

Jhabvala vs. Kiz: What's the key to the Broncos making the playoffs?

By Nicki Jhabvala and Mark Kiszla

Denver Post

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Kiz: This is how quickly a champion can crumble. The Broncos won Super Bowl 50 a scant 19 months ago, and 12 of the 22 starters in that game are already gone from the team. Yes, roster churn is inevitable in the NFL. But the vast majority of league prognosticators no longer believe Denver will be so much as a playoff team this season. What must the Broncos do to prove them wrong?

Jhabvala: The key will be their play up front, with their remade offensive line that features rookie tackle Garrett Bolles and veterans Ron Leary and Menelik Watson. They're bigger and — they believe — meaner, than last year's group. And they need to be. The Broncos' line was their biggest offensive weakness last season and hindered the play of the entire unit: the run game was stagnant and quarterbacks Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch were afforded little protection. The defense, even without T.J. Ward, is still deep and loaded with weapons. But improvement on the line should help make the offense more productive and efficient.

Kiz: The Broncos will run the football better behind a revamped offensive line. But can these guys protect Siemian? The Broncos threw only 20 touchdown passes in 2016. That's bad. San Francisco threw 21. And Denver QBs were sacked 40 times, which got Siemian hurt. Is five more TD passes and five fewer sacks in 2017 too much to ask? My key stat for playoff success: a minimum of 25 TD passes and maximum of 35 sacks.

Jhabvala: It shouldn't be too much to ask at all, and I'd venture offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and coach Vance Joseph expect much more than that. The Broncos dug themselves into some deep holes early and struggled to climb out of them last year. They had the second-worst first-quarter scoring differential (minus-54) in the NFL and totaled only 302 offensive points last season to rank 25th in the league. They need to put up more points earlier. Although preseason requires context (starters were limited) the Broncos averaged 26.8 points per game to rank third in the league, a drastic improvement. Now if only they could clean up all those penalties ...

Kiz: While I don't see the next league champ in the AFC West, there's probably not a division that's stronger from top to bottom. But the Raiders, Chiefs, Chargers and Broncos are so tightly bunched, the infighting might keep more than one from making the playoffs. Ten victories might win the West, while going 9-7 probably means sitting at home in January. How thin is the margin of error? If the offense produces 375 points, I'll guarantee the Broncos are a playoff team. If they score fewer than 340, however, advancing to the postseason will be iffy, at best.

Jhabvala: I'd be hesitant to guarantee anything with this team and especially this division. We saw how a season can turn on one play, one win or loss. Had the Broncos closed out that Week 12 game against the Chiefs at home last season, they probably would have been playoff-bound. They went 9-7 with a young and injured quarterback, with a sieve of an offensive line and with almost no run game. A little support up front and on the ground could — and should — take these Broncos back to the postseason.

Emmanuel Sanders, teammates continue to raise money, distribute goods for Hurricane Harvey relief

By Nicki Jhabvala
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Emmanuel Sanders' mission to help those in his home state of Texas recover from Hurricane Harvey is ongoing. According to a release from his foundation, the Broncos' receiver contributed \$25,000 to the relief efforts and partnered with Texas-based grocer Randalls to distribute the following to those in Houston:

- 11,172 bottles of drinking water
- 1,716 cases of food pantry items:
 - 5,496 cans of green beans
 - 2,736 cans of corn
 - 2,748 two-pound bags of long-grain rice
 - 2,748 two-pound bags of pinto beans
 - 2,744 bottles of apple juice
 - 2,748 jars of peanut butter
 - 8,232 boxes of macaroni and cheese

Sanders' foundation and Randalls also distributed the following to those in Beaumont, Texas, about 85 miles east of Houston.

- 3,192 bottles of drinking water
- 265 cases of food pantry items:
 - 840 cans of green beans
 - 432 cans of corn
 - 420 two-pound bags of long-grain rice
 - 420 two-pound bags of pinto beans
 - 424 bottles of apple juice
 - 420 jars of peanut butter
 - 1,296 boxes of macaroni and cheese

More than 30,000 diapers have also been delivered to the Texas Diaper Bank and \$10,200 has been set aside for an organization to be named in the future to help with rebuilding efforts in Houston.

With help from running back C.J. Anderson and the foundations of linebacker Von Miller, running back Jamaal Charles, cornerback Chris Harris and nose tackle Domata Peko, Sanders raised a total of \$82,500.

The Broncos earlier pledged to match what Sanders and his teammates raised, dollar for dollar.

"Seeing people lose everything that they had, from their houses to their cars to their clothes, seeing people even lose their lives, it was devastating to see," Sanders told The Denver Post on Tuesday. "And me being from there and being on this platform, I had to do something about it. So I started to walk around the locker room, I started asking guys if they want to get involved and I got incredible

teammates. We ended up raising like \$90,000. I play for an incredible organization and the Broncos came in and say they'll match it dollar for dollar, so we raised between \$180,000 to \$200,000."

Charles, a Port Arthur, Texas, native also started a relief fund with goal of raising \$500,000. As of Tuesday afternoon, he had raised nearly \$121,000. Charles said some of his family members "lost everything," including his brother.

Broncos to sign RB Jonathan Williams to practice squad

By Nicki Jhabvala
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The Broncos agreed to terms with former Buffalo Bills running back Jonathan Williams to join the practice team, an NFL source confirmed, rounding out Denver's 10-player squad.

NFL Network's Ian Rapoport first reported the signing.

Williams will earn a hefty salary of \$30,000 per week on the practice team, an indication he could vie for a spot on the active roster. The 2017 minimum salary for practice-squad players is \$7,200 per week. There is no maximum.

Williams, a fifth-round pick by the Bills in 2016, played in 11 games and totaled 94 yards (3.5 average) and one rushing touchdown on 27 carries last season. He was expected to take on a larger role in the Bills' offense this season but was among the surprise cuts as the team formed its 53-man roster Sunday.

He joins a Broncos running backs room that already has a bevy of talent with returning starter C.J. Anderson, veteran free-agent acquisition Jamaal Charles, second-year back Devontae Booker and rookie De'Angelo Henderson, a Coastal Carolina product who impressed in camp and led the Broncos with 129 rushing yards and one rushing touchdown in the preseason.

Booker suffered a wrist injury and underwent surgery early in camp, forcing him to miss the entirety of preseason. According to a source, Booker underwent an X-ray on Saturday that showed his wrist is healing well. He could be cleared to resume football activities later this week or early next, pending a clear CT scan.

Broncos' 2017 practice squad

Jonathan Williams, RB
Dymonte Thomas, S
Tyrique Jarrett, NT
Marcus Rios, CB
Elijah Wilkinson, OT
Jerrol Garcia-Williams, ILB
Deiontrez Mount, LB
Hunter Sharp, WR
Dillon Day, C
Austin Traylor, TE

Shelby Harris took a long road to reach Broncos roster. He, like the rest of defensive line, believes there's still plenty to prove.

By Nick Kosmider
Denver Post
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Shelby Harris sat at his locker Monday wearing a bright red T-shirt with the image of an oversized cardinal on the front, a proper homage to his alma mater, the Illinois State Redbirds.

Harris, a fourth-year defensive end in his first season with the Broncos, wore the shirt with pride. After all, Illinois State had opened its season over the weekend by walloping Butler 45-0.

But perhaps more than that score, the shirt was a reminder of how far Harris, the star of Denver's preseason, had to come in order to earn an important role on a reconfigured Broncos defensive line. It's a unit, featuring three new faces, that will play a key role in Denver's efforts to improve a run defense that ranked 28th in the NFL last season.

It's also a group that will be heavily tested Monday night against Los Angeles Chargers running back Melvin Gordon, who finished just 3 yards shy of the 1,000-yard mark in 13 games last season, his second in the league.

