angelo Henderson might need new cell plan if TD run leads to bigger things

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 13, 2017

For many, a cellphone is life's barometer, a gauge of how things are going and a forecast for what might be on the way.

So when Denver Broncos running back De'Angelo Henderson looked down at his phone late Thursday night, he had a good idea that an awful lot of people had seen how things were going and what might be in his future.

"I had, like, 300 text messages, a bunch of missed calls, people all over Twitter," Henderson said. "It was beyond anything I expected. I didn't even know some of those people had my number. High school, elementary school, all kinds of people. That was pretty crazy."

The preseason always seems to have its attention grabbers -- the heroes of August who don't always find their way into the action when the games begin to count. But there is a different feel around Henderson, who was the Broncos' sixth-round pick in April's NFL draft.

Henderson has flashed his speed and elusiveness in a variety of practice situations and has received some wait-and-see praise from Broncos coach Vance Joseph. And then came Thursday, when Henderson popped a 41-yard touchdown run that gave the Broncos a 24-17 victory over the Chicago Bears in the preseason opener, sending his phone into a frenzy.

Henderson finished the game with 54 yards rushing on seven carries -- he also had an 11-yard run called back by a holding penalty -- and his touchdown run came on a third-and-22 play just after the two-minute warning. Asked after Saturday's practice if Henderson had surprised him at least a little in recent weeks, Joseph said that was not the case.

"That's been special," Joseph said. "He's made guys miss in space, he showed explosion. That was a big-time run on Thursday night. That's what we've seen from that guy from the first day he's been at camp, so I'm not surprised he played so well."

There are many talent evaluators who say that if a running back averages better than 5 or 6 yards per carry over multiple seasons during his college career, that player has a chance to be productive in the NFL, even if he didn't play at a traditional power. Henderson averaged 6.4 yards per carry in his collegiate career, topping 1,100 yards rushing in a season three times to go along with campaigns in which posted 33, 40 and 20 receptions.

But he also went to Coastal Carolina, where the football program is still making a transition into the Sun Belt Conference and isn't eligible to play in a bowl game until the 2018 season. Henderson also happens to be 5-foot-7, a hand-wringing number for many scouts.

"I knew coming out what was against me," Henderson said. "I come from a small school, I'm not 6 foot. I knew that. But I look at it like I can't change my height, this is how God built me and I'm happy to work with it. But I just thought, 'Just get me somewhere and I'll show what I can do.' That's kind of my approach."

The Broncos saw a running back with vision and a productive résumé. Toss in a 4.48 clocking in the 40-yard dash at the NFL combine -- tied for the fourth fastest among running backs and the same time as No. 8 overall draft pick Christian McCaffrey -- and the Broncos were officially intrigued.

In the big picture, Henderson finds himself at a crowded spot on the depth chart, as the Broncos still have plenty to decide on how the workload will be divvied up.

For his part, Henderson said he's just trying to learn and "do good things when I have the opportunity" until the choices get made.

"I knew what I was going to run at the combine, but it was fun to shock people," Henderson said. "I need to just stay calm, make sure I'm staying in that moment, playing in that play, not looking too far ahead."

# Paxton Lynch works with starters in preparation for preseason start

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 13, 2017

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

## Trevor Siemian

Since Siemian started against the Chicago Bears on Thursday night and the Broncos are prepping Lynch to start the second preseason game next weekend against the San Francisco 49ers, Siemian opened with the second-team offense in Saturday's practice.

**Wow moment:** Siemian was especially sharp in an early 7-on-7 drill, as he hit tight end Jeff Heuerman with a quality throw high and away from the defender. He followed with another well-timed toss to fullback Andy Janovich on the next play that would have likely been a scoring play. Later in team drills, Siemian looked a defender off and came back to the other side of the field to find Virgil Green on the left sideline for what would have been a big play.

**Whoa moment:** Siemian didn't have any turnovers in the practice, though cornerback Chris Harris Jr. almost snagged an interception in red zone work when Siemian tried to squeeze a throw to the left side.

## Paxton Lynch

Lynch opened with the starters as he prepares for his preseason start against the 49ers. Coach Vance Joseph has consistently said he believed the "most fair" way to make the decision at quarterback was to give both quarterbacks at least one start in the preseason.

**Wow moment:** Lynch battled some accuracy issues at times in the workout, but his best throw of the day came when he found wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders down the left hashmark in red zone work. In the same drill, Lynch put a ball in a tight window to Bennie Fowler.

**Whoa moment:** Lynch avoided turnovers as well in the workout. But things get away from him at times in practice and he strings incompletions together, which means he has clusters of plays where he doesn't get a throw where it needs to be to get himself back on track.

