

# Kiszla: Broncos do the new math: 4 NFL games + 4 Pro Bowl running backs = less than zero

By Mark Kiszla  
Denver Post  
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The slap was so hard it felt like slander, and the message stung: The Broncos are soft. They can't stop the run.

Hey, who were the knuckleheads that spewed that garbage? Please. Remind the Broncos again.

"We've played four straight games and we've played four all-pro running backs. And they've done nothing against us," defensive end Shelby Harris bellowed Sunday, after the Broncos knocked the stuffing out of Oakland in a 16-10 victory that will leave a mark on their hated AFC West Division rivals.

A work of art? No, this game was more like a sweaty day's work at the junkyard. It sounded like broken glass and crushed metal. Raiders quarterback Derek Carr fell and couldn't get up during the second half. The silver and black left Colorado all black and blue.

"Our run defense has been stout the entire year," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said.

Not to suggest the Broncos are keeping score, but here's a tally the members of Denver's defense would be happy to recite by heart. Through four games, Denver has indeed faced four Pro Bowl running backs.

Let's do the math.

Melvin Gordon of the Los Angeles Chargers: 18 carries, 54 yards.

Ezekiel Elliott of Dallas: nine carries, 8 yards.

LeSean McCoy of Buffalo: 14 carries, 21 yards.

Marshawn Lynch of Oakland: nine carries, 12 yards.

That's four running backs with 12 combined trips to the Pro Bowl to their credit.

And here's their total production versus Denver: 50 carries, 95 yards.

The Broncos have faced a murderer's row of NFL running backs, and killed their stats, to say nothing of their spirit. On 50 carries, the average gain of Lynch, McCoy, Elliott and Gordon has been 68 inches.

Wait ... what? A grown man should be able to fall forward 68 inches. But Denver has made four above-the-marquee backs look as if they couldn't play dead in a Western movie.

Let's review. They call him Money Lynch; he left Colorado bankrupt. At Buffalo, the Broncos threw shade at McCoy. Derek Wolfe and crew hit Elliott, the NFL rushing champ a year ago, so hard that he quit. After

Gordon flashed for 21 yards on the very first snap of the season against the Denver defense, he got stuck in traffic.

What has been the mindset of Denver's defensive line against these great running backs?

"Whip their butt," Harris said.

Beating the Raiders was especially sweet for Harris, a 26-year-old defender who has been cut six times in his young career and came to Denver looking for a job after being told by Oakland, the New York Jets and Dallas he was not good enough to make a real impact in the NFL.

"Playing the old team, hitting the old quarterback and getting the old 'W,' that's a pretty good day," said Harris, credited with the sack in the third quarter that sidelined Carr with a back injury. "The whole thing was not letting Marshawn get built up and breaking tackles and running over people. So today was great. He had no room to run."

The Real Big D of the Broncos caused Oakland coach Jack Del Rio to get desperate early. Down 10-0 in the second quarter, the Raiders faced fourth down at Denver's 31-yard line. Instead of attempting a long field goal, Del Rio went for it, needing to gain only 3 feet to move the chains.

The Broncos, however, refused to give an inch. When Lynch was handed the football for a run up the gut, they punched back, stuffing him from no gain.

"Had to get that stop," said Will Parks, who darted in from his safety position to meet Lynch in the hole and make the tackle.

"Going for it on fourth and one? We kind of take that as an insult. We pride ourselves as being the best defense in the league. Now it's a tough league and the Raiders are a great organization. But as long as we go out there and execute, what we do? We feel like nobody can hang with us."

Yes, pro football is a job. It's a job, however, the guys in the front seven of Denver's defense have taken very personally since being cited for months as the soft underbelly to the No-Fly Zone. True confession: I might have been one of those knuckleheads who questioned if the Broncos were tough enough to get it done against the run.

"Don't act like you weren't," said Harris, laughing.

The job of Wolfe, Harris and the big D-linemen is to deliver pain. It's a pain that Lynch will feel in his bones.

As far the Denver defense is concerned, it doesn't matter how slick is your game or how fancy is your name. Money, Shady, Zeke or Flash. It's all the same. The Broncos will make you a promise: Getting out of bed on Monday is going to hurt.

Broncos vs. Top Running Backs

The Broncos' reputation as one of the NFL's best rush defenses grew Sunday as they made Raiders running back Marshawn Lynch a non-factor, limiting him to 12 yards on nine carries; Oakland had only

24 yards rushing as a team. Through four games, the Broncos have limited opposing starting running backs to 95 yards, and no team has scored a rushing touchdown against Denver.

<b>Player</b>	<b>Team</b>	<b>Carries</b>	<b>Yards</b>	<b>TDs</b>
Melvin Gordon	Chargers	18	54	0
Ezekiel Elliott	Cowboys	9	8	0
LeSean McCoy	Bills	14	21	0
Marshawn Lynch	Raiders	9	12	0

# John Bowlen on decision to sell minority interest in Broncos: “I think the price is going to be good”

By Nicki Jhabvala

Denver Post

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John Bowlen, the younger brother of Broncos majority owner Pat Bowlen, told The Denver Post on Monday that he is looking to sell his minority interest in the team of about 30-35 percent because he feels it's a good time to do so and that it's a personal decision for his family.

“Personally I think the price is going to be good and we seem to have some interest,” Bowlen said. “So that's it.”

John Bowlen reiterated that there is no animosity toward the Broncos or discord with the team. In fact, he said, he is “quite pleased” with the job team president/CEO Joe Ellis and counsel Rich Slivka have done running the Broncos as two of the three trustees.

Pat Bowlen's majority stake was placed in a family trust primarily to serve as a vehicle to transfer ownership to his children. Each of Pat Bowlen's seven children will receive an equal stake in the team, but the three trustees — Ellis, Slivka and local attorney Mary Kelly — are tasked with selecting one as controlling owner and the voice of the team.

John Bowlen's decision to sell his interest will not affect Pat Bowlen's succession plan; his majority interest is still intended to be passed to his children.

According to Forbes' latest estimates, the Broncos are valued at \$2.4 billion, making John Bowlen's minority interest, which does not include team voting stake, worth more than \$700 million.

In a statement released by the Broncos on Sunday, the team acknowledged John “recently was approached by someone who expressed interest in his share of the team” and emphasized that John has “is extremely pleased with the way the organization is being operated under Joe Ellis in the absence of his brother, owner Pat Bowlen.”

# For Broncos' revamped O-line, pass protection still a work in progress

By Nicki Jhabvala  
Denver Post  
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The Oakland Raiders needed only 32 seconds to split the Broncos' offensive line and get Trevor Siemian on the ground.

On the second play of the game Sunday, Raiders defensive end Mario Edwards barreled around Broncos left guard Max Garcia and slipped past left tackle Garrett Bolles to find quarterback Siemian, who was getting ready to unload a pass.

In the second quarter, linebacker Bruce Irvin notched the Raiders' second sack of the day after chasing down Siemian as he scrambled to evade pressure. And then in the third, reigning defensive player of the year Khalil Mack broke through double-teams to bearhug Siemian to the ground twice, the second of which nearly resulted in a fumble.

The pressure on Siemian was heavy and unrelenting, much as it has been in the first three games of the season. The Broncos' line has faced some of the NFL's toughest pass rushers, from Los Angeles Chargers' Melvin Ingram and Joey Bosa, to Dallas' DeMarcus Lawrence, to Buffalo's Lorenzo Alexander and Jerry Hughes and, most recently, Oakland's Mack and Edwards.

In the offseason, the Broncos got bigger and stronger up front to both jump-start their run game and better protect their young quarterback. The former has so far been achieved, as Denver is tied for third in the league, averaging 143 yards rushing per game. But the latter remains a work in progress.

Improvement in pass protection is a task shared by many — new tackles Bolles and Menelik Watson, the rest of the offensive line and even Siemian, who at times holds the ball too long.