"Melvin is a great running back," Broncos nose tackle Domata Peko said. "First-round pick; he's been having a couple good years. He's a very explosive back. We have to make sure we maintain our gap leverage and keep our gaps and stop the run. We should be fine, but it's a great test for us."

With defensive end Zach Kerr sidelined with a bruised knee (his status for Monday's game is uncertain) and the starters at the position, Derek Wolfe and Jared Crick, returning to practice for the first time in more than three weeks Monday, Harris figures to be relied upon to rotate along the defensive line and help slow Gordon as the Broncos open their season on the grand stage of "Monday Night Football."

It's a big jump from where Harris was 4½ years ago, when he was kicked off the team at Illinois State before his senior season. He had been an all-conference performer after recording seven sacks as a junior, but he ran afoul of the program's rules and was booted for conduct detrimental to the team. His college football career was over. He was at a crossroads. If he wanted to prove he belonged in the NFL, Harris would have to push himself there.

"It was making sure you're not going to go backward in your life," said Spence Nowinsky, the defensive coordinator at Illinois State who has remained close with Harris. "That this a bump. It's not a mountain. I told him: 'You'll get over this, and you'll get through this. This is not just this moment. These are the moments for the rest of your life.' That was the mind-set."

Harris spent his year away from football working a part-time job at a restaurant and training during most other hours. He impressed the Raiders enough for Oakland to use its seventh-round pick in 2014 on the

defensive lineman who showed impressive natural instincts despite some rust during the predraft process.

Harris played in eight games for the Raiders over two seasons, bouncing between the active roster and the practice squad, before he was released by the team in May 2016. That led to another season away from game action. Harris was with the New York Jets in training camp but was waived ahead of last season. He was signed by the Dallas Cowboys to their practice squad in December but never made it to the active roster.

The Broncos offered another chance. Harris signed a futures contract with the team in January and made some noise during organized team activities.

But it was the injuries of training camp that truly opened the door: Defensive lineman Billy Winn was lost for the season with a torn ACL in the preseason opener, Wolfe and Crick went down the following week and Kerr hurt his knee the next week. With extended playing time in Broncos' second and third preseason games, all Harris did was combine for a deflected pass, two fumble recoveries and three sacks.

"You never want to see anyone go down, but whenever that opportunity arises, you have to step up," Harris said. "You have to make it so there is no drop-off for anyone who comes in. That's all I was focused on. But, yeah, it was a great opportunity for me to show myself and show what I can do."

When Harris found out Saturday that he had made the Broncos' 53-man roster, a wide grin occupied permanent real estate on his face.

"It was a great feeling knowing all your hard work works out in the end," he said. "I was speechless."

Harris, like the rest of the Broncos defensive line, believes there still is plenty to prove against the Chargers. The first and second units were stout against the run in the preseason. But, as general manager John Elway is quick to remind, "the regular season is a big jump." Injuries were a concern during training camp, but coach Vance Joseph said he was "absolutely" confident Wolfe and Crick would be ready for the Chargers.

"We have all the tools we need," Peko said. "We have all the players and the pieces to the puzzle. We've just got to go out there and put the work in and get it done."

Broncos Insider: Brock Osweiler is back, T.J. Ward is gone, quick hits and more

By Mario Sanelli

Denver Post

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What can be bought for \$775,000? The only known 1967 Chevrolet Corvette convertible with blue interior and a black paint job. Or, maybe watches are more your style. You could buy one made from a space-age quartz material and built to withstand 5,000 Gs of g-force. Of course, you'd have to get that bling from its owner: men's tennis star Rafael Nadal. How about a house? You could buy any one of these three.

John Elway decided to spend that amount (the veteran's minimum) on a 6-foot-7, 243-pound quarterback named Brock Osweiler.

That's correct, Broncos Country. The Brockness Monster returned to the franchise that drafted him (but first he made a stop in Idaho) on a one-year deal to back up Trevor Siemian as Paxton Lynch recovers from a right shoulder sprain that will likely sideline him for around five weeks. Brock On!

Aside from the addition of the Brocket Launcher, there were numerous subtractions from the Broncos' roster on Saturday as it was trimmed to the league-mandated 53 players.

The most prominent was the release of all-pro safety T.J. Ward, which sparked reactions from Broncos and players around the league. Ward now switched conferences and ripped the Broncos for how they handled his situation.

The return of Osweiler and the departure to Ward "ripped the heart out of the locker room and kicked Broncos Country in the gut."

Quick Hits

- + Emmanuel Sanders, teammates continue to raise money, distribute goods for Hurricane Harvey relief.
- + Derek Wolfe, Jared Crick return to practice; WR Demaryius Thomas held out.
- + Love for Kyle Sloter most irrational form of Broncomania since Tim Tebow left town.
- + Watch: Emmanuel Sanders talks T.J. Ward, Brock Osweiler and Broncos offense.
- + Shelby Harris earns role on Broncos' defensive line.
- + Broncos sign RB Jonathan Williams to practice squad.
- + Jhabvala vs. Kiz: What's the key to the Broncos making the playoffs?
- + Kyle Peko added to Broncos' active roster; Kyle Sloter opts for Vikings' practice squad.

- + Broncos roster tracker: Follow the cuts, trades to get to the final 53.
- + Ty Sambrailo traded to Falcons for future draft pick.
- + Mile High stadium gets \$6 million internet upgrade with faster, reliable Wi-Fi.

Where to sit at Mile High Stadium if you want super fast internet

By Tamara Chuang
Denver Post
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The next time you attend a Denver Broncos home game, there's a very good chance that the video clip you and 63,999 other fans take of the game-winning field goal can be shared online instantly — and not hours after the game.

That's the goal of a \$6 million renovation of Sports Authority Field at Mile High's Wi-Fi technology, which has been nonexistent to more than half of those in attendance. Until now, only Verizon customers could tap the stadium's Wi-Fi network, a system installed six years ago. The upgrade offers free Wi-Fi internet to anyone with a compatible device to interact with friends while still (hopefully) watching the game.

"People want to be able to say, 'I was here.' They don't want to wait until they get home to send a picture," said stadium general manager Jay Roberts. "They want to send it immediately. They want to tell someone, 'See where I am' or 'Ha! I got a ticket and you didn't.' That fan interaction is only going to get better."

Fifty-five percent of the new wireless technology had been installed prior to Tuesday's sneak peek. The Cisco Systems hardware, which was under seats, in hand railings and under rooftop overhangs, triples the number of access points in the 76,000-seat stadium and pushes the bulk of users to the faster, higher capacity 5.0 gigahertz.

"There can be up to 64,000 concurrent connections that will have a good experience. It'll be just like at home, with no lag and no issues," said Jason Moore, a senior IT engineer with the Broncos. "The top cap of the old system of concurrent users was around 49,000."

And the speed?

"I had a co-worker at the last preseason game against the Cardinals — he was getting 14 to 18 megabits per second in his section," Moore said. "That wasn't bad because he was in the club section, which isn't even complete yet."

Good tip for those going to Monday's season-opening game: Get a seat as close to the field as possible because engineers began installing from the field up. The stadium should be completely online by early November.

The push to improve Wi-Fi came from fan surveys. For years, non-Verizon fans had complained. Verizon stepped up to help fund the renovation, which also was paid for by the Broncos and the Metropolitan Football Stadium District, which oversees capital improvements, Roberts said.

Using the latest flavor of Wi-Fi — 802.11ac Wave 2, which came out last year — speeds in ideal conditions can reach 3.47 gigabits per second, said Randy Ryder of Wi-Fi Alliance, the industry organization that certifies products. Wave 2 can also handle more users at a time. The stadium is

focusing on the faster 5 Ghz technology because of higher capacity and less interference. Those with older Wi-Fi devices limited to 2.4 Ghz should still get some internet access. Compatible devices are listed at wi-fi.org/product-finder.

