

Concerned about RB Royce Freeman's high carry count in college? The Broncos aren't, and maybe rightfully so.

By Nicki Jhabvala

The Athletic

May 5, 2018

In baseball, pitch count can be a deterrent. Too many fastballs and a pitcher is at risk of injury, if not worse.

Logic would think the same applies to NFL players. Too many reps, too much wear and tear and a player is damaged goods. But as the Broncos sought to bolster their running backs room in the draft this year after releasing veteran C.J. Anderson, they disregarded the pitch-count theory.

And perhaps wisely so.

In the third round, at No. 71, the Broncos drafted Royce Freeman, a 229-pound back who amassed 947 carries in four years at Oregon. At the culmination of the draft, the Broncos signed free agent Phillip Lindsay, a former Colorado standout who led the nation with 301 carries last season.

The two, of different size and style, ranked No. 4 and 6, respectively, in FBS in total attempts over the past three seasons.

"I feel like all of that durability and all of those carries just reflected my productivity throughout my four years at Oregon," Freeman said. "It is not often you get backs playing as many games or taking as many carries. I feel like the fact that I was able to do so proves I am a durable running back."

Over the last 30 seasons, the Broncos have had seven different players record 250 or more carries in a regular season. But only one (Gaston Green) topped 600 carries in their college careers and only two had more than 240 carries in their final season before going pro. Willis McGahee had 282 carries at the University of Miami in 2002 and went on to play 10 years in the league and earn two Pro Bowl selections. Reuben Droughns, a junior college transfer out of Oregon, had 277 carries his final season with the Ducks and played eight seasons in the NFL. In three of those, he had 220 or more carries.

Terrell Davis, the Broncos' Hall of Famer and all-time leading rusher, had only 372 carries in his college career at Long Beach State and Georgia. But his productive pro career was condensed into seven seasons because of a knee injury.

Freeman's career carries in college are believed to be the 25th-most in the NCAA all time, according to Sports-Reference, and he's among an elite group of backs to parlay his productive college career into the pros.

Ron Dayne, a seven-season NFL veteran who spent one year in Denver (2005), tops the NCAA's books with 1,220 attempts at Wisconsin. He had 983 carries in his NFL career, topping 200 only once, as a rookie with the Giants. Tony Dorsett turned in 1,163 carries at Pitt to rank No. 3 on the list, then went on to have a 12-year, Hall-of-Fame career in the NFL. Ricky Williams (1,011) is also among the NCAA's top 25 in career carries. Herschel Walker (994) and Thurman Thomas (956) are, too.

But sandwiched between them are many backs who logged significant mileage in college, only to have a pro career that was limited or nonexistent.

Still, John Elway was undeterred.

“What it shows to us is he’s durable,” the Broncos’ general manager said of Freeman. “He played a lot so therefore he can take that. At the end of his career who knows how much that will shorten it, but it wasn’t a concern when we took him that there was too much tread.”

At least one study supports Elway’s decision.

According to researchers at the University of Colorado’s Sports Medicine and Performance Center, there is no correlation between the number of carries by college backs and their future injury risk or performance in the pros.

The investigation, which was published in 2017, was done in conjunction with a similar study at CU that examined the effect of carries among pro backs and their injury risk in subsequent years.

Both produced similar results: Running backs are not at a greater risk of injury or worsened performance following a season of a high carry count. In fact, they are generally less injury prone.

The college study relied on ESPN data of running backs who played their last college season from 1999 through 2012 and who were drafted in the first four rounds in the NFL. A total of 103 players were included and divided into two groups: group A, for those who logged 100-200 in their final college season, and group B, for those who had 250 or more carries.

Although there are multiple variables that could have affected the results — some players in group A could have landed on more pass-heavy teams in the NFL, or players in that group could have been used more in pass-blocking in college — the Broncos’ lack of concern about tread was generally validated.

The backs in group B averaged significantly more carries in the NFL, but the average yards per carry in each group were about the same. Those in group A, with fewer carries their final college season, had a slightly higher average of games missed in their first three NFL seasons and a significantly higher proportion of players who suffered a concussion. Players in group B, with the higher carry counts, suffered a significantly greater rate of lower leg/ankle/foot fractures than those in group A.

Seventy-five percent of the players in group B were found to play in in all their first three eligible seasons in the NFL compared with only 60 percent of those in group A.

