

Broncos trade tackle Ty Sambrailo to Falcons for future draft pick

By Nicki Jhabvala
Denver Post
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A day before the deadline to solidify their final roster, the Broncos traded offensive tackle Ty Sambrailo, a former second-round pick, to Atlanta for a 2018 fifth-round draft selection.

The Broncos gain a future draft pick in exchange for a tackle that wasn't going to make their 53-man roster, according to a source.

Sambrailo, a former Colorado State standout, bounced in and out of the starting lineup since his rookie year in 2015, in part because of injuries but also because of performance. His first season was cut short to three games because of a shoulder injury that landed him on injured reserve. Last season, he played 10 games, starting four, and yielded seven sacks.

Sambrailo's status was in jeopardy when tackle Donald Stephenson agreed to restructure his contract to eliminate his 2018 salary and reduce his cap hit for 2017. But Sambrailo's future was in question long before when first-year head coach Vance Joseph and offensive coordinator Mike McCoy changed the blocking scheme, requiring linemen to play both power and zone, and often multiple positions.

The Broncos' remade offensive line got bigger and stronger and, though Sambrailo packed on pounds during the offseason, he didn't appear to be the right match.

Thursday night, in the preseason finale against Arizona, the Broncos tested Sambrailo at center to see if he could serve as both a tackle and center, a key for Joseph as he mulled his options for reserve linemen.

"Our backup four or five linemen, we want those guys to have flexibility in positions," Joseph said earlier in the week.

Sambrailo's exit leaves the Broncos with an offensive line that features already appointed starters in left tackle Garrett Bolles, center Matt Paradis and right guard Ron Leary. It's likely the Broncos will keep both Max Garcia and veteran Allen Barbre to play guard, as Joseph hinted earlier in the week, and it's likely Menelik Watson and Stephenson will share duties at right tackle.

Teams must finalize their 53-man roster by 2 p.m. Saturday.

Broncos roster tracker: Following the cuts, trades to get to the final 53

By Nicki Jhabvala
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TRADED

Ty Sambrailo, OT: To Atlanta for 2018 fifth-round pick

CUT

Stevan Ridley, RB
Juwan Thompson, RB
Anthony Nash, WR
Steven Scheu, TE
Danny Mason, OLB
Deon Hollins, OLB
Dante Barnett, S
Cameron Hunt, C
Justin Murray, OT
Shakir Soto, DE
Quentin Gause, LB
Ken Ekanem, OLB
Vontarrius Dora, OLB

Broncos begin to pare roster as deadline nears; Stevan Ridley, Juwan Thompson among cuts

By Nicki Jhabvala
Denver Post
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With only two days to trim their roster from 90 to 53, the Broncos got an early start Friday to move closer to their final group.

The Broncos finished training camp and preseason facing difficult decisions at multiple positions, especially running back. Among the first wave of cuts Friday were veteran running backs Stevan Ridley and Juwan Thompson.

Ridley was signed for depth after Devontae Booker suffered a wrist injury in the offseason. But he surprised many with his immediate impact in camp. A former 1,200-yard back for the Patriots, Ridley sustained a knee injury in his final season with New England that hindered his play the past three seasons.

Denver provided a fresh start, but a competitive one. Behind C.J. Anderson and Booker, the Broncos had signed Jamaal Charles in May and drafted De'Angelo Henderson, a small but speedy rookie who led the team with 129 rushing yards in the preseason.

In four preseason games, Ridley had a team-high 38 carries for 109 yards (2.9 average) and one touchdown — a 27-yard run in Thursday's preseason finale against Arizona.

Thompson faced the same uphill battle as he vied to retain a roster spot. The fourth-year back was signed by the Broncos as a college free agent in 2014 and has played in 38 regular-season games, with two starts. Last season he spent the first seven weeks on the practice squad and competed as both a halfback and fullback in Gary Kubiak's system. This year, with Mike McCoy as offensive coordinator, the team relied on Andy Janovich as its lone fullback.

The Broncos also waived wide receiver Anthony Nash, a rookie out of Duke; offensive lineman Cameron Hunt, an undrafted rookie out of Oregon; tackle Justin Murray, a 2016 practice-squad player; and tight end Steven Scheu, a first-year player who joined the team's practice squad last season.

NFL teams can begin to form their 10-player practice squads Sunday, and the four could be candidates.

On the defensive side, the Broncos waived outside linebackers Vontarrius Dora, Ken Ekanem, Deon Hollins and Danny Mason, as well as inside linebacker Quentin Gause.

Dora played one regular-season game for the Broncos last year after spending the first 13 weeks on the practice squad. Mason, who had previously signed with the team in 2015, was brought back during training camp after injuries to outside linebackers Shane Ray and Shaquil Barrett.

Barrett recently came off the physically unable to perform list after recovering from a hip injury, and Ray (wrist) is expected back within the first few weeks of the season.

Safety Dante Barnett and defensive end Shakir Soto, both undrafted rookies, were also waived Friday.

Unlike in past years when teams spread cuts over two weeks to get down to 75 after the third preseason game and then 53 after the fourth game, teams will only make one round this year. The list of the unemployed will grow to nearly 1,100 by Saturday afternoon, but many teams got an early jump on forming their rosters by making moves Friday.

The cuts, however, are only one piece of the puzzle.

The Broncos are also mulling options for some veterans, including safety T.J. Ward, whose name has come up in trade discussions. Earlier Friday, the Broncos traded offensive tackle Ty Sambrailo to Atlanta for a 2018 fifth-round pick.

Denver has yet to decide how they will fill the void of Paxton Lynch, their backup quarterback who is expected to miss the first few weeks of the season with a shoulder sprain. Kyle Sloter took his first NFL start Thursday as a result and is in the running to be a third quarterback on the roster, at least for Week 1.

“Well, we’ll see. Those calls are going to happen tomorrow. (Friday) and Saturday, I should say,” Joseph said after Thursday’s preseason game. “He’s played very well...He’s impressive. He’s a young, poised quarterback. He’s very intelligent. I’ve been impressed with Kyle.”

Keeping a third quarterback, however, will affect the Broncos’ roster construction since they originally planned on keeping only two, Siemian and Lynch.

Denver Broncos' Mile High stadium gets \$6 million internet upgrade with faster, reliable Wi-Fi

By Tamara Chuang
Denver Post
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For Denver Broncos fans who cheer the orange and blue from inside Mile High Stadium this season, watching online videos and posting their own updates should be much smoother, thanks to a \$6 million upgrade of the stadium's Wi-Fi network.

The ongoing renovation, paid for by Verizon and the Broncos, includes four times as many wireless antennas. And new hardware uses the latest available generation of Wi-Fi, called 802.11ac, which has theoretical speeds of 1.3 gigabits per second.

To achieve those speeds, the stadium also tapped CenturyLink to provide a 10-gigabit-per-second internet connection to power the stadium's wireless network.

Verizon teamed up with the Broncos to update cellular and Wi-Fi coverage in the stadium back in 2011. But that system essentially just put overhead antennas everywhere. This year's renovation adds antennas in handrails and under the seats.

Installation is underway but only 40 percent complete, according to a Broncos spokesperson. The full network is expected to be up and running by early November. The service is also going to be free. Just connect to "FreeStadiumWiFi" and watch those YouTube videos — or post your own — between plays.

More details are expected next week.

Broncos move 14 players, including Sambrailo, Ridley, Thompson

By Mike Klis

9 News

September 2, 2017

The Broncos have traded offensive lineman Ty Sambrailo to the Atlanta Falcons for a fifth-round draft pick.

Sambrailo is a former Colorado State standout whom the Broncos selected with their second-round pick in the 2015 NFL Draft. It began well for Sambrailo as he was the Broncos' starting left tackle the first three games of their Super Bowl 50-winning season.

But he suffered a season-ending left shoulder injury in that third game at Detroit. As he attempted his comeback in 2016, Sambrailo suffered a dislocated right elbow.

The two injuries made it impossible for Sambrailo to work out with upper-body weights and his play suffered last season. During the offseason Sambrailo added 15 to 20 pounds while losing 5 to 6 percent of body fat.

Sambrailo played well his last two preseason games which included a stint at center Thursday night during the Broncos' 30-2 win against Arizona.

"I've done everything I can do," Sambrailo said following the game Thursday night. "If I don't fit their team this year, then that's just how it works. If I do fit, I was drafted here, I love this place, I would love to be a Broncos still. It's really in their hands now. I control what I can control."

Don't feel sorry for Sambrailo. With the Falcons, he joins an offensive line that blocks for quarterback Matt Ryan, receiver Julio Jones and running backs Devonta Freeman and Tevin Coleman. Atlanta nearly won Super Bowl 51 last season before blowing a 28-3 lead and losing to New England in overtime, 34-28.

With Sambrailo traded, the Broncos' offensive line is expected to include starters Garrett Bolles, a first-round rookie at left tackle, center Matt Paradis, right guard Ron Leary and right tackle Menelik Watson.

Donald Stephenson, who restructured his contract so that he has a \$2.5 million guaranteed salary, is the only known backup offensive tackle.

The team may also keep as many as four guards in Allen Barbre, Max Garcia, Connor McGovern and Billy Turner. The fate of guard-tackle Michael Schofield, a starter the previous two years, is uncertain.

Besides Sambrailo, the Broncos made several other moves Friday morning as they began trimming their roster from 90 to 53 players. Running back Stevan Ridley was released, while receiver Anthony Nash, running back Juwan Thompson, safety Dante Barnett, center Cameron Hunt, offensive tackle Justin Murray, defensive lineman Shakir Soto and Nelson Adams, outside linebackers Vontarrius Dora, Ken Ekanem and Deon Hollins, inside linebacker Quentin Gause and tight end Steven Scheu were waived.