“It’s an enormous leap in throughput, and part of that is because if you have higher throughput, you can download data faster,” Ryder said.

But in less-ideal conditions, such as crowded stadiums, expect much slower speeds. Tests on Tuesday had users hitting the mid-50s to 90 megabits per second. One guy reached 91.18 mbps down and 105.57 up. But on Tuesday, of course, no one had just scored a touchdown and the stadium was pretty much empty.

Verizon customers will get to skip a step in the new system. They’ll automatically be connected to the special VerizonWiFiAccess network. Everyone else will need to log into Facebook or share an email address before they can connect to FreeStadiumWiFi for free.

But a key reason for the upgrade is that AT&T, T-Mobile, Sprint and other non-Verizon customers had to rely on their own mobile service to share photos or distract themselves on Facebook.

And all cellular service at the stadium has been challenging, according to a January 2016 report by RootMetrics, a market research firm that tests cell service from the four major carriers. Mile High stadium ranked in the bottom third of the NFL’s 31 stadiums when it came to mobile data performance.

The carriers have invested in improving their own coverage inside the stadium. Sprint said it upgraded its 4G coverage with multibeam antennas inside the stadium and parking lots.

AT&T, too, said it recently added coverage “comparable to 11 cell sites,” with 330 antennas hidden throughout the stadium, said Suzanne Trantow of AT&T.

Broncos notes: RB Williams to practice squad; T.J. Ward's contract details

By Mike Klis

9 News

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The addition of running back Jonathan Williams to the Denver Broncos' practice squad creates wonder as to which current back may be in trouble.

Williams, a second-year player from Arkansas, reportedly received a \$510,000 salary which would come out to \$30,000 a week. The minimum, and typical, practice squad salary is \$7,200 a week.

For 53-man roster players, the minimum salary for players in their second season is \$540,000. Williams is almost there. With the money Williams is already making, he is not expected to stay on the practice squad for long.

The Broncos' running back room is already full with starter C.J. Anderson, backup Jamaal Charles, injured second-year back Devontae Booker, rookie De'Angelo Henderson and second-year fullback Andy Janovich.

Booker has missed all of training camp and the preseason with a fractured right wrist. He is expected to start practicing next week with a possibility of playing in Game 3 at Buffalo.

The Broncos will resume practicing Wednesday in preparation of their game Monday night against the Los Angeles Chargers. Practices are now closed with the exception of a 20-minute media viewing period.

Williams, 23, was the Buffalo Bills' fifth-round draft pick out of Arkansas last year. He appeared in 11 games as a rookie, but had just 27 carries for 94 yards. He might have received more work but he lost two fumbles.

Williams rushed for 900 yards on 6.0 yards per carry as a sophomore for the Razorbacks and 1,190 yards on 5.6 yards per carry as a junior.

Williams suffered a left foot injury during a preseason Razorbacks' scrimmage in August, 2015. He needed season-ending surgery and missed his entire senior year at Arkansas.

Chenault, Nelson Chenault)

The Broncos considered taking Williams in the middle rounds of the 2016 draft, but instead selected Booker in the fourth round.

T.J.'s contract: 1 year, \$3.875 million

The numbers of T.J. Ward's contract have been reported. After he was released by the Denver Broncos on Saturday in lieu of a \$4.5 million salary, Ward signed a one-year deal with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Ward receives a \$3 million salary fully guaranteed salary, plus \$54,688 for each game he's on the 46-man roster – or \$875,000 if he plays in 16 games.

He also has incentives worth \$250,000 if he is on the field for 60 percent of the defensive snaps; another \$250,000 if he reaches the 70 percent play-time threshold; and another \$250,000 if he gets 80 percent. He can also collect another \$250,000 if the Bucs make the playoffs.

So Ward can make up to \$4.875 million.

Improved stadium Internet

Broncos' tech gurus Russ Trainor and Jason Moore delivered a WiFi demonstration at Broncos stadium Tuesday. The Broncos spent \$6 million to upgrade their WiFi capabilities at the stadium. The system's upgrades are roughly halfway completed now and are scheduled to be finished in late-October/early November.

Wi-Fi gets an upgrade at Mile High

By Noel Brennan

9 News

September 6, 2017

It's not every day cameras focus on the Broncos IT guy, but on Tuesday morning, Russ Trainor had the big news from Sports Authority Field at Mile High.

Trainor helped show off the Broncos new, \$6 million upgraded Wi-Fi system.

"How many times you go somewhere and you're like, 'oh my goodness, it's taking so long for the website to pull up,'" said Trainor, Broncos Vice President of Information Technology. "We're hoping that goes much quicker for the fans."

The new Wi-Fi system will boast nearly 1,500 Cisco access points, each with two, 5 gigahertz antennas. Fans will be able to access 10 Gbps internet connection for free throughout the stadium. The access points will be hidden in fiberglass casings on stair railings, mounted overhead and under some seats.

"During the game, when there's people in the seats, it kind of disappears. You don't see [the access points]," Trainor said.

The new Wi-Fi system means fans can scroll their social media feeds even from the nosebleeds.

"When [fans are] here, they want to post their selfie up to Facebook or just do a quick Snapchat. We want to make sure that works for them," Trainor said.

The Broncos IT guy has high hopes for the new Wi-Fi system at Mile High.

"We're hoping that it is a good five to seven times quicker than it was in the past," Trainor said.

Century Link is providing and powering the Verizon Wi-Fi system that's already about 55 percent installed. Trainor said the new system should be fully installed by late October or early November.

Broncos believe they will 'get things right,' fix run defense

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

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The difference between how good the Denver Broncos believe they can be this season and what expectations are outside the team's walls is substantial.

Broncos players have seen what others think and, frankly, they don't agree. Or, as cornerback Aqib Talib said during training camp, "I don't see what they see, I guess. I see the guys we have, the plan ... we're going to get things right."

The Broncos' run defense will get an early test with one of the two running backs to top 100 yards rushing against them last season on the docket for Monday night's regular-season opener.

The Los Angeles Chargers' Melvin Gordon ran for 111 yards against the Broncos on Oct. 30 last season. Two weeks before that, he rushed for 94 yards and ripped off a 48-yard run, one of the longest against the Broncos all season.

Coming off a 9-7 season where they missed the playoffs, the Broncos revamped their defensive front. They signed nose tackle Domata Peko and defensive lineman Zach Kerr in free agency, then used a second-round pick on defensive end/outside linebacker DeMarcus Walker.

"I feel like they brought me here to help with that," Peko said of slowing down opponents' run games. "With the secondary here and Von (Miller) rushing the passer, stopping the run puts offenses in tough positions."

The Broncos finished 28th in the league last season in run defense, allowing 130.3 yards per game. Latavius Murray's 114 yards in Week 9 were the most they allowed to any one back, but opposing offenses mixed and matched well enough to top 135 yards rushing eight times.

For a defense that finished No. 1 against the pass and No. 4 overall, its inability to stop the run was especially evident down the stretch. The Broncos dropped four of five games during a span from late November through December, allowing 218, 180, 136 and 238 yards on the ground in the losses.

"That's where guys like Peko, Zach Kerr came to help," said Miller, who was held without a sack in Denver's final four games last season. "I feel like we can play the defense the way we want to, and putting offenses into those situations where they have to throw against our guys in the secondary, the best secondary in the National Football League, that's what we want."

Monday night will offer the first real look at the remodeled defense, which kept things fairly vanilla during the preseason. Defensive coordinator Joe Woods has said he intends to add "some sugar" to what the defense did well under Wade Phillips during the previous two seasons.