So maybe the Broncos are onto something. Maybe two of their latest additions could bring production and durability to an offense that sorely needs both.

Time's up for cheerleaders/dancers at NFL, NBA games

By Paul Newberry

Associated Press

May 5, 2018

This is not a rant against cheerleading.

That's a legitimate sport, played by elite athletes — men and women — who are worthy of admiration for their daring and skill.

There might even come a day when cheerleaders are competing for gold, silver and bronze at the Olympics.

None of which has anything to do with what happens on the sidelines of an NFL or NBA game.

Those are scantily clad performers often leered at by fans — or, as we're learning, perhaps even worse.

The #MeToo era is the perfect time to retire these objectified, chauvinistic relics (and, while we're at it, ditto for the barely clothed women who climb into the ring to tell us what round it is at boxing and MMA events).

"There is a misconception that cheerleading is just sideline dancing. This could not be further from the truth," said Savannah Parrot, an 11th-grade cheerleader at Niwot High School in Colorado.

"Cheerleaders are athletes. We compete in local, state, national and international competition and are evaluated on the difficulty of our routines including advanced tumbling passes and intricate stunt sequences.

"If the NFL and NBA wanted to have cheerleaders," she went on to say, wise beyond her years, "I have no doubt that qualified athletes would be honored to represent our sport."

That's not what the NFL and NBA want, of course.

They're looking for attractive dancers showing lots of skin, apparently in the belief that sex is one of the best ways to keep fans entertained beyond the product on the field or court.

And, according to a report by The New York Times, cheerleaders from Washington's NFL team were forced to play an even seedier role behind the scenes.

During a 2013 trip to Costa Rica, they allege their passports were collected, they were asked to go topless for a calendar photo shoot that included male spectators, and they served as escorts for sponsors at a nightclub. The cheerleaders quoted in the report spoke on condition of anonymity because they signed confidentiality agreements.

The team said it's concerned by the allegations and conducting an investigation, but we all know where this is going. Already, team president Bruce Allen said many current and former cheerleaders are contradicting allegations in the report.

At least the NBA had the good sense to break from any pretense that these are cheerleaders, adorning their groups with names such as the Knicks City Dancers and Memphis Grizz Girls. These are dance groups, pure and simple, often performing sex-tinged routines that are a focal point of the between-game entertainment.

In the NFL, the dancers play a less-prominent role (the stadiums, after all, are much larger) but they're still passed off as cheerleaders, for no apparent reason. They are certainly not there to lead cheers. Their main purpose seems to be wiggling around as provocatively as possible for the men in the crowd, all while ignoring how many women are now in the stands.

This not-so-proud tradition can largely be traced to the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders becoming cultural icons in the 1970s, though it's worth noting that venerable franchises such as the Green Bay Packers, New York Giants and Pittsburgh Steelers don't have cheerleading squads.

It doesn't seem to have hurt their popularity or success on the field.

"It is way past time for the NFL and NBA to get rid of cheerleaders," said Jeffrey McCall, a professor of media studies at DePauw University in Indiana. "Other pro sports such as hockey and baseball seem to manage without thinly clad women as part of the game-day experience."

These faux cheerleaders look increasingly archaic when so many women are stepping forward to say enough's enough.

"Given today's concerns about sexual harassment and domestic violence, the NFL and NBA clearly have tin ears in this matter," McCall said. "Cheerleaders at pro games don't really cheer and inspire fans or players anyway. They are simply ornaments."

That should be offensive to all of us, but especially those who are actual cheerleaders.

Tens of thousands of athletes participate in this rapidly growing sport at competitions around the United States, which prompted Disney to build a new 8,000-seat arena at its Wide World of Sports complex in Florida for those types of events.

In 2016, the International Olympic Committee even recognized cheerleading as a provisional sport, the first step toward possibly claiming a spot at the Summer Games.

Of course, cheerleading also serves as a complement to sports such as football and basketball.

That's just fine, too.

"It is called cheerleading because their role is to lead the crowd in cheering for the team," said Shauna MacDonald, assistant director of the Gender & Women Studies Program at Villanova University. "This, I think, can still be a positive and interesting purpose. Cheering is part of the ritual of sport, especially in North America, and having people to pep up the crowd and lead the cheers is a good thing.

"We know that this doesn't require cheerleading to look exactly as it does, because bands and pep squads also serve in these roles. In order for the culture of cheerleading to change, however, there would have to be some sweeping cultural shifts."

