

Kiszla: Hey, brotato chip, here's why new QB Brock Osweiler might be exactly what Broncos need

By Mark Kiszla
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On the first of Brovember, the Broncos named Brock Osweiler their starting quarterback.

Cool, dude.

Osweiler will never be as handsome as Tom Brady or as cerebral as Peyton Manning. But know why this change at quarterback, while it smacks of desperation from a team that has not only lost three straight games but also its identity, just might work?

Osweiler is one righteous bro. The Brock Lobster speaks wisdom that fits neatly on a T-shirt, stuff like: "Ball security is job security." This is a quarterback who won't fumble the pizza box, even when blindsided by trouble in a parking lot at 2 a.m. Heck, the Cleveland Browns are paying Osweiler \$15 million to strap on his helmet in Denver and take snaps for a team that still has a shot at the playoffs.

Beats working, brovocado.

The Broncos don't need Osweiler to be Superman. In fact, coach Vance Joseph has basically informed the new starting QB that he has just one job. As Osweiler volunteered: "I'm being told, 'Protect the football.' "

Despite a daunting schedule the remainder of this month, the switch from struggling Trevor Siemian to Osweiler might hit the reset button for the reeling Broncos. All Osweiler needs to do is play like the same Bro Montana that came off the bench for a Denver team stuck in crisis mode two years ago, instead of pretending to be a quarterback he is not. That's a mistake Oz made when he went to Houston last season, then tried way too hard to justify the big bucks the Texans overpaid for his services.

In 15 regular-season games of his life that Osweiler will never get back, he compiled a miserable 72.2 quarterback rating with the Texans, playing even worse than the 76.8 rating that has sent Siemian to the Denver bench. From afar, it appeared to me as if Osweiler made playing QB in the NFL a bigger job than it already is. A bro tried to be the man. It was a mess.

"Maybe in that situation I was trying to do too much. I think, like smart players would, you would learn from that and you're not going to replicate that," said Osweiler, looking me squarely in the eye. "That's a great observation on your behalf, but I'm moving forward."

One foot in front of the other, he has climbed from a dark hole that could have swallowed a weaker man's career. In 2017 alone, Osweiler has gone from winning a playoff game with Houston ... to being declared persona non grata with the Texans ... to being shipped off to the NFL's version of Siberia in trade ... to being cut by Browns management, which doesn't know how to operate a football franchise or a fax machine.

Hey, we couldn't make this stuff up.

"Brock is the quarterback right now," Joseph said. "After this week, we'll figure out the next week."

On Nov. 22, 2015, Osweiler got his first NFL start, replacing the injured Manning, and on his first possession in Chicago, he threw a short pass to Demaryius Thomas, who rambled 48 yards for a touchdown that ignited a spark.

It was a beautiful bromance. Until it wasn't. After leading the Broncos to a four victories in a span of six weeks, including a 30-24 overtime win against Handsome Tom and the previously undefeated Patriots, Osweiler was benched in the last game of the regular season for Manning. Oz was ticked when told to stand down. I never understood why Broncos Country got so mad at his reaction. Any righteous dude would have been upset, because all any bro wants is a chance to play.

While there might be some fans who still hold a grudge against Osweiler for skipping the trip to the White House with the Broncos to celebrate their Super Bowl 50 victory, he was greeted with hugs in the locker room when returning to town this year. And, believe me, players view personnel changes in the huddle as no big deal, because everybody eventually becomes a replaceable part in this league. "My quarterback is like my wife, so I don't really care who's back there. I'm going to protect like it is," offensive tackle Garrett Bolles said. "I love Brock ..." The No. 17 the Broncos have known and would love again is a quarterback who embraces his role as an underdog. Osweiler at his best is the anti-Manning. He doesn't overthink it, checks his ego at the door, hands off the football or dumps it short with an easy throw, gets out of the way and lets Thomas or C.J. Anderson be the star.

"My leadership is just who I am," Osweiler said. "I'm not going to do anything special. Whatever my gut feeling is, or my gut thought, that's coming out."

Brock being Brock, doing Teddy Brosevelt things.

It just might work, dude.

Brock Osweiler replaces Trevor Siemian as Broncos' starting quarterback

By Nicki Jhabvala
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When Broncos general manager John Elway re-signed Brock Osweiler in September, he said the veteran quarterback was “going to need a little football rehab” after his 18-month roller-coaster around the NFL.

Once Peyton Manning’s groomed successor, Osweiler accepted riches from the Texans and experienced the extremes of the NFL, as a welcomed free agent signing one day and a vilified backup soon after. In the offseason, he was cast off to Cleveland, where few careers in recent history have thrived, then cut from the team, with a healthy salary but no clear future.

So Elway brought him back to again be a backup and a safety net. But now, Osweiler’s stint in rehab is over. “I’m checking out,” he said jokingly on Wednesday.

The former second-round pick is, once again, the Broncos’ starting quarterback, taking over for Trevor Siemian after three consecutive and frustrating losses fueled by turnovers.

After lengthy discussions with Elway and his coaching staff, coach Vance Joseph asked Osweiler and Siemian to report to the team’s Dove Valley headquarters Tuesday evening to inform them of the decision. Then the coach told the rest of his team Wednesday morning.

“It came down to what’s best for our football team and, quite frankly, what’s best for Trevor’s future,” Joseph said Wednesday. “The team was OK with it. They trust Brock. He’s been here before under the same situation. It’s very similar. This is why we signed him.

“I’m hoping that this move can simply stabilize the offense so that we can get into a fair game, so we can win some football games. ... We can’t see where we’re at until we stop turning the football over.”

Osweiler will start Sunday against the 7-1 Eagles in Philadelphia, a move that seemed overdue in recent weeks but still jarring given the team’s start and Osweiler’s past year.

Following their 29-19 loss at Kansas City on Monday night, during which Siemian tossed three interceptions and the team totaled five turnovers, Joseph said a quarterback change was “a possibility,” a departure from his previous insistence that Siemian would remain the starter.

Siemian admitted after the game he was pressing and sometimes looking for the big play instead of the right play. Joseph admitted their plan simply wasn’t working.

Ironically, the reasons Siemian lost the job were the same ones that helped him win it twice in consecutive offseasons: his decision-making, his ball security, his consistency.

That continued through the first two weeks of the season, as the Broncos owned the best rushing offense (159 yards per game), sat atop the NFL in third-down percentage (56.7 percent) and total

touchdowns (nine), and were tied for third in scoring (33 points per game). Siemian led the league passing touchdown percentage (10 percent) through two games and ranked seventh with a 106.9 passer rating — higher than Tom Brady, Drew Brees, Aaron Rodgers and Carson Wentz.

But over the last three weeks the Broncos have averaged a league-low 9.7 points per game and totaled a league-high 11 turnovers. Siemian has accounted for seven of those turnovers (six interceptions and one fumble lost), while compiling a passer rating of 64.1.

“I’m disappointed obviously. I think as a competitor you want to play. I want to play,” Siemian said. “But I understand coach Joseph has a job to do and do whatever he thinks is best for the team.”

In his seven starts total this season, Siemian had 10 interceptions, two lost fumbles, nine touchdown passes and was sacked 25 times. Only Cleveland’s DeShone Kizer and Carolina’s Cam Newton had more interceptions (11) through Week 8.

“Certainly last game I kind of felt like I was trying to make something happen, especially at the end there,” Siemian said. “But it’s tough to say. A lot of the mistakes I’ve made, they’ve been off-schedule and when I’ve gotten out of the pocket. So it’s something I’ll learn from and hopefully clean up.”

It became clear the team needed a change — and one they had seen before.

Oswailer was the only viable option of the team’s collection of quarterbacks, all Broncos draft picks. Former first-round pick Paxton Lynch is still on the mend from a shoulder sprain, and Joseph strongly hinted Wednesday that rookie Chad Kelly will remain on the non-football injury list for the rest of the season.

For Sunday, Oswailer is their guy. If he plays well, he will remain their guy.

“Brock is a pro’s-pro. He is one of the first guys here, last guy to leave,” Joseph said. “We talked last night and he went right to the film room and brought in a table full of questions for (offensive coordinator) Mike (McCoy) this morning. He’s been around the best in the business. He knows how to prepare. As far as the offense, he’s got it.”

And his first job is basic.

“I’m being told to protect the football,” Oswailer said. “And that’s something that I think all quarterbacks and all skill guys know when they come into the NFL. You have to protect the football. The saying is, ‘Ball security is job security.’ If you protect the football, you’re going to stay out there on the field.”

The Broncos re-signed Oswailer to a one-year deal in September after his whirlwind 18 months that landed him in Houston as a handsomely paid free agent, then to Cleveland via trade and back to Denver shortly after. The deal was a bit of coup for Denver, since the Browns are on the hook for about \$15.3 million of his \$16 million salary this year. Oswailer is earning a veteran’s minimum of \$775,000 from the Broncos.

In his seven starts as a Bronco in 2015, when he filled in for the injured Manning, the Broncos were 5-2 and Oswailer had nine touchdown passes, five interceptions, one fumble lost and took 20 sacks.

But his 14 starts in Houston were riddled with highs and extreme lows as he recorded 14 touchdowns and 16 interceptions, was replaced late in the season by Tom Savage, then later regained the starting job for the postseason.

The roller-coaster ride came with lessons, he said, ones perhaps Siemian is learning now.

“I think when players get in trouble sometimes is when they make the game bigger than what it is,” Osweiler said. “And yes, it’s a very complex game, it’s a very fast game, there’s a lot going on, there’s calls, there’s audibles, there’s side adjusts, there’s hots. But when you can slow the game down and, like coach said, just manage it, take care of the football, find completions, find ways to move the sticks. You don’t always have to take the big play.

“When you have that approach and you stack up a lot of good plays, you’re going to have good results at the end of the game.”

Now both he and the Broncos are back in a familiar situation. The second Brock Osweiler era begins Sunday.

“I’m sure a lot of people are surprised by this,” Osweiler said. “Very rarely does a player leave to go to a different team and he’s back on his previous team within a year’s time, let alone a quarterback. But again, I’m not the story. I’m here, I’m ready to play football, I know this team’s ready to go out there and play a good clean game. And that’s where our focus is.”

Then and Now

A look at Brock Osweiler’s record as a starting quarterback, first in 2015 when he took over for an injured Peyton Manning in Denver, then in 2016 when he signed with Houston.

	Denver 2015	Houston 2016
Starting record	5-2	8-6
Completion %	62.2%	59.6%
Avg. passing yards	260.1	193.1
Passing TDs	9	14
Interceptions	5	16
Rating	87.8	71.4
Sacks	20	24

Brock Osweiler's 2015 big-game success gives Broncos teammates faith in new quarterback

By Nick Kosmider
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Domata Peko stood next to Von Miller on the sideline during the Broncos' practice Wednesday afternoon and shared a memory of the team's new — yet not-so new — starting quarterback.

Peko played for the Bengals in 2015. Brock Osweiler, making the sixth start of his NFL career, and the Broncos trailed visiting Cincinnati 14-3 at halftime in a pivotal late December game.

How Osweiler responded, leading the Broncos to a 20-17 overtime victory, stuck with Peko, who had a close-up view of the 6-foot-7 quarterback stepping up when his team needed him most.

"He came in and took it to overtime, and he had a great game," said Peko, the defensive tackle who signed with the Broncos in March. "He played with a lot of confidence and was demanding in the huddle. We have a lot of faith in Brock. We're putting a lot of trust in him. I believe he can do it because he did it in 2015. He won some big games. So we know what we can do."

Osweiler, now in his second stint with the Broncos following a one-year detour with the Texans, was named the team's starter Wednesday for Sunday's game against the Eagles. He'll replace Trevor Siemian, who turned the ball over seven times during Denver's three-game losing streak, including a three-interception performance in a 29-19 loss to the Chiefs on Monday night.

Teammates expressed faith Wednesday in Osweiler, pointing to the 5-2 stretch he orchestrated at the end of the 2015 season that helped the Broncos earn a No. 1 seed in the playoffs — a path that led to a Super Bowl title.

"We know what Brock can do," linebacker Shane Ray said. "We won a Super Bowl with Brock. He won a lot of big games for us. We're confident in our team. It's not like, 'Oh, man. What are we going to do?' That's not the approach to take to this situation."