Raymond, Sambrailo, Taylor left stadium Thursday night awaiting fate

By Mike Klis

9 News

September 2, 2017

Kalif Raymond so badly wanted to make the Broncos' 53-man roster, he caught a 58-yard punt at the 1-yard line.

Returned it 9 yards, too. Can't make the team by the letting the ball bounce it into the end zone.

"Oh man, I wanted to make a big play so bad," said Raymond, who also had a nice, turn back for the ball, 12-yard reception. "But I felt so good back there. I'm hoping that shows on tape. I'm comfortable as all outdoors. If I'm here or somewhere else, it doesn't matter, I feel like I'm going to make a big impact this year for sure. I feel good."

Backup left tackle Ty Sambrailo so badly wanted to make the Broncos' 53-man roster, he played center for the first time in his life.

"It's always good to be able to do more stuff," Sambrailo said. "I've done everything I can do. I worked hard during camp. I went out and I played. If I don't fit their team this year, then that's just how it works. If I do fit, I was drafted here, I love this place, I would love to be a Broncos still. It's really in their hands now. I control what I can control."

Turns out, Sambrailo didn't fit with the Broncos, champions of Super Bowl 50. He was traded Friday morning to the Atlanta Falcons. He will fit in with a team that nearly won Super Bowl 51.

Jordan Taylor so badly wanted to make the Broncos' 53-man roster, the backup receiver took some practice snaps as an emergency quarterback, a position he hadn't played since high school.

"We'll see. We'll see," Taylor said. "I was looking forward to the opportunity to get in there and sling it around a little bit but for good reason I didn't get in there."

Kyle Slotter played the whole game against the Arizona Cardinals and led the Broncos to a 30-2 win. Taylor had a 32-yard catch and run on a slant pass, but was a bit disappointed he didn't come with one of his patented back-shoulder catches.

"I wish I would have had some of those contested ones," he said. "Definitely might have left a few out there but I think throughout the preseason I made the most of the opportunity that I had and hopefully it's enough."

The Broncos were starting to trim their roster from 90 players to 53 on Friday morning.

Kyle Sloter waiting to see if preseason heroics enough for roster spot

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

September 2, 2017

In a place where even preseason games are dissected with some fervor, Kyle Sloter is the face who has now launched a thousand cups of coffee.

The Denver Broncos rookie quarterback is one of the biggest topics of conversation among the team's faithful. Stand in any line almost anywhere and it won't be long until you hear his name. Though it is an annual rite of the preseason for folks to love a long shot, Sloter has taken it all up a notch.

"I just love playing football," Sloter said just after he went the distance behind center in the Broncos' preseason finale Thursday night, a 30-2 victory over the Arizona Cardinals. "I feel like it's what I was put on this earth to do, and hopefully I get to do it for a long time."

Sloter was an undrafted rookie when he signed with the Broncos this year, a quarterback out of Northern Colorado -- with just nine career starts -- who had thrown all of one pass before his senior season. Most years in the NFL he would have taken some reps in practice, received some tidy mop-up duty in a couple of preseason games and waited to hear his fate from the team's decision-makers.

But the Broncos aren't most teams, in most years, at the moment. They've held quarterback competitions in back-to-back training camps, competitions Trevor Siemian has now won each time. That has put the team's quarterback play under a constant and well-worn microscope.

Sloter raised a few eyebrows early in the preseason with his unencumbered play, outside of the make-every-snap-perfect pressure Siemian and Paxton Lynch were working under. Then Lynch suffered a sprained right shoulder in the Broncos' preseason win against the Green Bay Packers and Sloter got a rare and coveted opportunity.

Since the Broncos didn't want to play Siemian, or any other starter, in Thursday night's preseason finale and Lynch was hurt, Sloter got the start and went the whole way against the Cardinals.

"Everyone comes from college, everyone tells you every day how hard the NFL is and how much the speed is different," Sloter said. "I think the most important thing for every rookie is for them to see that they can come out here and that they can compete and they can do it and they belong."

After a rough go early in Thursday's game that included being sacked for a safety, another near safety when he was sacked at the Broncos' 2-yard line and a near interception, Sloter regained his balance a bit. Despite a limited game plan, he finished 15-of-23 passing for 220 yards and a touchdown pass to tight end Steven Scheu between two Cardinals defenders.

For the preseason, Sloter was 31-of-43 passing for 413 yards, three touchdowns and an AFC-best 125.4 passer rating.

All of this carries extra weight around the Broncos because Sloter has local ties, has shown a free-wheeling edge and because Lynch's injury means they need a backup for at least the first two weeks of the regular season. Coach Vance Joseph was asked Thursday night, however, if Sloter had done enough to be that third quarterback when the roster goes to 53 players by Saturday's deadline.

"Well, we'll see," Joseph said. "... But he's played very well ... He's been impressive, he's a young, poised quarterback. He's very, very intelligent."

That isn't a yes or a no. It is a big decision for the Broncos, who will also keep their eyes on the veteran quarterbacks who hit the market. If they sign a quarterback from elsewhere, it needs to be a guy who can learn quickly, and if he had experience somewhere in Mike McCoy's offense he would fit the profile.

Sloter is certainly the people's choice, but in-house the Broncos likely would have some nervousness because of Sloter's expected difficulties on the practice field over the past two weeks running the scout-team offense against the first-team defense. The Broncos' first-team defense is a tough riddle for any quarterback, so those struggles were not a surprise, but they were substantial.

"They didn't slack off all week," Sloter said. "There were times here and there where coach wanted them to back off a little bit so we could see the ball going to the receiver's hands, but they weren't having it ... They let you know it, too, when they pick those off when they're running past you, so it was a good experience."

Now Sloter waits to see if the Broncos, who used Siemian as a rookie backup to Brock Osweiler when Peyton Manning was injured during the team's Super Bowl run in 2015, are willing to take a chance once again.

"That's not up to me. I've put my best out there -- whatever happens I can leave or stay with my head high," Sloter said. "... I felt like I was prepared and I took my lumps here and there, but for the most part, I just tried to rebound from those and come back stronger and get a little bit better each day."

Broncos trade Ty Sambrailo to Atlanta as part of OL makeover

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

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The Denver Broncos' makeover in the offensive line was always going to test their ability to keep all of their former draft picks.

And Friday, one of those former picks -- Ty Sambrailo -- was traded to the Atlanta Falcons for a fifth-round pick in the 2018 draft. The Broncos have made the rounds and fielded calls in recent days about their crowded depth chart on the offensive line, and Sambrailo could be the first of multiple moves if they find some additional trade partners.

Michael Schofield, a third-round pick by the Broncos in 2014, is another player some personnel executives in the league have their eyes on as the Broncos approach Saturday's league-mandated deadline to cut rosters to 53 players. Schofield has started 29 games in his career.

For Sambrailo, a 2015 second-round pick who had started seven games in two previous seasons with the Broncos, the change in scheme on offense to go with the Broncos' reconstruction of the offensive line had placed him squarely on the roster bubble. Sambrailo had started games at both guard and tackle.

But the Broncos signed guard Ronald Leary in free agency, signed tackle Menelik Watson in free agency and used their first-round pick on tackle Garrett Bolles. All three are now starters. The Broncos then acquired guard Allen Barbre in a trade early on in training camp, and he's battling for a starting job at left guard.

The new coaching staff, including offensive line coach Jeff Davidson, has been in search of more power up front as they move from a movement-heavy, zone-run scheme the Broncos used under Gary Kubiak to a more varied scheme that will feature far more man-on-man gap schemes in addition to zone looks.

Both president of football operations/general manager John Elway and coach Vance Joseph have consistently lauded the new arrivals for the "edge" they've brought to the offensive-line play. And if Barbre starts the Sept. 11 regular-season opener against the Los Angeles Chargers instead of Max Garcia at right guard, the Broncos will feature four new starters up front next to center Matt Paradis.

All of that pushed Sambrailo down the depth chart, and he was even trying to work some at center this past week as the Broncos closed in on their roster decisions. Sambrailo played 27 snaps Thursday night in the Broncos' preseason finale.

When asked about the decisions to come among the offensive linemen in recent days, Joseph said: "It's difficult and it should be. We have a lot of depth there. We've got four or five guys that can play guard. We have three centers. We have four or five tackles. It's been difficult, but it's been a good thing. You want depth there. You want to keep at least 10 guys that can play for you. That's a good problem."

T.J. Ward's standing makes his future a tough call, even for John Elway

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

September 2, 2017

Each player in the Denver Broncos' locker room knows the team's chief football decision-maker is John Elway. They know he knows exactly what their world is like, that he is one of the most competitive people on the planet and that he will make most any football move he sees fit if he thinks it pushes the franchise closer to its ninth Super Bowl appearance.

On the other hand, there is likely a day that will come when you are the move Elway makes.

There is the story of the Broncos, Elway and safety T.J. Ward at the moment. The Broncos are entertaining the idea of trading, releasing or keeping their Pro Bowl safety.

And a trade or Ward's release are the more likely scenarios as the Broncos approach Saturday's deadline to take the roster from 90 players to 53. That some are shocked a player of Ward's caliber and standing in the locker room is the topic in this uncomfortable football conversation means they just haven't paid attention.

Because the moment Elway sat across from Peyton Manning in the weeks leading up to the 2015 season and launched the idea of a significant salary cut, it was clear that any contract at any time, any player's standing at any time, was up for review. Manning is a Mount Rushmore type player, an instant Hall of Famer and he was coming off a 39-touchdown season that also happened to be the third-highest single-season total of his career.

You know the rest. Manning took the financial haircut, the Broncos went on to win the Super Bowl in Manning's last NFL season, and Manning made the \$4 million salary cut back with bonuses that came with the team's win of the AFC Championship Game and Super Bowl 50.