There's no sign of it happening in the NFL or NBA.

Time's up for cheerleaders or dancers of whatever you want to call them.

Could Sutton and Hamilton wind up as next Broncos receiving duo?

By Aric DiLalla
DenverBroncos.com
May 5, 2018

It's hard to ignore the similarities.

A big-bodied receiver who can thrive in the red zone. A quick and agile threat who can take a slant the length of the field.

Sound like Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders?

It should. But if two of the Broncos' draft choices pan out, there could be another Denver receiving duo rising up the ranks in the league.

Call them Thunder and Lighting Lite.

SMU's Courtland Sutton and Penn State's DaeSean Hamilton, who were drafted in the second and fourth rounds, respectively, could be the next generation of prolific Broncos receivers.

After Sutton was drafted, Head Coach Vance Joseph said he showed traits of a No. 1 wideout.

That potential portends a bright future for the Broncos on the outside.

During his opening press conference, Sutton praised Sanders' work ethic and pledged to learn from the ninth-year veteran wide receiver. Both he and Hamilton seem eager to learn from the veteran pair of Thomas and Sanders, and while confident, the rookies aren't thinking about the years ahead.

"I'm going to come in, I'm going to find out what E-Man does [and] what Demaryius does," Sutton said. "What do they do to make them All-Pros and to make them dominant people at their position? I'm going to follow them and figure out what it is that's going to get me to that level so I can be able to perform day in and day out at a very high level."

They are, however, willing to consider what it may be like to line up with each other. Sutton, who coincidentally trained with Hamilton before the NFL Draft, already speaks about his teammate the way Thomas and Sanders talk about each other.

"DaeSean is a guy that can play the position very well," Sutton said. "He has unique talent trait when it comes to playing the wide receiver position. He and I are going to be able to come in and learn. I think he is more so like 'E-man' (Sanders). I am more like Demaryius."

Sanders, who weeks ago expressed disbelief that Sutton would fall to the Broncos in the second round, seems ready to start the process.

“I’m going to teach those guys everything that I know,” Sanders said. “That’s my job. You see a lot of these cats, when they get up in age, they kind of shy away from the rookies. I will never, ever be that type of receiver that says, ‘No, I’m [not] going to teach this guy.’ I’m going to teach you everything that I [possibly can].

“Regardless of if [Sutton] is from SMU or not, I want to see everybody successful. I want to see him making plays and going to the Pro Bowls and winning Super Bowls. I’m going [to help] him as much as I can.”

One day, Sutton and Hamilton may well replace the two players who they’ll lean on now for advice and tutelage.

And perhaps the best part about the entire situation is that Sanders won’t run from that fact.

Instead, he’ll embrace the cyclical nature of the league and aim to help both Sutton and Hamilton their potential.

In the short term, that increases Sanders’ chances at another world championship. A well-rounded receiving corps that exists as more than just Sanders and Thomas will help quarterback Case Keenum and the rest of the offense thrive.

From a long-term perspective, Sanders is eager to — as he so plainly put it — make sure everyone gets paid.

“That is going to happen anyway,” Sanders said. “Once you get up in this league, you start making too much money and they say...Look, I understand the business of it. My deal is this, I still want to see everybody’s family making a ton of money. I can’t avoid that. All I can do is make plays every single day and show that if I become expendable here, I’ll just show some other team, ‘Hey, look, I still got it. I still got the juice.’ Maybe they want to pay me. That would be selfish for me to say, ‘I’m not going to teach you everything that I know because you’re going to beat me.’ At the end of the day, if he’s going to do it, he’s going to do it. I can’t avoid that. All I can do is go out, work my butt my off and continue to be me.”

And if there’s one area in which Sutton may resemble Sanders more than the Thomas, it may be in his bravado. Much like Sanders, Sutton doesn’t come off as arrogant.

Rather, he expresses a confidence about his ability even as a young player.

“We are going to be able to take from them what they do at a high level,” Sutton said, “and add that to our games so that whenever they need a break or whatever the situation is on the field, we can come on the field and there won’t be any drop off at all. It is going to be the same talent level on the field whatever [the situation] is.”

Sacco Sez: Playing to stats, not size

By Jim Saccomano
DenverBroncos.com
May 5, 2018

When I joined the Denver Broncos in 1978, the Director of Player Relations for the National Football League was Buddy Young.