There is an adage that you have to earn the right to rush the passer on defense, that you first have to do enough on early downs to force teams to throw the ball on your terms. The Broncos, especially in November and December, didn't do that enough last season.

"I feel like if we can get people to have throw at us, we're going to have a chance to make more plays," cornerback Chris Harris Jr. said. "But if they're second-and-short, third-and-short, they're not going to. We want to make them have to come at us."

Broncos make winning bid to sign Jonathan Williams to practice squad

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

September 6, 2017

The Denver Broncos were expected to fill their last practice squad spot Tuesday, and when the deal is signed, it will show just how badly they wanted running back Jonathan Williams to fill that spot.

Williams, who was a surprise cut by the Buffalo Bills this weekend after he appeared to be in position to be LeSean McCoy's backup, agreed to terms to be the Broncos' 10th practice squad player. He also has the possibility of earning \$510,000 for the season (\$30,000 per week, given practice squad players are paid week to week) if he remains on the practice squad for all 17 weeks of the regular season.

That also means Williams, who would not suit up for games as long as he was on the team's practice squad, would potentially earn more than rookie safety Jamal Carter, who made the team as an undrafted free agent. Carter's base salary will be the rookie minimum, outlined by the collective bargaining agreement, of \$465,000 for the season.

Teams have some leeway if they wish to adjust their pay scale to sign practice squad players, who are players who cleared waivers after being cut when rosters around the league went to 53 players and can then sign with any team. If Williams were eventually promoted to the active roster, he would then be subject to the CBA and earn the rookie minimum on a pro-rated basis depending on how many weeks were left in the season.

In similar circumstances, the Minnesota Vikings outbid the Broncos and others to sign quarterback Kyle Sloter to the Vikings' practice squad Sunday. Sloter will get \$20,000 per week over the 17-week regular season, for a total of \$340,000 if he makes it through the entire season.

Williams had several suitors in recent days, but with Devontae Booker still working his way back from wrist surgery and Jamaal Charles having played in just eight games in the last two seasons combined because of multiple knee surgeries, it's clear the Broncos want some additional depth at the position.

Williams was a fifth-round pick by the Bills in 2016 after he suffered a foot surgery in his final season at Arkansas and had 94 yards rushing on 27 carries last season as a rookie. He was second on the team in rushing in the just-completed preseason with 121 yards on 21 carries -- 5.8 yards per carry.

One wrinkle is any team can sign a player off any team's practice squad at any point in the season as long as that player is then put on the 53-man roster. So if another team wants to sign Williams to its roster in the weeks to come, the Broncos will either have to promote him to their roster or let him go, but it would be Williams' choice at that point as well.

BRONCOS' NEW MOTTO: IN VANCE JOSEPH WE TRUST

By Jason Reid

The Undeclared

September 6, 2017

Few coaches would have spoken so frankly, let alone a rookie play-caller in his first season with a new team. But Vance Joseph only knows one way to roll. The then-Miami Dolphins defensive coordinator laid it out publicly last season, revealing which players weren't getting it done during the team's 1-4 start. Joseph's eyebrow-raising comments surprised many. As it turned out, though, not those who mattered most.

Within the Dolphins' locker room, no one was caught off guard. Joseph said the same things behind closed doors, explaining what he would do once they opened. Players knew what to expect from Joseph — and respected him for it.

"What they [fans and the media] didn't understand was that we knew V.J. would answer questions honestly. He had already been honest with us," Dolphins safety Michael Thomas recalled. "I do get why it was different. You don't see coaches going there and being so candid, but V.J. is different. He did a lot to help change our culture in the right way. A lot of guys thought the same thing about him: He could be a great head coach."

The Denver Broncos are counting on it.

The Broncos hired Joseph in January, making him the first African-American head coach in franchise history. They got a top-notch X's and O's man, who, to hear some around the league tell it, has been a head coach in waiting from the moment his brief career as an NFL defensive back ended. What may help Joseph most in his new role, however, is that he's a straight shooter and proven relationship-builder. At every coaching stop, he has earned players' trust through his words and actions. Now in charge of a talented team only two seasons removed from a Super Bowl title, Joseph has both his greatest career opportunity and challenge. That's exactly what he wants.

"I could have taken other jobs where maybe the view from the outside was, 'Well, you should really have three or four years to win.' Here in Denver, obviously, that's not the case, and that's OK," Joseph said. "With this team, no one will cut me any slack for being a first-year head coach. It's a good roster. We have a good staff. And, yes, I'm a rookie head coach. But I'm not a rookie coach. We expect to win."

It's 7 a.m., and the Broncos' team facility in Englewood, Colorado, is quiet. Soon, the hallways will be filled by the chatter of coaches and players as they bustle about the building to begin the workday. In his spacious office on the second floor, Joseph is already well into the daily grind.

After his 6 a.m. workout, Joseph has a packed schedule that includes meetings with the coaching staff, addressing the entire team, overseeing practice, more meetings, film review and yet more meetings. The Broncos open the regular season Sept. 11 against the Los Angeles Chargers. There's always more to do.

Although he's preparing for his first game as the boss, Joseph seems like he has been in this space for years. He exudes confidence. Not in a cocky way, but in an I've-been-training-for-this-for-years-and-I'm-

ready way. And Joseph's core belief on how to best interact with players provides the foundation for his faith in himself.

"In my opinion, being respectful and understanding of the players' mindset is so important," said Joseph, seated at his office desk and wearing blue-and-orange Broncos performance gear. "The players ... want the truth. And if you can put the truth in a sense of you also care about them, that you're telling the truth because you want them to be successful and it's not just business, that's where you build trust.

"If they get a sense of, 'This guy cares about me outside of football and he wants me to succeed,' they'll give you extra. Then you can be honest more often when they see it helps their game. But you have to be authentic and transparent. It can't be something that you're just saying. Players will see right through that. If they see that what he's telling me works, and it's coming from a true place, that's when it makes a difference."

Clearly, Joseph, in his only season in Miami, got through to the Dolphins.

Miami advanced to the playoffs for the first time since the 2008 season, becoming only the 12th team in NFL history to accomplish the feat after losing four of its first five games. Joseph had a big role in the turnaround.

"V.J. brought an understanding that everyone has to do his job, but he also wants guys to know why they're being asked to do what they're doing," said Thomas, the veteran safety. "I know that sounds simple, but a lot of coaches don't do that.

"They just tell you to go out and do something, but guys have no idea what's going on. To have everyone really get it, coaches have to communicate. V.J. is a great communicator. ... When V.J. came in and did what he did, guys didn't always like it, but you understood."

Byron Maxwell can tell you all about it. Early in the 2016 season, Joseph benched the veteran cornerback for poor play. Maxwell was an established player with a big contract. Had Maxwell blasted Joseph in the media, players around the league wouldn't have been surprised. But Maxwell didn't even sulk. He kept working and contributed to a playoff team. And he's still cool with Joseph.

"V.J. brought great leadership and taught us the intangibles of being a leader, what all of that entails and how you have to bring it every day with the guys looking at you," Maxwell said. "He knows how to talk to you. He knows how to communicate to guys in the generation. He's a leader of men."

All that from a guy Joseph benched. The most productive players were down with Joseph too.

In every team sport, successful coaches have powerful allies in the locker room. For Joseph, there was no doubt: Ndamukong Suh was the partner he needed. Suh is among the league's most dominant defensive linemen. After he arrived in Miami, Joseph quickly came to realize that the three-time first-team All-Pro is also football-sharp.

Joseph leaned on Suh, seeking his input on strategy and involving him in formulating game plans. As the Dolphins steadily improved (they won nine of their last 11 games in the regular season), Joseph and Suh developed a lasting bond.