# Derek Wolfe carted off practice field with ankle injury

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

August 13, 2017

Denver Broncos defensive end Derek Wolfe was carted off the field during practice on Saturday..

Wolfe was in a pile during a running play in a team drill early in practice -- tackle Menelik Watson limped, flexing his own right leg following the play -- and stayed down. Trainers helped Wolfe onto a cart, and he was taken to the locker room.

Wolfe could not put any weight on the leg as he was helped inside the Broncos' complex.

"It's an ankle injury, we're not sure how bad," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said immediately following practice.

Asked about the severity of the injury, Joseph then added: "We're not sure about that, but the first look it wasn't serious, but we'll know more [Sunday]."

Wolfe was being sent for an MRI following practice, and the Broncos hope to have a potential timetable for a return to practice if the exam doesn't reveal more than the medical staff saw in the preliminary look.

Wolfe suffered a stinger early in training camp and was removed from drills for the remainder of that practice, but he returned to practice quickly in the days that followed.

Like the rest of the Broncos' starting defense, Wolfe didn't get much work in Thursday night's preseason opener in Chicago. Wolfe played just three plays in the Broncos' 24-17 victory at Soldier Field.

The starting defense played the opening three plays but were taken out of the game after cornerback Chris Harris Jr. returned an interception 50 yards for a touchdown on the third play of the game.

The Broncos have wrestled with some high-profile injuries so far in camp; running back Devontae Booker (left wrist) and linebacker Shane Ray (left wrist) will miss the entire preseason. Defensive end Billy Winn suffered a season-ending knee injury in the win over the Bears as he tore his right ACL.

The Broncos signed defensive lineman Nelson Adams, who had recently been waived by the Pittsburgh Steelers, when Winn was formally moved to injured reserve.

# Broncos defensive end Wolfe hurts right ankle during drills

By Arnie Stapleton  
Associated Press  
August 13, 2017

The Denver Broncos appeared Saturday to have dodged a huge hit to their battered defensive line: Derek Wolfe's right ankle injury apparently isn't as serious as first thought.

"Great news," cornerback Aqib Talib said. "I was praying as soon as it happened that it was just a sprain and nothing serious."

The sixth-year defensive end was carted off the field after he got tangled up with right tackle Menelik Watson on the second snap of team drills. Watson got up on his own, uninjured, while a cart was summoned for Wolfe.

Coach Vance Joseph said after practice Wolfe sustained a lower ankle injury.

"We're not sure how bad. We're kind of assuming it's not that bad," Joseph said. "At first look it wasn't serious, but we'll know more tomorrow."

Wolfe seemed to confirm the diagnosis of a sprain Saturday afternoon when he tweeted a picture of his puffy right ankle with the phrase, "Just a little swelling." In another tweet he wrote, "Appreciate the love. Dodged a bullet," with the hashtag "blameitontheCleats."

A sprain would be a big relief to the Broncos, who are counting on Wolfe to serve as the fulcrum of their star-studded defense by leading a run-stuffing resurgence.

"If we plan on stopping the run, we'd better have Wolfe in there. He's our energy up front," Talib said. "He brings all our tenacity, starting with that D-line. So, man, he's super valuable to our defense."

The Broncos' biggest bugaboo last season was a porous D-line — they were 28th in the league against the run, No. 1 against the pass — and that disparity defanged their strengths: Von Miller wrecking game plans with Talib and Chris Harris Jr. shutting down receivers.

"Good," Harris said when told Wolfe's injury didn't seem serious. "We've got to be able to stop the run. That was our problem last year. And teams are going to check us to see if we can stop that and come out and try to run goal-line offense, pound us until we stop it. So, we need Derek Wolfe. He's our best run defender. He's our leader up front. So, you've got to have a guy like him to be able to anchor us."

A festive crowd enjoying the final day of public practices grew quiet as Wolfe lay on the field for several minutes, cheering him when he sat up and hopped onto the cart. Wolfe couldn't put any weight on his right leg as he was helped inside and then sent for an MRI.

"That definitely was scary for us," linebacker Todd Davis said. "He's a big key for our defense and also a good friend of mine. I hope he's all right."

Wolfe's injury is the latest on the Broncos' defensive front, coming on the same day Billy Winn was placed on injured reserve after tearing his right ACL in Denver's preseason opener at Chicago on Thursday night. He was replaced on the roster by rookie defensive lineman Nelson Adams of Mississippi State.

Also sidelined are nose tackle Kyle Peko (foot) and outside linebackers Shane Ray (wrist) and Shaq Barrett (hip). None will be back until September.

The Broncos will practice twice with the 49ers this week in advance of their exhibition game on Saturday, so second-year end Adam Gotsis will move up and take Wolfe's workload with the front-line defenders.