"We've done a good job with chipping the dominant rushers and helping our guys and also blocking them one-on-one from time to time," coach Vance Joseph said Monday. "You're not going to block Khalil Mack and Hughes, those guys, one-on-one. The two guys with the Chargers, you're not going to win all the time with those guys. But (the tackles) have competed hard, and we've helped them some.

"We had four sacks yesterday, and I think two were probably protection and two were probably Trevor. He can throw the ball away. He can have a better feel in the pocket. He understands that."

According to Pro Football Focus, Siemian has been under pressure on 38.8 percent of his dropbacks this season, eighth-most among quarterbacks who have taken at least 25 percent of their team's dropbacks. Siemian has also been hit 24 times and sacked 13 times, tied for fourth-most in the NFL. According to Stats, Bolles and Watson have allowed 0.5 and 4.5 sacks, respectively.

"I think the tackles have competed well," Joseph said. "Starting with Garrett Bolles, he is a talent. He's won a lot of his one-on-ones. He hasn't been beat much. Menelik Watson has competed well. I thought

Menelik the last two weeks has played a lot better in the passing game. Obviously when you're playing special rushers, they're going to win some also."

Bolles, a first-round draft pick this season, has been a welcome addition on the left side of the line. It was expected that Year 1 for the rookie would include some growing pains but, for the most part, he has surprised with his play and has held his own against some of the league's finest pass rushers.

Per Pro Football Focus, Bolles has allowed 15 total pressures on 147 pass-block snaps and has been graded as the 52nd-best tackle in the league in pass-blocking efficiency.

On the other side of the line, Watson ranks 62nd in pass-blocking efficiency by PFF. While he has been far from perfect, the Broncos' offense felt it — literally — when Watson left Sunday's game briefly with injury. Donald Stephenson took over midway through the third quarter and on the first play was bull-rushed by Mack, leading to Mack's second sack.

"We've got to do a better job of protecting him," running back C.J. Anderson said of Siemian. "We did the best we could. We did a really good job of neutralizing (Mack) as much as we can. You try to take him completely out of the game, because he can just wreck it. We've seen that here before, but when he gets hit, we just hope he gets up and everything is fine."

Last year at this time, it wasn't fine. Siemian was pummeled in a Week 4 game at Tampa Bay that left him with a sprained right shoulder and sidelined for the subsequent game. Siemian played in pain for much of the rest of the season and underwent surgery in January, one more reason the Broncos needed to upgrade their line.

In the run game, they certainly have. In the passing game, well, Joseph is hopeful of continued improvement.

His quarterback is, too.

# Broncos coach Vance Joseph on red-zone woes: “We’ll fix that.”

By Nick Kosmider  
Denver Post  
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Vance Joseph’s examination of the ongoing Broncos’ red-zone problem began Monday morning with a look at practice film.

He didn’t like what he saw. Changes are coming.

“Our Thursday practice is a practice (of), basically, third downs, red zone, goal line and short yardage,” the first-year head coach said. “Our last period is red zone. I’ve watched it for the last two weeks and it’s not very good. That’s my fault. So I’m going to move red zone up in the practice so we can get more energy. That part, we’re going to fix. We’re going to spend more time in the red zone. We’re going to apply more detail and focus there as players and coaches, and we’ll fix that.”

The Broncos failed to score a touchdown in four trips to the red zone during their 16-10 victory over the Raiders on Sunday. They settled for four field-goal attempts, one of which was a missed 29-yard try by Brandon McManus.

Overall, Denver (3-1) has reached the end zone during just one of its last seven trips inside an opponent’s 20-yard line.

“Offensively, it’s self-inflicted wounds,” Joseph said. “It’s been false starts. It’s been batted balls. It’s been holding penalties. We’re on the 5-yard line and we get a false start, now you go back to the 10. Your chance of scoring a touchdown goes down. It’s more of what we’re doing to ourselves.”

“Not down” on kicker. The 29-yard field-goal attempt missed by McManus on Sunday forced the Broncos to sweat.

Had he converted the kick, the Broncos would have led 19-7 with 14:11 to go. Instead, a field goal by Oakland with 5:27 left closed the deficit to 16-10.

The failed kick, which struck the left upright, was the third in 10 attempts this season for McManus, who has never missed more than five attempts in a season during his four-year career.

“I’m not concerned,” Joseph said. “He has to make that kick. That kick would have been critical for us to be up by (12 points). That game was basically put away. He understands that. He’s been told that. Moving forward, I feel good about B-Mac. He’s a talent. I’m not down on him. Things happen from time to time.”

Clean bill of health. Joseph said that, other than “a couple minor ankle sprains,” the Broncos came out of Sunday’s game healthy.

Reserve quarterback Paxton Lynch and wide receiver Cody Latimer were the only players who missed the game due to injury. Lynch is recovering from a sprained throwing shoulder, and the timetable for his return has not been set, Joseph said Monday.

“Cody is OK; he’s sore,” Joseph said. “We’ll see if the (bye) week helps him get better.”

Footnotes. Defensive lineman Ahtyba Rubin played five snaps — four on defense, one on special teams — in his debut with the Broncos on Sunday. Rubin, cut by Seattle in the middle of September, was inactive in his first two games after being signed by Denver. ... Will Parks received an overall grade of 89.3 by Pro Football Focus for his performance against the Raiders, the highest by a safety in the league this week heading into Monday night’s game between the Redskins and Chiefs. Parks had five tackles, including one on a fourth-down stop, and a pass defended. ... C.J. Anderson, A.J. Derby, Bennie Fowler, Derek Wolfe, Domata Peko and Justin Simmons received game balls after Sunday’s victory.



# Broncos notes: Joseph to emphasize red zone during break

By Mike Klis

9 News

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Sometimes, it's not how you practice but when.

The Broncos started the season converting 7 of 9 red zone opportunities into touchdowns. That's great. In their last two games, the Broncos have gone 1 of 7. That's awful.

Vance Joseph, the Broncos' head coach, hopes he can resolve his team's red-zone slump by moving it up earlier in his practice on Thursday.

"Our last period is red zone," Joseph said. "I've watched it for the last two weeks and it's not very good. That's my fault. I'm going to move red zone up in practice so we can get more energy there. That part we're going to fix. We're going to spend more time in red zone. We're going to apply more detail and focus there as coaches and players. We'll fix that. But the concepts are there, and running the football is there. It's just more self-inflicted wounds."

## Paxton update

It's going on seven weeks since second-year quarterback Paxton Lynch suffered an injury to his right throwing shoulder in a preseason game at San Francisco. And it's going to be at least a couple more before he's ready to play again.

Lynch has been doing some light throwing in the trainer's room, but has yet to toss the football on the practice field. And there are no plans for him to start throwing during the bye week or next week, when the Broncos resume preparations for Game 5 against the New York Giants.

"Yeah, it's frustrating because I want to be playing," Lynch said Monday. "But at the same time, it's an injury and I trust what the trainers have me doing."

Brock Osweiler will remain the Broncos' backup quarterback to Trevor Siemian until further notice.

## Frustrated receiver duo

The Broncos still may have one of the league's best receiving duos in Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders. Just not on paper. Not, yet, in 2017, anyway.

Thomas is tied for 18th in the NFL with 247 receiving yards and Sanderson is tied for 45th with 190 yards. Yes, they're a tad frustrated, especially when they believe they can resolve the team's recent red zone woes.

“Receivers? They’re always frustrated,” Joseph said. “They want to catch want to catch 10 balls a game. I like that. Especially from No. 10 (Sanders). I like his personality. He wants the ball every play. That’s cool. He should want the ball every play. He’s a competitive dude.”

A special ray of Sunshine

Who says Jordan Taylor can’t play special teams? Taylor got his first game uniform of the season Sunday and came up with the biggest special teams play, tackling Oakland punter Marquette King for a 3-yard loss when the fake attempt needed 11 yards for a first down.

“Perfect call by Brock,” Taylor said of special teams coordinator Brock Olivo. “I was spying the punter. When he tucked it and ran, that was my job. He definitely didn’t see me. He thought we were doubling outside and we were going to run out there. So, like I said, it was a great call.”