The Broncos “are getting an elite guy who understands defense and understands how things work together, working with a lot of different pieces and puzzles,” Suh said. “He’s a great people person. He’s great dealing with a lot of different personalities. ... There is no question that those players are going to definitely be happy with the way that he runs things.”

So far, Joseph has impressed senior management with his demeanor, approach and preparedness. Of course, the games are meaningless until the regular season starts. And even Bill Belichick experienced growing pains on the sidelines. Joseph will hit some bumps. Count on it.

Still, a good start is a lot better than a bad one. Also, the most important player in the Broncos’ locker room is impressed, which, for Joseph, is definitely a good thing.

On the Broncos, outside linebacker Von Miller can best be described as “That Dude.” The three-time first-team All-Pro and MVP of the 2016 Super Bowl is among the game’s best leaders. In Joseph, Miller sees a head coach who “definitely knows what he wants to do and how he’s trying to build everything. He’s just getting started out and it’s a long season. But he has a plan. That’s what you need.”

Joseph, who turns 45 on Sept. 20, rose through the ranks on defense. A former college quarterback and running back at the University of Colorado, the Marrero, Louisiana, native was converted to defensive back in the NFL.

After his playing days ended (Joseph appeared in 17 games combined for the New York Jets and Indianapolis Colts in the 1995 and ’96 seasons), he steadily developed a reputation as a defensive backs coach. Although he had never served as a coordinator until last season, one of his mentors predicted a few years ago that Joseph would run his own shop soon.

Joseph worked under Wade Phillips when they were part of the Houston Texans’ staff from 2011 through 2013. During that time, Phillips continually gave Joseph more responsibility. Joseph continually excelled.

“V.J. is a friend of mine, but he’s an outstanding coach,” said Phillips, in his first year directing the Los Angeles Rams’ defense after running the Broncos’ defense the past two seasons. “I told him he was going to be ... a head coach pretty soon, and it turned out that way.

“It’s well-deserved. He’s a football guy. He knows football, but he also works with people very well. He is going to do a great job.”

If not for the Rooney Rule, Joseph might never have gotten the Broncos job. Or any job, for that matter.

The rule — named after Dan Rooney, the late Pittsburgh Steelers chairman and one-time head of the league’s diversity committee — mandates that teams must interview at least one person of color in searches for head coaches, general managers and equivalent front-office positions. Although there are problems with the Rooney Rule, it has helped improve the hiring culture throughout a workplace where most players are African-American. This season, the NFL will have eight head coaches of color (matching 2011 as the most it has had in any season), seven of whom are African-American.

Thankful that the Rooney Rule has opened doors for him and other black and brown coaches, Joseph believes it’s definitely still needed. “We’re not there yet. We’re not in a place where we should”

eliminate the Rooney Rule, Joseph said. "The Rooney Rule allows execs and GMs to interview guys who they don't know. Ultimately, in any business, people hire who they know. Why? Because they're comfortable with those people. There's a trust factor there.

"Let's say there are two guys who know each other, and they start off as a young scout and a young coach. All of a sudden, 10 years down the road, that scout becomes a GM and the coach becomes a coordinator. Now, the GM is ready to hire a coach. He knows that coordinator's background. He knows his history. He knows the guy's family. Who do you think he wants to interview? And if it's close between him and another guy, who do you think gets hired? The Rooney Rule just gives GMs a chance to get to know more guys."

John Elway remains an imposing figure. The old quarterback doesn't get around quite as well as he used to because the human body just wasn't designed for a 16-year NFL career, but Elway is still on top of his game.

As the Broncos' executive vice president of football operations/general manager, the Hall of Famer has displayed the same deft touch he did while leading the Broncos to consecutive Super Bowl titles in the late 1990s. Elway assembled the Broncos' 2015 championship team, which was led by Gary Kubiak, his former Broncos backup and longtime friend. But when Kubiak retired from coaching at the end of last season for health reasons, Elway unexpectedly had an opening at the top of the coaching staff. He also knew he had his next guy: Joseph.

After the 2014 season, the last time Elway was in the market for a head coach, he brought in Joseph, who was a position coach with the Cincinnati Bengals.

"I didn't really know him, and that was the only way I could get him in here to talk to him," Elway said. "After the day I spent with him, I said there's no question: He's gonna be a head coach in this league fast."

The Elway-Joseph meeting was an excellent example of the Rooney Rule at work. Elway had planned to hire both Kubiak and Joseph, with Joseph becoming Denver's defensive coordinator. When the Bengals refused to let Joseph out of his contract, Elway scrapped a portion of the plan. Not surprisingly, Joseph was hot. "At the time, I was upset," he acknowledged. "It was a huge opportunity."

Joseph soon got another one with the Dolphins. Elway kept monitoring Joseph's career with an eye toward the future. The future came sooner than Elway envisioned.

"The way things worked out with Gary walking away, and the fact that V.J. had two more years of experience and had become a coordinator after never having that title before ... for me, it helped him," Elway said. "Now, I don't know if it was the deciding factor. I don't know if the decision would have been any different for me if he hadn't had the title [after Kubiak retired], because I liked him that much when I met with him the first time."

Elway also likes continuity. By hiring Joseph, he knew the Broncos would maintain the successful defensive approach they had employed under Phillips, who had a major influence on shaping Joseph's philosophy. "That's been our bread and butter the last couple of years," Elway said. "So V.J. comes in with the same thing. We're not changing anything on the defensive side. That was a big part of it."

Beyond sticking with what's familiar on defense, Joseph's overall football knowledge and how well he interviewed, Elway was most swayed by Joseph's reputation for being a great communicator. There aren't enough coaches who are capable of getting through to players, Elway said. "Vance, the way he carries himself and the way he's able to talk to people no matter their background, no matter where you're from ... he's got the ability to relate to anyone. In today's game, to me, that's the most important thing. You have to be able to talk to everybody. You have to be able to communicate and gain that trust, and he's got that presence about him. He really has a chance to be great."

That's why Elway hired him. He's expecting a whole lot from Joseph. And as a new Broncos era begins, this much seems certain: The head coach will make himself clear.

Vance Joseph and Anthony Lynn to share historic moment for NFL black coaches

By Jason Reid
The Undeclared
September 6, 2017

When head coaches Vance Joseph of the Denver Broncos and Anthony Lynn of the Los Angeles Chargers – the first African-Americans to hold those teams’ positions – face each other Monday night, they’ll also share in a groundbreaking moment.

The AFC West rivals’ season opener will mark the first time that two black coaches have made their regular-season debuts with their NFL teams during the same game. And it’s fitting that the longtime friends will start out against each other. On consecutive days in January, diversity in the league’s coaching ranks increased as the Broncos and Chargers, respectively, hired their new leaders, who will match wits at Denver’s Sports Authority Field at Mile High.

For Joseph and Lynn, it figures to be the first of many encounters in their new roles. Now divisional foes, the coaches will lead their teams against each other at least twice a season. Talk about testing a friendship. Joseph and Lynn go way back. They were briefly teammates in Denver, and for years have been part of a close-knit cadre of black assistant coaches. Listen to them even briefly, and their mutual admiration is clear.

“Anthony, man, I’ve known him for a long time,” Joseph said recently in his office at the Broncos’ facility. “He’s in his first year and I’m in my first year – but only as head coaches. We’re not new to coaching. We’ve been doing this for a while. We’ll get started here soon and play them again. It’ll be fun.”

Lynn figures he knows what to expect from Joseph, who will have the Broncos ready to play “smart football with a good defense and balanced attack.”

On paper, Joseph and Anthony have vastly different teams.

Only two seasons removed from winning the 2015 Super Bowl, Denver is loaded on defense, led by edge-rushing star Von Miller. Although the Broncos’ consecutive run of postseason appearances ended at five seasons in 2016, they again have the look of a playoff contender. Any first-time head coach would welcome being in Joseph’s strong position. And he knows it, too.