Ray noted that Osweiler, who will start Sunday for the first time since suffering a playoff loss to the Patriots as the quarterback for the Texans on Jan. 14, appears leaner than he did when he guided the Broncos in 2015.

"His throwing motion is good. He's a tall quarterback, so we like the fact that he can see and survey the field," Ray said. "It will be good to see him get live reps. We haven't really seen him in too much action. Practice, kind of getting the second-team reps, it's not the same as when you are the starting QB. It's going to be a different look, and we think he's ready."

Though his teammates were complimentary Wednesday of the skill-set Osweiler has displayed — both in practices since signing with the team in September and in his previous time as a starter — they also made it clear they are really asking for only one major thing out of their new starting quarterback: ball security.

“Coach (Vance Joseph) said it best. We need to take care of the ball,” Peko said. “Whoever it is at quarterback, we just have to make sure they can manage the game, take care of the ball and let our defense go out there and win the games.”

Oswelier operated with a similar formula in 2015. His success was predicated on taking care of the football — he had just six interceptions in seven games — and allowing a championship-caliber defense to close games.

In that game against the Bengals, Oswelier led the Broncos on a field-goal drive to start overtime, then watched from the sideline as the defense stripped A.J. McCarron and recovered the fumble to seal the victory.

But that box score has collected dust. Though the Broncos’ defense once again is among the league’s best, Oswelier now inherits an offense that has sprung holes in nearly every spot at various points this season. For him to thrive as a replacement starter in Denver for the second time, he’s going to need help.

“We just can’t turn the ball over,” said Bennie Fowler, noting his own dropped pass at the goal line Monday night hurt his team. “If we’re not turning the ball over, I think we’re going to be in every game.”

Broncos linebacker Shane Ray expects to get “more comfortable every week” wearing cast

By Nick Kosmider
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Shane Ray isn't trying to pretend playing with a cast closed around his left wrist doesn't pose some problems.

But he also doesn't think the protection around his surgically repaired wrist, which he is likely to wear for the rest of the season, is going to stall his progress as he prepares to play in his second game.

“I felt good,” Ray said of his season debut against the Chiefs on Monday night. “It's hard to play with one hand, but I don't make excuses. I've just got to be better. I expect to get more comfortable every week with this.”

Ray's debut was promising. He made three tackles, including a run stop on the first play of the game, and provided consistent pressure of Kansas City quarterback Alex Smith. He played 52 defensive snaps — 82 percent of the defense's total plays.

“I'm still going to bring pressure,” he said. “I'm still going to do my job. I don't see any worries.”

Kelly unlikely to play in '17. The 21-day window for the Broncos to either activate rookie quarterback Chad Kelly or leave him on the injured-reserve list comes to a close next week.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph said the decision already is close to being made, and he appeared Wednesday to indicate Kelly will remain on injured reserve.

“Simple numbers or his health,” Joseph said when asked what will go into the decision for the Broncos. “He's had two injuries that he's rehabbed hard from. He went today a little bit in practice. It was just OK. That has to happen by Monday. It's almost clear with Chad.”

The Broncos won't carry four quarterbacks on their roster. With Brock Osweiler now scheduled to start Sunday, Trevor Siemian serving as his backup and Paxton Lynch nearing a full return from an injured throwing shoulder, that leaves no room for Kelly.

Kelly went through the team's “jog through” Wednesday, constituting his first action with the team since being drafted in the seventh round out of Mississippi in April.

The Broncos will also have until next week to make the same decision on rookie tight end Jake Butt. Asked if Butt, who is completing rehab from an ACL injury he suffered in Michigan's bowl game last winter, could play against the Eagles on Sunday, Joseph said: “I'm not sure. He was back on the field (Wednesday). We'll see.”

Challenge to Walker. Broncos rookie outside linebacker DeMarcus Walker was inactive for the first time Monday night, and the quasi-demotion came with a challenge from his coach.

The return of Ray leaves the Broncos with five outside linebackers, and the Broncos have routinely dressed four during games. The decision to deactivate Walker instead of Kasim Edebali came down to special teams, Joseph said.

“With Shane Ray being back, that fourth guy has to play special teams,” Joseph said. “(Walker) won’t dress until he plays better (special) teams.”

Walker began training camp as a defensive end but moved to outside linebacker within the first week. Joseph said Wednesday it is “very possible” the rookie out of Florida State could move back to defensive end in the future.

“But right now, he’s an outside linebacker,” Joseph said.

Injury report. Offensive guard Ron Leary, who suffered a biceps injury in Monday’s game, was limited in practice Wednesday. Joseph said he expects Leary to play against the Eagles on Sunday. Also limited were wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders, who has missed the past two games with an ankle injury, and inside linebacker Todd Davis, who was kept out of Monday’s game after suffering an ankle injury against the Chargers on Oct. 22. Offensive tackle Donald Stephenson (calf) did not practice.

Brock Osweiler Timeline: A look at the Broncos quarterback's NFL career

By Staff

Denver Post

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The following is a timeline of the major events during Brock Osweiler's NFL career:

April 27, 2012: The Broncos select Osweiler in the second round of the NFL draft with the 57th overall pick. Osweiler started 15 games for Arizona State and was named second-team All-Pac-12 in 2011.

Sept. 30, 2012: Osweiler makes his regular-season debut for the Broncos, coming in relief for Peyton Manning for a kneel down in a 37-6 home victory over the Raiders.

Dec. 30, 2012: After making four appearances in which he only took a knee to run out the clock, Osweiler was given a chance to run the offense in Denver's regular-season finale. With the Broncos up 35-3, the rookie entered the game on Denver's first possession in the fourth quarter. He completed 2 of 4 passes for 12 yards.

Dec. 29, 2013: With the Broncos up 31-0 in Oakland, Osweiler came in for Peyton Manning to start the second half. Osweiler completed 9 of 13 passes for 85 yards as Denver rolled to a 34-14 victory.

Dec. 28, 2014: Osweiler recorded his first NFL touchdown pass late in the fourth quarter against the Raiders — a 1-yard throw to Virgil Green.

Nov. 15, 2015: Osweiler replaced Manning with 6 minutes, 34 seconds remaining in the third quarter in the Broncos' game against the Chiefs. With Denver down 22-0, Osweiler completed 14 of 24 passes for 146 yards, a touchdown and an interception. The Broncos lost 29-13. After the game, coach Gary Kubiak said: "Peyton is our quarterback if he's healthy and ready to go."

Nov. 22, 2015: With Manning out with an injury, Osweiler makes his first career start, leading Denver to a 17-15 win over the Bears in Chicago. He threw for 250 yards and two touchdowns. "It was incredible," Osweiler said after the game. "... But I am telling you, it's not about me. It's about us winning as a team."

Nov. 29, 2015: His second career start would come against Tom Brady and the rival New England Patriots. With the game tied 24-all at the end of regulation, C.J. Anderson rumbled 48 yards en route to a touchdown and a Broncos victory. However, it was Osweiler who changed the call that made the run possible. "They gave us a specific defensive front that we can't run that ball into," Osweiler said after the game, "so I checked to our second play that we called in our huddle. The line did a (heck) of a job and C.J. did the rest."

Jan. 3, 2016: With the Broncos down 13-7 to the Chargers in the third quarter, Osweiler was pulled from the game. Manning would lead Denver to a 27-20 win at Sports Authority Field. "I don't think Brock did anything wrong," Kubiak said after the game. "We could have helped him. Just my gut told me to turn it over to Peyton and let him lead the football team." It was Osweiler's last appearance in a game for the Broncos.

Feb. 7, 2016: The Broncos defeated the Carolina Panthers, 24-10, to win Super Bowl 50.

March 9, 2016: Osweiler signs a four-year, \$72 million deal with the Houston Texans with \$37 million guaranteed. It was a choice he said was the “most difficult decision of my life.”

June 6, 2016: President Barack Obama hosts the Broncos at the White House. Osweiler skips the event, “due to a scheduled OTA (organized team activity) in Houston, I feel it is important to be at practice with my new teammates.”

June 12, 2016: The Broncos receive their Super Bowl 50 championship rings in a private ceremony. Osweiler again is absent from the event.

Oct. 24, 2016: Osweiler’s return to the Mile High City was a rough one. Denver won 27-9 as the Broncos limited him to 131 yards passing on 41 attempts and zero touchdowns. “I looked up at the scoreboard at his yards,” Broncos cornerback Aqib Talib said, “and I just smiled on the inside.”

Dec. 18, 2016: In his 14th start with Houston, the Texans benched Osweiler midway in the second quarter for Tom Savage.

Jan. 7, 2017: Savage suffered a concussion in the regular-season finale against the Titans, reopening the door for Osweiler. In the wild-card game against the Raiders, the 6-foot-8 quarterback led Houston to a 27-14 victory.

Jan. 14, 2017: In a playoff game against New England in Foxborough, Mass., Osweiler threw three interceptions as the Texans fell 34-16.

March 9, 2017: The Houston Texans trade Osweiler to the Cleveland Browns. The Browns also received a 2018 second-round pick in exchange for taking on Osweiler’s \$16 million guaranteed contract.

Aug. 7, 2017: The Cleveland Browns name Osweiler their starting quarterback for the first preseason game. Osweiler was picked over Cody Kessler, rookie DeShone Kizer and Kevin Hogan to start against New Orleans.

Aug. 23, 2017: The Cleveland Browns name rookie QB DeShone Kizer the team’s starter over Osweiler. Kizer is the 27th different quarterback to start for the Browns since 1999.

Sept. 1, 2017: The Cleveland Browns decide to eat Osweiler’s \$16 million guaranteed contract and prepare to release him from their roster.

Sept. 2, 2017: News surfaces that the Broncos plan to re-sign Osweiler pending a physical, capping a whirlwind 18 months of bouncing from Denver to Houston to Cleveland and back again.

Sept. 4, 2017: Osweiler officially resigns with the Denver Broncos on a one-year deal for the veteran’s minimum, \$775,000.

Nov. 1, 2017: The Broncos name Osweiler their starting quarterback for Week 9 against the Philadelphia Eagles, replacing Trevor Siemian.

'Best for Trevor's future:' Coach Vance Joseph's decision for Brock as quarterback

By Mike Klis

9 News

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Brock made it back to the box.

The box is reserved for the Broncos' starting quarterback during those Wednesday press conferences.

Brock Osweiler. Just 18 months ago, he was a free agent. And after leaving the Broncos to go play for the Houston Texans, who would have thought that Osweiler would have made it back to the presser box so soon?

"I'm sure a lot of people are surprised by this," he said. "Very rarely does a player leave to go to a different team and be back on his previous team within a year's time, let alone a quarterback. But once again, that's not the story. I'm here. I'm ready to play football. I know this football team is ready to go out there and play, play a good, clean game and that's where I focus is."

The Broncos have lately played a lot of games, messy with turnovers. This is THE reason why Trevor Siemian is no longer the quarterback. Three losses might not have gotten Siemian demoted.

Three losses and eleven team turnovers, six on Siemian's interceptions, is why he's now the backup.

(Photo by Doug Pensinger/Getty Images)

"I think just the one thing, a lot of mistakes I've made, they've been off schedule when I've gotten out of the pocket," Siemian said. "It's something I'll learn from and hopefully clean up."

Joseph said the benching was best "for Trevor's future."

"Lots of young quarterbacks have to take a step back to just watch the game and figure out how to play the game better," Joseph said. "All of the good quarterbacks are game managers. That's a negative term in football, but it shouldn't be because to be a quarterback, you have to manage the football game. That part, he's been struggling with. In my opinion, for his best interest, he needs to take a step back to watch Brock operate in meetings and on game day. It's going to help his future."

Status quo would not have cut it inside the Broncos' locker room. The grouching defensive players for the league's No. 1 unit eventually would have lost some will.

Change is necessary when status quo isn't working.

"Whatever they feel like is necessary for us to stop turning the ball over so we have a chance to win—that's the upstairs guys and the coaches," said outside linebacker Shane Ray. "We just have to play."

Osweiler's first assignment as a starting quarterback in 2017? The 7-1 Eagles in Philadelphia.

“On a personal note, it’s hard to really put it into words just because of how much love I have for this organization, my teammates and this city,” Osweiler said. “This week’s not about me. I’ve answered those questions when I left and when I came back. This week is solely about our football team finding a way to get a win on the road in a hostile environment against a great opponent. We know we have a huge challenge ahead of us, but we’re excited to go out there, compete and see what we can do.”