One would see him occasionally at an NFL function, and he always had a smile on his face to match his upbeat personality.

I have been thinking about Buddy Young quite a bit lately, especially since the Broncos signed running back Phillip Lindsay of the University of Colorado as a college free agent.

A lot of teams were interested in signing Lindsay, but none of them did, and the likely reason is his height, not his productivity.

In his four years at Colorado, Lindsay ran for 3,775 yards and a 4.9 average, caught 117 passes for 1,084 more yards, and had 5,936 total yards to go with 39 touchdowns.

But Lindsay is "only" 5'8", and that scared some teams away.

But it shouldn't have.

Buddy Young was only 5'4", the shortest Pro Bowl player in NFL history.

Sometimes players play to their stats, not to their size.

Besides being one of the most positive and genial men one could ever meet, Young was a great player.

He was an All-American running back at Illinois, where he also tied the world record for the 45- and 60-yard dashes as a member of the Illini track team.

During World War II, he served his country in the Army and like a lot of football players, spent some of his time playing for a service team.

The war years opened many doors for a lot of people due to an emphasis on values such as democracy, fair play, and equality.

To digress for a moment, service football was comprised of about 30 percent NFL players and 30 percent college All-Americans, so you get the idea very quickly that those were powerful teams.

Young was on the best team on the West Coast, and when the two top teams played for the Service West Coast championship in 1945, the game was played before 65,000 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

Buddy Young returned kickoffs 94 and 88 yards for touchdowns and scored a third on a 30-yard run. He would sometimes point out that his team actually challenged the unbeaten West Point team to a game, a challenge which was politely declined.

He played 10 years of pro football as a 5-foot-4- running back and kick returner, and had over 1,000 all-purpose yards in five different seasons.

Young made the Pro Bowl in 1954 — the same year in which he had a 104-yard kickoff return touchdown against Philadelphia — and his 10-year kickoff return average was over 27 yards per return.

At Illinois, Young was given the nickname the "Bronze Bullet," and he became the first Baltimore Colt player to have his uniform number retired. He wore No. 22, which in retrospect seemed to fit his speed and style.

Young became a member of the College Football Hall of Fame and will forever be notable as one of the game's great pioneers.

In 1966 he became the first African-American executive ever within the NFL headquarters and worked for the NFL until his death in 1983.

He had one of the great quotes I have ever heard, and I repeat it many times. Quite often in a social greeting to begin a new day, he would say, "This is another great day in which to excel."

Buddy Young was 5'4" and new Bronco Phillip Lindsay is 5'8".

But Lindsay was a role model at CU and has a chance to be the same in pro football.

Buddy Young played to his stats, not to his size, and Phillip Lindsay will be given a chance to do the very same for the Denver Broncos.

Four NFL teams that will disappoint fan bases in 2018, including the Dallas Cowboys

By Jason La Canfora

CBS Sports

May 5, 2018

Earlier this week I weighed in on the teams I believe are poised to make a positive step forward in 2018. So, it was only a matter of time before I shared my thoughts on teams I believe are trending in the opposite direction. Right?

And indeed that time has come.

Rosters are largely formulated by now and the chances of a team making a transaction significant enough that it alters the scope of their upcoming season are scant. Coaches in the NFL know that by this time in the offseason, the 45 guys they will take into play on Sundays are coming from the group that is currently assembled. This is their team. It's not up to them to find the best group out of these 90 bodies to get the job done.

Joe Montana ain't walking into that building. And neither is Barry Sanders or Lawrence Taylor, for that matter. And while, eventually, somewhere, I suppose, Dez Bryant will be walking into a team headquarters, expecting players who are on the street into May to make a difference is folly. They are available for a reason (or three). So with that in mind, here are some teams that have experienced at least a modicum of success in recent years who I don't have a great feeling about in the spring of 2018:

Kansas City Chiefs

I love me some Patrick Mahomes as much as the next guy. More than most ... but some of the hype is getting out of control. He's going to be a rookie (he has 1 start; for starting purposes he is still a rookie to me). He's going to make a bunch of mistakes (and learn from them) and he's likely to be in a position where his offense needs to score a ton of points for Kansas City to be viable. I don't see any more pass rush really than a year ago, and this season could live or die on Justin Houston's ability to stay healthy and dominate week in and week out. Eric Berry coming back from a major injury gives me pause. Frankly, the entire defensive front would give me concern and while I was never a huge Alex Smith guy or believed he would take a team to the promised land, his MVP-caliber play last season covered up a lot of warts and propelled this team to the postseason. Getting back, even in a shallow AFC pool, looks like an uphill climb to me. That ugly playoff loss – and the exodus of quality leaders like Derrick Johnson and difficult-but-talented players like Marcus Peters – could hover over this franchise for a while.