There it is. Like it or hate it. If Elway will stare down Manning over a pay cut, then anybody in that Broncos locker room better be ready for the same.

Those are the rules. The reward is to play for the Broncos and know you're going to have a chance to be in the postseason mix each season, the facilities are among the best in the league, and the organization lives Pat Bowlen's mantra to never forget it's a football team that needs to win football games, not a marketing vehicle.

As a player, that's both good and rare.

Aqib Talib once said of the Broncos that "you know Elway is going to make those moves, man, and we'll get in those playoff games."

It also means Elway doesn't just say he wants to "compete for world championships" every year, he is making moves to try to accomplish that. Right or wrong, some of those moves will raise eyebrows, will be inconvenient and will rub people the wrong way.

Von Miller, who once cropped Elway out of a photo taken at the White House before he posted it on social media because contract negotiations with Elway were growing plenty tense, has said: "In John Elway we trust."

But Ward's football fate is one Elway will have to explain carefully both in the public domain and his own building. It's one coach Vance Joseph, in his first season with the Broncos, will have to smooth over at some point if Ward is indeed sent on his way.

Teammates respect Ward, who has an important voice in the locker room. And several players on the defense received contract extensions before their deals ran out -- linebacker Brandon Marshall, cornerback Chris Harris Jr., defensive end Derek Wolfe and safety Darian Stewart.

There are football reasons Ward's future is now shaky. He's 30 and in the last year of his contract. That's when teams decide if another deal makes sense to them.

For Ward, the next contract could be his last swing at the top-tier money, so it's no small item to him. His teammates believe he deserves that kind of contract and they believe it would be best if it happened here.

The Broncos' decision with Ward will certainly test the ties that bind, but the last thing anybody should feel about it is surprised.

Broncos teammates come to Ward's defense amid trade talk

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
September 2, 2017

If John Elway trades or releases veteran strong safety T.J. Ward, he can expect some bitter backlash from the Denver Broncos locker room. A cauldron of discontent could also confront Vance Joseph as he embarks on his rookie campaign as head coach.

Amid speculation that their boss is about to break up the "No Fly Zone," Denver's defenders are coming to their teammate's defense and pleading with the team to keep the three-time Pro Bowler who brings much-needed leadership to the locker room and a tone-setting nastiness to the playing field.

"I'm with him. I'm with him 100 percent. I don't think he should be going. That's a cornerstone of the 'No Fly Zone,'" said Von Miller, expressing disbelief at the prospect of splitting up the team's special secondary that's helped lead them to a 37-15 record and a Super Bowl title in the last three seasons.

"The 'No Fly Zone' has made me great individually, us great as a defense and us great as an organization," Miller said.

Ward, who left the stadium without speaking to reporters following Denver's 30-2 thumping of Arizona on Thursday night, brings the attitude and thump to the star-studded secondary that includes All-Pro cornerbacks Chris Harris Jr. and Aqib Talib along with safety Darian Stewart and nickel back Bradley Roby.

"It can't be real," Miller said. "He's such an impactful player on and off the football field, in and out of the locker room."

As he always does when he chimes in on personnel matters, Miller added a caveat that the front office has a Super Bowl 50 trophy in the lobby, "so we've got to trust those guys like they trust us."

Not even the man who would replace Ward in the starting lineup wants to see him go.

"I mean, you're talking about messing with the chemistry of the defense and the chemistry he has with so many guys in this locker room," second-year safety Justin Simmons said. "And so we'll see what happens. It's crazy."

Linebacker Brandon Marshall took out his frustrations on social media, tweeting, "Letting go of TJ would be a mistake. With all the plays he's made and leadership he's brought. He deserves to at least play out his contract."

Ward is entering the final season of a four-year, \$22.5 million deal he signed in 2014. He's due \$4.5 million this season.

After this season, he'll be a free agent and he figures to command something similar to the five-year, \$60 million deal that Dolphins strong safety Reshad Jones signed — providing he can stay healthy and available in 2017 no matter whose team he's on.

Ward missed the entire preseason after tearing a hamstring early in training camp and Simmons played well in his place. Also, undrafted rookie safety Jamal Carter of Miami led the team with 19 tackles in the preseason.

The Broncos are facing some tough choices as they trim their roster to 53 by Saturday's deadline because Paxton Lynch's sprained right shoulder will probably force them to keep an extra quarterback and that roster spot has to come from somewhere.

When first asked Tuesday about the reports that Ward could be on his way out, Joseph said he'd be surprised because "he's one of our better players." But after the game, he sidestepped questions about Ward's status, saying, "Again, it is going to be a long weekend of a lot of transactions, you know, so I cannot speak to that. At the end of the day, we want the best guys for our football team, and if he is one of them, he will be."

Both Simmons and fellow second-year pro Will Parks spoke in the locker room Thursday night about how much they've learned from Ward.

Asked what Ward did to make him a better player, Simmons said, "The easier question would be what hasn't he done?"

"It would stink for me to see him go," Parks said. "But at the end of the day, he helped me understand this was a business from Day 1."

NOTES: The Broncos sent third-year tackle Ty Sambrailo to the Falcons on Friday for a fifth-round pick in next year's draft. The former second-rounder out of Colorado State went on IR with a shoulder injury after starting three games at left tackle as a rookie. He started four games at right tackle last season.

Broncos cuts begin with running backs Stevan Ridley, Juwan Thompson

By Troy Renck

KMGH

September 2, 2017

When Jamaal Charles darted around the corner six days ago, it signaled the end of Stevan Ridley's roster bid. Charles' healthy right knee made Ridley expendable and provided a reminder of the difficulty of making an NFL team.

The Broncos began paring down to 53 players on Friday, beginning with running backs Ridley and Juwan Thompson. Both did everything asked this preseason, but lost out in a numbers crunch. Receiver Anthony Nash was also released. I will continue to update this story throughout the day. The Broncos must reach the limit of 53 by 2 p.m. Saturday.

It is increasingly likely safety T.J. Ward will be traded or released, which is not going over well with teammates. The Broncos are also keeping all options open as they consider adding a third quarterback. And earlier Friday, the team traded former second round pick Ty Sambrailo to the Atlanta Falcons for a fifth-round draft pick in 2018.

Ridley rushed for 109 yards on 38 carries this preseason, hardly effective, but he finished strong Thursday with a touchdown run and a 27-yard gallop. Thompson collected 85 yards on 14 carries. He proved a valuable special teams member, but was never able to find a consistent role as a fullback or backup tailback over the past few seasons.

Nash is considered a strong candidate for the Broncos' 10-man practice squad.

Linebacker Danny Mason, signed for training camp depth after Shane Ray's wrist injury, was cut. Ray could be out for the first month of the season as he rebuilds strength in his wrist. Linebacker Deon Hollins was also let go along with tight end Steven Scheu.

Broncos Roster Cuts/Moves (will update throughout day):

T Ty Sambrailo (traded to Atlanta for 2018 5th round pick)

T Justin Murray

RB Stevan Ridley

RB Juwan Thompson

TE Steven Scheu

WR Anthony Nash

LB Danny Mason

LB Deon Hollins

LB Quentin Gause

LB Ken Ekanem

OL Cameron Hunt

S Dante Barnett

DE Shakir Soto

DE Vontarrius Dora

Broncos trade OT Ty Sambrailo to Falcons for 2018 5th round pick

By Troy Renck

KMGH

September 2, 2017

The Broncos' 53-man roster began taking shape with the departure of a former high draft pick. Denver shipped ex-Colorado State star Ty Sambrailo to the Atlanta Falcons for a fifth-round pick in 2018, the team confirmed Friday morning.

Sambrailo sat on the bubble with the Broncos, losing ground in the battle for playing time at left and right tackle spots. He played center on Thursday in an attempt to enhance his value, but has not been able to produce consistently since the first month of his rookie season.

The Broncos drafted Garrett Bolles in the first round to unseat Sambrailo at left tackle. The rookie won the job early in training camp. Denver's trade of Sambrailo could open a spot for Billy Turner or Michael Schofield to stick as a reserve lineman.

Sambrailo was the 59th overall pick in the 2015 draft, but only started 13 games over the past two seasons due to elbow and shoulder injuries and ineffectiveness.

Woody Paige: Sloter could be the real deal, outscoring foes 61-19 in preseason

By Woody Paige

KMGH

September 2, 2017

Kyle Sloter has become The G.O.T.E.

Greatest Of The Exhibitions.

Sloter was signed on May 11 as an after-thought by the Broncos, an unheralded, undrafted free agent.

Four months later, On Sept. 11, he will be the Broncos' backup quarterback for the regular-season opener.

He was supposed to be camp fodder, a young man thrown in to throw during OTAs and minicamps and training camp, a four-stringer while Trevor Siemian returned from off-season surgery, while Paxton Lynch developed to become a potential starter quarter, while Chad Kelly, the last selection in the draft, rehabilitated from knee and wrist injuries. He was expected to clean up during garbage time of a couple of exhibitions, sit idly by for the third game and possibly play in the meaningless final exhibition, then be cut, and possibly signed to the practice squad or replaced by a more experienced quarterback from another team.

After all, he was a J.A.G. (Just Another Guy) who hadn't even played quarterback in college until 2016, and was a wide receiver had had his scholarship yanked by Southern Mississippi.

People didn't even know how to pronounce his name properly.

Slouter, Slooter, Slutor, Slother, Slaughter.

He had a name only his mother said right. He might as well have been a man with no name, who rarely spoke, in an Italian Western.

Following two rather impressive appearances late at Chicago and in Santa Clara, Calif., against sloths and street free agents, Sloter received faint praise from Vance Joseph.

But the coach said: "We will have two quarterbacks on the (regular-season) roster."