"Just from a leader standpoint, we're lucky that we've got (Domata Peko) in the room, Big Peck. So, we still have an older guy in there that's played some ball," Gotsis said.

Wolfe, a sixth-year pro, appears primed for a bounce-back season after dealing with a sore neck much of last year and missing two games. He bulked up over the summer, saying he added 20 pounds of muscle because "I was like 285 last year and it was a little too light holding the point."

He also had vowed to become a more vocal presence in the locker room following the retirement of DeMarcus Ware. Wolfe suggested he hadn't spoken up enough last season when the Broncos missed the playoffs a year after winning the Super Bowl.

# Broncos' Carlos Henderson to undergo thumb surgery

By Troy Renck

KMGH

August 13, 2017

Carlos Henderson failed to appear at the walk through Saturday afternoon, prompting concern. It proved well-placed. The rookie slot receiver missed the morning practice with an injured thumb that an exam determined will require surgery, according to multiple NFL sources.

He will be sidelined indefinitely.

The Broncos continue to experience a rash of injuries. Outside linebackers Shane Ray (torn cartilage in left wrist) and Shaquil Barrett (hip), and running back Devontae Booker (wrist) remain out until roughly the third week of the season. Defensive end Billy Winn will not play this year after tearing his ACL, and inside brute Derek Wolfe is expected to miss multiple weeks in camp after spraining his right ankle on Saturday.

It represents tough luck for Henderson who has struggled to gain traction. A third-round pick from Louisiana Tech, Henderson fumbled a pair of kickoffs in the preseason opener against the Bears. Now we know, at least in part, why.

Henderson looked good in OTAs but has not kept his momentum going during camp.

His absence opens up a potential path to the roster for Kalif Raymond. His chances appeared to shrink with the emergence of rookie punt returner Isaiah McKenzie. However, Raymond has enjoyed a terrific camp, opening eyes with his performance.

# Broncos' Derek Wolfe leaves practice with right leg injury

By Troy Renck  
KMGH  
August 13, 2017

Defensive end Derek Wolfe exited Saturday's practice with a right ankle injury, sending tremors into the final workout open to fans at Dove Valley.

Coach Vance Joseph remained cautiously optimistic. Early word to Denver7 is that Wolfe suffered a sprain.

"We are kind of assuming it's not that bad," said Joseph.

Wolfe underwent an MRI. He is expected to miss some time. Typically, a player with a sprain is placed on crutches to ease back into weight-bearing activity. The good news is that the calendar works in the Broncos' favor. They don't open the regular season until Sept. 11 against the Los Angeles Chargers.

A versatile inside force who plays with an edge, Wolfe tangled legs with starting right tackle Menelik Watson on a running play moments after team drills started. Wolfe left the field in a cart with his right leg straight as he leaned back. Upon leaving the cart, he limped into the locker room with the help of the training staff, placing no weight on his right leg.

There's no denying Wolfe's impact in the locker room. He has evolved into a team leader.

"Wolfe is a dude that is no-nonsense guy. He's always tough on people," veteran nose tackle Domata Peko said. "He's a really tough dude. And people follow him. He's a really aggressive guy and you need that stuff on the defensive line."

Wolfe is one of their best defensive players, if not their top interior player. He combined for 51 tackles last season with 5.5 sacks.

"We've got to be able to stop the run. That was our problem last year, and teams are going to check us. They're going to check to see if we stopped that and come out and try to run goal-line offense, and pound us until we stop it. We need Derek Wolfe," cornerback Chris Harris Jr. said. "He's our best run defender. He's our leader up front, so we've got to have a guy like him to be able to anchor us."

After a season marred by a painful elbow injury, Wolfe added bulk in the offseason, beefing up 20 pounds, he said. Wolfe's injury comes less than 48 hours after defensive end Billy Winn suffered a season-ending knee injury against the Bears. Winn tore his ACL. He served as a key rotational player.

The Broncos added free agent rookie Nelson Adams for depth on Saturday. Winn's injury created a path for Shelby Harris to make the team. He played in 2014 and 2015 with the Oakland Raiders. If Wolfe is lost for significant time, the Broncos might have to find a veteran replacement. Vance Walker remains available. But that doesn't appear necessary at this point.

Rookie defensive end DeMarcus Walker shifted to outside linebacker earlier in camp following injuries to Shane Ray (wrist) and Shaquil Barrett (hip). There are no plans to move him back inside.

"The coaches are pleased with what I am doing. I thought I did some things well (against the Bears)," Walker told Denver7. "I just need to keep getting reps."

Jared Crick starts opposite of Wolfe at defensive end. Other rotational and depth players at defensive end include Zach Kerr, Adam Gostis, Harris and Shakir Soto. They are likely to see more reps over the remainder of the preseason.