“We have a good team,” Joseph said.

Lynn’s squad doesn’t appear to be as strong. Last season, the 5-11 Chargers finished last in the AFC West. Now, they’ll try to rebound while also dealing with their move from San Diego to Los Angeles. Uprooting an entire organization, and the logistical issues that arise from moving, can have an adverse effect on a team’s on-field performance. At the very least, the Chargers’ transition this season figures to be bumpy. But Lynn isn’t the type to embrace excuses.

Lynn’s meteoric rise with the Buffalo Bills in 2016 – because of multiple staff shake-ups, he was promoted twice during the season – culminated with his stint as the interim head coach after Rex Ryan

was fired with one game to play. Lynn is accustomed to overcoming obstacles, not succumbing to them, Buffalo All-Pro outside linebacker Lorenzo Alexander said.

“It was only one week,” Alexander said, “but you could definitely see the qualities that you would want in a head coach.”

If not for the Rooney Rule, Joseph and Lynn might not be head coaches. The rule – named after Dan Rooney, the late Pittsburgh Steelers chairman and one-time head of the league’s diversity committee – mandates that teams must interview at least one minority candidate in searches for head coaches, general managers and equivalent front-office positions. Although there are problems with the Rooney Rule, it has helped improve the hiring culture throughout a workplace where most players are African-American. This season, the NFL will have eight head coaches of color – matching 2011 as the most it has had in any season – including seven of whom are African-American.

Even in 2017, the NFL’s African-American head coaches still feel a sense of responsibility to succeed more than for purely personal reasons, because “if I do a good job, it won’t be an issue in the future for the Broncos to hire the next black head coach. That’s important to me,” Joseph said. “I take this responsibility very seriously. It means something to me.”

John Elway, the Broncos’ executive vice president of football operations/general manager, wasn’t seeking a black head coach. Elway just wanted the right head coach. He wound up getting both.

“To me, V.J. happens to be black. But to me, it doesn’t matter,” the Hall of Famer said. “Having been in this game for so long, I don’t see color. Here’s my deal: I want to get the best football coaches to give those kids [in the locker room] the best opportunity to be the best they can be and win championships. Having been there, and the experience that I’ve got, that’s what’s so important. I’m able to draw from what I liked about my favorite coaches. That’s what matters to me about V.J.”

For black assistants striving to sit in the head coach’s chair, what matters most is that Joseph and Lynn are getting their shot. Tennessee Titans secondary coach Steve Jackson, who knows both men well, we’ll be watching his friends on television Monday night.

“These are guys, and I say this with total respect, who are just regular, hardworking guys,” Jackson said. “For them to get these opportunities, yeah, you better believe there are a lot of guys just like me who are encouraged about that.”

Justin Simmons, heart of "Baby No-Fly," ready to join big boys

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
September 6, 2017

"Baby No-Fly" is about to grow up.

One of its members, Justin Simmons, is now a first-teamer in the wake of T.J. Ward's release and is expected to start the regular-season opener, just as he did in the preseason after Ward injured his hamstring. Another young safety, Will Parks, will play extensively when the Broncos go to their dime package.

In June, Simmons referred to himself, Parks and other young members of the secondary as "Baby No-Fly." It was a term of affection and respect for the players that stood above them on the depth chart.

"You can't just come in and be established as part of the 'No-Fly.' I think Will and I earned that over the course of the year, helping contribute in that, the second straight year of being the No. 1 passing defense," Simmons said Monday.

"Obviously, we're still earning our way. We still haven't officially earned those stripes. I mean, this is our second year in the league. We still have so much to learn, so much to accomplish, so you can't just automatically be on that."

But "Baby No-Fly" was also about setting an expectation level that if and when their time to contribute arrived, they would hold themselves to the same standard as the Pro Bowlers on the first team.

That time is now. Just because Simmons doesn't have an All-Pro or Pro Bowl selection or AFC Defensive Player of the Week trophy on his ledger doesn't mean he won't be held to the same standard as Chris Harris Jr., Aqib Talib, Darian Stewart and Bradley Roby.

"Those guys, they demand excellence," Simmons said. "You can't just come in and be mediocre. Everything has to be perfect with those guys. It's the reason why Will and I love playing with them -- every day is demanding on watching film, making sure you're mentally and physically prepared for what's going on. It's great."

They know Simmons is ready to start.

"You see it. You see his production in OTAs," Talib said. "You see his production last year. He's a smart kid. It's not like we have to worry about him knowing his assignments or knowing what the other team is doing. He is professional. He is mature. He's married. He's going to go home and study like a vet. This should be an easy transition for him."

Simmons' two starts for Ward at the end of the 2016 season are a reason why the transition should be a smooth one, even though his skill set is not the same as Ward's.

"There was no coming in and being like, 'Oh, well, he's a rookie, so we'll just wait until next year.' It was like, 'No, these are significant snaps. You need to do your job. You need to make sure you know what you are doing so we can continue [to try and make the] postseason,'" Simmons said. "So those types of snaps trickled into the offseason, training camp."

And now he gets tossed into the fire. In the first two weeks, he'll go against passing games that feature two potential Hall of Fame tight ends -- Antonio Gates of the Los Angeles Chargers in Week 1 and Jason Witten of the Dallas Cowboys in Week 2.

"Baby No-Fly" will have to grow up in a hurry.

"I feel like every week we're playing a top tight end, top wide receiver, top quarterback. That's what the league is, right?" Simmons said.

"Antonio Gates, Hall of Famer, right out of the gate. It's going to be a great challenge for us. You can't call yourself the best if you don't go up against the best. It's nothing but excitement on this end, and I'm looking forward to it."

Under the Headset: Q&A with Defensive Backs Coach Marcus Robertson

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
September 6, 2017

When Joe Woods was promoted to defensive coordinator, he knew his former assistant coach in Oakland, Marcus Robertson, would be a perfect replacement to command the team's defensive backs. The former All-Pro safety's playing experience has translated well to his coaching career, and now he's looking to add his own teaching style to the Broncos' secondary to keep their performance at the top of the NFL for a third consecutive season.

Ben Swanson: Based off your playing experience and the coaches you worked with when you were a player, what kind of coach do you want to be and try to be?

Marcus Robertson: I think more than anything, I want to be a teacher and a mentor. Given the fact that I've played the game, I know what it's like to be in big-time football games and things of that nature, but then when I made the transition to coaching, you kind of see the game from a different perspective, and I understand all aspects of the game, from the three technique or the shade all the way to the post. It's one of those situations where front-end coverage works together and you've got to do a great job of communicating and executing.

BS: When you were a player, did you have a favorite position coach?

MR: My favorite coach of all time, not necessarily a position coach, but my favorite coach was probably Buddy Ryan. Playing for Buddy Ryan was an outstanding experience. Under him is where I feel like I've grasped the whole concept of being able to see the whole field, being able to — at the snap of the ball — recognize what play it was as well as, I could tell you who was out of their gap or whatever it may be, because I had to be the quarterback of the defense. We worked off an AFC system where he just gave us one call and based on the formation, we had to make the call and the checks and all the other types of stuff. So you really had to be a communicator and had to be very aware of everything that was happening on the football field.

BS: How much does your experience as a player help you with this group of star defensive backs?

MR: I think it's invaluable because the game hasn't changed. The game is still the same. You've still got to run, hit and tackle. You've still got to fit gaps and you've still got to play top-down. So with that being said, I'm a firm believer that defenses win games and offenses score points, so I'm in the business of trying to keep as many points off the board as well as getting the football, emphasizing getting to the ball and getting the football.