Cincinnati Bengals

Man that run of five straight playoff appearances seems like a long time ago. The worst aspects of those teams – lack of discipline, rewarding selfish and undisciplined players, an incredible tendency to melt down collectively in the most critical junctures – are still there, but the talent loss and brain drain has caught up to them. Stunned they would (over)draft an injured player in the first round for a second straight year with Marvin Jones yet again entering a season fighting for his job, and found it odd that they would pass on a potential franchise quarterback in Lamar Jackson at a time when every other team in the division (including the Steelers with potential Hall of Famer Ben Roethlisberger) grabbed one relatively early. Andy Dalton is functional with a coterie of skilled playmakers and an outstanding line in

front of him ... but those are luxuries he has no more. They open another season with a Vontaze Burfict suspension cloud hanging over them, and all the recent draft misses has this smelling like a 7-9 season to me.

Dallas Cowboys

Man, they end up spending a lot of time talking about just-retired or just-kicked-out-the-door former players, don't they? Seems to be the motif of another offseason. Tony Romo a year ago. Jason Witten and Dez Bryant now. And of course they had their share of run-ins with the law, with David Irving the latest Cowboy to be dealing with potentially seriously off-field issues (last year it was Zeke Elliott). Seems like the plan is to go Back to the Future to like 1986 and run the ball 600 times. Good luck with that. Dak Prescott, I doubt, takes a big step forward with this supporting cast, and even with adding a linebacker in the first round I have some serious concerns about the viability of the Dallas defense. The division should be better this season, but the Cowboys will not be. And if it does go as expected, will Jerry Jones cling to a coach he can micro-manage? Could more change be in the air for the Cowboys?

Jacksonville Jaguars

This franchise is in a far better place than it's been in long, long time, but every year there is a team that falls prey to regression. Doesn't mean they won't continue on an upward trajectory in future years, but it also means they could find it quite difficult to come close to repeated what they accomplished a season ago. Last year, Andrew Luck never played a snap and Deshaun Watson didn't play a half a season and the Titans were running an offense that seemed perversely backwards at times. All of that should change this season, and the Jags still have, by far (if Luck is remotely healthy) the worst QB situation in the AFC South. The run game wasn't as big and bad as some made it out to be, and we'll see how this group handles the insta-success of 2017 when they enter a season as favorites for the first time in forever. I remain a Blake Bortles skeptic, and as good as this defense is, if the offense doesn't expand and the big bucks spent on guys like Donte Moncrief and Marqise Lee doesn't expand the scope of this offense, getting back to the postseason will not be such an easy chore.

Panthers' internal investigation leads to resignation of defensive backs coach

By Shalise Manza Young

Yahoo Sports

May 5, 2018

The Carolina Panthers' internal investigation into workplace practices has led to the resignation of at least one employee.

In a statement on Friday, the team confirmed that the resignation of defensive backs coach Curtis Fuller on Wednesday came after complaints of workplace misconduct. Fuller had been with the Panthers since 2013.

Conduct to women 'inappropriate'

Via ESPN Panthers writer David Newton, the team's statement, attributed to spokesman Steven Drummond said, "After approaching Coach Fuller with the findings of an investigation into complaints of inappropriate conduct, we accepted his resignation. The Panthers are deeply committed to ensuring a safe, comfortable and diverse work environment where all individuals, regardless of sex, race, color, religion, gender, or sexual identity or orientation, are treated fairly and equally."

A source told Newton that Fuller's conduct toward women in the organization was "inappropriate."

Joseph Person and Jourdan Rodrigue of the Charlotte Observer got more details later Friday, reporting that Fuller had acted inappropriately toward multiple women.

Citing multiple sources who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the investigation, Person and Rodrigue wrote that "Fuller sent emails and text messages to an unknown number of female employees on the business side of the organization."

Earlier in the week, head coach Ron Rivera called the situation behind Fuller's resignation "complicated."