"Injuries are 100 percent certainty in this league. You hate to see it. Hopefully, it's nothing serious," Kerr said. "But other guys have to step up. I know I have things I have to improve on."

Denver's defensive line depth began shrinking during OTAs. Kyle Peko broke his foot, and has not yet returned to practice.

"I am getting close," Peko told Denver7.

#### **Footnotes**

Inside linebacker Todd Davis (strained shoulder) returned to practice. ... Safety T.J. Ward watched practice. He's hoping to return this week from a right hamstring strain. ... Rookie receiver Carlos Henderson was not at practice because of a thumb injury. ... The Broncos drew a record average of 4,910 fans in 11 open practices this summer. The top crowd was 7,085 on Aug. 5. ... Joseph admitted he's not sure if Von Miller will play in the preseason.

# Broncos' Jamaal Charles remains confident can make team

By Troy Renck  
KMGH  
August 13, 2017

Running back Jamaal Charles refuses to change his perspective. His confidence made him one of the NFL's best players for years. He believes in his ability to land on the Broncos' roster.

Yet, he has not played in a preseason game. He will. But it remains unsure when.

"He has time," coach Vance Joseph said.

The dynamic has changed slightly since camp began. The Broncos added veteran Stevan Ridley, who also plays on special teams, and rookie De'Angelo Henderson continues to impress after scoring a touchdown in the preseason opener.

"I feel comfortable. I am out here. Whenever they throw me into the fire, I will be ready," Charles said. "Everyday my reps go up, week by week. I am doing whatever they tell me to do."

Charles represented a low-risk, high-reward signing for the Broncos. He received a \$900,000 base salary with a \$500,000 roster bonus. The Broncos are attempting to manage his recovery from knee surgeries to allow for production later in the season. However, he needs to show enough strength in his knee to trust that will happen.

## QB shuffle? Nope

Joseph has no plans to change his quarterback plans. While multiple players have suggested there is no competition remaining -- they see Trevor Siemian as the clear winner -- Paxton Lynch will start against the 49ers. Joseph called it fair to give each quarterback a chance to run with the No. 1s. Lynch and Siemian will play a quarter-and-half with Kyle Slotter taking the rest.

Slotter has impressed in limited reps. He has no delusions about entering the derby but is enjoying every minute of camp. He has attracted a following of fans, with one even creating a song about him.

"It's got a little ring to it. I kind of like it. That's cool," Slotter said before explaining where he stood on the depth chart. "It's something I went into knowing that it was going to be the Paxton and Trevor show. I am fine with that. I don't get paid to make those decisions. My job is to go out there and put the team in the best position to win."

Slotter finished his college career at Northern Colorado. He said media sessions there involved two reporters. He wasn't convinced he would pursue the NFL, nearly taking a job as a financial advisor. Then scouts began to call, pushing him to pursue his dream. His family traveled to the Chicago game, taking pictures and getting autographs from star Von Miller before the first snap.

## Left of right

The competition at left guard heated up Saturday with Allen Barbre sharing first-team reps with Max Garcia. The Broncos acquired Barbre from the Eagles, believing he could challenge for the top spot. As he has grown more comfortable with the playbook, he finds himself in that position.

Joseph said he was pleased with the run blocking in the opener. Pass protection, however, needs work. Right tackle Menelik Watson allowed a sack on the offense's first snap.

### **Footnotes**

Broncos rookie slot receiver Carlos Henderson, who has struggled to find traction at training camp, missed practice with a thumb injury. He is being evaluated. Henderson dropped two kickoffs against the Bears. ... There is no practice on Sunday. The Broncos work out Monday before heading to Santa Clara on Tuesday afternoon to begin joint practices with the 49ers.

# Broncos Training Camp Day 12 Takeaways: Depth forced into action on D-line

By Andrew Mason  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 13, 2017

The sight of Derek Wolfe leaving the field on a cart jarred the Broncos, and while his ankle injury isn't expected to sideline him into the regular season, it does force the Broncos to adapt to yet another front-seven injury.

With DE Billy Winn lost for the season because of a torn ACL suffered Thursday night in Chicago and OLBs Shane Ray and Shaquil Barrett not expected to return until early in the regular season, the Broncos were already moving pieces around.

Rookie DE DeMarcus Walker has worked at outside linebacker the last week and a half. Even with Wolfe expected to miss some time because of the lower-ankle injury, Walker is expected to remain at linebacker for now, Head Coach Vance Joseph said.

In the meantime, DEs Adam Gotsis and Zach Kerr will be asked to step forward. Kerr, in particular, will likely handle a multi-faceted role, seeing action as a three-technique defensive end and as a nose tackle behind starter Domata Peko.

"I'm wherever they want me to play," Kerr said. "I went into the game as the second end and then played the majority of snaps at nose when Billy went down. I'm cool with being a gadget man."