BS: With guys like Chris Harris Jr. and Aqib Talib, perhaps the two best cornerbacks in the entire league, what kind of coaching do those guys need?

MR: The one thing I love about those guys is — they are extremely good, they're well-respected in the league — but the one thing they do when they come out here: They work every single day. They take

coaching, they want to be coached, they want to get it right. And that's what I can appreciate about them, because when I stepped in here, they gave me the utmost respect, they listened to me and they go out and execute. So I'm not worried about those guys when they get on the football field because to them it's important and they're going to do whatever it takes to win on every single down.

BS: You've followed Joe Woods' footsteps a couple times, first to become defensive backs coach in Oakland when Woods came to Denver in 2015 and now here when he was promoted to defensive coordinator. How much has he helped you step into those roles?

MR: When me and Joe got together, it was a real good experience for me because I think we knew of each other for some time and when we got together it was interesting because there were certain areas or aspects that I was missing as a coach and that he was missing as well. But we seemed to fill that void for each other, and I think we came out of that year as much better coaches.

BS: From the Oakland side, what was the Broncos vs. Raiders rivalry like?

MR: Obviously we couldn't stand Denver and we wanted to beat them at all costs. Over the last two years we had some really good battles and I want to say we ended up splitting them 2-2, if I'm not mistaken. The last game last year was one of those situations where we couldn't get anything going offensively and defensively, I think we kind of missed some tackles and things of that nature, but it's a hatred, to be completely honest with you. It's interesting being here after being on the other side. And I grew up an L.A. boy from Pasadena, California — Altadena, California — and always grew up being a Raiders fan, and things of that nature. So it was an honor to finally be a part of the organization and then coming over here, having to flip the mind frame of, 'Hey, we've got to do whatever it takes to win the division,' which means, 'Hey, we've got to put the Raiders to rest.' It's exciting to be here and I'm looking forward to the season.

BS: Was there any opponent that the Raiders got up for more than the Broncos?

MR: No, I don't think so. I think this rivalry was one that was, from Day 1, that was talked about. My philosophy was when you're coming to a training camp or OTAs or whatever it may be, you've got to put your sights on the team that won the division. And over the last several years, with the exception of last year, that was the Denver Broncos. So we prepared ourselves and we built that team to beat the Denver Broncos over the last two years.

Matt Paradis's cheat meal is an over-the-top behemoth of a burger. We tried it for ourselves

By Jamie Lisanti
Sports Illustrated
September 6, 2017

Denver Broncos center Matt Paradis has only two requirements when it comes to his ordinary, day-to-day meals: lots of protein—typically chicken or fish—paired with vegetables, a staple in his diet. “That’s about it,” he says.

But when he wants to stray from the norm and satisfy his cravings, Paradis only wants one thing: a burger. And that’s no surprise, given that he grew up on a 500-acre family cattle ranch, run by his father, in the tiny town of Council, Idaho (pop. 818). There was always something to be done on the farm, says Paradis, who spent his early years “working all of the time.” The one advantage? Lots of beef.

“Looking back, I’m pretty sure we ate it every meal,” he says. “I’ve been disappointed in burgers since leaving because growing up, I was spoiled by the quality of the meat. It was fresh—it hadn’t been through any chemical processes. When you go out to these restaurants and chains, it’s just not the same.”

In an effort to create the perfect burger and channel his childhood for an epic cheat meal, Paradis partnered with Boston-based company BurgaBox to develop an insane, over-the-top monstrosity called the Bronco Burger. Here's what the behemoth burger is made of: two angus beef patties with cheddar jack cheese, beer braised onions, BBQ beef brisket, chili peppers, horseradish sauce and Bronco BBQ sauce. Then—because that’s obviously not enough—it’s served with two sides: chili mac and cheese and beer sauce-covered french fries.

“I love it because it’s a reflection of the taste of Colorado with the peppers and other ingredients,” says Paradis. “For a cheat meal, it tastes great and I won’t be upset eating it because it tastes so good. That’s the problem with cheat meals sometimes—if you cheat and the meal doesn’t taste good, your diet isn’t on point and it doesn’t taste good. That’s upsetting. Luckily with this, that’s not the case.”

And luckily with this, you, too, can make Paradis’s gluttonous creation at home.

Similar to meal delivery services such as HelloFresh or BlueApron, BurgaBox sends all of the ingredients needed to craft this monstrous burger—plus all of the sides to go with it—in one box (priced at \$65 for two) so you can whip up a cheat meal the next time you're in the mood to eat thousands of calories.

When delivered, the box comes packed with ice packs and all of the ingredients labeled and bagged together. The directions for each item are listed out on two cards sent in the box. With the help of some sous chefs, I embarked on this cheat meal journey one August afternoon.

You’ll need to preheat the oven and pop the mac and cheese in once it’s all hot and ready. Season the two beef patties with the special spice packet and coat a pan with a drizzle of oil and get it on the stove to get nice and sizzling.

I was initially concerned about the lack of grilling involved—burgers should be charred up on a screamin' hot grill outside, right?—but the two patties cooked nicely in a regular non-stick pan, without smoking up the kitchen or making too much of a mess. Once the other toppings are heated through and the buns are toasted and buttered, it's time for the assembly: Slather up the rolls with the horseradish sauce, add the patties (covered with cheese) and then pile on the beer braised onions, beef brisket and chili peppers and drizzle with a generous squeeze of BBQ sauce. Plated up with some sides and served with an ice cold beer from our friends at Kane Brewing, the finished product looked something like this:

It was all delicious—and decadent. There was so much food, definitely way more than enough for two people, which is what the box is supposed to serve. Between my sous chefs and I, we divvied it all up between five people—and still had some leftover sides for later. The meat in the burger was juicy and flavorful and the beef brisket topping was a good match with the onions and extra BBQ sauce. The mac and cheese had a bit of a kick to it and the baked beans were tasty. The extras seemed like a bit much, but they all came together to make one kick-ass burger. And that's exactly what Paradis was going for.

“They're all of my favorite ingredients. The onions are amazing and the peppers bring that Colorado taste,” he says. “And growing up on a cattle ranch, you can never have too much beef.”

Von Miller: There Aren't 64 Quarterbacks Better Than Colin Kaepernick

By Khadrice Rollins
Sports Illustrated
September 6, 2017

Broncos pass rusher Von Miller was a guest on SI Now on Tuesday and said Colin Kaepernick should have a job in the NFL.

"I think he definitely should be in the National Football League," Miller says. "It's not 64 quarterbacks that's better than him, and I feel like in the National Football League, that's what it's about. It's about 'can you play' or 'what can you do for me.' There's not 64 quarterbacks that's better than Colin Kaepernick. That's just cut and dry. It's plain and simple."

Miller went on to say that Kaepernick would be a good fit for "75 percent" of offenses because of his arm strength and ability to move in the pocket. He added that he wasn't sure if Kaepernick's national anthem protest was the reason he is still not signed.

The Broncos recently signed Brock Osweiler to backup Trevor Siemian since Paxton Lynch will be out for a few weeks with a shoulder injury. Last offseason the Broncos nearly traded for Kaepernick after Peyton Manning retired and Osweiler left to sign with Houston.

Broncos sign RB Jonathan Williams to practice squad

By Kevin Patra

NFL.com

September 6, 2017

Jonathan Williams found a new home a day after clearing waivers.

NFL Network Insider Ian Rapoport reported Tuesday that the former Buffalo Bills running back signed with the Denver Broncos' practice squad. The second-year pro will get a \$510,000 salary, per Rapoport, a big figure for a practice squad player.

The Bills surprisingly cut Williams over the weekend after it appeared he was in line for backup duties. The 23-year-old was not claimed off waivers on Monday, making him a free agent. Williams earned 94 yards on 27 carries and one touchdown in 2016.