Brock Osweiler a big topic of conversation on the Broncos Huddle

By Rod Mackey
9 News
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A change in quarterback was the topic of the day at Broncos Headquarters, both during the day and during the Broncos Huddle.

Emmanuel Sanders had a lot of success when Brock Osweiler was throwing to him, but when asked about #17 on the Broncos Huddle, Sanders first chose to talk about Trevor Siemian and the effort he put in to help this team succeed, even though they didn't.

"You want to talk about a guy that's tough as nails, but took a ton of pounding " said Sanders on Siemian.

Now though, it's on to Osweiler. The Broncos made that official announcement today after it had become obvious that a change had to be made. Broncos Safety Will Parks, who was the special guest on the Broncos Huddle, played his college ball at Arizona. Osweiler played for rival ASU, but Parks laughed that off saying that they are all on the same team now.

This will be a special game on Sunday for Parks. Will grew up in Philadelphia, and will have a lot of friends and family at the game.

"Everybody is making that a big deal," said Parks. "My phone is blowing up. I have cousins I don't know asking me for stuff. I'm excited. I'm going there for business, to get the job done and get a win for my team. It's definitely going to be emotional. It'll be the first time I'm playing in Philly since 2011. A lot of people are trying to come to that game. A lot of people are going to that game. It's going to be epic."

The Broncos Huddle with Emmanuel Sanders airs every Wednesday night on 9News at 6:30pm and again on Channel 20 at 10:30pm If you would like to be a part of the live studio audience, send an email to Broncos@9news.com.

What comes next for Broncos quarterback Trevor Siemian?

By Jon Heath

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After turning the ball over nine times and scoring just two touchdowns in his last five games, Trevor Siemian has been benched by the Broncos. So what comes next for the former seventh-round pick out of Northwestern?

Siemian, who went 11-10 as a starter in Denver, will likely serve as Brock Osweiler's backup, at least this week against the Eagles. Broncos coach Vance Joseph said second-year quarterback Paxton Lynch was not in the running to be named starting quarterback because he just returned from a shoulder injury last week.

So fans should expect Lynch to be inactive for at least one more week while he gets up to speed. That will leave Siemian to be Osweiler's backup in Philadelphia. Beyond this week, though, it's unclear what kind of role Siemian will have.

If Osweiler struggles, Denver may want to turn to Lynch to finish the season. Lynch, a former first-round pick, only has two career starts under his belt, hardly enough to fully evaluate him as a quarterback. So it would make sense for the Broncos to name Lynch the No. 2 quarterback when he's ready, which would bump Siemian down to being inactive on game days.

Siemian is under contract for one more season in Denver before becoming a free agent in 2019. It's hard to see him getting an extension, even as a backup. The Broncos may look to trade him next offseason and move on with Osweiler, Lynch or someone else.

Chad Kelly and Kirk Cousins may be the names to watch next summer.

Broncos Cheerleaders nominated for Salute to Service Award

By Alexander Kirk
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The Denver Broncos have announced their nominee for the USAA Salute to Service Award: their cheerleaders.

The nomination is in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the "Cheer for the Troops" collection drive.

"Cheer for the Troops," an annual campaign run by the Denver Broncos Cheerleaders, collects items for distribution to servicemen and women throughout the world during the holidays.

The campaign has distributed more than 37,000 pounds of items since 2007. More than 4,000 individual boxes have been given to military members.

"For 10 years, 'Cheer for the Troops' has been a way for our team and our Broncos community to make sure these service men and women know they are not forgotten back home," says Director of Cheerleaders' Shawna Peters in a statement on the Broncos' website.

"The 600 kids in our Jr. Cheerleaders program are fully vested in the program as well, collecting items from home, school, friends and family as well as making sure every box shipped has a personal letter of gratitude from them. Connecting the children in our program to the values we share as a country will hopefully create a legacy of helping serve those who serve."

Fans can help the 2017 "Cheer for the Troops" campaign by donating food, hygiene and fun items at Denver Broncos Team Stores through December 9th.

For the full list of USAA Salute to Service Award nominees [click here](#).

Broncos hope 'football rehab' has been good for Brock Osweiler

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

November 2, 2017

When the Denver Broncos signed Brock Osweiler this past summer as the just-in-case quarterback, president of football operations/general manager John Elway said he believed Osweiler just needed a little "football rehab" to be ready to play.

Just over two months later, the Broncos have broken the proverbial glass due to a turnover emergency because they believe Osweiler has now completed that rehab. And him stepping away might have been a good thing, even if Osweiler might not have wanted to admit it during his struggles as the Houston Texans' starter last season or when he was with the Cleveland Browns in training camp.

"I'm checking out," Osweiler said Wednesday when asked he if had completed that rehab. "You would have to ask John exactly what he meant. ... I think sometimes the best thing for a quarterback, when he's not playing well or he's going through some tough times, is actually pulling him out of the fire and making him the backup ... letting him observe.

"That's what I've been able to do. Sometimes when you're in the heat of the moment, you're just trying to make a play and then you make a bad play worse and then it just compounds, and before you know it, you can't slow it down."

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So while some might see the term "game manager" as an insult, it's exactly what the Broncos hope that Osweiler is. Osweiler admitted Wednesday he might have tried to do too much in his tumultuous time as the Texans starter as a high-priced free agent who was hailed as a franchise savior.

"Observe and think about how I would do things different if I'm ever given the opportunity again, that's kind of what my rehab's been," Osweiler said. "And now we're going to put it to the test."

Joseph said the 25-year-old Siemian could benefit as well from what Siemian called a "disappointing" turn of events. The Broncos are 11-10 in Siemian's starts over the past two seasons. He was tied for the league lead in touchdown passes, with six, after the Broncos' Week 2 rout of the Dallas Cowboys.

But the offense has largely gone south since in a stretch where the Broncos are 1-4 with the current three-game losing streak. Siemian admitted after the loss to the Chiefs he was pressing to try to make a big play to snap the Broncos out of the funk. Ultimately the turnovers were what cost him the job.

"It's best for Trevor because he's a young quarterback; his career is not over by this," Joseph said. "Lots of young quarterbacks have to take a step back, kind of just watch the game, and kind of figure out how to play the game better. ... Because all the good quarterbacks are game managers. That's a negative term in football, but it shouldn't be, because to be a quarterback you have to manage the football game. That part he's been struggling with."

Said Siemian: "Just kind of reset for a second, and I've got to support Brock and do whatever I can for these guys and be as good a teammate as I can be. Just take a step back, take a breather and kind of evaluate some things ... a lot of mistakes I made have been off schedule and gotten out of the pocket, it's something I'll learn from and hopefully clean up."

Broncos turn back the clock with quarterback change

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

November 2, 2017

The Denver Broncos have turned the clock back to 2015, and they can only hope that they can construct anything close to the stretch run that team made on the way to a Super Bowl 50 win.

They have once again pulled a quarterback after a bad day against the Chiefs, put in Brock Osweiler behind center and decided to treat the quarterback decision as a week-to-week affair.

In 2015, the Broncos pulled Peyton Manning, who was struggling with an injured foot, in the second half of a four-interception day against the Chiefs. Osweiler went on to finish that game and start the next seven, with coach Gary Kubiak announcing each week who would start the upcoming game. It followed the same rhythm: Monday would roll around, and Kubiak would tell the players in a team meeting who would play quarterback and then publicly make the announcement. Like that, the Broncos rolled through November and December.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph doesn't have a future Hall of Famer like Manning in the quarterbacks' meeting room this time around, but he framed a similar scenario, now that he has benched Trevor Siemian after the Broncos' five-turnover game against the Chiefs on Monday night and put Osweiler in the starting role Sunday against the 7-1 Eagles in Philadelphia.

"I'm all about Sunday right now, and Brock's the quarterback right now," Joseph said Wednesday. "And after this week, we'll kind of figure out next week. I'm only concerned about Sunday."

Eventually, Manning returned to the lineup in the regular-season finale in '15, and the Broncos once again struggled with turnovers in the first half of a game against the Chargers. Manning then started all of the team's playoff games, including Super Bowl 50.

With the Broncos having turned the ball over 17 times in seven games, including 10 interceptions by Siemian, Joseph felt he could no longer wait to make the move. That's because the Broncos, even at 3-4, are still in the wild-card hunt in the AFC and have a 2-2 record in the AFC West, with division games remaining Nov. 26 against the Oakland Raiders and the regular-season finale Dec. 31 against the Chiefs.

"It came down to what's best for our football team and, quite frankly, what's best for Trevor's future," Joseph said after Wednesday's practice. "The team was OK with it. They trust, obviously, Brock. It's the same situation [as 2015], very similar."

A few moments later, Joseph added: "It's a week-to-week business, so my focus is absolutely on Sunday. It's simple, right? If Brock plays well, he'll play next week. That's just simple. That won't be hard to determine after Sunday's game."

In 2015, Osweiler made his first start, on the road, against the Chicago Bears, and the Broncos used a game plan that featured 36 run plays as Osweiler attempted 27 passes on a cold day at Soldier Field. Wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders, who is a question mark for Sunday's game in Philadelphia with an ankle injury, missed that game in Chicago because of injury.

"In some ways, it's somewhat of a similar situation, but no year in the NFL is the same as the next," Osweiler said. "... Yes, there's similarities, but they're still different."

The Broncos won five of Osweiler's seven starts in that '15 run, including an overtime win over the New England Patriots in Osweiler's second start that was the tiebreaker to give the Broncos home-field advantage in the playoffs. That meant the AFC Championship Game against the Patriots was played in Denver. This time around, should Osweiler start a second consecutive game after Sunday, he would face the New England Patriots on Nov. 11 in Denver.

Joseph met with Siemian, Osweiler and Paxton Lynch individually Tuesday night to tell the quarterbacks of his decision to start Osweiler against the Eagles. Joseph then told the team Wednesday morning.

"Just called me in his office, and we had a good talk," Siemian said. "Disappointed, obviously. I think, as a competitor, you want to play, I want to play, but I understand Coach Joseph has got a job to do and do whatever he thinks is best for the team."

Brock Osweiler to replace Trevor Siemian at QB for Broncos

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

November 2, 2017

With a growing pile of turnovers and a three-game losing streak in hand, the Denver Broncos made a change at quarterback Wednesday as Brock Osweiler was named the starter over Trevor Siemian for Sunday's game against the Philadelphia Eagles.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph met with Siemian and Osweiler on Tuesday night before informing other players at the Wednesday morning team meeting. Osweiler was slated to work with the first-teamers at practice, while Siemian, a team captain, has been benched.

It will be Osweiler's first start for the Broncos since 2015, when he started seven games while Peyton Manning was injured. Osweiler was pulled in the regular-season finale after the Broncos had four first-half turnovers, and Manning started every game thereafter in the run to the Super Bowl 50 title.

Osweiler then left in free agency for Houston. After throwing 15 touchdowns and 16 interceptions as the Texans' starter in 2016, Osweiler was traded to the Browns, who released him this preseason.

"I've been given this opportunity," Osweiler said Wednesday. "I'm being told to protect the football. ... The old saying is, 'Ball security is job security.'"

Joseph hinted at a change Tuesday after the Broncos' five-turnover loss to the Kansas City Chiefs on Monday night.

"When you lose three in a row and how we've lost the football games, again [Monday] on offense with four turnovers, I think everything is for discussion," Joseph said. "It's fair to say, right now, everything is being discussed. ... It's unfair to your team if you're not discussing that position."

The Broncos are on a short week and will leave for Philadelphia after Friday's practice.

Siemian, who had won the job in back-to-back training camp battles, threw three interceptions in Monday night's loss to the Chiefs. Only Cam Newton and Cleveland Browns rookie DeShone Kizer -- each have 11 interceptions -- have thrown more than Siemian (10) this season.

Siemian is 29th in the league in passer rating (76.8), and he's been sacked 25 times -- tied for the second-highest total among the league's starters. And the Broncos, despite the league's No. 1 defense, have lost four of their past five to drop to 3-5.

"[Joseph] just called me in his office and we had a good talk," Siemian said. "[I'm] disappointed obviously. I think as a competitor, you want to play. I want to play, but I understand Coach Joseph has got a job to do and do whatever he thinks is best for the team."

The Broncos re-acquired Osweiler after Paxton Lynch suffered a right (throwing) shoulder injury in a preseason game against the Green Bay Packers. Lynch just returned to practice last week.