Kerr said he's made a "quick" adjustment to the defense, but the need to learn multiple positions has forced him to study more.

"Sometimes, it's a little bit different because I'm playing two different positions," he said. "Technique at nose compared to a three-technique is a little bit different and vice versa especially in the playbook. There's definitely different things for the nose and the three to do. It's coming along pretty quick. I've just got to still keep polishing."

With Wolfe and Winn sidelined, the Broncos need Kerr to shine bright, and shine quickly.

## 1. SETTING DEPTH UP FRONT

The starting quintet on the offensive line matters. But the sixth offensive lineman matters, too. So does the seventh. Rare is the year in which a team goes through all 16 games with the same first-team offensive line.

So when Head Coach Vance Joseph, Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy and Offensive Line Coach Jeff Davidson shuffle the deck, it's about something bigger. Whether it's getting Allen Barbre first-team repetitions or rotating Donald Stephenson and Ty Sambrailo in at tackle or giving Connor McGovern a look at right guard while Ron Leary recovers from a groin injury, the moves allow the coaches to figure out the contingency plans that are inevitably used over the course of a season.

"The offensive line is like running back in my opinion -- you need more than five, anyway," Joseph said. "The more we can work McGovern at some left [guard], to work Barbre there left and right -- in my opinion, that's a good thing for the offensive line."

That is more crucial than simply having the same group of five together for as many snaps as possible. While cohesion and chemistry do matter along the offensive line, they take a back seat to finding out the best five linemen, followed by the top reserves who will be active on game day and must have the versatility to line up at multiple positions.

"As far as the guys playing together, that's kind of not important — it's your job to block the three-technique or block the shade," Joseph said. "Whoever's out there, it works. I'm not concerned about the one group playing together. This is more about guys playing different positions."

## **2. BARBRE UP TO SPEED**

On the first day of training camp, Head Coach Vance Joseph told Orange and Blue 760 that he expected it would take Barbre approximately a couple of weeks to fully learn the offense.

That time has passed, and right on schedule, the competition at left guard that Joseph repeatedly mentioned at press conferences is now afoot. Barbre split first-team repetitions with Max Garcia during Saturday's practice.

"Allen Barbre is a pro's pro. He came in and hit the ground running," Joseph said after practice. "He hasn't made a bunch of errors at all. He's a tough guy. He makes pass pro[tection] look easy at times. He's a tough guy. It's what we saw on tape."

## **3. SLOTER: FIRST GAME WAS A CHANCE TO LEARN**

About a half-hour after practice ended, rookie quarterback Kyle Sloter stepped into a phalanx of media more crowded than any in-game huddle he'd ever seen and answered a barrage of questions with the poise of a seasoned pro.

The attention was to be expected after he led the Broncos on a pair of touchdown drives late in their 24-17 preseason-opening win at Chicago on Thursday night. But he downplayed the accomplishment -- including the 47-yard touchdown pass to WR Isaiah McKenzie, who had plenty of space to himself as the beneficiary of blown coverage.

"The good: I think I can step up in the pocket and throw it 50 yards wide open to a guy," said Sloter when asked what he saw from reviewing the game film.

But there was more that he felt he needed to work on.

"Bad: I've just got to refine the footwork and fix the timing and all of that stuff," he said. "There's a couple of plays where I could probably go somewhere else with the ball."

"It was my first time out there and I'm going to learn. We're learning on the fly. I'm not getting too many reps out here [in practice], so I've got to make the most of it when I get out there in the game."

# Broncos Training Camp Quick Hits: Day 12

By Andrew Mason  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 13, 2017

A "dodged bullet" for Derek Wolfe, a promising step forward for Todd Davis, and a full-pad session to close out training camp. All of that and more from Saturday at UCHealth Training Center.

Barely 36 hours after their preseason opener, the Broncos were back to work -- and in full pads, no less. Head Coach Vance Joseph did not opt to ease his team back into its practice routine. Instead, he put them through a brisk, hard-hitting practice that saw an emphasis on full-speed and red-zone work.

The full-pad work had been on the docket for a while.

"That's been planned for four months," Joseph said, "and the ones only played on defense what, four plays? Three plays? On offense they only played a quarter, so that's been planned for [four] months."

... The last day of training camp saw its scariest moment, when DE Derek Wolfe and RT Menelik Watson both fell to the ground after a collision on a run play during the first team period of practice. Wolfe suffered what appeared to be a lower ankle injury that was not as serious as initially feared. Watson was examined on the field and quickly returned to practice.

... There were some rough moments for the offense, particularly in a team red-zone period. Pressure from the front seven and tight coverage led to eight incompletions in eight attempts for Paxton Lynch and Trevor Siemian.