They would be Siemian and Lynch, who were dueling to be starter and substitute. Sloter was the young man on the outside.

Then, Siemian was named the starter as Lynch struggled.

Paxton entered at the beginning of the second half against the Packers and promptly was shoved on his shoulder, which was later diagnosed as a strain. He would be sidelined for weeks.

Sloter immediately was in, then played the entire game on Thursday night. After a shaky start, Sloter was special.

The 6-foot-4, 218-pound, 23-year-old young man from Georgia has made a name for himself with the Broncos.

Kyle is relegated to page 204 of the Broncos media guide, back where the "others" are listed, and he is at the bottom.

"Named to the Conference USA's Commissioner's Honor Roll in all three years (2012-2014) at Southern Mississippi."

Sounds very smart and very unnoticed otherwise.

"Sloter played 35 games (13 starts) with Northern Colorado and the University of Northern Colorado, beginning his career as a wide receiver before becoming a quarterback full-time in 2016" after UNC, only after being rejected by a new coach at Southern Miss and only after the starting quarterback at UNC was injured.

Sloter has been the best of the trio of quarterbacks with Denver for four games.

He has completed 31 of 43 passes (72.1 percent) for 413 yards (9.6 yards per attempt) for three touchdowns and zero interceptions. He has a 47-yard touchdown pass and a passer rating of 125.5.

He has more touchdowns than Siemian and Lynch combined (1), fewer interceptions than the duo (1) and more yardage, a higher percentage and a much loftier QB rating.

Of course, he has played against scrubs and street agents, and a majority of the defensive players from those four teams will be cut on Saturday. But this isn't touch football or seven-on-seven, and, as former Broncos coach John Fox would say, "they get paid, too", although not much, and the opponents weren't Abilene Christian or Cal Poly, teams Sloter shined against when he was in Greeley.

But the Packers are pretty, pretty good.

Consider this achievement: While Sloter played, the Broncos outscored their foes 61-19.

In the Arizona game, Sloter was responsible in reality for all 32 points. He was sacked in the end zone at the outset for a safety (the only points the Cardinals ended up with), then guided the Broncos to three touchdowns and two field goals the rest of the way. On the sideline, he was hugged by more than two dozen teammates. He is accepted.

Sloter shouldn't be the starter, but he certainly shouldn't be cut on Saturday, and he certainly shouldn't be demoted automatically to the practice squad or oblivion when Paxton returns after two-four games. He certainly has earned his spot on the roster.

Slotermania has broken out.

Not since Tebow.

Sloter choose jersey "1" when he arrived in Denver. The only players who have worn that number in Broncos history were punters and kickers.

"Mile High" Kyle is a quarterback.

And when he now enters a "Cheers" bar in Denver, everyone will know his name.

Next-Day Notebook: Adam Gotsis, D-line step up after injuries

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
September 2, 2017

The Broncos' defensive line didn't want its depth to be tested like this.

Not with the loss of one rotational contributor, Billy Winn, for the season because of a torn anterior cruciate ligament. Not with the absence of two starters, ends Derek Wolfe and Jared Crick, for over two weeks because of injuries suffered in training-camp practices held after the preseason opener at Chicago. And not with a knee bruise incurred by free-agent pickup Zach Kerr that could keep him out for the regular-season opener against the Los Angeles Chargers.

This was the hand the group was dealt. Somehow, it didn't miss a step.

"We were rolling with six or seven guys from the end of camp basically all the way through [the end of preseason]," said defensive end Adam Gotsis, who was the only defensive lineman to start each of the final three preseason games. "Hats off to those guys. We just put our head down and grinded, and that's what we've got to do as a D-line.

"You can't take a day off, and I don't think any guy in our group did."

It helps that the defense as a whole accounted for just 24 points allowed in the last three games -- with one of the three touchdowns permitted coming on a 2-yard drive that came after an interception return. The results were positive, despite the absence of Crick and Wolfe for each of the last three games.

"I think everyone on the D-line either got a sack or a [tackle for loss] or something," Gotsis said. "It's everyone just getting off the ball, just trying to make plays."

Indeed, over the course of the preseason, defensive end Shelby Harris notched three sacks, four tackles for loss, another quarterback hit and a pass breakup. Defensive end Shakir Soto had a quarterback hit and a pass defensed. Gotsis had a sack and two tackles for losses. Nose tackles Tyrique Jarrett and Domata Peko Sr. each posted one tackle for a loss, as did defensive end Nelson Adams. Kerr had a quarterback hit and a pass breakup before he was injured, and Crick helped provide the pressure that led to Chris Harris Jr.'s pick-six in the preseason opener.

"You can kind of see that the chemistry of the D-line is a bit different this year than last year," Gotsis said.

Gotsis credits Peko for that.

"He does a great job with bringing the young guys along and making it like a family in that room," Gotsis said. "I think when we go out there, we're playing for each other as a family out there. It's not just the defense and the offense. It's that we've got to do our job so the rest of the family can do what they need to do."

For Gotsis in particular, it was a chance to start over. His rookie season was a frustrating one, as he finished without a sack in his first year removed from the torn ACL he suffered in his senior season at Georgia Tech.

Once he got back up to speed following minor knee surgery that ended his offseason work in June, he became a steady presence.

"I feel like it's my first preseason again," Gotsis said. "It's out there, you've got to make plays and you've got to make a name for yourself."

The Broncos expect Crick and Wolfe back by Week 1. In the meantime, they've learned that no matter who ends up comprising their rotation, they have quality options. They passed the preseason test.

BUSY MEN: Quarterback Kyle Sloter and cornerback Brendan Langley each played 100 percent of the snaps on offense and defense, respectively, during Thursday's game. They were the only Broncos to play each snap on their side of the football.

Offensive lineman Michael Schofield played the second-most snaps on offense; he lined up for 43 of 61 plays (70 percent). Rookie safety Orion Stewart was right behind Langley on defense; he saw action on 63 of 68 defensive plays (93 percent).

Four players tied for the team lead in special-teams snaps Thursday night. Safety Jamal Carter, cornerback Marcus Rios, outside linebacker Vontarrius Dora and inside linebacker Quentin Gause each played 14 snaps (50 percent) on special teams.

Dungy, Harrison look to Trevor Siemian to make Broncos' passing attack more explosive

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
September 2, 2017

Even with a more dynamic offensive scheme and explosive players, the fate of the Broncos' offense will mostly rest on the shoulders of Trevor Siemian.

At least, that's what a couple of NFL legends think.

"To me, again, it's going to be the quarterback play," said former Buccaneers and Colts head coach Tony Dungy during a "Football Night in America" conference call. "They've got a running game with runners who can make things happen, they've got a defense that's going to keep them in ball games and give them field position. Everybody is going to clamp down and try to play them tight and ... force the quarterback to make plays to beat them."

In Dungy's eyes, that means the Broncos must make more aggressive plays for big gains. Siemian and the Broncos avoided costly mistakes with the 11th-best interception rate on the season, but the passing offense managed only 40 passing plays of at least 20 yards on 570 passing attempts, a rate that ranked 29th.

"He's going to have to step up and make plays down the field," Dungy said. "I'm sure [Offensive Coordinator] Coach [Mike] McCoy will have some things in place to take shots down the field, but it's going to depend on Trevor Siemian really operating at a high level. If he does, then they're going to be very, very tough to beat. But he's going to have to prove to people he can be the difference-maker."

Fellow studio analyst and former Patriots safety Rodney Harrison agreed with Dungy on those points, but he added that he can see Siemian's potential paying off.

"[If] you're asking me if the Denver Broncos can win the division with Trevor Siemian, I believe they can," Harrison said. "I think their defense is good enough. Coach [Dungy] talked about being able to hit the passes downfield, but also not turning the ball over, making sure that you protect your quarterback and try to get some semblance of a run game. They have to be a little bit more patient with the run game and take a little pressure off the quarterback, but you can't hide the quarterback. He's a starting quarterback in the National Football League for a reason. You have to see if he can play."

Broncos trade Ty Sambrailo to Falcons for 2018 fifth-round pick

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
September 2, 2017

The Broncos have agreed to a trade with the Falcons that will exchange offensive lineman Ty Sambrailo to Atlanta for a fifth-round pick in the 2018 NFL Draft.

Sambrailo showed he could be a versatile player in his time in Denver, but he struggled with injuries since joining the Broncos as a second-round pick in 2015. He was originally slated as the starting left tackle to open his rookie season, but a torn labrum in his shoulder sent him to injured reserve after just three games.

In 2016, Sambrailo recovered from an elbow injury he suffered during training camp and played in 10 games, starting four at right tackle. To add to his versatility as the offensive-line corps got deeper, the third-year lineman gained experience working at guard and center during the past two seasons.

Broncos, Verizon collaborate on \$6 million Wi-Fi renovation at Sports Authority Field at Mile High

By Staff

DenverBroncos.com

September 2, 2017

The Denver Broncos and Verizon have collaborated on a \$6 million Wi-Fi renovation project that will allow fans to access free and faster Internet at Sports Authority Field at Mile High beginning in the 2017 season. CenturyLink will provide and power the Verizon Wi-Fi network at the stadium with a full 10Gbps internet connection that has both low latency and incredible reliability through Cisco's 5Ghz access points.

"We have been working with Verizon engineers since last June to select the best possible Wi-Fi system for our fans," Broncos Vice President of Information Technology Russ Trainor said. "Our Wi-Fi system was last updated more than five years ago and needed an uplift. Wi-Fi technology has made some significant advances in the last few years and we wanted to deliver a more robust system to our fans."

"We are proud to have a long standing partnership with the Broncos and are excited to play a strategic role in helping fans stay connected before, during and after every home game and event at the stadium," President of the North Central Market of Verizon Domenico D'Ambrosio said.