Osweiler, after struggling in Houston and Cleveland, said he would have returned to the Broncos "for a dollar."

Broncos president of football operations/general manager John Elway said then that Osweiler needed some "football rehab." On Tuesday, during a radio appearance, Elway said the team would "be fine" if Osweiler were named the starter.

The biggest question moving forward is what the Broncos will do if they are mathematically eliminated from the playoff race. Lynch was the team's first-round pick in 2016, and the Broncos have seen him work in just two regular-season games to this point.

Joseph left open the possibility of putting Lynch in the lineup at some point as his shoulder improves and he gets more practice reps.

"He could be [in the mix]. Again, whatever's best for your football team, we're going to do," Joseph said Tuesday. "Obviously, Paxton is still healing up. He's getting better day to day, but it would be unfair to put Paxton out there right now. He hasn't played since Week 3 of the preseason and he's only practiced four days, on a short week. It wouldn't be fair to our football team or to Paxton."

QB Brock Osweiler gets another shot, but don't count out Paxton Lynch

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN

November 2, 2017

He said often in his storied career that "every interception has a story and nobody wants to hear it," but Peyton Manning knew better than most what interceptions do, and the power they have to wreck games and shatter confidence.

It's easy to lose in the tidal wave of historic numbers Manning put up as a Mount Rushmore quarterback in the NFL, but he was once a 20-something who threw 43 interceptions in his first two NFL seasons combined. He survived the scrutiny, the criticism, the baggage that comes with turnovers and losses in professional football because he was a rare, franchise-lifting talent.

Most who play quarterback do not have that vocational luxury and the unwavering support that comes with it. Turnovers have taken down more quarterbacks than all of the pass-rushers in the Pro Football Hall of Fame combined, and Trevor Siemian's name went on that list Wednesday.

Siemian was benched by the Denver Broncos with 10 interceptions on his docket this season and the team mired in a three-game losing streak.

Now, Brock Osweiler gets his chance. But he, like Siemian, has the first and only quarterback John Elway has drafted in the first round as the team's chief football decision-maker staring over his throwing shoulder in Paxton Lynch. The Broncos have now benched the guy who beat out Lynch -- twice -- for the job and are going with the quarterback they signed when Lynch got hurt in the preseason.

Osweiler will absolutely have to deal with that. No matter what the Broncos' playoff fortunes are down the stretch this season, the prospect of promoting Lynch hangs in the air over everything they do.

Looking over this season, the Broncos were shut out for the first time in 25 years in a 21-0 loss to the Chargers two games ago, and in seven games they have more turnovers (17) than touchdowns (14).

There were plenty of things that were Siemian's fault in there -- plenty indeed -- but he has taken the fall for the rest of it, too. That is a quarterback's job, given a team's starter usually receives most of the credit or blame for how things go.

The Broncos currently have only one front-line receiver (Demaryius Thomas), they have been decidedly inconsistent on the offensive line, and despite the fact they run the ball well, they've rarely run it into the end zone over seven games. It means Thomas hasn't had a touchdown catch in roughly 50 weeks, no running back has more than one rushing touchdown this season, and even the Broncos' elite defense has forced just six turnovers, or 11 fewer than the league leaders (Buffalo and Baltimore).

None of that matters. It never does for a starting quarterback -- they all know that going in. The Broncos lost games, Siemian threw interceptions and an expected change was made to have Osweiler start in Week 9.

Osweiler waited more than three years for the Broncos to toss him into the mix in his first stint with the team, when he started seven games for an injured Manning in 2015. Osweiler, too, got pulled because of turnovers that weren't all his fault in the regular-season finale that season, and Manning returned to close out the team's Super Bowl run in what was Manning's last season.

This time, Osweiler is trying to do what Siemian will be left to do down the road -- rebuild himself and his career.

Papa John's says anthem protests are hurting deal with NFL

By Darren Rovell
ESPN
November 2, 2017

Executives from Papa John's, the official pizza company of the NFL, expressed disappointment on a conference call Wednesday about the league's ongoing player protests during the national anthem.

"The NFL has hurt us," company founder and CEO John Schnatter said. "We are disappointed the NFL and its leadership did not resolve this."

Executives said the company has pulled much of its NFL television advertising and that the NFL has responded by giving the company additional future spots. Later in the day, a spokesman clarified that the spots themselves weren't being pulled, just the NFL shield or "official sponsor" designation on those spots.

"Leadership starts at the top, and this is an example of poor leadership," Schnatter said, noting he thought the issue had been "nipped in the bud" a year and a half ago.

In revising sales estimates for the next quarter, Papa John's president and chief operating officer Steve Ritchie said on the call that the NFL deal was the primary suspect behind the decline and that "we expect it to persist unless a solution is put in place."

Ritchie said that research has found that Papa John's has been the most recognized sponsor associated with the NFL for two years running, which he said means the company's performance can track with that of the league.

Papa John's has a deal with not only the NFL, but also with 23 individual teams.

Company executives declined to disclose exactly how much money in projected sales Papa John's lost from its association with the NFL and declining ratings, which mean fewer people are ordering their product for game days, they said.

Papa John's stock was down 8.5 percent on Wednesday.

ESPN reached out to 18 NFL official sponsors in the last few days and asked the companies about its current relationship with the league and if any marketing programs had been changed due to the turmoil. Only five sponsors responded with a comment.

Verizon spokesperson Jim Gerace wrote via email that "our discussions with any partner are between us and while we haven't done anything different, we don't discuss future plans."

"We are not going to critique their performance in public just as I wouldn't expect them to critique ours," Gerace added.

A Hyundai spokesperson said in a statement, "Hyundai participated in constant dialogue with the league to discuss all aspects of our partnership, including national anthem protests. We've been pleased with the frequency and openness of those conversations."

A spokesperson for Dannon, whose Oikos brand has an official NFL deal, said: "We continue to monitor the situation carefully and have not made changes to our advertising or related plans."

Nike and Anheuser-Busch referred to previously issued statements.

League sponsors that either didn't return a message after 24 hours or declined comment included: PepsiCo, Mars, Visa, Campbell's Soup, Procter & Gamble, Castrol, Bose, McDonald's, Nationwide, Microsoft, USAA, Marriott and Bridgestone.

Denver Broncos bench Siemian, promote Osweiler

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
November 2, 2017

Brock Osweiler knows just how to turn the Denver Broncos' quarterback switch into more than a temporary gig.

"Ball security is job security," Osweiler said.

Doesn't Trevor Siemian know it.

Siemian's half dozen turnovers during Denver's three-game losing streak cost him his starting job 48 hours after his three ugly interceptions wasted a strong defensive effort in a 29-19 loss at Kansas City.

"It came down to what's best for our football team and frankly, what's best for Trevor's future," coach Vance Joseph said Wednesday after naming his starter for Sunday, when the Broncos (3-4) visit the Philadelphia Eagles (7-2). "The team was OK with it. They trust Brock. He's been here before."

Osweiler started seven games in place of an injured Peyton Manning two years ago, going 5-2 in helping the Broncos secure home-field advantage in the AFC playoffs on their way to their Super Bowl 50 title.

In bolting two months later for \$37 million in guarantees from the Houston Texans, Osweiler embarked on an 18-month odyssey that included a playoff win, a benching, a blow-up, a trade, the birth of his daughter, his release from Cleveland and ultimately a return to Denver, where backup Paxton Lynch had sprained his throwing shoulder in the preseason.

The first thing Osweiler did was text Siemian.

"And I said, 'Hey Trev, this is your team. You've earned it. This is your squad. I'm here to do whatever you need me to do to help you win games,'" Osweiler recounted Wednesday. "And now the roles have just flipped."

So, Osweiler will make his first start in a Broncos uniform Sunday since Jan. 3, 2016.

"It's hard to really put in words just because of how much love I have for this organization, my teammates and this city," Osweiler said. "... This week is solely about our football team trying to get a win."

Joseph said the coaching staff and Siemian's teammates aren't without blame in Denver's slump but Siemian is the one paying the price, something Joseph insisted would ultimately benefit the third-year pro who is 11-10 with 27 TDs and 20 interceptions.

"His career is not over by this. Lots of young quarterbacks have to take a step back to just watch the game and figure out how to play the game better," Joseph said. "All of the good quarterbacks are game managers. That's a negative term in football but it shouldn't be because to be a quarterback, you have to manage the football. That part, he's been struggling with."

Siemian said he'll "just take a step back and take a breather and kind of evaluate some things" while also being there for Osweiler.

Joseph made clear his mandate to Osweiler: protect the football.

"You know, the saying is 'job security is ball security,' and if you protect the football, you're going to stay out there on the field," Osweiler said. "So, game manager, protecting the football, whatever you call it, that's our job every week."

Osweiler went 8-6 in Houston last year before being benched but he was back starting for the Texans' win over Oakland and loss to New England in the playoffs, after which he was traded to Cleveland.

Siemian also went 8-6 last season but the Broncos missed the playoffs at 9-7. He had to beat out Lynch again last offseason after Joseph replaced coach Gary Kubiak.

Lynch returned to practice last week and could get his own shot at starting should Osweiler falter and the Broncos slip out of contention. They're only a game back in the AFC wild card race right now.

After his release by the Browns, Osweiler quickly reunited with the Broncos, saying he'd learned his lesson about leaving such an ideal situation. He said he told his agent if the Broncos wanted him back, "I don't care if it's a dollar, that's where we're going."

Of course, he's getting much more than that — \$16 million this season, 95 percent of it paid by the Browns.

Showing he held no grudges, general manager John Elway declared Denver never would have won the Super Bowl without Osweiler and suggested that with offensive coordinator Mike McCoy and QBs coach Bill Musgrave, Denver was just the place for Osweiler to revive his career so he could be a starter again.

Elway said Osweiler just needed "a little football rehab."

"Yeah, I'm checking out," Osweiler cracked.

Turning serious, Osweiler said sometimes what's best for a passer who is pressing "is actually pulling him out of the fire and making him the backup and letting him observe."

Which he did in Denver for the last two months.

"So, that's kind of what my rehab's been," Osweiler said, "and now we're going to put it to the test."

Notes: Rookie QB Chad Kelly, who is almost certainly headed to IR next week, practiced with the other QBs during the jog-through Wednesday. ... Joseph said he's not sure if TE Jake Butt (knee) will come off the reserve/non-football injury list this weekend.

Papa John's cites NFL controversy in weak pizza sales growth

By Staff

Associated Press

November 2, 2017

Sales growth at Papa John's is slowing, and the pizza chain is blaming it on the outcry surrounding NFL players kneeling during the national anthem.

The company, which is a sponsor and advertiser of the NFL, said customers have a negative view of the chain's association with the NFL. The company also cut its earnings growth expectations for the year and Papa John's stock fell about 10 percent Wednesday.

"NFL leadership has hurt Papa John's shareholders," said the chain's CEO John Schnatter, in a call with analysts Wednesday. "This should have been nipped in the bud a year and a half ago."

The kneeling movement was started last year by former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who kneeled to protest what he said was police mistreatment of black males. More players began kneeling after President Donald Trump said at an Alabama rally last month that team owners should get rid of players who protest during the anthem.

Schnatter, echoing what Trump has said on Twitter, said the controversy is hurting NFL ratings. He said Papa John's has hired a new creative agency that will help it create more digital ads.

"The controversy is polarizing the customer, polarizing the country," he said.

A representative for the NFL did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday. Commissioner Roger Goodell and several owners said at the league's fall meetings last month that they did not discuss altering the anthem policy language from "should stand" to "must stand."

Other companies don't see the NFL as a problem. Executives at chicken wing chain Buffalo Wild Wings Inc. said last week that the company didn't expect declining NFL viewership to hurt a key sales figure. And Kohl's, the department store operator, said it is working with the NFL on a holiday ad campaign.

"What we see is a lot of our shoppers and prospective shoppers are watching NFL so that is what is behind the decision," said Greg Revelle, the chief marketing officer at Kohl's. "We are very confident."

As for Papa John's, it reported late Tuesday that third-quarter sales rose 1 percent at established locations in North America, which it said was below what the company had expected. In the same period a year ago, sales rose 5.5 percent at established locations.

Shares of Papa John's International Inc., based in Louisville, Kentucky, fell \$6.60 to \$61.45 on Wednesday.