Taylor’s specialty as a receiver is the back-shoulder catch on go-routes, but he was inactive the first three games largely because the Broncos’ other backup receivers – Cody Latimer, Bennie Fowler III and Isaiah McKenzie – are more valuable special teams players. Latimer missed the Raiders’ game because of a right knee injury.

“I knew coming into everything I was going to have to make an impact on special teams and that’s what I was trying to go do,” Taylor said. “Glad I was able to make a couple plays.”

Bye week schedule

The Broncos lifted weights, watched film and had meetings Monday. They’ll lift and have meetings against Tuesday. There will be one practice on Wednesday and then the team will be dismissed, by collective bargaining agreement rule, Thursday through Sunday.

The Broncos will resume work Monday for their Sunday night game, October 15 against the New York Giants.

# Broncos will adjust practice schedule to try to repair red zone issues

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

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In search of more touchdowns on offense, Denver Broncos coach Vance Joseph is going to tweak the team's practice schedule in the weeks ahead in hopes of getting more efficient in the red zone.

That's because the Broncos' work there has been a hot button issue the last two games, even as the team has powered out to a 3-1 start after Sunday's 16-10 victory over the Oakland Raiders. But over the last two games, the Broncos are 1-for-7 in finishing drives inside their opponents' 20-yard line with touchdowns.

"It's been self-inflicted wounds, it's been false starts, it's been batted balls," Joseph said. "We're at the 5-yard line [Sunday] and we get a false start. ... It's more of what we're doing to ourselves."

"We just have to make plays, us as playmakers make plays," Broncos running back C.J. Anderson said. "Some things on us that we have to find a way to put the ball in the [end zone] and bury teams. We don't want to keep games close like that. We need to bury them."

As a result, Joseph said he once again watched video Monday morning of the team's red zone work in practice in the days leading up to the loss against the Buffalo Bills and in the days leading up to Sunday's win over the Raiders. And Joseph said, after watching it live as it happened in practice and rewatching it multiple times on video, he didn't like what he saw.

"It's more how we practice," Joseph said. "Our Thursday practice is basically third downs, red zone, goal line and short yardage. Our last period is red zone. And I've watched it for the last two weeks and it's not very good. And that's my fault. So I'm going to move red zone up so we can get more energy there."

Joseph added that he believed "the concepts are there, running the football is there," so that the issues are more detail oriented than in the team's scheme.

But the last two games haven't been pretty after the Broncos have done the work to get the offense inside their opponents' 20-yard line. Against the Buffalo Bills, the Broncos surrendered sacks on back-to-back plays in one red zone trip, and tackle Menelik Watson had a false-start penalty on a third-and-7 play from the Bills' 10-yard line in another drive.

Both of those possessions ended in field goals instead of touchdowns in a game the Broncos led into the third quarter before losing, 26-16.

Sunday against the Raiders, the Broncos were 0-for-4 in red zone trips. In one of those drives, left tackle Garrett Bolles had a false start penalty on a third-and-goal from the Raiders' 5-yard line. On another drive, quarterback Trevor Siemian had a pass deflected on a play that started at the Raiders' 4-yard line that wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders caught for a 10-yard loss. Kicker Brandon McManus missed a 29-yard field goal attempt three plays after the 10-yard loss.

In either case, a Broncos touchdown likely would have put the game out of reach. Instead, Broncos safety Justin Simmons had to make a leaping interception with just over two minutes to play Sunday to nail down the win.

“I think we’re hurting ourselves down there,” Siemian said. “We have to find a way to get touchdowns instead of field goals. I thought the first week we did a good job of that. We’ll figure it out, clean it up on the bye and be ready to go.”

# Devontae Booker's return will divvy up the rushing attempts even more

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

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The Denver Broncos have endorsed the idea that many legs will make light work in the team's running game.

They exited Sunday's win over the Oakland Raiders tied for third in the NFL in rushing. They've pounded out 143 yards rushing per game in their 3-1 start and, before Monday night's game, only three teams had attempted more run plays than the Broncos' 130 -- Jacksonville (138), Buffalo (134) and Houston (132). Sunday's win also provided another glimpse at the Broncos' growing committee at running back.

In the Broncos' first three games C.J. Anderson and Jamaal Charles had divvied up all but one of the carries among the running backs -- rookie De'Angelo Henderson had one carry on a fake punt. Sunday, however, Devontae Booker played in his first game of the season after having had surgery to repair a fractured bone in his wrist to open training camp.

Offensive coordinator Mike McCoy has consistently said he intends to use all of the running backs, but how many carries that means for any of them will be a wait-and-see affair each week.

"I think it's going to go the way it's going to go," Anderson said. "We knew we all were going to play. We knew that when Jamaal got over here that we were all going to play. We're all going to have our time and have our moments to make plays. We all have different roles and we use our roles and our abilities within the game in the different roles. Maybe if the game is going another way, then maybe it's a Jamaal Charles day or a Booker day, things to that nature. We all ran the ball well and that's how we want to keep it."

Anderson, who finished with 95 yards on 20 carries against the Raiders, leads the Broncos in carries with 73. Charles, who had five carries for 33 yards Sunday, has 33. Booker, who had his first three carries of the season for 14 yards against the Raiders, will alter things after the Broncos' bye week.

Booker was the team's leading rusher last season after Anderson suffered a season-ending knee injury in late October. The Broncos like Booker's potential as a receiver, and Sunday he once again re-affirmed his ability in pass protection on quarterback Trevor Siemian's 22-yard touchdown pass to tight end A.J. Derby.

"On Derby's touchdown pass ... Book made the key block on a safety, so for a young guy who hasn't played much football this year to make that block, that was key," Joseph said.

Anderson, Charles and Booker have each been singled out by Joseph in the season's early going for their efforts in pass protection. All three players can provide impact as receivers as well.

Initially it's rookie De'Angelo Henderson who has been impacted the most by Booker's return -- he was a game day inactive Sunday. Henderson, who is the fastest player at the position for the Broncos and

showed some big-play potential in the preseason, had already had a difficult time cracking the rotation with just Anderson and Charles in the mix.

But even if the Broncos top 30 carries in a game, as they have in all three of their victories -- they had just 23 in the loss to Buffalo -- it will take some play-calling dexterity to use them all. Especially if Charles, with five career 1,000-yard rushing seasons, continues to show the kind of explosiveness he has shown in the team's first four games.

"All three guys played well (Sunday)," Joseph said. "... Jamaal Charles looks more explosive each and every week he's played. He's close to making big plays for us. So, that's been fun to watch Jamaal just bursting through the line with great speed."

# Broncos look to slow down trips through No Fly Zone

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

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A month into the season, and the Denver Broncos defense has done a lot of what the players in that defense expect it to do.

After four games, the Broncos are No. 1 in the league in total defense, No. 1 in run defense and No. 6 in scoring defense. And while there is still plenty of season left to play, plenty of work to be done, the group does have an item that needs some attention: Opponents have occasionally found more room to travel than expected in the No Fly Zone.

The Broncos have surrendered seven touchdown passes already this season -- opponents had 13 all of last season.

"Our pass coverage is pretty tight, but we've given up too many explosive passes that have led to points," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said Monday. "It's some good and bad there."

It's been mostly good. The Broncos exited Sunday's 16-10 win over the Oakland Raiders at No. 11 in pass defense.

But comparison shopping makes it tough on this year's team, given that the Broncos have finished No. 1 in pass defense in each of the previous two seasons. This year the Broncos have already surrendered a 38-yard touchdown pass by Philip Rivers, a 28-yard touchdown pass by Dak Prescott and Derek Carr's 64-yard touchdown pass Sunday.

The win over the Raiders provided a look at what Joseph said needs some work. The Broncos dominated much of the game defensively, but Oakland's two scoring drives were 99 and 73 yards, respectively, largely built on the passing game. So the Raiders had 172 yards of offense on those two possessions, including the 64-yard scoring pass, and 37 net yards on their other 10 possessions combined. The Raiders had five possessions that went for minus-2, minus-3, minus-8, minus-19 and minus-1 yards.