Investigation began after accusations against Richardson

The Panthers began an internal investigation after Sports Illustrated published a report in December about team owner Jerry Richardson's disturbing behavior toward female employees of the franchise, as well as his treatment of at least one black scout.

The NFL is also conducting an investigation into the allegations against Richardson, but it is seemingly toothless, as one of the women who accused Richardson of sexual harassment noted in open letters she wrote to the league and others last week, which were published by Sports Illustrated. Richardson is refusing to release those who took settlements and signed non-disclosure agreements from the NDAs, and the NFL can't offer immunity.

Panthers' next owner still unknown

Hours after the initial SI story outlining the numerous allegations against Richardson, a former NFL player who brought the league to Charlotte as the Panthers' founding owner, the team announced that the 81-year-old would be putting the franchise up for sale.

The Charlotte Observer has identified at least four bidders for the club: Alan Kestenbaum, the CEO of a Canadian steel company; David Tepper, a star in hedge fund circles and minority owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers; e-commerce entrepreneur Michael Rubin, whose companies include Fanatics; and Ben Navarro, the son of former college football coach Frank Navarro and a South Carolina native.

Former CSU football star Shaq Barrett worth more to Denver Broncos than Shane Ray

By Kelly Lyell
The Coloradoan
May 5, 2018

Shaq Barrett, signed as an undrafted free agent out of CSU in 2014, is set to make \$1.2 million more this season than Shane Ray, the outside linebacker the Broncos selected in the first round of the 2015 draft.

And that's assuming Barrett doesn't get a new deal now that the Broncos have decided not to exercise the option on Ray's contract for a fifth year in 2019.

Based on where each stood coming out of college, it's stunning that Barrett would be the higher paid of the two Denver defenders in 2018.

Based on what each has done on the field, it's obvious why the Broncos are placing a higher value on Barrett than Ray.

Barrett, 6-foot-2 and 250 pounds and the Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year in 2013 as a senior at Colorado State University, has been in on 123 tackles, including 11 sacks, and forced seven fumbles since he began playing for the Broncos in 2015.

Ray, 6-3, 245 and a unanimous All-American and the Southeastern Conference Defensive Player of the Year in 2014 as a junior at Missouri, has been in on 84 tackles, including 13 sacks, and forced one fumble over those same three seasons.

While Barrett hasn't missed a game since he was promoted to the active roster prior to the 2015 season, Ray missed two games his rookie season with a knee injury and half of last season with a left-wrist injury that required offseason surgery.

Barrett, 25, signed a one-year deal with the Broncos over the winter that will pay him \$2.9 million in 2018. The team had previously placed a second-round tender on him, meaning any other NFL team that chose to sign him would have to give the Broncos a second-round draft pick if Denver chose not to match the offer.

Ray, 24, is set to earn \$1.7 million this year, the final season of the \$9.1 million, four-year deal he signed when he was drafted. That deal included a \$4.9 million signing bonus.

That deal also included an option for a fifth year that would have raised Ray's annual salary to \$9.2 million for 2019. The Broncos declined to exercise that option, according to 9News and other media outlets.

So, Barrett, who spent his first season with the Broncos on the practice squad without playing a game, is now worth more to the Broncos than Ray.

Super Bowl MVP Von Miller honored by DeSoto ISD

By STAFF

Fox 4 News

May 5, 2018

Super Bowl and Pro Bowl MVP Von Miller returned to his North Texas roots to be honored by his hometown school district.

The Denver Broncos linebacker was inducted Friday night into DeSoto ISD's Hall of Honor.

Miller returned to where it all began, and the Super Bowl champ couldn't be more proud to be inducted into the Hall of Honor.

"I was walking down the hallways and I was like, 'I used to sleep in this class,'" he said. "A lucky break here and taking it one day at a time. It could happen to anybody. It's truly a blessing to be here."

Miller graduated from DeSoto High School in 2007 after becoming a premiere college linebacker, he was drafted by the Denver Broncos in 2011. But it was his performance in Super Bowl 50 that earned him the game's MVP.

"Growing up never in a million years did I ever think I would be going to the Hall of Fame," he said.

Former teachers attended the ceremony at DeSoto High School. They recalled Miller as a small kid who was dedicated to his NFL dream.

Miller donates his time and money to Von's Vision, a charity that provides eyeglasses to children in underprivileged communities. His elementary school principal says fame hasn't changed him.