Broncos name Brock Osweiler as starter, bench Trevor Siemian

By Troy Renck
KMGH
November 2, 2017

Brock on.

What became obvious Tuesday became official today. The Broncos named Brock Osweiler as their starting quarterback, replacing the struggling Trevor Siemian. After meeting with assistants and general manager John Elway on Tuesday, coach Vance Joseph made the move.

"The team obviously trusts Brock. He has been in this situation before. It's very similar. It's why we signed him. We want a veteran presence who has played in big games," Joseph said. "So far, so good. I am excited about Brock."

With the season slipping away after a third straight loss, Siemian's play left Joseph no choice. Siemian has nine turnovers in his last five games, and reached the abyss with a three-interception outing at Kansas City. The Broncos believe they can move back into the playoff race if they win the turnover battle given the strength of their defense. The feeling internally is that they need a game manager, someone to protect the ball. Osweiler owns experience in that role.

"Ball security is job security," Osweiler put perfectly on his first-day back atop the depth chart. "This week is not about me. This week is solely about our football team finding a way to get a win on the road in a hostile environment against a great opponent. We know we have a huge challenge ahead of us."

However, Osweiler inherits a team different from the one he took over in 2015. With Peyton Manning slumping and injured, Osweiler went 5-2 as a starter, relying heavily on the ground game and a conservative approach. A lot has happened since. The 6-foot-7 quarterback bottomed out in Houston last season after signing a four-year, \$72-million contract. The Texans benched and later traded Osweiler to the Cleveland Browns, who cut him loose.

"I believe I have learned from those experiences," said Osweiler, who posted an 8-6 record as Houston's starter last season, but threw 16 interceptions with 14 touchdowns. "I think anyone would."

Joseph told Siemian and Osweiler Tuesday night of his intentions. Siemian expressed disappointment. It was a staggering spiral for a player who started the season with six touchdown passes in his first two games.

"It's hard to say (what went wrong). Certainly last game I was trying to make something happen, especially at the end there," Siemian said, showing professionalism in meeting with the media after his demotion. "The one thing, a lot of the mistakes I have made when I got off schedule and got out of the pocket. It's something I will learn from."

Osweiler returned to Denver as a free agent at the end of training camp, making the veteran minimum. Humbled and hungry to salvage his career, Osweiler worked diligently at practice to fix his mechanics

and rebuild his confidence. Multiple players told Denver7 on Tuesday and Wednesday that they believe Osweiler is ready. When general manager John Elway brought back Osweiler, he admitted Osweiler "needs some football rehab."

"I have checked out (of rehab)," Osweiler joked.

Denver faces 7-1 Philadelphia on Sunday, looking for its first road win of the season.

"Brock knows the system having worked with Mike (McCoy's) system from way back in the day," running back C.J. Anderson said. "He knows how to get in and out of things. And having guys he's played with like me, Emmanuel (Sanders), D.T. (Demaryius Thomas), Virg (Virgil Green) helps. It's up to us to support him and do our jobs, too. We need to find a way to get back on track."

Mason's Week 9 Power Rankings: No change at the top

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
November 2, 2017

1. PHILADELPHIA (7-1) Last week: 1

Carson Wentz has the league buzzing, but the Eagles are far more than him; they have rushed for 1,034 yards through eight games, nearly twice as many as their opponents (563).

2. NEW ENGLAND (6-2) Last week: 2

Dont'a Hightower's season-ending torn pectoral muscle could catch up with the Patriots at some point, but for now the proof is in the pudding of four consecutive games in which New England's defense has allowed 17 or fewer points.

3. PITTSBURGH (6-2) Last week: 3

Ben Roethlisberger's passer rating of 82.7 is still middling, but the rest of the Steelers' attack on both sides of the football is humming along nicely.

4. KANSAS CITY (6-2) Last week: 4

In two of their last three games, the Chiefs have been held to one offensive touchdown, but that probably says more about the quality of the defenses they faced in Pittsburgh and Denver than anything that is askew with Kansas City's attack.

5. MINNESOTA (6-2) Last week: 6

Another week, another game in which the Vikings held a foe to fewer than 20 points, something they've done seven times this season.

6. L.A. RAMS (5-2) Last week: 5

This week's cross-country trek to New York to face the Giants is a must-win, as the Rams' schedule gets tricky from that point forward. Their schedule from Weeks 10-16 includes games with the Texans, Vikings, Saints, Eagles, Seahawks and Titans. Only a Week 13 game at Arizona looks reasonably comfortable. We'll find out from that stretch whether this ranking is justified or a mirage.

7. NEW ORLEANS (5-2) Last week: 7

The Saints didn't have their 'A' game against Chicago, but they had enough to get by. A win this week would give them their longest winning streak since the 2011 season, when they finished the regular season on an eight-game streak.

8. SEATTLE (5-2)

Last week: 8

Not every quarterback can discombobulate the Seahawks the way Deshaun Watson did, but last week's game marked the second time in the last five contests that they given up at least 33 points. In their other games this season, the Seahawks haven't allowed more than 18.

9. BUFFALO (5-2)

Last week: 9

Forcing turnovers is crucial to the Bills' success, and they did so again last Sunday against Oakland, notching four takeaways without a giveaway of their own.

10. CAROLINA (5-3)

Last week: 11

Five of their next six games are against teams with winning records.

11. DALLAS (4-3)

Last week: 17

Since the Broncos held them to 17 points, the Cowboys have averaged 32.4 points per game and haven't scored fewer than 28.

12. JACKSONVILLE (4-3)

Last week: 16

The Jaguars' defense leads the league in net points allowed per possession; if they can figure out how to avoid the one-week-on, one-week-off routine, this looks like a potential division champion.

13. HOUSTON (3-4)

Last week: 10

Deshaun Watson and the offense have put up fireworks, but the defense is at the cusp of collapse.

14. ATLANTA (4-3)

Last week: 15

After a trip to Carolina this weekend, four of the Falcons' following five games are at home, but is that a good thing? They looked out of sorts in their previous two home games, which they lost to Buffalo and Miami.

15. BALTIMORE (4-4)

Last week: 23

A big-time bounce from a romp over Miami gives them a boost in a muddled middle.

16. DETROIT (3-4)

Last week: 18

Too many lost opportunities felled them against the Steelers, as they settled for five Matt Prater field goals. Detroit has squandered its chances for statement home wins against the Falcons, Panthers and Steelers this season.

17. TENNESSEE (4-3)

Last week: 20

Moving up by standing still during their bye.

18. DENVER (3-4)

Last week: 14

Denver's defense leads the league in net yards and first downs allowed per possession and has held opponents without a first down on a league-leading 43.9 percent of their series this season.

But it's all about turnovers, of course, which have given the Broncos the league's second-worst turnover margin. That has helped allow opponents to start 15 drives in Broncos territory this season; those possessions account for 36.5 percent of the points allowed by the defense. Opponents have also scored four times on field goals without even gaining a first down; the Chiefs did so twice Monday night.

19. WASHINGTON (3-4)

Last week: 12

A rigorous schedule seems to have caught up with Washington, which now has three losses to their primary NFC East rivals from Philadelphia and Dallas.

20. GREEN BAY (4-3)

Last week: 19

They need to trust their two-and-a-half-year investment in Brett Hundley's development, take off the training wheels and let him take advantage of the Packers' myriad formations while utilizing his mobility to create run-pass options that can force one defender to spy on him. That should create exploitable matchups in downfield coverage that Hundley can exploit.

21. CINCINNATI (3-4)

Last week: 26

The Bengals have quietly put together an effective defense; they rank in the NFL's top 10 in net points (10th), net yards (seventh) and first downs allowed (eighth) per possession.

22. MIAMI (4-3)

Last week: 13

After another shutout in which the Ravens' defense outscored the Dolphins' offense by two touchdowns, Miami is dead last in net yards and net points per possession.

23. CHICAGO (3-5)

Last week: 22

Mitchell Trubisky had more attempts in New Orleans last Sunday (32) than in his previous two starts combined (23), and while that offers a chance for him to grow for the future, the Bears' success equation for the present doesn't involve him carrying the offense on his arm.

24. L.A. CHARGERS (3-5)

Last week: 21

A win against the Patriots was a possibility, but you can't win in Foxborough by gift-wrapping points like Travis Benjamin did by doubling back too far into the end zone for a safety, giving New England a free two points.

25. OAKLAND (3-5)

Last week: 24

With games against the Patriots, Chiefs, Cowboys and Eagles among their first six games after their Week 10 bye, Sunday night's game at Miami shapes up as the do-or-die moment in their season.

26. N.Y. JETS (3-5)

Last week: 25

They're 2-2 in games decided by five or fewer points, and they're probably right about where they should be.

27. TAMPA BAY (2-5)

Last week: 27

The galleon is capsizing.

28. ARIZONA (3-4)

Last week: 28

Arizona has allowed at least 33 points in three consecutive games, and the offense no longer has enough firepower to consistently provide the output it needs to compensate for a defense that is beyond its breaking point.

29. N.Y. GIANTS (1-6)

Last week: 29

With the Giants on a bye, I have nothing to say except that when I covered Super Bowl XXXV, which the Giants lost 34-7 to the Ravens, I sat in the auxiliary press area, one row behind the late "60 Minutes" essayist Andy Rooney, best known for his "Did ya ever notice" monologues. The lifelong Giants fan was

not amused at watching his team's offense look only slightly more lively than the typewriter on his desk. Or maybe he just got annoyed at my comments as I took notes; I'm not really sure which.

30. INDIANAPOLIS (2-6)

Last week: 30

The wins over the Browns and 49ers save them from the bottom, because they help their winning percentage, but the Colts actually have a worse per-game point differential and overall offensive and defensive efficiency numbers.

31. CLEVELAND (0-8)

Last week: 31

A curious timeout called in a goal-to-go situation one play before they scored a touchdown allowed the Vikings enough time to march to a field goal just before halftime. This is the sort of game-management gaffe that an analytics-intensive team should never make.

32. SAN FRANCISCO (0-8)

Last week: 32

Home games against the Cardinals and Giants offer the potential for short-term relief; the trade for Jimmy Garoppolo could offer long-term hope if he proves to be the answer.

Broncos Injury Report: Emmanuel Sanders, Todd Davis return to practice

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
November 2, 2017

Wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders and inside linebacker Todd Davis returned to practice on a limited basis as the Broncos moved closer to being back at full strength in advance of their Week 9 game against the Philadelphia Eagles.

Sanders practiced after missing the last two games because of a sprained ankle suffered in the third quarter of the Oct. 15 loss to the New York Giants. Davis practiced after sitting out last week to recover from a high ankle sprain he suffered in the Oct. 22 loss to the Los Angeles Chargers.

Tight end Jake Butt also returned to practice after missing last week's work because of soreness that set in after practicing in Week 7. Butt, who spent the first nine and a half months of the year rehabilitating from a torn ACL, is still within the 21-day practice evaluation window for players who start the season on the non-football injury list.

Quarterback Chad Kelly is also in his 21-day window. The seventh-round pick took part in his first practice as a Bronco on Wednesday after seeing some work throwing the football after practices in recent weeks.

Kelly started the season on the non-football injury list after not taking part in training camp or preseason play because of a wrist injury he suffered before his Pro Day workout.

Cornerback Aqib Talib, nose tackle Domata Peko Sr. and running back Jamaal Charles also practiced. Both had received veterans' rest days on previous Wednesdays.

Job No. 1 for Brock Osweiler as he becomes Broncos' starting QB: 'Protect the football'

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
November 2, 2017

As he steps into the starting quarterback role, Brock Osweiler knows what his primary task is.

"I'm given this opportunity, and I'm being told, 'Protect the football,'" Osweiler said. "And that's something that all quarterbacks and all skill guys know when they come into the NFL: You have to protect the football.

"You know, the saying is, 'Ball security is job security.' And if you protect the football, you're going to stay out there on the field. Game manager, protecting the football, whatever you call it -- that's our job every week."

But rarely has the task been more crucial than it is right now.

The Broncos sit at 3-4, their first losing record after seven games in six years, and a minus-11 turnover margin is the primary culprit. During their three-game losing streak, the offense gave away the football 10 times -- six on interceptions thrown by Trevor Siemian and four on lost fumbles.