... CB Chris Harris Jr. nearly intercepted Lynch at the goal line and briefly had to leave after taking a shot to the face as he landed, but he said after practice he felt fine.

... The competition at left guard is starting to heat up, as Allen Barbre took some first-team snaps Saturday, splitting time with Max Garcia. It marked the first time Barbre has worked with the No. 1 offense since the Broncos acquired him from the Eagles just before the start of training camp.

"That guard position, it's an open competition between three or four guys, so the best guy's going to play," Joseph said. "It's fair that he's getting some [first-team] reps."

... The No. 1 defense carried over its strong work against the run from Thursday's game. ILBs Brandon Marshall and Corey Nelson quickly closed gaps to stop runs from reaching the second level, and DE Jared Crick and NT Domata Peko both did a good job holding their ground at the line of scrimmage and occupying blockers to allow Marshall and Nelson chances to make tackles.

## PARTICIPATION REPORT:

... Wolfe's injury created more first-team repetitions for Zach Kerr and Adam Gotsis. Kerr was already seeing extra work on the second team because of Billy Winn's season-ending torn ACL, which pushed him into extra work at nose tackle, in addition to his responsibilities at defensive end.

... ILB Todd Davis took team and seven-on-seven repetitions as he continues to recover from a sprained shoulder.

"It's a non-contact type of practice for Todd," Joseph said. "But Todd's back working with the ones again."

... RB Jamaal Charles saw extensive work in team periods Saturday after sitting out Thursday. Joseph said that Charles would "eventually" see some preseason-game repetitions.

... RB Bernard Pierce (hamstring), WR Carlos Henderson (thumb) and safety T.J. Ward(hamstring) did not practice.

WEATHER REPORT: Practice took place under partly cloudy skies with temperatures from 73°F to 79°F during the session.

ATTENDANCE: 4,057. Average: 4,910 -- a UCHealth Training Center record, 12.5 percent above last year's average.

# Broncos place Billy Winn on injured reserve, sign DL Nelson Adams

By Ben Swanson  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 13, 2017

The Broncos have made a pair of transactions on the defensive line after Billy Winn's knee injury.

The Broncos have placed defensive end Billy Winn on injured reserve after he suffered a season-ending knee injury against the Bears. In a complementary transaction, the team signed defensive lineman Nelson Adams.

Winn, fifth-year veteran, injured his right knee when he fell awkwardly with 39 seconds remaining in the first quarter. He became tangled up with multiple Bears linemen during a Ka'Deem Carey run.

Winn was listed as the second-team nose tackle on the team's initial depth chart released Monday. He played in all 16 games in 2016, starting twice, and he totaled 19 tackles and one fumble recovery.

Domata Peko remains the starter at nose tackle. He played two snaps Thursday before the first-team defense exited. Rookie Tyrique Jarrett and second-year player Kyle Peko, who was declared active/PUP (physically unable to perform) on July 24, are listed behind Winn on the depth chart.

Adams, a rookie, was a college free agent signing by the Steelers in April. He was waived Aug. 7. He will wear No. 62 for the Broncos.

# HC Vance Joseph updates Derek Wolfe's injury status

By Aric DiLalla  
Denverbroncos.com  
August 13, 2017

The Broncos' defensive end suffered an ankle injury during Saturday's practice.

Derek Wolfe left Saturday's practice early after suffering an ankle injury, but Head Coach Vance Joseph later said the injury did not initially appear "that bad."

Joseph said Wolfe would undergo an MRI early Saturday afternoon and that the team would know more Sunday.

"It's an ankle injury," Joseph said. "We're not sure how bad. We're kind of assuming it's not that bad."

Wolfe suffered the injury when he became tangled up with offensive tackle Menelik Watson.

Both players went down, and Watson eventually stood up under his own power. Wolfe was helped to his feet and to a cart that took him to the facility entrance.

Joseph said he did not see the play occur.

After practice, both Chris Harris Jr. and Aqib Talib voiced relief that Wolfe's injury did not appear serious.

"Great news, man," Talib said. "Great news. I was praying as soon as it happened that it was just a sprain or something like that and nothing serious. Hopefully it's nothing serious and it's just a sprain."

Added Harris: "Good. We've got to be able to stop the run. That was our problem last year, and teams are going to check us. They're going to check to see if we stopped that and come out and try to run goal-line offense, run the ball and pound us until we stop it. We need Derek Wolfe. He's our best run defender. He's our leader up front, so you've got to have a guy like him to be able to anchor us."

# **Broncos fans set UCHealth Training Center camp attendance record**

By Staff

Denverbroncos.com

August 13, 2017

An average crowd of 4,910 fans came to each day of training camp practice.

The Denver Broncos concluded 2017 Training Camp on Saturday, capping their record-setting attendance figures at UCHealth Training Center.