Miller hasn't forgotten DeSoto. He's used his multi-million-dollar salary to donate school supplies, football gear, and a police vehicle to his community over the years.

DeMarcus Ware Says He ‘Never Got The Call’ About Coaching For Broncos

By Chad Jensen

CBS Denver

May 5, 2018

The Denver Broncos have a puzzling plan with their defensive coaching staff. Since firing six coaches at the end of the disappointing 5-11 season — including Outside Linebackers Coach Fred Pagac — the Broncos have filled all coaching vacancies but one.

Coach Pug was never replaced, and so for the first time in as long as I can remember, the Broncos don't have a specific coach assigned to coaching their outside linebackers. The edge rushers, which are Von Miller, Bradley Chubb, Shane Ray, Shaq Barrett and Jeff Holland will be split up.

Von Miller will go with Defensive Line Coach Bill Kollar and the other down linemen, while Ray, Barrett and everyone else will go with Inside Linebackers Coach Reggie Herring.

We're not sure where Chubb will end up but if you're looking for an explanation or break down on this new coaching approach, read this article.

With how much talent the Broncos have at the outside linebacker position, and the recent investment the team made in the No. 5 overall pick Bradley Chubb, you'd think the team would have a sense of urgency to provide clarity at the coaching level. The team could use an individual expert to teach pass rushing technique and ensure that the edge players, as a group, stay together in the same room.

I floated a couple of names that a little birdy told me have been in consideration to fill Denver's OLB Coach vacuum. One of those names was DeMarcus Ware — a former Bronco and mentor to Von Miller.

I'd been told that Ware returning to coach in Denver didn't happen because of his decision to focus on building a television career, rather than pursuing the grueling life of a pro coach. However, according to Ware himself, he never heard from the Broncos on this topic.

“Never got the call,” Ware said on Twitter.

Ware was responding to Troy Renck of KMGH who in a Tweet was talking about how great Ware would be as a coach in Denver. And the plot thickens.

Ware arrived in Denver in 2014 and helped the Broncos win Super Bowl 50. Ware has been credited by Von Miller as helping to save his career from the precipice of disaster.

The two formed a ‘big brother’ relationship, with Ware imparting all his knowledge, technique and tricks of the trade to Miller in their three seasons together. That level of expertise and passion for teaching could pay huge dividends for the Broncos.

Can you imagine Ware working one-on-one with Chubb? And breaking down film on tackles with Miller and the rest of the edge defenders?

If DeMarcus Ware is even remotely interested in coaching the outside linebackers in Denver, Vance Joseph should not hesitate to pick up the phone.

The Bronco who is being called “God” at his alma mater

By Ryan Koenigsberg
BSN Denver
May 5, 2018

He’s the reason the Denver Broncos felt comfortable moving on from T.J. Ward.

He was the shining bright spot of an otherwise dark, 5-11 season.

He regularly catches praise from teammates and coaches.

He won the 2017 Darrent Williams Good Guy Award, given to the player who best exemplifies Williams’ enthusiasm, cooperation and honesty while dealing with members of the press.

He’s the best young player on the Denver Broncos.

Justin Simmons is building a legacy in Denver, but some 1,700 miles East of Denver, Simmons’ legacy is etched in stone.

“He’s the G.O.A.T at B.C.,” said new Bronco and fellow Boston College Eagle, Issac Yiadom, shortly after being introduced to the Denver media.

“He knows it. He won’t say it, but we say it all the time,” Yiadom added. “He’s always like, ‘Stop, stop,’ and we’re like, ‘No, you’re the G.O.A.T.”

As a senior at Boston College, Simmons was named team MVP as a member of the No. 1 defense in the nation. He was named a second-team all conference player by multiple outlets. He picked off five balls and recovered three fumbles. During his career, he appeared in all 50 possible games.

That’s all impressive, but G.O.A.T. status? Well, there’s a little more to that.

“We always laugh about it, we’re like, ‘Justin is God. He’s the perfect man,’” Yiadom explained. “It’s crazy, you never see Justin get mad. He’ll talk to every single person in the media, go do community service and come out on the field and do what he has to do 100 percent at a great level. That’s what makes Justin such a great person, he’s always smiling, he’s so outgoing, and at the same time he’s always going to take a second to just say ‘hi’ to you or introduce himself to you, that’s what makes him a great person. Everybody wants to be like him.”