Few statistics are better at reflecting the game's outcome than giveaways and turnover margin. In the 2017 season alone, teams that give away the football at least three times are 3-40; in the last 10 seasons, they are 209-815-1, according to pro-football-reference.com. With a minus-3 turnover margin, teams are 1-21 this year and 27-438-1 over the last decade. The Broncos have lost 23 of their last 24 games with a turnover margin that is minus-3 or worse.

The giveaways have not only taken their toll on the team, but they have made it difficult for Head Coach Vance Joseph and his staff to ascertain just what type of team they have.

"I'm hoping that this move can simply stabilize the offense so we can get into a fair game so we can win some football games -- or just simply to see where we're at as a football team," he said. "We can't see where we're at until we stop turning the football over. It's impossible to win in this league with three to four turnovers a game.

"Monday night [in Kansas City], it's a 20-13 game with three minutes to go in the third quarters, and we've got four turnovers. How about just two and see where we are? I'm anxious to see where we are if we don't turn the ball over, to see how good we can be."

What the Broncos want and need is for Osweiler to be the quarterback he was during his first six starts as a Bronco in 2015, when he turned over the football just three times. Denver won four of those games, including a come-from-behind overtime triumph over the Patriots, who came into that contest unbeaten.

If that means Osweiler is a "game manager," then so what? That's not a pejorative in Joseph's eyes.

"All of the good quarterbacks are game managers," Head Coach Vance Joseph said. "That's a negative term in football, but it shouldn't be, because to be a quarterback, you have to manage the football game."

Osweiler expects that he can manage the game better because of the time he spent re-learning Offensive Coordinator Mike McCoy's scheme and watching from the sideline.

"I think sometimes the best thing for a quarterback when he's not playing well or he's going through some tough times is actually pulling him out of the fire and making him the backup, making him the third string and letting him observe," Osweiler said. "And that's what I've been able to do."

Siemian now has the benefit of regaining perspective by standing on the sideline. That helped Osweiler over the last seven weeks as he went through what President/General Manager John Elway termed as "football rehab" following a difficult 2016 season with the Houston Texans and a failed bid to make the Cleveland Browns' roster this summer.

"Sometimes in the heat of the moment, things aren't going well and you have to make a play, and then you make a bad play worse, and it just compounds, and before you know it, you can't slow it down," Osweiler said. "But I've been very fortunate now to sit on the sideline for seven games, learn this offense and just observe and think about how I would do things differently if I'm ever given the opportunity again."

Now he can put those thoughts into practice.

"This is why we signed him," Joseph said. "We wanted a veteran presence in our quarterback room -- a guy who has played in big games. A guy who can lead our offense if something like this were to happen."

"So far, so good."

That What They Said: Eagles HC Doug Pederson, DT Fletcher Cox

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
November 2, 2017

Eagles head coach Doug Pederson: "We have to prepare like we've been doing for whoever is back there. Obviously in the week, it does give you a chance to go back and just watch some tape and give you a feel for him. Listen, we're concerned about our own game plan and just getting ready for a good football team to come in here."

Eagles defensive tackle Fletcher Cox: "We know we're going against a really good, competitive quarterback. We know that he'll be competitive and fired up and ready to go. So we just have to prepare as if Trevor [Siemian] was playing. We know they'll stick with their game plan."

[On if it's difficult preparing for Osweiler because there is almost no film on him in this offense from this season]

FC: "It will. We know that. This won't be his first-ever game in the NFL, so as a defensive line we'll go back and study some old stuff on him and see some things that he does and some things that he's good at. I think he'll come out ... excited for a chance to go out and show the NFL why he can be a starting quarterback. But at the same time, we have to make this game about us, because they're going to do what they do and we need to just stay focused on what we're doing. That's going out and competing every down."

Denver's defense draws admiration

DP: "This is one of the top defenses — the top defense — in the league right now. For me, the familiarity with having been in Kansas City for three years and playing these guys just from a personnel standpoint, there really are no weaknesses on defense, whether it be the front seven or the back four. These guys are relentless finishers. We all know about [Broncos OLB] Von Miller and getting [OLB] Shane Ray back is obviously a big boost to that defense. A lot of man coverage in the back end — that's what you see on tape. They're doing a great job in mixing things up, giving you multiple fronts and giving you some multiple coverages. Our work is definitely cut out from us from an offensive standpoint and from a preparation standpoint. But, this is the No. 1 or No. 2 rush-defense in the league right now. It's a pretty stout front to run the ball against."

"... You're also seeing a lot of quarterbacks on the ground. You're seeing a lot of quarterback's scramble and throwing the ball away. They're very disruptive that way. If you can protect, there are some opportunities there to make plays. But again, it all boils down to your offensive line and your backs and protection to give Carson a chance to find those guys down the field."

"... I think they're right around 72 yards per game. It's a stout group. It's hard. These guys fill the gaps. The linebackers are downhill. They create edges. Then it's an attack style. It is difficult. The teams that have won games are a little more patient in the run game and just keep chiseling away. Definitely a

staple. Again, if you're going to throw the ball, they have two great corners, Chris Harris [Jr.] and [Aqib] Talib that can shut you down. It just makes it that much harder to execute on offense."

Wentz growing in second NFL season

[On what Eagles QB Carson Wentz has done that has most impressed him]

FC: "Just his ability to control everything and stay poised. I think Carson also does a great job when it comes to being a leader. We look at him as the leader of the team because he's in his second year. We've got a bunch of leaders, but if you look at the teams that are really good, their quarterback is the leader of the team. You've got guys like that and we've just got to stand behind him in everything he does and support him, even through the bad times."

[On how he helps Wentz recover from mistakes]

DP: "We just focus on the next play, you know? Things like that are going to happen in this game. Nobody is perfect, obviously, so we just move on to the next play. We try to execute and learn from them. We try to coach him up either in the game or the next day. It's just a matter of how well you can move on past the negative and make a positive play after that."

"... I can help them a little bit with the play call and play calling, and that type of thing. Get back to the run game and back to fundamentals to settle him down just a little bit. Maybe get the ball out a little bit faster. Maybe some quick throws, just to try to get him back into rhythm, if something were to happen that way. Then, as the game begins to flow from there, that's when you can open it back up again. But, the thing is, quarterbacks in this league have to have short-term memory and move on from anything negative that happens."

Pederson unsure of recently acquired Ajayi's role on Sunday

DP: "It just depends on a few things, how much he can learn in a short period of time. I don't want to do him a disservice by putting him out there or affecting the roster because you're going to have to put somebody down that might have a little bit more of an impact role this week. So, we'll see. We'll see how the week goes. We'll see how much he can learn and understand and we'll make a decision later on."

Cox enjoying Eagles' attacking front

FC: "We're just playing together. I think that even — and [DT] Timmy [Jernigan] and [DE] Vinny [Curry] and everybody — with me, [DE] Brandon [Graham] and Vinny being here last year, with the addition of Timmy, I think has made a big impact on what we do, because he gets to go out and show what he can do. He came from a different style of defense but once he figured out the way [and] that the style that we play defense — attack, attack, attack the line of scrimmage, create the line of scrimmage — I think that he's just having so much fun doing it. And especially with bringing [DE] Chris [Long] and [DE] Derek [Barnett] and everybody in that room, we feed off of each other, and that's what's driving us on every down."

[On whether the defensive line's success helped the secondary come together early in the season]

"Yeah, I think it played a big part. We like to get after the quarterback, so in order to do that, what do we got to do? We have to stop the run. And stopping the run, we know [Eagles defensive coordinator] Jim [Schwartz] is going to let the big guys rush and the back end cover. We always tell those guys, 'Man, hey, just give us a little time and we'll get there and be disruptive.' And those guys, they trust us. We trust them, and we just play off one another.

Brock Osweiler to start at quarterback vs. Philadelphia Eagles

By Aric DiLalla
DenverBroncos.com
November 2, 2017

Brock Osweiler will guide Denver's offense Sunday when the Broncos take on the Eagles in Philadelphia.

Head Coach Vance Joseph informed his team Osweiler would start this weekend during a team meeting ahead of Wednesday's practice.

Joseph is scheduled to meet the media Wednesday afternoon and will expand on the decision.

Following the Broncos' third consecutive loss, Joseph said "everything is being explored" to help Denver stay in contention for a postseason berth.

"It's my job to do what's best for the football team," Joseph said Tuesday. "... If you try to go the same way and it doesn't get better, that's on me. Again, we have players and coaches putting a lot of time and effort in to get ready for these football games and guys are playing hard. I think it's fair to examine [the quarterback] position and all positions."

Joseph was asked by media Tuesday whether the move would be permanent as the Broncos move ahead in their 2017 season.

"I can't say, if something does happen, what the time frames are," Joseph said. "Right now, I'm only concerned about the Eagles, and that's Sunday."

Osweiler guided the Broncos to a 5-2 mark in 2015 as he filled in for an injured Peyton Manning. The then fourth-year quarterback threw for 1,589 yards, eight touchdowns and three interceptions during the six games in which he was the only Broncos quarterback to attempt a pass.

Osweiler's work during that stretch helped the Broncos earn the No. 1 seed for their postseason run to Super Bowl 50.

The Broncos drafted Osweiler with the 57th-overall pick in the 2012 NFL draft, and the sixth-year player returned to Denver in early September as teams across the league submitted their roster cuts.

Trevor Siemian started Denver's first seven games of the season and threw for 1,669 yards, nine touchdowns and 10 interceptions.

How 'a step back' should help Trevor Siemian's future

By Aric DiLalla

DenverBroncos.com

November 2, 2017

Forget dropbacks. Right now, Trevor Siemian's best bet is a step back.

Head Coach Vance Joseph told the third-year quarterback as much Tuesday night when he met with him to explain his decision to proceed into Sunday's game with Brock Osweiler as the starter.

"It's best for Trevor because he's a young quarterback," Joseph said Wednesday. "His career is not over by this. Lots of young quarterbacks have to take a step back to just watch the game and figure out how to play the game better. All of the good quarterbacks are game managers. That's a negative term in football, but it shouldn't be because to be a quarterback, you have to manage the football game.

"That part, he's been struggling with. In my opinion, for his best interest, he needs to take a step back to watch Brock operate in meetings and on game day. It's going to help his future."

Siemian, who said he understood Joseph's decision, seemed to recognize the positives he could gain from even an unwanted switch.

Through seven games, Siemian said, he hasn't been able to meet his own expectations for how he hopes to play. He hopes spending time as the reserve quarterback can help him reset his game and return to what worked in Week 1 and Week 2.

"I've got to support Brock and do whatever I can for these guys and be as good a teammate as I can be," Siemian said. "Not much changes on that end. But yeah, I just take a step back, take a breather and kind of evaluate some things."

Should Joseph call on Siemian, who owns a 11-10 career record as a starter, he will be ready to play. He still feels good, he said, he just needs to reduce the couple of mistakes that have plagued him in recent losses.

Those mistakes, at least in Kansas City, came from Siemian pressing to make plays. And, more often than not, Siemian has seen his mistakes add up when he's off script and out of rhythm.

"Just the one thing is, a lot of the mistakes I've made have been off schedule and when I've gotten out of the pocket," Siemian said. "So that's something I'll learn from and hopefully clean up."

Ahead of Sunday's game against Philadelphia, though, Siemian's main focus will rest on helping Osweiler prepare for the start.

Siemian said he would do "whatever [Brock] needs from me," and that their friendly relationship has helped soften an otherwise awkward situation.

In the few hours since Joseph's announcement to his quarterbacks and his team, Osweiler has seen Siemian lend his support.

"I don't think really anything changes," Osweiler said. "It's funny how this league works. In 2015, Trevor backed me up for a while, and he was so supportive and he was always there for me and he was an extra set of eyes on the sideline during games. Now I come here in 2017, and I'm his backup.

"And I did the same thing from Day 1. When I got here, I texted Trevor, and I said right away, 'Hey, Trev, this is your team. You earned it. This is your squad. I'm here to do whatever you need me to do to help you win games on Sunday.' And that's how it's been.

"And now the roles have just flipped for a week, and nothing changes with Trevor and I. Our lockers are right next to each other, we went about business as usual. You know, we're talking about news in the world and the World Series and this and that, and we're just there to support each other, good, bad or indifferent."

Denver Broncos Cheerleaders selected as Salute to Service Award nominee

By Staff

DenverBroncos.com

November 2, 2017

The Denver Broncos have selected the team's cheerleaders as its USAA Salute to Service Award Nominee in recognition of the 10-year anniversary of the "Cheer for the Troops" collection drive.