The new Wi-Fi system will have more than four times as many wireless antennas as the previous version across the stadium site. The new access points are the latest generation supporting 802.11ac Wave 2 — providing Broncos fans with the latest and greatest Wi-Fi technology on the market.

The new design in the bowl will include three different types of antennas: "Overhead" mounted, "In the Rail" mounted and "Under the Seat" mounted.

"The CenturyLink and Cisco teams have stepped up and have gone beyond the normal working relationship and we are very excited for them to help deliver this new system to our fans," Trainor said. "The new Cisco Technology is state of the art in that each of the access points is capable of driving dual 5Ghz radios. This was a key differentiator in our decision process."

Fans can access the network by selecting "FreeStadiumWiFi." The Verizon Wireless SSID will remain so Verizon customers will be able to join the network automatically.

The new Wi-Fi system is 40 percent installed and the goal is to be 100 percent installed by late October or early November. The Broncos' IT department will continue to analyze the new Wi-Fi system throughout this football season and gather data and metrics each game to tune and optimize the overall system for fans as the season goes on.

"As we continue to add more Wi-Fi infrastructure these next few months, we will continuously tweak and tune the system from week to week," Trainor said. "We have shored up our back-haul circuits to take on the additional capacity as well with dual 10Gbps circuits. We are increasing the amount of antennas throughout the venue by a significant amount and will primarily be driving a 5Ghz solution. We

very excited about this new Wi-Fi platform and the design, and can't wait to see what the system can do during gamedays."

Trainor and D'Ambrosio will be available for a Wi-Fi presentation and infrastructure tour at the stadium at 11 a.m. on Tuesday.

Media are asked to park in Lot J and enter through the North Tunnel, where they will be directed to the Coca-Cola Fan Cave. Lunch will be served to media at approximately 12 p.m. following the tour.

Reports: Ridley, Thompson cut by Broncos, Sambrailo traded; Browns cut Osweiler

By Staff

Colorado Springs Gazette

September 2, 2017

Some familiar names are among the players being let go by the Denver Broncos as cutdown day approaches.

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UPDATE 4:03 p.m.

Brock Osweiler has been released by the Cleveland Browns.

Additional Broncos cuts include TE Steven Scheu, LB Deon Hollins, LB Quentin Gause and DT Shakir Soto.

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UPDATE 3:03 p.m.

Mike Klis reports that tackle Justin Murray has been waived.

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UPDATE 1:42

Various media outlets are reporting that linebacker Vontarrius Dora, center Cameron Hunt and linebacker Ken Ekanem have been waived.

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UPDATE 1:04 p.m.

Linebacker Danny Mason and safety Dante Barnett were both waived, according to Mike Klis of 9News.

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Mike Klis of 9News tweeted that the Broncos have waived WR Anthony Nash and RB Juwan Thompson. Klis also reported that tackle Ty Sambrailo has been traded to the Atlanta Falcons for a fifth-round draft pick.

The Broncos also cut running back Stevan Ridley, according to NFL.com's Ian Rapoport.

Updates on Broncos cuts, as well as other notables around the NFL, will be added as information becomes available.

Trevor Siemian keeps winning Denver Broncos' quarterback job, and this is why

By Lindsay Jones
USA Today
September 2, 2017

The first time Trevor Siemian entered a competition to be the Denver Broncos' starting quarterback, he was the ultimate underdog — a seventh-round pick with just one kneel-down on his NFL resume.

But he emerged from 2016's three-man race victorious and played decently.

The second time he fought for the job, he was the front runner as the incumbent starter after going 8-6 last season. Still, a skeptical Denver fan base took to talk radio and social media to express firm support for Paxton Lynch, the team's 2016 first-round pick and a player Hall of Fame quarterback-turned-general manager John Elway handpicked and traded up to acquire.

Still, Siemian prevailed. He has supplanted a journeyman, Mark Sanchez, whom the Broncos signed because of his experience and twice defeated Lynch.

"I had a shot coming in and, for me, that's all I needed," Siemian said.

But how exactly did he twice manage to emerge atop the depth chart while playing for two coaching staffs and in two different systems?

Current and former coaches and teammates say it's a credit to Siemian's mental acuity — both in the classroom and on the field — underrated athleticism and a low-key leadership style that earns respect.

"He is a great connector. He connects with everybody," Mick McCall, Siemian's college offensive coordinator at Northwestern, told USA TODAY Sports. "It doesn't surprise me that people continue to follow him and try to do things for him."

Even after starting 14 games last year, Siemian faced obstacles. It began in January, when the coach who was his biggest cheerleader, Gary Kubiak, retired. Later that month, Siemian had surgery to repair a lingering injury in his left (non-throwing) shoulder.

New head coach Vance Joseph hired offensive coordinator Mike McCoy, who was expected to bring an offense with more spread elements, shotgun formations and downfield passes that could have favored Lynch, who is more mobile and has a stronger arm than Siemian.

But installation of the new offense might have worked in Siemian's favor because of his ability to process it. When offseason practices began in the spring, it was clear he had a better grasp on McCoy's playbook and carried that consistency into training camp practices in July and August.

"I think it's more of how to attack from a schematic standpoint. That's Trevor. That's Trevor putting us in the right spots ... and knowing exactly what Mike McCoy would check to in a matter of 13 to 15 seconds," receiver Emmanuel Sanders said.

"I'll tell you what, I think those two guys are going to continue to gain camaraderie and pick each other's brains apart to understand what Trevor likes and understand exactly what Mike is thinking. I think that's when this offense is going to take off to a whole different level."

While Lynch's athletic ceiling might be higher than Siemian's, Joseph said he's been impressed with Siemian's arm strength and has no concerns that he can make all of the throws in McCoy's scheme.

"I think Trevor gets no credit for his arm talent," Joseph said. "So I'm excited about Trevor, protecting him more than we did last year, running the football better and continue to play great defense. I think he fits the bill for us."

When Joseph called off the 2017 quarterback derby last week, he declared Siemian the permanent starter. Still, it is conceivable that regardless of how Siemian plays, Lynch — he sprained his shoulder after losing the competition, adding injury to insult — would get another shot to win the job in 2018.

That's what makes this season so important for Siemian, while playing for a team that still has a championship-caliber defense. If he plays well, he can force the Broncos into a difficult situation next offseason, when he would become eligible for a contract extension.

"I have a long way to go," Siemian said. "I know where I can get better. I also know some of the things I can do well."

"For me, even going back to when I came in the league, I try to do a good job of taking it one day and rep at a time. At the end of the season, I'll go back and figure out where I'm at and go from there."

Broncos trade part-time starter to Falcons in exchange for 2018 draft pick

By John Breech
CBS Sports
September 2, 2017

After adding three starters on the offensive line this offseason, the Denver Broncos didn't really have any need for offensive tackle Ty Sambrailo, so they shipped him off to Atlanta.

The Broncos announced on Friday that Sambrailo has been traded to the Falcons in exchange for a 2018 fifth-round draft pick.

The offensive lineman had been with the Broncos since 2015 when he was selected in the second round of the NFL Draft. During his two seasons with the Broncos, Sambrailo played in a total of 13 games for the team, and started in seven of those.

However, Sambrailo never really lived up to the hype that came with being a second-round pick. During two injury-riddled seasons with the Broncos, he missed a total of 19 games due to injury.

During the 2017 offseason, the Broncos made it clear that they wanted to improve an offensive line that gave up a total of 40 sacks last season. To beef up the unit, the Broncos added two free agents -- Ronald Leary and Menelik Watson -- and then went out and used a first-round pick on another offensive lineman, Garrett Bolles.

With all three of those guys expected to start, that made Sambrailo expendable in Denver. The Broncos also added offensive guard Allen Barbre during a July trade with the Eagles.

With the Falcons, Sambrailo probably won't see the field too often in 2017 unless someone gets injured. Atlanta has two established starters at the tackle spots in right tackle Ryan Schraeder and left tackle Jake Matthews.

Of course, the Falcons could ask Sambrailo to make the move to guard. The only starter the Falcons lost from the Super Bowl team was right guard Chris Chester, who announced his retirement in May.

NFL Roster Cuts: The Most Notable Players Released

By Dan Gartland
Sports Illustrated
September 2, 2017

NFL teams face a pressure-filled weekend as they pare their rosters down from 90 to 53 before Saturday's 4 p.m. ET deadline.

This marks the first year that teams were not forced to cut their rosters down to 75 men before the final preseason game, which means this final round of cuts will see more than 1,100 players hit the free agent market. Most of those players will be anonymous undrafted free agents but there will be a few names you may recognize. Check out the list below as we track the most notable players left looking for jobs.

- QB Brock Osweiler, Browns
- WR Victor Cruz, Bears
- RB Chris Johnson, Cardinals
- RB Matt Asiata, Lions
- C Jeremy Zuttah, Ravens
- RB Stevan Ridley, Broncos
- RB Bobby Rainey, Ravens
- RB Lorenzo Taliaferro, Ravens
- TE Larry Donnell, Ravens
- FB Glenn Gronkowski, Patriots

Broncos trade Ty Sambrailo to Falcons for '18 draft pick

By Kevin Patra

NFL.com

September 2, 2017

The Denver Broncos shipped disappointing backup offensive tackle Ty Sambrailo to Atlanta. The Broncos traded the former second-round selection for a 2018 fifth-round pick, the team announced Friday .

ESPN first reported the swap.

After struggling mightily in his first three starts as a rookie, Sambrailo appeared in 10 games in Denver in 2016, starting four tilts for a porous Broncos offensive line. He has battled upper-body injuries throughout his first two seasons.

Denver drafted left tackle Garrett Bolles in the first-round this year to take over the starting duties immediately. Sambrailo battled Donald Stephenson for the backup swing-tackle role this summer before being sent to Atlanta.