"[Sunday] they scored basically 10 points and we gave up a 64-yard pass. We had them backed up both times ... Defensively we're playing pretty good, but we could play better, especially in two-minute defense," Joseph said. "We've been really soft there. We have to improve there."

Some of that can be traced to opponents having to throw more than they want, because the Denver run defense, in surrendering just over 50 yards per game, has suffocated teams on early downs.

The Broncos have also built double-digit leads in two of their wins and had a 9-point lead in the third quarter of Sunday's win. So offenses have had little choice but to be in pass-first mode much of the time.

"I don't think offenses want to throw all the time against us," said cornerback Chris Harris Jr. "... We're not going to stay the same, we're going to keep working and we can be even better. And with our guys up front and our run defense, we can make it tougher."

The Broncos have made some tweaks in coverage as they have transitioned from Wade Phillips' defense to the scheme of Joe Woods, who was the team's secondary coach in the two years Phillips was coordinator. Denver was almost exclusively a man-to-man team under Phillips, but since Joseph's arrival as head coach, Woods has implemented some zone concepts.

Asked if that transition has played a role in some of the big plays the Broncos have allowed, Joseph said, "No, it's not that. I think it's more focused in its details. It's plays that we've covered in practice that have hurt us. We have to be better with our focus and details. To your question, as far as it being more zone now, yes. I mean, we're playing a lot more zone than we played in the past. When you're a zone team, you have to be really focused and detailed on your keys. ... They have to continue to play with more focus and detail, because zone takes focus and detail."

Following their bye week, the Broncos will get a chance to test their secondary work, given they'll face Eli Manning, Rivers, Alex Smith, Carson Wentz and Tom Brady in the five games to follow.



# Fake punt failure leads to frustration for Raiders' King

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

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A fake punt by the Raiders late in the third quarter ended in a spectacular failure and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against flamboyant punter Marquette King.

The damaging sequence didn't cost the Raiders (2-2) in terms of points, though, because Denver's Brandon McManus missed the 29-yard field goal attempt that followed when his kick hit an upright and bounced away.

Raiders coach Jack Del Rio called for the fake punt with his team facing a fourth-and-11 at its own 33 in the 16-10 loss Sunday. King tried to sweep around right end but was met by the Broncos contain-man, wide receiver Jordan Taylor, who tackled him for a 3-yard loss at the Oakland 30.

A frustrated King, who celebrated an earlier 49-yard punt by riding an imaginary horse, threw the ball into the back of Broncos fullback Andy Janovich and was flagged, allowing Denver to tack on 15 more yards to the change of possession.

Del Rio said he called for the fake punt in a bid for a momentum swing because the Broncos (3-1) were dominating the line of scrimmage.

"We were looking for a spark and looking to take something that we thought we had and make it work, but it didn't work," Del Rio said. "We are very fortunate that it did not bite us."

King may not be so lucky. He could be fined by the league for the taunting foul and figures to be on the receiving end of a stern talking to from his head coach.

"I have not said anything yet," Del Rio said, "but you can be assured that I will."

Other takeaways from the Broncos' grind-it-out win that defensive end Derek Wolfe called a thing of beauty:

**RUN REVERSAL** : A year ago, Denver's run defense was its weak link, defanging the "No Fly Zone" secondary and Von Miller's harassment of QBs. So far, it's their strength and the primary reason they're 3-1 heading into their bye.

Melvin Gordon, Ezekiel Elliott, LeSean McCoy and now Marshawn Lynch have averaged a measly 1.9 yards a carry against the Broncos. Lynch gained 12 yards on nine carries Sunday and the Raiders managed only 12 more from its other rushers.

"Our run defense has been stout the entire year," Broncos coach Vance Joseph said. "So, I have been very proud of how those guys have played the run. With a back like that and an offensive line like that, that's really special, 24 yards."

**SAFETY VALVE:** Second-year Broncos safety Justin Simmons turned away the Raiders' final drive with a game-sealing interception . And fellow safety Will Parks, who joined the Broncos in the same draft class as Simmons collected five solo tackles, a pass breakup and a special teams stop.

Simmons, who beat out perennial Pro Bowl safety T.J. Ward in training camp, snared EJ Manuel's pass to Amari Cooper at the Denver 8 with just under 2 minutes remaining.

"One of our young bulls stepped up like a vet in the clutch, high-pointed the ball, you cannot do much better than that. So that is a big-time play by J," said cornerback Aqib Talib.

**BRONCOS BACKS:** The Broncos have a crowded backfield now that Devontae Booker is back from a broken wrist that sidelined him all of July, August and September. He carried three times for 14 yards, Jamaal Charles ran five times for 33 yards and C.J. Anderson rushed 20 times for 95 yards.

Altogether, the Broncos gained 143 yards on the ground, highlighted by Anderson's 40-yard scamper.

"We're all going to have our time ad our moments to make plays," Anderson said. "We all ran the ball well and that's how we want to keep it."

Anderson's mother, by the way, wore Anderson's No. 22 jersey underneath a Raiders jacket in the stands. She's from Oakland. "I knew she was going to do that," Anderson said . "She loves her team."

**RED ZONE, RED-FACED:** Broncos coach Vance Joseph wasn't happy with the Broncos' red-zone troubles.

"It wasn't very good, we were 0-for-4," he said. "Again, it's really self-inflicted wounds. It's a false start and there's a holding penalty, and so we can't do that. We've got to score points down there and score touchdowns down there and we had a missed field goal. That part of our offense we have to fix quickly."

**STANDING TOGETHER:** The Raiders and Broncos had the most players who protested during the national anthem in response to the president's comments. Almost all the Raiders sat on the bench at Washington and 32 Broncos knelt at Buffalo.

On Sunday, only Lynch wasn't standing for sax virtuoso Trey Daniels' rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Lynch sat by the Gatorade on the Raiders sideline. On the Broncos sideline, LB Brandon Marshall stood with his teammates with his left fist raised high.

# Broncos coach says he hasn't lost faith in his kicker

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

October 3, 2017

Brandon McManus has been anything but money since signing an \$11.25 million extension last month.

The fourth-year pro has missed a field goal in each of Denver's three home games so far, including a 29-yarder Sunday that would have removed much of the drama from the Broncos' 16-10 win over the Oakland Raiders .

Instead, the Broncos sealed it on safety Justin Simmons' interception in the closing minutes.

All three of his misses have come in warm weather, too.

Against the Chargers in the opener, he pushed a 50-yarder wide right with four minutes left and the Broncos clinging to a 24-21 lead. Shelby Harris bailed him out by blocking rookie kicker Younghoe Koo's last-second field goal that would have tied it.

Against the Cowboys, the Broncos special teams captain pushed a 49-yarder wide right, but it didn't matter because the Broncos won 42-17.

Against the Raiders, he had a chance to put Denver up 19-7 early in the fourth quarter but after nailing his first three kicks — and making 50 consecutive field goals from inside 40 yards — he hit the left upright.

"He has to make that kick," coach Vance Joseph said Monday right after saying he wasn't concerned about his scuffling kicker. "That kick would have been critical for us to be up by three scores and that game is basically put away. He understands that. He's been told that."

Joseph, however, still sees the kicker who set an NFL record by making all 10 of his field goal attempts during the Broncos' Super Bowl run two years ago.

"Moving forward, I feel good about B-Mac. He's a talent. I'm not down on him," Joseph said. "Things happen from time to time. I haven't changed my mind about how I feel about B-Mac. He's fine."

McManus was the last restricted free agent to sign his tender this summer, waiting until June 15 to put his signature on a one-year, \$2.75 million deal after making \$600,000 last season. He did it in hopes of getting a long-term deal, which he finally got last month just hours before kickoff against the Chargers when he agreed to a three-year extension that included \$6 million guaranteed.