The Salute to Service Award was created to acknowledge the exceptional efforts by members of the NFL community to honor and support U.S. service members, veterans and their families. Each team identifies a nominee for the national award.

"Cheer for the Troops" is an annual campaign that encourages Broncos Country to join the cheerleaders in collecting items for servicemen and women all over the world to be distributed during the holidays. Since the campaign's inception in 2007, more than 37,000 pounds of items have been donated, totaling more than 4,000 individual boxes delivered to soldiers.

In 2016, "Cheer for the Troops" collected 6,066 pounds of hygiene, food and fun items, which led to the team shipping 674 packages to service men and women.

"For 10 years, Cheer for the Troops has been a way for our team and our Broncos community to make sure these service men and women know they are not forgotten back home," Director of Cheerleaders Shawna Peters said. "The 600 kids in our Jr. Cheerleaders program are fully vested in the program as well, collecting items from home, school, friends and family as well as making sure every box shipped has a personal letter of gratitude from them. Connecting the children in our program to the values we share as a country will hopefully create a legacy of helping serve those who serve."

Fans can get involved this year by donating items at all Denver Broncos Team Store through Dec. 9.

Klee blog: What year is it? Brock Osweiler to replace Trevor Siemian as starting quarterback of Denver Broncos

By Paul Klee
Colorado Springs Gazette
November 2, 2017

Here, throw this at the wall.

See if it sticks.

In a football twist no one could have predicted when he was booed at Mile High as a member of the Houston Texans — but is the obvious choice after Monday night's meltdown — Osweiler will start for the Broncos at quarterback at Philadelphia on Sunday. Vance Joseph informed the team of the switch from Trevor Siemian on Wednesday morning, according to Mike Klis of 9News.

How'd we get here?

How much time do you have?

Here's a loose timeline:

2012: Broncos draft Osweiler with the 57th overall pick

2015: Osweiler starts for Broncos in place of Peyton Manning and helps Denver to Super Bowl 50 with a 5-2 record in seven starts

2016: Osweiler spurns the Broncos to sign a \$72 million deal with the Texans and skips Denver's visit to the White House

August 2017: Osweiler completes 12-of-22 passes for 67 yards, no touchdowns and a quarterback rating of 41.3 during the Browns' preseason

November 2017: Osweiler starts for Broncos in place of Siemian

It's the right move for the Broncos. It's the only move for the Broncos.

Mostly, it's proof Denver's real quarterback of the future isn't in the building.

Ramsey blog: This is Brock Osweiler's final chance to save his NFL career

By David Ramsey
Colorado Springs Gazette
November 2, 2017

It's his last chance.

Brock Osweiler has returned as the Broncos starting quarterback. He's being asked to resurrect a sputtering offense and a season that's dangling on a cliff.

This is the same Osweiler who was cut in August by the Cleveland Browns, a winless team. The Browns decided Osweiler was not worthy to remain on their roster. (That's one serious insult.) This is the same Osweiler who was banished from Houston a few months after the Texans paid him \$37 million in guaranteed money to lead their offense.

Osweiler showed signs in 2015 of quarterbacking brilliance. He started seven games for the Broncos, leading the eventual champs to five wins, including come-from-behind victories over the powerful Patriots and Bengals.

And he was improving. His presence in the pocket was maturing. He was taking more time to scan the field. He played with increasing poise and decreasing fear.

It's easy to forget now why the Texans gave him so much money. Brock Osweiler seemed on his way to becoming one of the NFL's top dozen quarterbacks. Remember, John Elway and the Broncos offered Brock \$30 million in guaranteed money to remain in Colorado. No position in sport is more demanding than playing QB in the NFL.

And Osweiler once looked ready to meet all the demands.

But maybe the obsessive and brilliant masterminds who craft NFL defenses have figured out Brock. After examining video of his tendencies, those masterminds might have discovered all his weaknesses and left him less-than-mediocre. The Brock of 2016, the one who struggled with the Texans, looked exposed and jittery. No one wants that version of Brock leading an offense.

Bronco coach Vance Joseph had no choice. Trevor Siemian was throwing strange interceptions while failing, again and again, to score points. Over 12 quarters, the Siemian-led Broncos scored 19 points, or less than the Peyton Manning-led Broncos sometimes scored in one quarter.

Change was required.

Brock, despised and rejected by the Texans and Browns, faces an immense task. He will lead the Broncos against the powerful Eagles. He must face the fans of Philadelphia, who are among the most vile and lovable in all of sport. The Broncos will be heavy underdogs, and a lost season might get even more lost.

He is one step away from salvaging a career that not long ago had so much promise.

And he's also one step away from football oblivion.

Broncos' Brock Osweiler eager to prove his stint in 'football rehab' was successful

By Lindsay Jones
USA Today
November 2, 2017

When Brock Osweiler re-signed with the Denver Broncos in September, following his release from the Cleveland Browns, he was in search of what Broncos general manager John Elway called “football rehab.”

“I guess I’m checking out,” Osweiler said Wednesday, laughing.

This is no joke.

Osweiler is — once again — the starting quarterback, and he’s taking over a team in a tailspin.

Head coach Vance Joseph called Osweiler and Trevor Siemian, who started the first seven games, into his office Tuesday night to inform them that Osweiler will start Sunday against the Philadelphia Eagles and their NFL-best 7-1 record. Siemian’s struggles over the past three weeks — he turned the ball over seven times during Denver’s losing streak — became unbearable for Joseph, who’s repeatedly said since Monday night’s defeat in Kansas City that the mistakes were unfair to a team that was otherwise playing well in other areas.

“In fairness to the players and the staff, it was time to make a change so we could figure out how to stabilize the offense and get into a fair game, so we can win some of these games,” Joseph said. “We’ve outgained our opponents in the four (total) losses. Our numbers and stats from Monday night, it’s silly. We won the yardage, we won third downs, we won in the red zone. We lost one battle, and that’s turnovers. It’s all about managing the game better and picking our moments better to make big plays, rather than making things bad to worse.”

The message to Osweiler is clear: Manage the offense, limit negative plays, and let the running game and defense carry the load.

“I’ve been given this opportunity and I’m being told, ‘Protect the football,’ ” he said.

Around the training facility Wednesday, Broncos coaches and teammates tried to talk up Osweiler, referencing his 5-2 record for the 2015 Super Bowl team when Peyton Manning was injured. They brought up Osweiler’s big wins, from his first start on a frigid day in Chicago, to an overtime win in the snow against New England, as proof that he can handle the job.

No one mentioned an ugly home loss to Oakland, when Osweiler was sacked five times, or his two first-half interceptions in the 2015 regular-season finale, a performance that sent him back to the bench as Manning reclaimed the reins.

Osweiler was a huge disappointment last year after signing with the Houston Texans, who jettisoned him after one 15-touchdown, 16-interception campaign.

But the Broncos are still hoping now, with another chance, he'll become an effective game manager.

Oswailer admitted Wednesday that he found himself trying to "do too much" in Houston. He had a massive contract (4 years, \$72 million) and was, for the first time in his NFL career, the man. But he feuded with Texans coach Bill O'Brien and never established a rapport with No. 1 receiver DeAndre Hopkins.

"Sometimes, when you're in the heat of the moment and things aren't going well, you're just trying to make a play. And then you make a bad play worse, and then it just compounds and, before you know it, you can't slow it down," Oswailer said.

"I've been very fortunate that for seven games to be able to sit on the sideline, learn this offense through mental reps and just observe and think about how I would do things different if I was given the opportunity again. That's sort of what my rehab has been, and now we're going to put it to the test."

Joseph is not committing to Oswailer beyond Sunday but admitted, if he plays well, it would be a "simple" decision to leave him in the lineup. Barring that, Joseph could turn back to Siemian at some point or even play Paxton Lynch, last year's first-round pick, once his right shoulder fully heals from a preseason injury.

"(Siemian)'s career is not over by this. Lots of young quarterbacks have to take a step back and watch the game and figure out how to play the game better," Joseph said. "All the best quarterbacks are game managers. That's a negative term in football, but it shouldn't be. To be a quarterback, you have to manage the football game."

Siemian is disappointed by his play and his demotion but pledged to be supportive of Oswailer while using this time to "take a breather and re-evaluate."

"I have an expectation for myself and I haven't lived up to it," Siemian said.

On the other side of football rehab, that's a feeling Oswailer can understand.

Papa John slams NFL, blames national anthem protests for declining pizza sales

By Thomas Novelly
Courier Journal
November 2, 2017

This isn't what Papa ordered.

John Schnatter, the founder and CEO of Papa John's Pizza, took aim at NFL executives Wednesday amid declining sales and consistent national anthem protests during games, Bloomberg reports.

"The NFL has hurt us," Schnatter said in a conference call. "We are disappointed the NFL and its leadership did not resolve this ... Leadership starts at the top and this is an example of poor leadership."

Stock in the Louisville-based pizza company plummeted Wednesday, dropping 6 points by noon.

"This should have been nipped in the bud a year and a half ago," Schnatter said on the call. "Like many sponsors, we're in touch with the NFL. Once the issue is resolved, we're optimistic the NFL's best years are ahead."

"Leadership starts at the top and this is an example of poor leadership."

John Schnatter

A spokesperson for Papa John's did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In the wake of former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick's decision to protest by kneeling during the national anthem before the start of NFL games, President Donald J. Trump has harshly condemned players for taking a knee and has even encouraged Americans to boycott the NFL.

"Sports fans should never condone players that do not stand proud for their National Anthem or their Country. NFL should change policy!," Trump tweeted in September.

@realDonaldTrump

Sports fans should never condone players that do not stand proud for their National Anthem or their Country. NFL should change policy!

4:25 PM - Sep 24, 2017

62,720 Replies 40,208 Retweets 174,033 likes

Amid Trump's protests of the NFL, Schnatter hasn't publicly condemned the president for slamming his company's business partner.

A large donor to Republican candidates, Schnatter gave \$1,000 in July of 2016 to the "Trump Victory" committee, according to a Federal Election Committee filing.

Papa John's has been a longtime sponsor of the NFL, and Schnatter previously said he enjoyed the league's sponsorship.

"The NFL has been a great partner for many years and Papa John's continues to be the pizza of choice among avid NFL fans," Schnatter said in a 2016 statement.

Broncos are turning to Brock Osweiler to save their season against the Eagles

By Will Brinson
CBS Sports
November 2, 2017

Turn up the volume as loud as you possibly can (perhaps even to 11?) because the Brock Lobster is about to get loose in Philadelphia. That's right, baby -- Brock Osweiler is back as the Broncos starting quarterback.

Coach Vance Joseph, after about 48 hours of tape study from Trevor Siemian's disastrous start against the Chiefs on Monday night, decided to turn to Osweiler as the starting quarterback for Week 9 in Philadelphia.

This is something. It is a thing that exists. How else can you analyze it? Because the Broncos, who have stumbled to 3-4 despite sporting one of the best defenses in the NFL, are turning to Brock Osweiler as their starting quarterback against one of the most dangerous defenses in the NFL.

The Eagles aren't stout in the back end of their defense, but they are filthy on the defensive line. Fletcher Cox, Timmy Jernigan, Brandon Graham, Vinny Curry and Derek Barnett have been getting after more mobile and dangerous quarterbacks at various points in the season.

The lasting images of Osweiler as a member of the Houston Texans (he never attempted a regular season pass with the Browns) is him narrowly avoiding pressure while looking like Gumby, trying to throw a pass downfield but mostly flailing in an attempt to do so. It wasn't pretty.

This game has the same feel, although it's worth noting that Osweiler has had success in Denver before, albeit with a different offensive coordinator. The Eagles are flying high right now at 7-1 and the Broncos are desperate; Brock Osweiler desperate.

If Mike McCoy and Co. can cook up a plan that makes Osweiler look good, this will be an impressive victory.

Broncos Name Brock Osweiler Starting Quarterback vs. Eagles

By Chris Chavez
MMQB
November 2, 2017

Denver Broncos head coach Vance Joseph has informed his team that Brock Osweiler will take over the starting quarterback duties over Trevor Siemian, the team announced on Wednesday.