With the Falcons, Sambrailo is a depth addition behind starters Jake Matthews and Ryan Schraeder.

Why Mile High Stadium Could Keep Sports Authority Name for Years

By Michael Roberts
Westword
September 2, 2017

For more than a year, the Denver Broncos have been desperately trying to line up a new naming sponsor for Mile High Stadium following the bankruptcy and subsequent collapse of Sports Authority, the athletic-gear retailer that previously held the rights. Now the team confirms that the Sports Authority Field at Mile High moniker will still be on the facility when the 2017-2018 season kicks off with a September 11 game against the Los Angeles Chargers, and a branding authority says it could stick around for a lot longer than that.

"We know they don't want to take a low-ball agreement," notes Darrin Duber-Smith, marketing professor and senior lecturer at Metropolitan State University of Denver. "If they believe they can get a good deal down the line, they can let this thing sit for one or two or even three years."

Clearly, the current situation isn't ideal. Indeed, when we last spoke to Duber-Smith on this topic, for a June 7 post headlined "Buying Broncos Stadium Naming Rights Killed Sports Authority, Expert Says," he stressed, "The main thing is, they want to get the Sports Authority name off the stadium."

For these reasons, Duber-Smith expected that a fresh sponsorship pact would be wrapped up sooner rather than later. That this didn't happen suggests to him that the Broncos "haven't been able so far to get the amount of money they're looking for" — a presumed \$10 million to \$11 million per annum for fifteen to twenty years.

Duber-Smith believes this kind of windfall won't be easy to attract. "It's harder to get a naming-rights partner for an older stadium," he points out. "There's a lot of buzz for a new stadium. And look at what they got for the L.A. Coliseum."

Indeed, the University of Southern California recently sold the naming rights to the venerable Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, which opened in 1923, to United Airlines for \$70 million over fifteen years, or around \$4.66 million annually. This doesn't bode well for the Broncos, since the price tag is less than half the yearly amount the franchise is thought to covet. "L.A. is a much larger market than Denver," Duber-Smith acknowledges, "so I would have expected them to get more."

The L.A. Coliseum contract could be a negative harbinger for another reason, too. "Even colleges are getting into the naming-rights business," Duber-Smith says. "They can't ignore the revenue stream that comes from venue naming-rights agreements. And that means more competition."

Local examples of this scenario abound. As reported by BusinessDen, Colorado State University is open to a naming-rights sale for its new stadium, which hosted its first game in August, and the University of Colorado Boulder is shopping for partners to slap their honorific on Folsom Field.

"Because more colleges are doing this, there's a larger inventory of stadiums that need names on the market," Duber-Smith allows. "And the laws of economics say that when that happens, the price goes down."

The prospect that, as Duber-Smith puts it, "the market for naming rights may have plateaued," is speculative at this point, and the Broncos, who are working with William Morris Endeavor to line up a new sponsor, may feel that Mile High Stadium is such a unique property that it's capable of bucking such a trend. But this is an expensive strategy. When the Broncos took over Sports Authority's naming-rights agreement last year, the squad had to pay the Metropolitan Football Stadium District the \$3.6 million the company owed for 2016 — and the firm was reportedly on the hook with the district for at least an additional \$16 million through 2020.

Paying this price is preferable to removing the Sports Authority imaging entirely, though. In Duber-Smith's words, "The only thing worse would be to leave it blank. They really don't want to do that, because fans don't understand that in 2017, you need to have a venue naming-rights partner. It's not going to be Mile High Stadium; they don't want people to get used to having no [sponsor] name on the stadium. And people shouldn't want that, either, because the ticket prices would go up. Broncos ticket prices aren't that high compared to a lot of the league, and the venue naming-rights partner softens the blow for consumers."

Does that mean that ticket prices could go up if the franchise doesn't find a naming sponsor this season, or the next one, or the one after that? If so, the Broncos won't be the only losers.

In the meantime, the squad's braintrust is definitely frustrated. During the broadcast of Denver's 30-2 victory over the Arizona Cardinals last night, August 31, in the preseason finale for both outfits, game caller Ron Zappolo asked team president Joe Ellis about the search for a new handle — and Ellis grumbled that it was taking a lot longer than he expected....

Mike McCoy feels San Diego's pain

By Tom Krasovic

The San Diego Union-Tribune

September 2, 2017

The head shook just a smidge, the chin dipped and then Mike McCoy removed his orange visor and ran a hand through white-blond hair.

"You feel for everybody there," he said.

Far from San Diego, hard by the Rocky Mountains here, McCoy sat on a bench at his new football home and revisited his four years as the final head coach of the San Diego Chargers.

A jagged topic, his San Diego tenure – and McCoy's comments scattered like shards from a broken vase.

"Every coach, every player gave it all they had," said McCoy, now offensive coordinator of the Denver Broncos. "Unfortunately, it didn't work out for all of us."

Another comment: "I made some mistakes. There were certain things."

Other remarks: "The whole organization, I can't thank them enough. They were so good to me... I can't thank Dean Spanos and the Spanos family enough for the opportunity they gave me... I can list so many players and coaches. No doubt Philip (Rivers) and Antonio (Gates) are Hall of Famers. Special people. The things I asked them to do, they never hesitated..."

Yes, he said, in reply, he'd love another crack at head coaching — but his current job is the only one that matters.

He lamented the defeats that piled up, despite the labor of "so many great people."

It was eight months ago that the San Diego Chargers — RIP — played their final game. Through his friends in San Diego, where he still owns a home, McCoy feels the void in the city that housed the team since 1961.

"It's hard to think there isn't a team in San Diego," he said. "It's too bad."

Blaming McCoy for the relocation doesn't make much sense even with his .281 winning percentage over the final two years.

While a Super Bowl run was likely needed akin to the World Series run that helped the Padres get their public money for a venue, McCoy was unable to wring that miracle from a roster that had streaks of talent but insufficient depth and horrible injury luck.

"Mike McCoy deserves to be a head coach again," said Broncos head coach Vance Joseph, who called him a "perfect fit" as both a coordinator and sounding board. "He had good football teams in San Diego that were riddled by injury every year."

Joseph also told the Union-Tribune that McCoy is a “great leader.”

“Mike McCoy,” he said, “understands what it means to be a head coach. So, with our football team having success he will get his chance again.”

‘Very, very lucky’

San Diegans remember Jan. 12 as the date Spanos announced he was taking his team to Orange County and Los Angeles.

The same day, McCoy was in Denver to chat with Joseph and John Elway.

Joseph, whose background is on defense, said he sought a designer to handle the offense. “I was very lucky to acquire Mike,” he said. “He’s going to attack, he’s going to have fun, he’s a great teacher. So, those things fit my personality, my vision for the offense.”

McCoy’s experience as a head coach is a bonus, buffering Joseph in a new role.

Denver’s performance will dictate if it’s a one-and-done season for McCoy as it was for his former Chargers playcaller Ken Whisenhunt.

Whisenhunt returned to head coaching after an impressive 2013 season that saw Rivers complete an NFL-high 69.5-percent of his passes and then, in his first turnover-free game in a postseason, lead the Chargers to their first playoff win in five years.

However, while Denver’s Von Miller-led defense is more talented than the 2013 Chargers defense, the Broncos’ offense McCoy inherited seems less talented than his San Diego unit in 2013.

A year ago Denver was 22nd in points and 27th in yards.

The view through orange-tinted lens is that quarterback Trevor Siemian, a second-year starter and former seventh-round draftee, can be McCoy’s next Jake Delhomme: an unheralded quarterback who someday helps get his team to a Super Bowl.

Under coordinator McCoy, Delhomme directed a no-huddle offense for Carolina that was simple but efficient.

McCoy, peering from Denver’s sideline, will serve as a guide to Siemian, who started 14 games last year after sitting behind Peyton Manning and Brock Osweiler as a rookie.

“We’re very, very lucky to have Coach McCoy,” Siemian said.

Unlike with San Diego, McCoy will call the plays, although after he hears from aides and quarterbacks.

Broncos receiver Emmanuel Sanders said Siemian got the job over Paxton Lynch — Elway’s top draftee in 2016 — because he’s an apt on-field extension of McCoy. “That’s Trevor putting us in the right spots,” he said.

McCoy must break in two athletic but raw tackles, one of whom is a rookie, and his tight end unit is inferior to his 2016 Chargers grouping led by Gates and Hunter Henry.

The wide-receiver tandem of Sanders and Demaryius Thomas is the unit's strength, though age is creeping up on each player. Tight end Virgil Green, who with Thomas is the only offensive holdover from McCoy's previous stint with Denver, is a good blocker.

McCoy said his offense benefits from practicing against such a strong defense.

"It's going to be exciting," McCoy said. "With the way the guys have worked and what we've done in a short amount of time together, the sky's the limit for us. We have to keep getting better every week."

Spanos context

With the Chargers, McCoy finished fifth in win rate (.422) of the nine Spanos Era hires to the head-coach job. Above him are Bobby Ross (.588), Marty Schottenheimer (.588), Norv Turner (.583) and Al Saunders (.436). Below are Dan Henning (.333), June Jones (.333), Mike Riley (.292) and Kevin Gilbride (.273).

If McCoy, 45, is to head an NFL team again, he would break precedent. Ross was the only Spanos hire to return to NFL head-coaching, with Detroit. However, McCoy is several years younger than a few of those coaches were, and would join a long list of NFL coaches to run a second team after a losing first tenure.

"You learn," McCoy said. "I'm a much better coach than I was when I first took the job in San Diego. I'm not gonna lie. There are so many things."

Up, then down

His crowning achievement was his first team's playoff victory, at Cincinnati as a 5.5-point underdog.