In 11 practices open to the public, a record average of 4,910 fans came to watch the Broncos. That mark topped the previous record average of 4,364 fans at UCHealth Training Center in 2016.

A total of 54,013 fans attended training camp at UCHealth Training Center. Practice turnout topped 6,000 fans on three different occasions, including a record crowd of 7,085 fans on Aug. 5.

# Paul Klee: Should Denver Broncos include UNC's Kyle Sloter in quarterback competition?

By Paul Klee

Colorado Springs Gazette

August 13, 2017

Let's start here: Kyle Sloter now has a music video.

It wasn't enough, of course, that a navy-and-gold flag hyping the "Northern Colorado Bears" flapped in the breeze on Von's Hill at the final day of training camp; that Sloter, the most famous UNC football alum since Widefield's Vincent Jackson, was the first Bronco on the practice field and the last one to leave it (signing autographs, snapping pics, kissing babies); that the third-string quarterback casually drops phrases like "multinational Armitage" in small-talk conversations; that my mail — email and voice — has been flooded with frantic calls for Sloter.

Kyle "Klawz" Sloter needed a music video. Now he has one.

"No. 1 on the field and in your hearts...

Team Slo-ter! Team Slo-ter!

He's undefeated and blowing up the depth charts ...

Team Slo-ter! Team Slo-ter!

Look out for the kid from UNC ..."

And so we interrupt your daily diet of Broncos quarterback controversy for the best lesson of this Broncos training camp: Do your job, don't whine, and they'll make music videos about you.

All Sloter wanted was a shot. "Whatever opportunity they give me," he told me in May, "I'll take it." He got one — kinda, sorta — and now he's taking it.

Stand up, Greeley. This quarterback's for you.

But Sloter is not a quarterback option for the Broncos, according to the coach. Vance Joseph said Sloter won't get practice time with the first- or second-team offense. Those reps are reserved for Trevor Siemian (who almost quit football for a job in commercial real estate, so maybe that's the key to playing quarterback for the Broncos) and Paxton Lynch, Joseph said. It's a mistake by the Broncos. The smart move — in the locker room, a meritocracy where they abhor playing favorites; in Colorado, where we gravitate to our own ("What more could you want than to learn from John Elway and learn some things and pick his brain a little bit?" Sloter said); in the QB room, where "open competition" applies only to first-round picks who never are the first ones on the practice field. It's a mistake because Kyle Sloter has approached this job interview — the one in the NFL, not the one in finance — with the highest degree of professionalism, and the rest of the team has taken notice.

Sloter's the only guy to wear a tie to the first preseason game. He's been the first guy on the practice field, without fail, every day. (I asked him why he's the first guy out there, hoping for a deep, philosophical answer, but Sloter said his early arrivals are based in superstition.) Tom Brady, on his 40th birthday, was the first one on the practice field in New England, and my lasting memory of Peyton Manning was the 38-year-old jogging up and down Von's Hill after a 90-minute practice.

All that stuff matters with quarterbacks. It just does. Sloter knew as much even after he played only one full season as a starting quarterback in college, at the FCS level, in Greeley, for those loud and proud Bears.

"It's something that I went into knowing when I came here, that it was going to be a Paxton and Trevor show. I'm fine with that," Sloter said Saturday after posing for roughly two dozen photos with fans at Dove Valley. "I don't get paid to make those decisions. That's up to them. My job's just to go out there and do the best that I can and put the team in the best position to win."

When I called Sloter back in May, my interest was in his Wonderlic score — 38, which would have been the highest score at the NFL Combine he wasn't invited to. "It's seriously one of the easiest things I've ever seen in my life," Sloter said. He said that he almost quit football in January to accept a job offer as a finance expert with Ashford Advisors, scored a 1,740 on the SAT in high school, and that he had to make up 45 lost credits when he transferred from Southern Miss to UNC. Basically, that he's a worker and a brain and one of those guys who's going to force his way into the conversation.

Thursday in a pretend game against the Chicago Bears, Sloter forced his way into the conversation. He nailed five of six passes, including a 47-yard touchdown to 5-foot-8 Isaiah McKenzie, and looked comfortable doing it.

"The good: I can step up in the pocket and throw it 50 yards, wide open, to a guy," he said, drawing laughs. "The bad: I've just got to refine the footwork and fix the timing."

Next time out, against the 49ers on Saturday, Lynch will start and play about 1.5 quarters, then Siemian will come on and play 1.5 quarters. Last week I predicted the QB competition is over. Ol' Trev's the guy, for now.

"This week it's Paxton's turn, and we'll figure it out from there," Joseph said. Sloter gets mop-up duty with the last string.