At the time, McManus was tops in team history with an 84.8 percent conversion rate on field goals, but with three misses in 10 attempts this season, his clip is now 81.5 percent, slightly behind Matt Prater's 82.9.

NOTES: QB Paxton Lynch said his return to the football field isn't imminent as he continues his recovery from a sprained throwing shoulder. Joseph said he has no timetable, either. "As far as his next step, it's throwing the football. That may take a while. I'm not sure of how much time he needs."

# Denver7 Broncos' takeaways entering bye week

By Troy Renck

KMGH

October 3, 2017

Four games into the season, the Broncos create mayhem and mystery.

The defense under first-year coordinator Joe Woods added nuance, developing a nasty penchant for stopping the run. Four straight Pro Bowl backs have fizzled against Denver. So good are the Broncos, they have limited opponents to fewer yards on the ground in four weeks than they permitted at Oakland last season.

Offensively, the Broncos' eschew subtle. With a new man blocking scheme, Denver has collected 572 rushing yards, tied for second best, while reeling off 4.4 per clip (10th overall).

Stop the run. Run the ball. That plays in the NFL. And it has left all of the Broncos' goals within reach as they enter the bye week. But improvement is necessary with the schedule road heavy down the stretch.

My Denver7 takeaways at the quarterpole:

## 1) Party like it's 2015.

After a one-year interruption, the Broncos possess a championship-caliber defense. They are causing problems with the girth upfront. The Broncos have allowed 203 yards on a league-best 2.4 yards per attempt. Opponents have yet to score a rushing touchdown. Gap assignments have been on point.

"We have been relentless," nose guard Domata Peko said. "I knew when we were in San Francisco (in preseason) that we were going to be good."

## 2) Growth of Baby No Fly Zone

To become a card-carrying member of the No Fly Zone, it takes more than a game day jersey. You have to make plays to belong to the league's best secondary. Justin Simmons and Will Parks, it's fair to say, are no longer teething. Too cautious the first three games, Simmons played with athleticism and aggressiveness against the Raiders, sealing the victory with a pick in the best game of his career. Parks continues to make an impact in the box and on special teams. He's becoming a physical force.

## 3) Too chunky

The Broncos' defensive blemish, like a scratch on a Ferrari, remains big plays. The Broncos allowed huge passing plays to the Chargers and Raiders, creating doubt about an outcome that should have been salted away earlier.

"Minor details. We can clean that up," Parks said. "We know we can even be better."

#### 4) Protect the line

The number jars the senses. The Broncos have allowed 13 sacks in four games. They faced multiple elite pass rushers, but that total creates concern. Right tackle Menelik Watson, coach Vance Joseph said, has "played well the last two weeks." Rookie Garrett Bolles is competing, and improving. But Trevor Siemian has not performed well under intense pressure. The line, along with Siemian, must be better in those situations.

#### 5) Stay grounded

Keep your feet on the ground, and head, um, not in the clouds. The Broncos' running the ball well sets them up to win later in the season. They are averaging 143 yards per game (third best) and 33 carries (fourth). C.J. Anderson continues to provide a bullish presence. Jamaal Charles is progressing every week. The Broncos have the weapons, and the depth to stay grounded.

#### 6) Trevor seeing red

Siemian has been decent, but too careless with the ball. He knows that. His seven touchdowns rank fifth, but his four picks sit at eighth. There needs to be a greater variance. Quarterbacks make their money on third down. The Broncos have converted 28 of 60 attempts. That works. The red zone statistics don't. They have eight touchdowns in 16 chances, a 50 percent threshold that ranks in the bottom third.

#### 7) McManus McNails

Brandon McManus earned his three-year contract extension. But there's no room for an extended slump. He has already missed as many field goals at home (three) as he did last year. The Broncos will play close games. That much is known. Kicking can't be a concern.

# Woody Paige: The Broncos are currently an in-com-plete team, need to find the endzone

By Woody Paige

KMGH

October 3, 2017

After one quarter, the grade for the Broncos is the same as what 75,000 fanatics screamed 14 times Sunday at the stadium.

"In-Com-Plete."

The Broncos are not a complete team — yet.

They do get a passing grade in passing.

However, they definitely have earned an A+ in running and stopping the run.

The Broncos are a "Band On The Run," as Paul McCartney would sing. They put on a ban on the run by four opponents.

In four games the Broncos' defense has yielded only 203 yards rushing — and just 95 yards to four of the supposed superior running backs in the NFL.

Marshawn Lynch generated 24 yards in 15 carries before the Raiders abandoned the run in the 16-10 defeat.

The week before, even in a loss at Buffalo, the Broncos allowed Sean McCoy a measly 21 yards on 14 rushes (1.5-yard average).

Melvin Gordon had the only field day at night. Ha! He picked up 54 yards in 18 attempts in the opener, and the Los Angeles Nomads, er, Chargers fell on a failed field goal.

Saving the best for second, the Broncos' front seven — The Magnificent 7 — didn't permit ""Zkl llt"" to buy a vowel. "I'll take an 'e', an 'i' and 'o,' Pat." He was an "Oh, No."

The league's leading rusher of a season ago finished with nine runs for 24 feet. He looked like he had two left feet.

The retooled defensive front, which ranked 28th against the run in 2016, has set a club record in four games — allowing only 50.75 yards per.

That's a remarkable achievement.

The Broncos' rushing total of 572 yards, primarily run up by C.J. Anderson and Jamaal Charles, is just as amazing, considering that the Broncos overhauled the offensive line with four new major contributors. The first offensive lineman taken in the draft — Garrett Bolles — is playing like "Pro Bowl" Bolles —

especially considering that in the second game he was injured, and it seemed as if he would miss the rest of the season. He hasn't missed a beat or a game, and has been spectacular. Ron Leary, a left guard playing right guard, hasn't given up a sack even though twice he has been forced out, and spent a week on concussion protocol. Defenses are leery of Leary. Matt Paradis, coming off double-hip surgeries, was somewhat of a question mark for early in the season. He has been forgotten – because he's again playing at a Pro Bowl level – and his name is never called – because he doesn't commit penalties or make blocking mistakes.

Max Garcia and Allen Barbre are holding their own (and not defensive rushers) at left guard. Watson Menelik, a free agent who left Oakland, has been the weak link, but improved his play against, of all people, Oakland. Donald Stephenson, who was rated among the worst starting tackles in the NFL last season, comes in when the Broncos add a full-horse line, and Connor McGregor has been a very good backup. Billy Turner can't get on the active list because of the versatility of the others, and the Broncos are suiting only eight offensive linemen.

Adam Gotsis, the Aussie who played rugby, probably has been the most surprising and effective starting on the defensive line with Derek Wolfe, who has overcome a training camp injury, and nose tackle Domata Peko Sr., who has been a boss knob in the middle.

Von is Von, and the secondary may have gotten stronger with the replacement of T.J. Ward with Justin Simmons at safety. All Simmons has done is make two incredible plays, including the late interception Sunday, that have helped the Broncos get off to a 3-1 start before the bye.

The Broncos did dominate Dallas, but they haven't been as suave and debonair in the other three.

One touchdown Sunday.

One touchdown the previous Sunday.

The Red Zone hasn't been an Orange Zone lately.

Trevor Siemian's sacks and interceptions and lack of success close to the goal is a troublesome area. He's fine, but still not among the finest.

And Brandon McManus has missed three field goals (equaling the number of all last season).

The Broncos will need some fixes during the bye, but they do have the Giants upcoming at home. And that will be like a second bye. The road looms, though.

Com-plete must be the grade goal.



# Next-Day Notebook: Top-ranked defense could be 'scary' if it prevents deep passes

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
October 3, 2017

The Broncos arrived at UHealth Training Center on Monday leading the league in total defense.

Imagine how good their defense may be if it can reduce the number of explosive pass plays it allows.

It's not that the Broncos are falling victim to an avalanche of deep passes; they're giving up one pass of 20 or more yards every 15.4 pass plays. That's the 10th-best ratio in the league. The 64-yard touchdown they allowed Sunday was the first pass of 40 or more yards allowed by the Broncos this season; only seven teams have done better.