Not only the franchise's first playoff win in five years, it made McCoy just the third coach of the 34-year Spanos Era to win in the postseason, a feat that eluded even Schottenheimer.

The McCoy Era divided neatly into two categories: good start and awful finish.

Over the initial 24 contests that comprised the 2013 season/postseason and six games into 2014, the Chargers were frequent winners (.625) largely behind a quick-pass offense McCoy's staff had installed.

Ryan Mathews, before breaking down again, became the special running back envisaged when A.J. Smith went large on him in the 2013 draft.

And, McCoy's first team did more than defeat cupcakes.

The 5-2 record against playoff-bound teams in 2013 set a franchise mark, as did that .714 win rate with a minimum of five contests. Against Super Bowl-bound Denver, the Chargers won as 9.5-point underdogs.

Then McCoy's second team started out 5-1. The victims included the Seahawks, who'd won the previous Super Bowl and would return there.

“They had a great game plan against us,” recalled nose tackle Brandon Mebane.

Cowabunga, though, became look out below.

McCoy’s teams would win only 31 percent of their games through the sad 2017 finale at Jack Murphy Field.

Tellingly, the start of the 42-game slide was a home loss to the Chiefs. A disastrous 1-13 stretch followed within the West – the division that, notably, had become a far tougher realm than in the six-year Smith & Turner Era.

A top-dollar hire of the Chiefs, coach Andy Reid won his final six games opposite the budget-friendly McCoy.

Where strong special teams characterized the Chiefs, who invested heavily there, poor special teams plagued McCoy’s teams.

The bigger problem was this: His final two teams came up short in close games, dropping 17 of 24 decided by eight points or fewer.

Giving many San Diegans an extra-sour and final case of heartburn, his ‘17 Bolts lost six games they’d led in the fourth quarter.

“We gave them away,” Rivers said last year, fingering in particular the opening-day loss at Kansas City and a home-field collapse against the Saints.

NFL powerhouse

So, it was back to Denver for McCoy, who’d worked under Josh McDaniels and John Fox from 2009-12.

The Broncos are NFL royalty, having gone to eight Super Bowls. Three Lombardi Trophies, the first one captured on San Diego soil, sparkle inside a lobby’s trophy case on a spiffy campus.

With shrieking pro-Broncos crowds the norm and mile-high conditions unique to the NFL, their home-field advantage is such that they talk of being 6-2 going into each season.

Flush in revenues even by NFL standards, the Broncos are where Team Spanos would like to be if, against tall odds, it can tap into the riches of greater L.A.

The Broncos’ payroll includes a director of football analytics, Mitch Tanney, who is a time-saver for coaches as they prepare game plans and tutorials. Joseph and predecessor Gary Kubiak said Tanney is part of the headset discussion on game day, providing instantaneous, data-driven context.

McCoy said he was lucky to return to Denver. (He also drew reported interest from Washington coach Jay Gruden, a Chargers interviewee in 2013.)

San Diego home

Did the injury bug follow McCoy from San Diego?

In surprising detail, the coach revealed this week the health setbacks of an offensive lineman. Surgery was on the horizon.

Exhale, Broncos fans.

The blocker is Luke McCoy, who won't suit up for the Westview High Wolverines of north San Diego anytime soon.

Luke and his sister, Liv, have remained in San Diego with their mother, Mike's wife, Kellie, so they can complete high school.

Though his family visits him frequently, McCoy said he had a long, yet timely, stretch alone in Denver not long after he was fired and hired.

Going out for groceries only once – the Broncos' cafeteria is popular with players and coaches – he hunkered down and got the jump on the time-intensive task of launching with a new team.

"He's an empty-nester right now," Joseph said, laughing. "He's working an awful lot. And, he's doing a great job."

On Sept. 11, a familiar team will visit Denver for the opener. A defense led by Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram will attack Siemian. The visored man directing Siemian from the Broncos' sideline? He'll be Mike McCoy, the final San Diego Chargers coach.

How NFL tight end Jake Butt found a natural sponsorship: Charmin

By Alex Schiffer
Los Angeles Times
September 2, 2017

As a kid, Jake Butt asked his dad whether he could change his last name.

But as a Denver Broncos rookie tight end, he has embraced it. It became a fan favorite when he was an All-American at Michigan and a popular talking point for his friends, who joked that he could pursue an endorsement with Charmin, should he ever make it big.

"It carried on every single year," he said. "Everyone would bring it up to me thinking they were the first." This spring, Butt had the last laugh, when Charmin signed him to a sponsorship for the NFL Draft. It wasn't one of those blockbuster endorsement deals that A-list athletes pull down. But it was a tidy sum for a rookie building on the business prospects of his pro career.

Such deals have emerged as marketers seize opportunities to pair athletes who have unique names with otherwise unlikely product endorsements.

In recent months, NBA star Karl-Anthony Towns (nicknamed "KAT") landed a sponsorship with Kit-Kat, Cowboys rookie Vedauntae "Taco" Charlton landed a deal with restaurant chain Taco Bueno, and Los Angeles Chargers rookie Forrest Lamp landed an endorsement with manufacturer and retailer Lamps Plus.

"These are rare," said Bob Williams, the president of Burns Sports Celebrity Service, a marketing agency that pairs celebrities with marketing campaigns. "Lately there's been a trend, but in my mind that's a short-term trend. The long odds of a particular celebrity fitting a brand — the money, the time, all those commitments — is hard."

Although some of the sponsorships may seem like no-brainers, they don't just fall into place.

A company could see an immediate connection with a player because of the name, but that's just the first step. It has to work in other ways: be good for the brands of both parties, reflect common audiences and shared principles.

"The biggest hurdle in general is the fit," Williams said. "It has to be the right name fit. The celebrity has to appeal to the target name demographic, and the celebrity has to be able to participate in a campaign. Some celebrities might not be comfortable endorsing things like alcohol."

When Lamp signed with Select Sports Group, Jacquelyn Davis, the agency's marketing specialist, said she knew there could be some unique marketing avenues to explore because his name. She decided to reach out to Lamps Plus, which is based in Los Angeles.

The company had never heard of Lamp and wanted to do its homework on him.

"We were very hesitant," Lamps Plus spokesman Eric Wein said. "Our target demographic is female. We were more interested in trying to target more men."

Wein said the company was sold on the idea after Lamp's longtime girlfriend Natosha Boden agreed to join in, which helped it appeal to multiple demographics. The two are featured in digital marketing campaigns.

The deal was announced the morning of the NFL Draft and ended up being the company's largest social media hit to date: 4 million impressions on social media, of which 92% were positive. A recent video had 50,000 views in the first 48 hours.

"It kind of exploded," Wein said. "Attention across the board. The biggest hit was ESPN put up our tweet right after he was selected."

Lamp getting selected by a team that resides in the same city as Lamps Plus only made the deal sweeter. It also didn't hurt that the Chargers logo is a lightning bolt.

"When he's in your backyard you can do more with him," said Dennis Swanson, chief executive of Lamps Plus. "The Chargers coming to L.A. is a bonus. And the Chargers are electricity, so you couldn't have had it any better."

Other times, the company tracks a player.

Perry Ellis, who was a breakout basketball player at Kansas, knew since childhood that he shared the name of a clothing brand. When he met with his agent shortly after turning pro, he found out that a deal was already in the works.

"They said they were keeping their eye on me for a while," Ellis said.

Williams said Ellis' situation is the more common of the two routes.

"It's about 90% the brand contacting the athlete," he said. "And I might be generous on that. There are a significant number of celebrity deals done because the agent is aggressive. Other agents are passive. They leave the marketing to someone else. They will sit and wait for that 90%. Many times a brand gets excited when an agent says, 'My client loves your product. They've been using it for years.'"

In the case of Butt, Charmin reached out after hearing about him through the company's Proctor & Gamble connections at the NFL and learning in its research that his family had come to embrace its name.

Butt's deal was the first time the company ever signed an athlete, said Angie McAuliffe, an associate manager at Charmin. Before the NFL Draft, Butt was delivered a truck full of Charmin and posed with it, which went viral on social media.

Butt has come around to his last name even more, especially since it has proved helpful off the football field. His marketing team is ready to work on new opportunities. A long-term relationship with Charmin would be ideal.

As his marketing agent Jeff Weiner puts it: "His last name being Butt is a huge asset."

'For Me, It's Personal.' NFL Fans Boycott Football As Colin Kaepernick Goes Unemployed

By Sean Gregory

Time

September 2, 2017

For half a century, Mindy Reed has enjoyed a love affair with the NFL. As one of three daughters, she bonded with her father, a machinist living in Connecticut, over football. She wore a Bart Starr jersey as a kid, and recalls seeing Joe Namath play at the Yale Bowl in a 1969 exhibition game. As Reed climbed the corporate ladder at Dell in the 1980s and 90s, her football knowledge served as entrée into the old boys' club. After switching careers — Reed, 61, is now a librarian in Austin — she continued to consume football. Reed rooted for the Seattle Seahawks, because wide receiver Tyler Lockett attended her alma mater, Kansas State.

But, Reed swears, now she's done.

Reed plans on boycotting the NFL this season because no team has offered a job to ex-San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, whose peaceful protest of police brutality during the National Anthem last season sparked a firestorm. It's not just that teams haven't extended an offer to Kaepernick, once one of the most promising signal callers in the league, who led the Niners to a Super Bowl in 2013, and threw an admirable 16 touchdown passes, against just four interceptions, for an undermanned San Francisco team a year ago. No team even invited him to training camp for a tryout.

So when an NFL commercial comes on TV, Reed immediately flips the channel. "I don't take this lightly," she says about her boycott, citing the important role football has played in her life. "But a line has been crossed, as far as I'm concerned." Reed, who is white, believes Kaepernick's protest against the killing of unarmed black people is completely justified. She says police regularly pull over her husband, who is African-American, for "driving while black."