Any team could potentially sign Williams off the Broncos' practice squad. Denver could also promote him to the active roster.

The Broncos currently boast a running back corps of C.J. Anderson, Jamaal Charles, Devontae Booker (dealing with a wrist injury) and rookie De'Angelo Henderson.

Denver Broncos Announce Better Wifi At Mile High

By Staff

CBS Local

September 6, 2017

Connecting to the internet should be easier for thousands of people who visit Sports Authority Field at Mile High.

On Tuesday, the Denver Broncos and Verizon Wireless announced a \$6 million wifi renovation at the stadium.

That means fans can tweet and post to Facebook and Instagram easier than ever starting this season.

According to a press release by the Denver Broncos, "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."

In fact, the renovation includes four times as many wireless antennas across the stadium than before.

Broncos Injury Report: Butt Starts Out Season On Reserve/NFI List

By Staff

CBS Local

September 6, 2017

The Broncos have finalized their roster, and they return the same trio of tight ends that combined for just 33 yards a game last year and scored a single touchdown.

But there's hope that rookie Jake Butt, who is on the Reserve/NFI list, will be back from a torn ACL by November to give the Broncos a big boost.

Butt won the John Mackey Award as the nation's top tight end in his senior season at Michigan. He suffered the knee injury in the Orange Bowl. The Broncos picked him in the fifth round of the NFL Draft in April.

Emmanuel Sanders talks about the upcoming season

By Nancy Melear

FOX 31

September 6, 2017

CenturyLink is partnering with the Denver Broncos and wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders to put the power of technology into the hands of lucky football fans this season through the CenturyLink Boostbox sweepstakes.

CenturyLink Boostboxes are customized fan boxes filled with exclusive Broncos items. Beginning Sept. 12, fans are encouraged to sign up at DenverBroncos.com/CenturyLink for their chance to win.

Each Boostbox prize will include two tickets to an upcoming Broncos game, a tablet featuring Sanders' laser engraved signature, along with specialty items based on the theme of the week. Specialty items include a 55" Smart LED TV, a video game console with controllers and autographed memorabilia. Fans may even be greeted with a hand-delivered box from a Broncos personality, such as Miles, the Broncos cheerleaders or a legendary former player.

The sweepstakes will run all season, featuring eight bi-weekly entry periods. Every other Tuesday, the Boostbox theme will be announced via CenturyLink's Facebook and Twitter (@CenturyLinkCO) accounts, as well as Sanders' Twitter (@ESanders_10) account.

Faster Wi-Fi coming to Sports Authority Field

By Staff

KKTV 11

September 6, 2017

Denver Broncos fans will be able to post pictures and check their fantasy football scores a lot faster in the 2017 season thanks to a collaboration between the team and Verizon.

A \$6 million Wi-Fi renovation project will allow fans to access free and faster internet at Sports Authority Field and Mile High according to 11 News partner CBS Denver.

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.

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.

As of Tuesday, 40 percent of the new system had been installed. The Broncos' IT department hopes to have 100 percent of the system installed by late October to early November.

Broncos past the halfway point of \$6 million stadium wifi renovation

By Casey Light
Mile High Sports
September 6, 2017

The last time the Denver Broncos undertook a major fan-centric digital infrastructure upgrade, 2011, Facebook had approximately 500 million users.

Now, as the Broncos and SMC have eclipsed the halfway point of their \$6 million stadium wifi renovation, Facebook claims over 2 billion users.

That's 300 percent growth over a six year window that Vice President of Information Technology Russ Trainor and Senior IT Engineer Jason Moore have been working diligently to keep up with.

Of course, the growth in mobile and digital usage extends well beyond a head count on Facebook. It's streaming audio and video, cloud-based file storage, on-demand news, personal and home security, workforce management, payment processing, dating, transportation services and literally tens of thousands of other applications all available in the palm of your hand.

So, how do Trainor and Moore provide a quality mobile experience for over 70,000-plus data-crazy fans who only need your services once a week for four hours?

That's the problem that will be solved in full by late October / early November with an expansion of the wireless network at Sports Authority Field at Mile High that should provide, according to Moore, up to 64,000 concurrent connections at speeds that are five to seven times faster than seasons past.

When the old in-stadium wifi was installed, it was available only to Verizon customers across 500 access points (AP). Verizon customers will still have access to a separate wifi network that has been upgraded simultaneously.

The new system will be available to users on any mobile network and will have nearly 3,000 Cisco APs, all featuring 5Ghz access and delivered on a Century Link circuit that has been upgraded from 1Gbps to 10Gbps.

APs have been expanded across the stadium bowl, which fans may notice on handrails and below seats. Installation within the stadium bowl is about 46 percent complete and back of house expansion is 75 percent complete, so fans should immediately notice an improvement on performance over years past with full installation to be completed midseason.

As with any technology upgrade, the real proof will be in the pudding – or rather the uploads of pudding – when a stadium full of fans puts the network to the test.

You can expect faster Wi-Fi at Broncos games this season thanks to a \$6 million upgrade

By Christian Clark
Denverite
September 6, 2017

The Denver Broncos are making it easier to post, like, share and tweet during games at Mile High Stadium this season. On Friday, the Broncos announced a \$6 million renovation project aimed at providing fans with faster Wi-Fi.

The Broncos are partnering with CenturyLink and Verizon to make fast and free Wi-Fi a reality — even during those peak times at Mile High. The new Wi-Fi system will feature four times as many antennas as the system that was installed more than five years ago.

“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 in a news release. “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.”

Work on the new system is already about 40 percent complete, the team said. The project is expected to be finished by late October or early November.

The wireless network is called FreeStadiumWiFi.

Von Miller Stays Goofily Unpredictable in W+K's New Ads for Old Spice

By Gabriel Beltrone

ADWEEK

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Von Miller is so delicate, he uses Old Spice's gentle-on-the-skin "Invisible Spray" to fight his body odor, instead of running a power sander over his armpits.

So goes the absurd premise of a new ad starring the Denver Broncos powerhouse linebacker, who, in real life, is known for forcefully tackling his opponents. Part of a new campaign from Wieden + Kennedy for the Procter & Gamble soap and deodorant brand, it's set on the sidelines of a football field, features some perplexed coaches, and an equally silly twist ending.

A second new ad plays on Miller's many talents, which famously include chicken farming, and apparently, professional-grade surrealist film production. A trip through a glowing desert landscape sees him hatch out of some kind of alien egg, crusted in dust.

After staggering toward a monolithic bottle of Old Spice body wash, and touching it, he is enveloped by lightning, as the crud falls from his body. Cut to a locker room full of his teammates. Enraptured, they burst into applause.

Both spots are solid additions to the brand's "Stay Unforsweatable" campaign, which Miller launched as the brand's new spokesman last year. That saw him fighting his way down the gridiron with a beehive wrapped around his hand and a game of limbo set up in his path—because the game just wasn't hard enough without some new obstacles.

Compared to some of the brand's historically high-energy work, the new ads are relatively subtle—like the earlier commercials starring Miller, more tailored to his understated charm (as opposed to say, Isaiah Mustafa conjuring fistfuls of diamonds or a zany Terry Crews bursting through a wall). Still, escalating dashes of randomness keeps them feeling amusingly clever, and entertaining enough.

The execs at Old Spice, for their part, are so enthused about Miller that they are putting Miller's face on limited-edition versions of the "Pure Sport Plus" scent from their NFL Hardest Working collection—the first time the brand has altered its packaging as part of its partnership with the football league.

Miller, meanwhile, describes that honor as "pretty unreal," and says, "I hope that fans stay unforsweatable with me under their armpits."

To be fair, it'd be pretty hard for anyone to not get a little flustered by Von Miller being in their armpits.