But in Sunday's game, Oakland picked up 134 of its 254 yards on four pass plays of at least 20 yards. The gains came in clusters -- two each on Oakland's two scoring drives. Take those away, and the Broncos have a defensive performance for the ages.

"Yesterday they scored basically 10 points and we gave up a 64-yard pass," Head Coach Vance Joseph said. "We had them backed up both times and the second time we got them backed up minus five, I think. We gave a 28-yard pass up, which led to points. Defensively we're playing pretty good, but we could play better, especially in two-minute defense. We've been really soft there. We have to improve there."

Improvement starts with knowing what went wrong -- especially on the touchdown. Safety Darian Stewart said the score saw a breakdown that was similar to what transpired on the 38-yard score the Broncos gave up to Chargers wide receiver Travis Benjamin in Week 1.

"It just so happened to be the same play the Chargers ran on us. They caught us in the same type of play," Stewart said. "It was just a miscommunication for the most part. We've got to be better with technique, so we won't feel so threatened to drive stuff that was in front of us."

"But it's something that can be cleaned up. We just have to know when we get that look what's coming, and prepare for it."

And if the Broncos clean it up, its defensive ceiling could be immeasurable.

"That's the scary part," said safety Justin Simmons. "From the outside looking in, there's so much more that could be accomplished in this defense."

"That's the crazy part about it: We're just getting started," said nose tackle Domata Peko Sr. "I think we're just scratching the surface."

STILL SEEING RED INSIDE THE 20

After two weeks of struggles in the red zone, fixing the issues inside the 20-yard line will be a focal point of the Broncos' work between now and their return to action Oct. 15 against the New York Giants.

Denver got just 25 of a possible 56 points -- including a single touchdown -- in its last two games from eight drives that advanced to or across the opponent's 20, including just nine of 28 possible points Sunday. In Weeks 1 and 2, the Broncos scored touchdowns on seven of nine red-zone forays, racking up 52 of a possible 63 points from nine possessions.

In the games, the "why" of the Broncos' recent red-zone issues is clear. In Buffalo, one of the failed red-zone drives saw a penalty; another was bogged down by a pair of sacks for a combined loss of one yard. Sunday saw similar causes: a sack on one series, a penalty on another, and pressure that led to a 10-yard loss after a tipped pass that forced a second-and-goal from the Oakland 14 from which the offense could not recover.

But as Joseph reflected on the struggles, he saw the origins of these problems in practice.

"I thought this morning watching our practices from the last two weeks -- it's more of how we practice," he said. "Our Thursday practice is a practice of basically third downs, red zones, goal lines and short yardage. Our last period is red zone. I've watched it for the last two weeks and it's not very good. That's my fault.

"I'm going to move red zone up in practice so we can get more energy there. That part we're going to fix. We're going to spend more time in red zone. We're going to apply more detail and focus there as coaches and players. We'll fix that. But the concepts are there, and running the football is there. It's just more self-inflicted wounds."

#### TIGHT ENDS STEPPING UP

A.J. Derby's 22-yard first-quarter touchdown catch was the second by a Broncos tight end this season, matching the total for Broncos tight ends from the entire 2016 campaign.

Derby, Virgil Green and Jeff Heuerman are on pace for a collective 888 yards and eight touchdowns on 64 receptions. Last year, Broncos tight ends combined for 640 yards and two touchdowns on 53 catches.

Derby led the Broncos in receptions (four) and receiving yards (75) on Sunday. He was one of six players to receive game balls, joined by Simmons, Peko, wide receiver Bennie Fowler III, running back C.J. Anderson and defensive end Derek Wolfe.

# Broncos head into second quarter of the season with momentum, room to improve

By Aric DiLalla  
DenverBroncos.com  
October 3, 2017

The bye arrives early this season.

The Broncos haven't taken their break this soon since a Week 4 bye in 2014, and you have to look all the way back to 1994 to find another Broncos bye week as early as Week 5.

Yet while the stretch run will be long, this early gap in the action can serve as a "State of the Broncos," of sorts.

Head Coach Vance Joseph treated it as such Monday, the day after a 16-10 win over the Oakland Raiders that pushed the Broncos to 3-1 at the break.

"Right now, offensively, running the football has been really good for us," Joseph said. "The pass game, it's there. It's a work in progress. We've got some things that are working for us, but it has not been efficient enough for me. Defensively, obviously stopping the run was a goal of ours. That's happening. Our pass coverage is pretty tight, but we've given up too many explosive passes that [have] led to points. So obviously [there's] some good and bad there."

Joseph added Sunday afternoon the trend of committing critical errors, including blown coverages and turnovers, "has to stop."

Last season, the Broncos began the season 4-0, but those type of errors late in the season led the team to miss the playoffs by a game. As the team looks to avoid that sort of slide in 2017, they'll use the bye week to evaluate where the team can improve.

For safety Will Parks, who Head Coach Vance Joseph said has a number of responsibilities in his new role, that means getting a jump on preparation for the New York Giants.

"It gives us a chance to get our bodies back," Parks said. "We completed the first quarter 3-1. Like coach [Vance Joseph] said, 'Our team changes every quarter. We're going to change for the better, come back, get ready for the Giants.' I won't be surprised if we come back [Monday] and start watching some Giants film and start practicing for them. I can't wait to get to it."

The Broncos said they will also use the bye to reflect on their lone loss and how they can ensure that other opportunities don't slip away.

"We know that we didn't come to play our best versus the Bills," cornerback Chris Harris Jr. said. "We could easily be undefeated right now, so we've just got to fix our mistakes and come up with a great plan versus the Giants. We've got two weeks to get ready for them. That's the only thing we can look forward to."

For now, they'll head into the bye on a high note following a division win that pushed them to 2-0 in the AFC West.

Perhaps Derek Wolfe said it best as he closed his media availability Sunday afternoon and tried to put the Broncos' early success in perspective.

"It's the end of the quarter, the end of those first four games," Wolfe said. "If you can go 3-1 every quarter, you're doing all right."

# Las Vegas concert shooting prompts ESPN to change its mind about airing national anthem

By Cindy Boren  
Washington Post  
October 3, 2017

Because of the horrific news of the shooting at a Las Vegas concert, ESPN has reversed course and will broadcast the national anthem that precedes Monday night's game between the Washington Redskins and Kansas City Chiefs as well as the moment of silence that will take place in Arrowhead Stadium.

It's a reversal of course, one that reflects the network's decision to remain nimble as far as showing the anthem during this season of "Monday Night Football." It had intended to return to its new, normal practice of not showing the anthem until at least 58 people were shot to death and more than 500 injured in the shooting in Las Vegas.

Before the season began, the network had decided not to show the anthem, with two exceptions. One was the "Monday Night Football" season opener that fell on the 16th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and featured a special tribute at the Minnesota Vikings' U.S. Bank Stadium. And then last week, after protests popped up across the country in response to tweets and comments by President Donald Trump, ESPN pivoted to carrying the anthem preceding the Dallas Cowboys' game against the Arizona Cardinals. Cameras captured Cowboys owner Jerry Jones taking a knee along with coaches and players, then rising and standing with arms linked for the anthem.

Although "MNF" has shown the anthem in previous seasons, the production team decided to make a change this year, even as the idea of protests were looming, to use the time to highlight matchups and story lines, a network source said. The network did not carry the anthem preceding the Sept. 18 game between the Detroit Lions and New York Giants.

ESPN had promised to "do our due diligence" as far as protests and coverage were concerned, producer Jay Rothman said last month and clearly the change of heart Monday is part of that.