"He's been impressive for a young (undrafted) free agent quarterback," Joseph said. "He's poised, his ball placement is good — in games and in practice. I wasn't surprised to see him play well in that game on Thursday night. He's done a good job for us."

The Broncos set a training camp record with an average of 4,910 fans per practice. No Peyton, no playoffs, no problem. At the final one, it felt like 4,000 were there to see Sloter. Kyle himself had never seen the music video.

"Team Slo-ter! Team Slo-ter!

It's a QB ... controversy!"

"Got a little ring to it," Sloter said upon his first view. "I kind of like it."

I kind of like the guy from UNC.

# LOOK: Broncos' Derek Wolfe suffers gnarly ankle sprain, says he'll be ready for Week 1

By Sean Wagner-McGough

CBS Sports

August 13, 2017

The Broncos' playoff hopes rest almost entirely on their defense. If they're going to overcome their shaky-at-best quarterback situation, they'll need their defense to continue to be the dominant unit it has been for the past two seasons.

So, it's understandable then why the Broncos might've panicked when a key member of that defense went down with an ugly looking injury at practice. On Saturday, defensive end Derek Wolfe had be carted off the field with an ankle injury and couldn't put weight on it, according to ESPN's Jeff Legwold.

But after practice, Wolfe got some good news -- unlike his teammate Shane Ray, who will likely miss the beginning of the regular season. Wolfe, on the other hand, isn't expected to miss the start of the season.

He told ESPN's Josina Anderson that he suffered a "really bad" sprain, but will be ready for the team's regular-season opener. He doesn't need surgery.

Wolfe said that he "dodged a bullet," and then posted a photo of his swollen ankle to Twitter. As expected, it's gnarly:

In each of the past two seasons, Wolfe has notched 5.5 sacks. He's still only 27, so he should still have room to grow -- once his ankle shrinks, of course.

# Derek Wolfe suffers ankle sprain at Broncos practice

By Kevin Patra

NFL.com

August 13, 2017

Derek Wolfe was carted away from the practice field on Saturday, but the Denver Broncos won't have to worry about him being gone for too long.

The defensive end suffered a moderate ankle sprain and will miss some practice time, a source informed of the situation told NFL Network Insider Ian Rapoport.

Wolfe also indicated on Twitter the injury is not serious.

Wolfe's ankle sprain comes on the heels of the Broncos losing defensive lineman Billy Winn for the season to a torn ACL suffered in Thursday's preseason game. The Broncos front-seven is also without Shaq Barrett (hip, NFI list), pass rusher Shane Ray (wrist) and nose tackle Kyle Peko (foot, physically unable to perform list).

Although it appears Wolfe will not miss any significant amount of time, Denver's defensive line still enters the season with plenty of questions. It's a group that struggled to stop the run last year. Injuries certainly wouldn't help reverse that trend.

Wolfe tallied 5.5 sacks in 14 games last season. His relentless pass rush was key for Broncos edge rushers getting shots at the quarterback.

# Derek Wolfe “dodged a bullet” with sprained ankle

By Josh Alper  
Pro Football Talk  
August 13, 2017

Broncos defensive lineman Derek Wolfe was carted off the field at practice on Saturday, leading to fears of a serious injury that would keep a key part of the Denver defense off the field for an extended period of time.

Wolfe will be out for a bit, but the diagnosis didn't fulfill the worst-case scenario. Wolfe tweeted a picture of his swollen right ankle later in the day and said that the injury wasn't as severe as it could have been.

Wolfe told Josina Anderson of ESPN that he hopes to be 100 percent for Week One with what he called a “really bad sprain.”

The Broncos lost defensive lineman Billy Winn for the season to a torn ACL this week. The defense is also without linebacker Shane Ray, linebacker Shaquil Barrett and defensive tackle Kyle Peko at the moment.

# Broncos holding their breath on Derek Wolfe

By Mike Florio  
Pro Football Talk  
August 13, 2017

Only two days after losing Billy Winn for the year with a torn ACL, the Broncos are now sweating out another potentially serious injury along the defensive line.

Via multiple reports, Broncos defensive lineman Derek Wolfe was carted off the field during practice on Saturday.

It's being described as a right ankle injury by coach Vance Joseph, and efforts to diagnose the problem undoubtedly are occurring.

Wolfe has vowed to be a more vocal presence in 2017.

"I can sit here and make all the excuses I want, but at the end of the day, we just didn't get it done," Wolfe said in May. "It doesn't matter what happens — look at the Super Bowl season. We got put in a lot of bad situations, we just made it happen. There's no excuse for that. It's just poor focus, bad football, guys were banged up, whatever. It doesn't matter. You just have to get it done. And that's what we're going to do this year, get that [stuff] done."

If Wolfe's injury is serious, it will be a little harder to get that [stuff] done.