Joseph met with Siemian and Osweiler at the team's training center on Tuesday and informed the quarterbacks of the switch. Siemian finished Monday's 29–19 loss to the Kansas City Chiefs with 19 passes of 36 passes for 198 yards, one touchdown, three sacks and three interceptions. Siemian's 10 interceptions on the season are third-most in the NFL, trailing only Cam Newton and Browns rookie DeShone Kizer, who have both thrown 11.

Osweiler, a second-round pick of the Broncos in 2012, backed up Peyton Manning for three seasons. He showed flashes of success when he replaced an injured Manning at the end of the 2015 season and finished with a 5–2 record, and he was reportedly upset that the team pulled him in favor of Manning during the last regular season game of their eventual Super Bowl-winning year.

Osweiler went on to sign a four-year contract worth \$72 million with the Houston Texans as a free agent but was pulled in favor of Brian Hoyer midway through the season then traded to the Cleveland Browns after one year. He was released by Cleveland and then re-signed with the Broncos after Paxton Lynch injured his shoulder.

The Broncos play at the Eagles (7–1) on Sunday.

Broncos Bench Siemian, Name Osweiler the Starter: How Might This Play Out in Denver?

By Connor Orr
MMQB
November 2, 2017

The Denver Broncos switched quarterbacks on Wednesday, benching Trevor Siemien and giving Brock Osweiler a chance to see if he can discover some personal magic before head coach Vance Joseph inevitably turns back to 2016 first-round pick Paxton Lynch.

It will likely kick off an intense evaluation cycle for president and general manager John Elway, who has an important decision to make over the final nine games of the season: Will he end up becoming a player for the quarterback in the 2018 NFL Draft?

Lynch's preseason shoulder injury, from which he just returned last week, puts the Broncos in an unenviable situation. If he is the team's franchise quarterback moving forward (Lynch started two games for the Broncos last year, going 1–1 as a starter with a 59% completion rate, 497 passing yards, two touchdowns and one interception) he may only have about six or seven games to prove it. His turn in the starting lineup also depends on how well Osweiler plays against the Philadelphia Eagles on the road this Sunday.

As we see it now, here is what might happen in Denver over the next two months...

VERY LIKELY:

Osweiler plays to roughly his per-game average over his last 10 starts (19-of-33, 183 yards, one touchdown, one interception, 71.1 quarterback rating) and kicks off the inevitable countdown clock for Lynch's return as a starter. If I'm Joseph, I'm likely keeping Osweiler in against the Patriots next Sunday then handing Lynch the ball on Nov. 19 against the Bengals at home. Unless he wants to wait for a Dec. 10 home game against the Jets, this would be the most sensible time to get Lynch a week of preparation and still have a decent shot at sparking a fire before the end of the season.

MAYBE?

The Broncos get thrashed up front by the Eagles in the first half Sunday and Vance Joseph decides to put Lynch through the ultimate stress test, swapping him with Osweiler at the half. This would answer a few questions for the Broncos quickly: How does Lynch respond under pressure? How does he truly prepare during the week without the knowledge that he's in charge? How does he fare against a relentless blitzing defense? That would seem to be a set up for failure, but then again, a good quarterback needs to be prepared for anything. This would also involve the Broncos making three quarterbacks active on Sunday or leaving Siemien in dress clothes.

HEY, YOU NEVER KNOW:

Osweiler finds himself in Mike McCoy's offense and lets it rip. His only in-game performance with McCoy as an offensive coordinator was in 2012 (Dec. 30) in a 38–3 rout of the Kansas City Chiefs. In that game,

Oswelier went 2-of-4 for 12 yards. But ... McCoy has a great reputation with quarterbacks and even though Oswelier's time in Houston was a complete disaster, there were moments when I thought he could save himself. Bill O'Brien clearly wanted to move on but, in the right circumstances, could call a mix of plays that maximized Oswelier's strengths.

WHAT HAPPENS TO SIEMIEN?

If I'm John Elway, I'm not letting my former seventh-round pick walk once his contract expires at the end of the 2018 season. I think Siemien is an example to mid- and late-round picks of what is possible through hard work and late nights. I also think he'll have offers—this is a league starving for quarterback talent and in stretches, he can be an effective player for stretches (79-of-127 for 888 yards, seven touchdowns and four interceptions through four weeks this year).

Brock Osweiler will start for Denver Broncos vs. Eagles

By Marc Sessler

NFL.com

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The spiraling Denver Broncos are making a switch under center.

The team announced Wednesday that coach Vance Joseph told his players that Brock Osweiler will replace Trevor Siemian for Sunday's clash with the Eagles.

On the heels of an ugly three-game skid, the decision comes as no surprise. Joseph made it crystal clear the quarterback position would be thoroughly evaluated after Monday night's five-turnover horror show against the Chiefs.

Siemian threw a trio of picks in the loss, capping a concerning string of games that saw the former seventh-round pick lob six interceptions to just two scores since Week 6. The encouraging traits we saw from Siemian early in the year all but dried up by Halloween.

That puts Osweiler at the controls while second-year passer Paxton Lynch meshes back into practice after sitting out the start of the season with a shoulder injury.

Osweiler reunited with the Broncos in early September following failed stints with the Texans and Browns. After being drafted by the team in 2012 and playing four years in Denver, he gives the club a familiar face -- but the rest is suspect.

Osweiler entirely flamed out in Houston, showing sketchy mechanics, a gangly throwing motion and slow processing speed. He was never seen as a realistic starter in Cleveland, which should tell you something.

Besides, the Broncos have problems that go beyond the quarterback, with protection issues up front, a hot-and-cold ground game and a banged-up core of receivers.

Facing the Eagles won't help, with Philadelphia sporting a vicious defensive front that makes a habit of ruining Sundays for opposing passers.

The switch has been flipped on Denver's quarterback carousel. It isn't likely to stop with Osweiler, but instead spin on weekly as these things tend to do.

Knudson: Is Vance Joseph the right guy to lead the Denver Broncos?

By Mark Knudson
The Coloradoan
November 2, 2017

Vance Joseph didn't draft Paxton Lynch, or Trevor Siemian for that matter.

He's not responsible for Peyton Manning retiring or losing T.J. Ward or Wade Phillips, or for having an offensive line that seems to be permanently under reconstruction.

But he is the rookie head coach of the Denver Broncos and ultimately responsible for the performance of this team, which began the year with Super Bowl aspirations and now has its playoff hopes on life support halfway through the season.

The main question Denver Bronco fans were asking, Joseph answered this week when it was announced he was benching struggling quarterback Trevor Siemian and handing the reigns of the offense over to recycled veteran Brock Osweiler, who is tasked with jump starting the Broncos lethargic offense Sunday in Philadelphia.

The Broncos are not yet ready to turn to Lynch, the inexperienced and unimpressive second-year man, presumably because he's been injured and has had limited practice time.

But is getting at least a temporary answer to the quarterback dilemma where the line of questioning about the rookie head coach ends?

When he was hired shortly after the retirement of Gary Kubiak, Joseph was touted by Broncos brass as being the next great young head coach. A "guy who takes command of a locker room" and "is a great leader of men." Most of the statements about him spoke to the long-term success he will have

There wasn't much said about his readiness for the present when he took over a team a season removed from winning the Super Bowl.

That's kind of understandable given that this is Joseph's first head coaching gig. It's smarter to focus on the long haul. Yet moving from defensive coordinator to first-time head coach is a big leap. There are buckets full of little things that assistant coaches aren't asked to deal with on a daily basis — things that take up valuable time from the guy in charge.

It's certainly fair to say that halfway through his first season, Joseph as a head coach isn't wowing the rest of the NFL. A good number of so-called pundits are wondering out loud if he's in over his head. That's mainly because of the QB situation, but even Joseph knows it's a lot more than that.

He lamented the Broncos' lack of success doing the little things before they lost to Kansas City to fall to 3-4. He focused on turnovers — the Broncos are now minus-11 in that category and next to last in the NFL — and has mentioned frequently how his team needs to "play clean" in order to win games. For

most of the season, the Broncos have done just the opposite. They've committed killer penalties, dropped passes and had critical breakdowns on special teams.

These aren't a matter of talent. These are correctable things, and fixing them falls on the coaching staff.

Publicly, Joseph has been relentlessly positive about his team, which the players surely appreciate. But you have to wonder about the level of accountability within the locker room. Is it where it needs to be? Perhaps instead of constantly promoting Siemian as "our quarterback", Joseph should have left the door slightly ajar a couple of weeks ago by saying publicly, so his defensive players could hear it, that Siemian's performance in games would dictate whether or not he got the starting nod every week.

Everything gets magnified when you're not winning. If Denver had a top flight quarterback capable of making big plays, many of the little mistakes that have wounded them to this point would be erased. And while Joseph isn't responsible for Siemian's lack of play-making ability, he is ultimately responsible when his team continually jumps off sides, fumbles punts, gives up kick return scores or has a holding penalty wipe out an important first down. He's responsible for the internal discipline and focus of his football team.

This is an area where the last Broncos' rookie head coach, Josh McDaniels, failed. McDaniels, who had a far bigger and egregious ego, also had quarterback issues during his less-than-two-year stint in charge of the Broncos. But the issues that caused his firing late in his second season here were deeper than that.

A lack of internal discipline, including Denver's own watered-down version of SpyGate, brought down McDaniels. It's not likely that Joseph or his staff will have any of those issues, but they still must stay on alert.

Joseph now faces a test over the next couple of weeks. With a gap developing between the scuffling offense and the stalwart defense, that command will be tested. Denver will be a big underdog in the next two games, regardless of who plays quarterback.

If the offense continues to struggle, Joseph's rookie year could be defined by how well he's able to hold his team together during a season none of them were expecting.

Broncos will start Brock Osweiler

By Josh Alper

Pro Football Talk

November 2, 2017

The Broncos didn't commit to starting Trevor Siemian at quarterback after Monday night's loss to the Chiefs or on Tuesday and it looks like Siemian's time as the team's starter has come to an end.

According to multiple reports, Broncos coach Vance Joseph informed the team on Wednesday morning that Brock Osweiler will start against the Eagles in Philadelphia on Sunday. Joseph reportedly had Siemian and Osweiler come to the team's facility on Tuesday night to break the news to them.

Osweiler spent his first four NFL seasons with the team and started seven games for Denver in 2015 before being replaced by Peyton Manning for the second half of their Week 17 game. The Broncos came back to win the game and Manning remained the starter through their Super Bowl win.

Osweiler left for the Texans as a free agent, had a dismal 2016 season and got traded to the Browns. He returned to the Broncos as a free agent after Paxton Lynch hurt his right shoulder just before the start of the regular season.

Siemian started 14 games during an 8-8 2016 season and opened this year with three good outings as the Broncos went 3-1 before a Week Five bye. Siemian has not been anywhere near as good in the last three games, all of which the Broncos lost, and had a nightmarish outing against the Chiefs to force the Broncos' hand.

Vance Joseph: It's Brock Osweiler's job as long as he "plays well"

By Charean Williams

Pro Football Talk

November 2, 2017

Vance Joseph stopped short of naming Brock Osweiler the starter for the rest of the season, but the Broncos coach admits as long as "Brock plays well, he plays next week. It's very simple."

The Broncos are focused on this week, with Osweiler starting his first game since throwing three interceptions in the Texans' 34-16 divisional round playoff loss in New England. Osweiler has a 13-8 record in the regular season, including a 5-2 mark with the Broncos in 2015.

He replaces Trevor Siemian, who has seven turnovers and a 64.1 passer rating the past three games.

"It came down to what's best for our football team, and quite frankly, what's best for Trevor's future," Joseph said, via Troy Renck of Denver7. "The team was OK with it. They trust obviously Brock. He's been here before in the same situation. It's very similar. Here's why we signed him. We wanted a veteran presence in our quarterback room, a guy who has played in big games, a guy who can lead our offense, if something like this would happen. So far, so good. I'm excited about Brock. He's excited."

In the past three weeks, Denver has averaged a league-low 9.7 points per game with a league-high 11 turnovers.

"We can't see where we are until we stop turning the ball over," Joseph said. "I am interested to see what happens when we take care of the ball."

Osweiler was the Broncos' only option besides Siemian, although they have two other quarterbacks. Paxton Lynch, a first-round choice last season, continues to work his way back from a sprained right shoulder that has kept him out all season. Rookie Chad Kelly remains on the non-football injury list while recovering from wrist and knee surgeries, and Joseph hinted in his press conference that Denver will place Kelly on injured reserve.