"For me, it's personal," says Reed. "We need to support people who remind us we don't live in a post-racial society."

Reed joins a growing number of Americans who say they will swear off NFL football until a team signs Kaepernick. A #NoKaepernickNoNFL petition on Change.org has received over 175,000 signatures. Hundreds of Kaepernick supporters rallied outside of NFL headquarters in New York City in August. If the boycotters follow through on their promises to stop watching games and buying merchandise, NFL owners may see a dent in their bottom lines. They feared fans would walk out on them if they signed the controversial QB. But by steering clear of Kaepernick, they'll likely get boycotted anyway.

"There are probably more people out there who are against Colin Kaepernick protesting than there are people who support him," says Vic Oyedeji, an African-American NFL fan who started the Change.org petition. "But at the end of the day, the people supporting Colin will have enough of a voice to make a change."

NFL teams have signed more than 30 quarterbacks not named Colin Kaepernick to contracts since Kaepernick opted out of his 49ers deal in March. (If Kaepernick had not opted out, the 49ers were

planning on cutting him; new coach Kyle Shanahan prefers traditional pocket passers for his system). That figure does not include 2017 draft picks, or QBs who re-signed with their squads. But it otherwise includes 19 players who have never completed a pass in an NFL regular season game. Kaepernick's completed 1,011.

How did this happen? While Kaepernick is almost certainly a less effective player than he was during his Super Bowl run, many fans are convinced that NFL teams have blacklisted him because of his anthem protest. In July, Baltimore Ravens owner Steve Buscotti acknowledged that signing Kaepernick could offend his customers; he requested that Ravens fans "pray for us" as the team contemplated offering Kaepernick a contract. NFL players who have been convicted of drunk driving, obstruction of justice, theft, gun possession, domestic violence, assault, vehicular manslaughter, and other crimes have returned to the field. Baltimore passed on Kaepernick.

Watching a team like the Miami Dolphins pull Jay Cutler, a white quarterback with inferior statistics during his injury-ridden 2016 campaign, out of retirement rather than give Kaepernick a shot strikes a raw nerve for many fans. "What we're actually seeing in real time is the more qualified black guy being passed over for a less qualified white guy, for non-football reasons," says J. Wyndal Gordon, a Baltimore attorney — and fan of the Ravens and Washington Redskins — who plans to skip the NFL this year. Boycotters fear Kaepernick's situation sets a dangerous precedent. "If footballs players can't express themselves in a peaceful way, it's almost like saying they can't be free in a free country," says Derek Harris, a high school assistant principal in New York City. "The NFL has a right not to choose Kaepernick. We have a right to not support the sport."

Some Kaepernick supporters, however, consider an NFL boycott misguided. "Take the picket signs and go protest a police commissioner, a mayor, a city council," says Shelby Jones, a tennis pro in Washington, D.C. who is African-American. "Protest the people in civic duty who brought about the Colin Kaepernick protest. There is a fight going on. And we're fighting the wrong person."

Regardless, the boycotters are sticking to their plan. For hardcore NFL fans, tuning out football won't be easy. "But I'll get used to it," says Oyedemi. "We are all creatures of habit. I'm doing my duty as a person of color." Reed, the Austin librarian and half-century supporter of the NFL, has come to terms with her withdrawal. If Kaepernick signs, she'll be back. In the meantime, she'll be doing other things this fall. "Who knows what I might discover out there," says Reed. "I certainly know how to read a book."

Broncos trade Ty Sambrailo to Falcons for 2018 fifth-round pick

By Josh Alper
Pro Football Talk
September 2, 2017

The Broncos settled on first-round pick Garret Bolles as their starter at left tackle and restructured Donald Stephenson's contract to increase his chances of sticking with the team, which didn't seem to leave a lot of room for Ty Sambrailo on the 53-man roster.

That feeling turned out to be correct. Adam Schefter of ESPN reports that the Broncos have traded Sambrailo to the Falcons in exchange for a 2018 fifth-round pick.

Sambrailo was a second-round pick in 2015 and opened his rookie season as the team's left tackle with Ryan Clady out due to injury. He started the first three games, but landed on injured reserve due to a shoulder injury. He played in 10 games and made four starts during the 2016 season.

The Falcons signed tackle Austin Pasztor as a depth option earlier this summer and Sambrailo will likely factor into the reserve mix in Atlanta as well.

PFT's 2017 AFC 53-man roster cuts tracker

By Josh Alper
Pro Football Talk
September 2, 2017

[Editor's note: We're keeping track of the moves as AFC teams make them this weekend, as they have to get to their 53-man roster limit by Saturday at 4 p.m. Due to a rule change this year, there was no interim cut to 75 players so there will be a lot of moves to keep track of this time around. Check back throughout the weekend, as we'll update throughout.]

Buffalo

Miami

Waived punter Matt Darr.

New England

Traded cornerback Justin Coleman to the Seahawks for a late-round pick. Waived fullback Glenn Gronkowski.

New York Jets

Traded defensive lineman Sheldon Richardson to the Seahawks for wide receiver Jermaine Kearse and a 2018 second-round pick. Released linebacker Spencer Paysinger, offensive linemen Jeff Adams and Craig Watts, wide receivers Chris Harper and Myles White, tight end Brandon Barnes, defensive lineman Jeremy Faulk, defensive backs Armagedon Draughn and David Rivers and kicker Ross Martin. Placed wide receiver Quincy Enunwa, tight end Chris Gragg, and linebacker Corey Lemonier on injured reserve, and cornerback Jeremy Clark on reserve/non-football injury.

Baltimore

Released veteran offensive lineman Jeremy Zuttah. Waived wide receiver Keenan Reynolds among their first 24 moves. They terminated the contracts of tight end Larry Donnell, quarterback Thaddeus Lewis, running back Bobby Rainey, cornerback Trevin Wade, and wide receiver Griff Whalen. They also waived punter Kenny Allen, linebacker Randy Allen, wide receiver C.J. Board, guard Jarell Broxton, defensive back Otha Foster, tackle Roubbens Joseph, center Derrick Nelson, long snapper Taybor Pepper, guard Jarrod Pughsley, running back Lorenzo Taliaferro and offensive lineman De'Ondre Wesley, and placed six on injured reserve: Running back Kenneth Dixon, offensive lineman Alex Lewis, linebacker Albert McClellan, guard Nico Siragusa, wide receiver Tim White, and cornerback Tavon Young.

Cincinnati

Cleveland

Placed cornerback Howard Wilson on PUP list. Released defensive tackle Brandon Thompson and wide receiver Josh Boyce. Waived defensive back Trey Caldwell, wide receiver Mario Alford, wide receiver

Rasheed Bailey, linebacker B.J. Bello, defensive back Christian Bryant, linebacker Ladell Fleming, defensive back J.D. Harmon, defensive back Alvin Hill, tight end Nate Iese, tight end Taylor McNamara, wide receiver Richard Mullaney, offensive lineman Kitt O'Brien, defensive lineman Karter Schult, defensive back Channing Stribling and running back Brandon Wilds. Released offensive lineman John Greco, kicker Cody Parkey and defensive lineman Xavier Cooper.

Pittsburgh

Released running back Knile Davis.

Houston

Released linebacker Sio Moore, linebacker Mike Catapano, offensive lineman Erik Austell and safety Malik Smith.

Indianapolis

Jacksonville

Placed tight end Mychal Rivera and safety Jeron Johnson on injured reserve. Waived/injured fullback Marquez Williams. Waived or released tight end Caleb Blueitt, tackle Malcolm Bunche, center Demetrius Rhane, linebacker P.J. Davis, linebacker Akeem Dent, defensive lineman Tueni Lupeamanu, wide receiver Jamal Robinson, wide receiver Larry Pinkard, running back Jonathan Grimes, running back DuJuan Harris, cornerback Charles James and cornerback Dwayne Thomas.

Tennessee

Denver

Traded tackle Ty Sambrailo to the Falcons for a 2018 fifth-round pick. Released running back Stevan Ridley, running back Juwan Thompson and wide receiver Anthony Nash.

Kansas City

Traded defensive lineman David King to the Titans for a conditional 2018 seventh-round pick.

Los Angeles Chargers

Oakland

Vance Joseph declines to comment on T.J. Ward, before making ominous comment about him

By Mike Florio

Pro Football Talk

September 2, 2017

The vibe around Broncos safety T.J. Ward has changed dramatically in recent days. From a report that teams were burning up the phone lines to try to acquire him to the more accurate report that the Broncos were burning up the phone lines to try to trade him to a report from Mike Klis of 9news.com that Ward will be cut if the Broncos can't trade him, it's not looking good for Ward continuing his career in Denver.

After Thursday night's preseason finale, coach Vance Joseph was asked about Ward's status.

"Nothing on that," Joseph told reporters. "Again, it is going to be a long weekend of a lot of transactions, you know, so I cannot speak to that. At the end of the day, we want the best guys for our football team, and if he is one of them, he will be."

That's hardly a ringing endorsement for Ward and his \$4.5 million salary, which as a practical matter becomes fully guaranteed if he's on the Week One roster.

It's currently looking more clear than ever that he won't be.

Stevan Ridley among early Broncos cuts

By Darin Gantt

Pro Football Talk

September 2, 2017

In addition to pawning off unwanted parts, the Broncos are making some early cuts which include a few familiar names.

According to Mike Klis of KUSA, the Broncos have released veteran running back Stevan Ridley.

The 28-year-old Ridley has never really caught on after his brief star-turn with the Patriots, when he ran for 1,263 yards and 12 touchdowns in 2012.

The Broncos have also waived running back Juwan Thompson and wide receiver Anthony Nash.