ESPN's practice is in keeping with those of Fox and CBS, which do not carry the anthem before their 1 p.m. EDT regional telecasts. An exception was made before the games of Week 3, with protests everywhere, by Fox, CBS, NBC, the NFL Network and DirecTV. But on Sunday, Fox reverted back to form, carrying only the anthem (and "God Save the Queen") before the 9:30 a.m. game in London. The New Orleans Saints took a knee, then rose and linked arms for the anthem as three Miami Dolphins players remained kneeling. Fox came back from commercial as the Saints were getting to their feet and at halftime it showed video of Saints Coach Sean Payton taking a knee and linking arms with his players.

"As is standard procedure, regionalized coverage of NFL games airing on Fox this Sunday will not show the national anthem live," Fox had announced in a statement Sunday. "However, our cameras are always rolling and we will document the response of players and coaches on the field."

CBS, however, showed the anthem on its regional games and NBC showed the anthem before the "Sunday Night Football" game between the Indianapolis Colts and Seattle Seahawks.

# This one stat shows why the Broncos have the NFL's best run-stopping defense

By Kevin Skiver  
CBS Sports  
October 3, 2017

The Denver Broncos currently have the second-best run defense in the NFL, and if the Washington Redskins give up 17 yards to the Kansas City Chiefs on Monday Night Football (almost a certainty against the electric Kareem Hunt), the Broncos will be the best.

Even more impressive is how resilient the Denver defense has proven to be against run-heavy teams. So far, the Broncos have faced Melvin Gordon and the Chargers; Ezekiel Elliott's and the Cowboys; LeSean McCoy and the Bills and the Raiders with Marshawn Lynch. In that span, they've given up 203 yards on 84 attempts -- or 2.4 yards per carry. That's good for best in the league.

@FieldYates

Melvin Gordon, Ezekiel Elliott, LeSean McCoy & Marshawn Lynch combined against the Broncos' run D this season: 50 carries, 95 yards, 0 TD.

5:32 PM - Oct 1, 2017

85 Replies 1,964 Retweets 3,373 likes

In a division like the AFC West, controlling the clock is the best way to win games. The Broncos are doing that with one of the best front sevens in the league and a strong secondary. Although they're 13th in the league in pass defense, the Broncos' dominance in the ground game has been on display all season. Without playing the Broncos, Elliott would be averaging four yards per carry on the season, rather than 3.6. The Broncos held Elliott to less than a yard per carry in a 42-17 romp in Week 2.

Adam Gotsis and Kyle Peko have been huge difference makers for the Broncos run defense so far this season. Their ability to command the interior has allowed Denver's excellent run-stopping secondary to swarm the ball, and with aggressive corners like Aqib Talib and Chris Harris -- in addition to the surprising Justin Simmons -- the Broncos have been able to stop any progress at the line of scrimmage.

If the Broncos can iron out some of kinks in the passing game, they may be able to return to 2015 form, which turned out to be a historically good defense. They're already dominating great backs, and their next challenge will be against the New York Giants, who don't have a running game to be found so far in 2017.

# NFL mourns victims of Las Vegas shooting

By Staff

NFL.com

October 3, 2017

On Sunday night, a gunman, on a high floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas, fired a barrage of bullets onto a crowd of thousands at an outdoor music festival, killing more than 50 people, injuring hundreds of others in one of the deadliest mass shootings in American history.

The Raiders announced Monday they are donating \$50,000 to the Las Vegas Victims' Fund and the NFL Foundation is matching the team's contribution.

Clark County (Nevada) Commissioner Chair Steve Sisolak started the fundraiser to provide relief and financial support to the victims and families of the mass shooting. You can donate [here](#).

The NFL Foundation also will contribute \$50,000 to the American Red Cross to assist with blood drives and other relief efforts in Las Vegas.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and everyone impacted by this heartbreaking event," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a statement. "We are grateful for the first responders who bravely helped those in need."

A moment of silence for the shooting victims was observed prior to Monday's game between the Washington Redskins and Kansas City Chiefs.

The NFL community took to social media to honor the victims of this tragedy.

# Broncos Week 4 Team Grades: Broncos Win AFC West Race Against Raiders

By Rick Brown

CBS 4

October 3, 2017

The Oakland Raiders and the Denver Broncos met for the 116th time in the Mile High City on Sunday. Each team was looking to rebound from a tough loss on the road in Week 3, and this was a hard-fought game with two talented teams. The Broncos did a good job against the Raiders offense—especially after Oakland’s starting quarterback, Derek Carr, went down with an injury in the third quarter and did not return. But Denver’s offense continues to start off hot and then have problems finishing games. Luckily, Denver’s defense came through in the last two minutes with a big turnover to seal the victory for Denver, 16-10. The Broncos will go into their bye week with a 3-1 record.

## Offense – C+

The plan all week was for the Broncos to run the ball against the Raiders — and they did, for a while. Denver ran for 146 yards but the run game seemed to disappear in the second half.

C.J. Anderson had a great day and rushed for 95 yards. Trevor Siemian threw for 179 yards and one touchdown. While Siemian was not spectacular against Oakland, he did a good job of protecting the ball.

The offense did not do a good job of converting on third down, going 5 of 16. Look for the Broncos to work on extending drives during the bye week. The team was doing a great job of converting third downs, but performed poorly against the Buffalo Bills (3-1) and the Raiders.

The Broncos’s offense did just enough this week to eek out a win, while the defense continues to perform at a high level.

## Defense – A

The Broncos defense showed up against the Raiders offense. Denver started off strong and they did a good job of containing Marshawn Lynch. The Raiders were held to 24 yards rushing and 230 yards passing.

While the Broncos secondary gave up a couple of big plays to Derek Carr, the secondary saved the day late in the fourth quarter, causing the game’s only turnover. Late in the third quarter, Carr was injured and was replaced by EJ Manuel. The Raiders offense finally starting moving the ball and tried a late-game rally. Manuel found early success against the Broncos’ secondary, but this success was short-lived. During what could have been the game winning-drive, Manuel was intercepted by Justin Simmons, ending the Raiders’ redzone attempt.

## Special Teams – B+

The Broncos special teams were almost perfect against the Raiders—outside of Brandon McManus missing a field goal, going 2 for 3 in the game. The Broncos may have found a punt return weapon in



Isaiah McKenzie, as he was doing a great job of returning punts. After the Broncos' failed fake punt attempt, the Raiders attempted a fake punt and the Broncos were quick to stuff the Raiders.

Even the Broncos punter had a great day. Riley Dixon performed well and was able to pin the Raiders behind the 10-yard line twice.

#### Coaching – B+

The coaching staff did a good job of leaning on the strength of this Broncos team—the rushing game. Through three quarters, the Broncos were able to effectively run the ball and give the defense a rest. The Broncos coaching staff did a good job of stuffing the Raiders rushing attack. Finishing out games continues to plague the Broncos, so look for the team to work on this before it costs the team too many victories.

#### Looking Ahead

The Broncos head into the bye week with a 3-1 record. If Denver continues to win 75 percent of the remaining games, then there is a really good chance they could make it to the playoffs. During the bye week, the offense needs to work on running the ball late into the fourth quarter. The offense cannot continue to count entirely on the defense to win games.

# Bolles A Big Reason Why The Broncos Run Game Is 'On The Right Track'

By Michael Spencer

CBS 4

October 3, 2017

Garett Bolles has started all four games at left tackle this season and is a big reason why the Broncos running game is much improved. Denver is third best in the league through four games, averaging 143 yards on the ground.

"Our team is definitely on the right track where we're headed," said Bolles. "We got four great stud running backs that push us forward."

The Broncos have struggled inside the red zone recently and are just 1-7 in their last two games. They're currently scoring touchdowns 50 percent of the time when they get inside the red zone.

"The red zone is always something we have to improve," said Bolles. "We trust in our coaching staff. Coach (Mike) McCoy is a great offensive coordinator. I feel like this bye week is something that's going to be good for the whole team."

Bolles brought his son Kingston to the show on Monday night. Kingston became an internet sensation after the draft when Bolles brought him on stage when he was selected by the Broncos.

"I told my agent I wanted to bring my son on stage because I'm a big family man," recalled Bolles. "I was so happy I got to bring him up there and hold him up."