You want to talk about a coach’s dream. Imagine having a player so good off of the field that two years after he’s left the program, players are still talking about it. Or, even better, trying to live up to it.

“In our locker room, Justin is really highly praised and honored,” Yiadom said. “We always say that Justin set the bar up here for us, and after that, it was John Johnson with the Rams now, and it’s me, [former Boston College DB] Kamrin [Moore] and Gabe [McClary] right now and so on. Every single year we know that we have such a high expectation at B.C. because of Justin that we all have to fulfill. We all stay in touch with Justin every day, and he still talks to us. It’s something that keeps us going.”

As for Yiadom, Simmons is his go-to, whether he wants to talk about faith or football. He refers to Justin—the teammate who hosted his official visit when he was being recruited to BC—as his “big brother,” and he’s followed in big bro’s footsteps pretty well. From being a fellow recipient of the Jay McGillis Memorial Scholarship—given to the BC defensive back who best exemplifies the personal qualities of team dedication and leadership by example, an extraordinary competitive spirit, and personal concern for family, friends, and teammates—to now being a Denver Bronco.

“I think it’s going to help me a lot,” he said of playing with a role model like Simmons. “I know if I have any questions I can ask the coaches or Justin. He’ll help me on and off the field. I know he’s got high expectations for me, so I could never let myself go underneath the bar because I know he’s looking at me and everybody else.”

Justin Simmons is the best draft pick the Broncos have made in years, so maybe it shouldn’t come as a surprise that they centered their draft around players who have left similar legacies at their respective schools, and even one who flat out admits he emulates the third-year player.

NFL exec downplays idea of London Super Bowl or draft

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
May 5, 2018

It's fun (and potentially profitable) for NFL figures to periodically muse about moving a team to and/or playing a Super Bowl in London. However, neither is likely to happen soon. One NFL executive has strongly suggested that, as to playing a Super Bowl in London, that can't and won't happen until a team would first be assigned to London, making it an official NFL market.

"You have to respect all the other markets that are out there in the U.S.," Alistair Kirkwood said during an appearance on a Sky Sports podcast. "It would be difficult to justify lobbying really hard for something over and above those locations that have had fanbases and teams for a lot longer than we have been operating."

Kirkwood made that point in relation to both the draft and the Super Bowl.

"There will be times where we will push and say fanciful things, but when it comes down to it, those events are so core to the domestic fanbase in the States that we should not be lobbying for it," Kirkwood said.

So it means that London won't be trying to get the Super Bowl or the draft unless and until it gets a team. Which probably means that it will continue to push for a team. Which means that, if Jaguars owner Shad Khan hopes to stage a Super Bowl in a stadium he hopes to own in London, he may have to move his team there to make it happen.

Bills tried to trade up with Browns, Broncos before getting Josh Allen at No. 7

By Michael David Smith

Pro Football Talk

May 5, 2018

The Bills got their man, quarterback Josh Allen, by trading up to the seventh overall pick in the draft. But they wanted to trade up higher.

Bills General Manager Brandon Beane says he was working hard on trying to get the fourth overall pick, but Browns General Manager John Dorsey was holding out for too high a price.

“I probably talked to John Dorsey more than anybody through the process, but we could not come to an agreement on what was fair,” Beane told the Buffalo News.

Beane also had a deal in advance with Broncos General Manager John Elway that would have seen the Bills send the 12th overall pick, the 22nd overall pick and a second-round pick to Denver in exchange with the fifth overall pick. But Elway said he would only do that if the player he wanted was off the board at No. 5, and it turned out the player Elway wanted, Bradley Chubb, wasn’t available. Chubb was available, and the Broncos stayed put and drafted him.

“John calls me and says, ‘All right, here’s what we’ll do,’” Beane said. “We finalized the deal, but it’s contingent on his guy not being there. . . . I was a little bummed when Elway told me, ‘Hey, this is our guy.’ I felt like what I had to offer John was better than anybody else could offer. I felt like I was bidding against myself, basically.”

In the end, Beane got a much better deal: To trade up from 12 to 7, Beane only had to give up two second-round picks, and not the 22nd pick in the first round. That allowed Beane to get Allen and then make another trade in the first round to get another player he wanted, linebacker Tremaine Edmunds. Beane thinks the trades he made ended up even better than the trades he tried to make.