The Broncos have this weekend off and will return to action on Sunday Oct. 15 when they host the New York Giants at Mile High.

# Denver Broncos Wide Receiver Emmanuel Sanders to Make Donation to Houston Community ToolBank to Aid Hurricane Harvey Relief Efforts

By Staff  
BusinessWire.com  
October 3, 2017

## WHO:

Denver Broncos Wide Receiver, Emmanuel Sanders

## WHAT:

Emmanuel Sanders Foundation Check Presentation to Houston Community ToolBank

For Denver Broncos Wide Receiver Emmanuel Sanders, Houston is home as this is the city where he was raised and where his passion for football started at a young age. With Emmanuel's personal ties to the city of Houston being extremely close to his heart, Emmanuel wanted to contribute to those affected by Hurricane Harvey.

At the end of August, Emmanuel and his Denver Broncos teammates raised money through the Emmanuel Sanders Foundation to provide relief to those individuals affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Through his efforts to raise money for Hurricane Harvey relief, Emmanuel has identified the Houston Community ToolBank, a nonprofit tool lending program that puts high-quality tools in the hands of volunteers who are leading recovery efforts, as one of the beneficiaries for the money raised through his Hurricane Harvey relief efforts.

On Thursday, Emmanuel and the Emmanuel Sanders Foundation will be making a check presentation to the Houston Community ToolBank.

The mission of the Emmanuel Sanders Foundation is to provide children from financially disadvantaged families with resources and support to reach their full potential and attain a better life.

## INTERVIEWS:

Interviews, Photos and B-Roll opportunities are available with Emmanuel Sanders at 2:00 PM

## WHEN:

Thursday, October 5, 2017  
2:00 PM

## WHERE:

Houston Community ToolBank  
1215 Gazin Street  
Houston, TX 77020

FOLLOW:

Website: [emmanuelanders.org](http://emmanuelanders.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/EmmanuelSandersFoundation](https://facebook.com/EmmanuelSandersFoundation)

Hashtag: #ES1

# Broncos' head coach Vance Joseph revealed an encouraging quality on Monday

By Ryan Koenigsberg

BSN Denver

October 3, 2017

The Denver Broncos have struggled in the red zone the last two weeks. After starting the year by impressively scoring seven touchdowns in their first nine trips inside 20-yard line, the team has regressed mightily, only going 1-for-7 in those situations against the Bills and Raiders.

As you might expect, the struggles in the red area have seen the team's scoring output plummet dramatically. When the dust settled after a 42-17 blowout of the Dallas Cowboys in Week 2, the Broncos were averaging 33 points per game. Following two 16-point outputs in Weeks 3 & 4, that average is all the way down to 24.5 points per game.

On Sunday, the Broncos went 0-for-4 in the red zone, their lone touchdown coming on a 22-yard pass from Trevor Siemian to A.J. Derby. After that the team lined up for four field goals, with kicker Brandon Brandon McManus making three of those, his lone miss coming from just 29 yards out.

"Offensively speaking, I thought the red zone, it's been self-inflicted wounds," said head coach Vance Joseph. "It's been false starts, it's been batted balls, it's been holding penalties. We're at the five-yard line, and we get a false start, and now we go back to the 10, your chance of scoring a touchdown goes down. It's more of what we're doing to ourselves."

The execution in the money zone has been poor for the Broncos, it cost them a win in Buffalo and nearly cost them another in Denver on Sunday.

It would have been easy for Vance Joseph to watch the tape from Sunday's game, blame it on execution, say they have to be better in that area and move on.

That is not what the Broncos head coach did.

Early on Monday morning, when most of us were sleeping, Vance Joseph watched the Oakland game, but instead of thinking about how his players could be better he thought about how he, as a first-year head coach could be better.

So Joseph dug up more tape, but not of games. He went back to the Broncos practice tape, to see how his team has been practicing their red-zone execution. What he noticed was his own issue, not the team's.

"Our Thursday practice is a practice of third downs, red zone, goal line and short yardage," the head man explained. "Our last period is red zone. I've watched it for the last two weeks, and it's not very good, that's my fault."

In realizing his misstep, Joseph decided to do the obvious thing that isn't always so obvious in the National Football League—change.

“I’m going to move red zone up in practice so we can get more energy there,” he said. “That part we are going to fix. We are going to spend more time on red zone; we’re going to apply more detail and focus there as coaches and players. We’ll fix that. The concepts are there, running the football is there, it’s just more self-inflicted wounds, and we just need to give it more attention, in my opinion.”

Joseph could have said, “I’ll make sure our guys pay more attention to detail in that period,” and kept things the same, but he didn’t. That’s something that the Broncos coaching staff has showed constantly, a willingness to change. When something isn’t quite working, they are willing to nip it in the bud. The young coaching staff doesn’t have many—if any—preconceived notions about how it’s supposed to work. Even some of the most veteran guys they have, like Mike McCoy, are known for their willingness to adapt.

A coach’s dream is a teachable win, Vance Joseph got something even better, a teachable win and a learnable win. In the end, this is why the Broncos job was so appealing; Joseph can do some learning on the job while winning at the same time.

# With three primary backs playing, C.J. Anderson gets bulk of touches in Denver

By Mike Florio  
Pro Football Talk  
October 3, 2017

Denver's 16-10 win over the Raiders was fueled by the availability of their three top running backs — C.J. Anderson, Jamaal Charles, and Devontae Booker, who had been out with a wrist injury since the start of training camp. Anderson had 24 total touches (20 carries, four catches), Charles had six (five and one), and Booker had three rushing attempts.

On Monday, coach Vance Joseph praised each of them.

"All three guys played well yesterday," Joseph said. "I thought C.J. played really well, breaking tackles, ripping off big runs. He was great in the pass game, and he was great with protections. Jamaal Charles looks more explosive each and every week. He's played so he's close to making some big plays for us. That's been fun to watch Jamaal just burst through the line with great speed. [Booker] played well. He played solid yesterday running the football and in protections. On [tight end A.J.] Derby's touchdown pass in high red zone, [Booker] made the key block to block the safety. For a young guy who hadn't played much football this year to make that block was key for us there. I've been very impressed with Jamaal and C.J. Obviously having [Booker] back that just makes us better there.

Anderson generated 95 yards on 20 carries. Charles churned up 33 yards, giving him an average of 6.6 yards per attempt. Booker's three carries resulted in 14 yards.

With injuries inevitable, it helps the Broncos to have three guys who can get it done. Ideally for the team, all three will be available as much as possible. But if one gets injured, they'll still have the other two.

As far as the team is concerned, the rushing attack is working. They gained 143 yards on the ground, averaging 4.5 yards per try.

# Pat Bowlen's brother John to sell minority stake in team

By Darin Gantt  
Pro Football Talk  
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The brother of Broncos owner Pat Bowlen is prepared to sell his stake in the team, which is between 30 and 35 percent.

John Bowlen, the younger brother of Pat Bowlen, told Nicki Jhabvala of the Denver Post he felt it was the right time to sell.

"Personally I think the price is going to be good and we seem to have some interest," Bowlen said. "So that's it."

He said there was no animosity toward the team, and that he was "quite pleased" with the job president/CEO Joe Ellis and counsel Rich Slivka have done running the Broncos as two of the three trustees. That runs counter to the initial announcement he made on Twitter confirming his decision to sell, in which he said: "My brother Pat's leadership has been greatly missed."

Pat Bowlen stepped away from day-to-day operations of the team in 2014 as a result of the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

The team issued a statement confirming the sale, emphasizing that John "is extremely pleased with the way the organization is being operated under Joe Ellis in the absence of his brother, owner Pat Bowlen."

John Bowlen's stake should be worth around \$700 million, if you believe the Forbes estimate that pegs the team's value at \$2.4 billion.

Pat Bowlen's majority share in the team will transfer to his children, with one of them to be picked as controlling partner. The league will be monitoring this one closely, as the control of the Titans among the heirs of Bud Adams has been an issue for months, and remains unresolved.