

Bradley Chubb “prepared” to fill in for injured Shane Ray on Broncos defense

By Ryan O’ Halloran
The Denver Post
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Broncos linebacker Shane Ray’s multiple wrist surgeries last year provided a starting opportunity for Shaquil Barrett. Ray’s upcoming operation — his fourth in 10 months — has created a similar opportunity for rookie fifth overall pick Bradley Chubb.

Ray was shut down last week and will miss minicamp, which runs Tuesday-Thursday and wraps up the Broncos’ offseason program. In his place, Chubb has been working with the starters.

“I know Shane is going to do whatever it takes to get back as fast as he can and when he gets back, we’re going to definitely need him,” Chubb said Monday during a volunteer event for Broncos rookies at the Food Bank of the Rockies. “If that causes me to have to step up and step into a certain role, I’ll be prepared.”

During the first three weeks of organized team activities, Chubb’s role was as a second-team player behind Ray and then a part of the pass-rushing group as a defensive end. If Ray isn’t ready for the Sept. 9 opener against Seattle, Chubb would be thrust into an every-down role.

Working with the starters has helped speed up Chubb’s learning.

“The game is so much faster by being with the vets,” Chubb said. “You need to have a sense of urgency. When I take reps with the (starters), it helps me out learning a little bit better. There is no, ‘Hey, what do I have to do on this play?’ because those guys expect me to know it.”

Chubb was a defensive end at North Carolina State playing in a 4-3 alignment but said the transition to becoming a 3-4 linebacker has been “smooth.”

“I have great guys helping me out — Shaq (Barrett), Shane and Von (Miller),” Chubb said. “Those guys are encouraging me and letting me know the things to do in the playbook and the different things that they’ve learned over their careers. I’m excited to be a part of a good group.”

Chubb also received instruction from former Broncos pass rusher DeMarcus Ware during OTAs.

“He helped me out a lot, just doing different pass-rush moves with him,” Chubb said. “He was telling me things he did to have success for so long in his career.”

Chubb said Ware told him to reach out if he wants to talk pass rushing.

“I’m going to be sending him videos of me pass rushing and letting him know I’m trying to do what he taught me and (asking him), ‘What do you see here? What can I do better?’” Chubb said. “Using him as a resource is going to be helpful for me.”

Between now and the start of training camp in late July, Chubb's goal is to continuing to gain comfort with the playbook.

"In the NFL, they expect you to learn the scheme and be dominant," he said. "You need to know the outcome for all different types of (pre-snap) situations. In college, I felt like everything was pretty set and we didn't have to know that much. It was difficult at first, but I feel I've come a long way with it."

Broncos visit Boys & Girls Club, bringing back memories for Courtland Sutton, David Williams

By Ryan O' Halloran
The Denver Post
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Visiting the Broncos' Boys & Girls Club on Monday brought back memories for receiver Courtland Sutton and tailback David Williams.

Sutton and Williams were among 19 Broncos rookies who volunteered at the Food Bank of the Rockies, enjoying lunch and participating in outdoor activities with kids at the Boys & Girls Club.

Sutton said the Boys & Girls Club in his hometown of Brenham, Texas, was a big part of his childhood.

"I know how influential all of the Boys & Girls Clubs are because they all have a very similar purpose — giving kids an outlet, being with other kids around their age and really being active when they're not in school," Sutton said.

Sutton began attending the Boys & Girls Club when he was "about 7 or 8," years old and his mother was a long-time administrator at the club.

"Anytime there was a break and the club was open, I would be there," Sutton said. "To come back and be around the kids and feel their energy and the happiness they have being here is pretty awesome.

"This is a great place for kids whose parents work all day and it keeps them from being at home. You build tremendous friendships from programs like this."

Sutton said a highlight from his time with the club was interacting with football and basketball players from Brenham's Blinn Community College.

"We saw them as people who were super athletic and guys who were in a position to give back time," he said.

"Those are moments I still remember It's not always about giving money, it's about spending time because that allows for memories these kids will have for a long time."

Williams attended a club in Philadelphia from ages 7-11 for summer and after-school programs, and said it's how he met most of his childhood friends, and appreciated visits from players from the Phillies and Eagles.

Food bank visit. During one hour of work, the Broncos' rookies packed 200 boxes of food that weighed 5,800 pounds and will provide for 10,440 meals.

"We're out here giving our time and making sure people know we care about them and are having a good time while we're doing it," linebacker Bradley Chubb said.

Tailback Phillip Lindsay floated around and appeared to be directing the packing of food items.

“He appointed himself (in-charge) but nobody was really listening to him,” Chubb joked. “We had a little assembly line going and Phillip was in the background — a little white noise that we tried to block out.”

Broncos mandatory minicamp preview: 5 things to watch

By Kyle Frederickson
The Denver Post
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The Broncos begin minicamp on Tuesday for the first of three mandatory practices at Dove Valley.

Here are five story lines to follow as the team rebounds from a 5-11 season with an intriguing blend of veterans and newcomers.

1. Keenum connections. Ten Broncos organized team activities went a long way toward allowing quarterback Case Keenum to assume his role as leader — and the early returns were positive. Keenum now has the opportunity to build on that chemistry and demonstrate how his physical and mental gifts can elevate a talented supporting cast and relieve an overworked defense. After five seasons between three different teams, Keenum enters his first NFL minicamp as an unquestioned starter. How he responds to that challenge is yet to be seen.

2. Impact rookies. The Broncos selected 10 players in the 2018 NFL Draft, and through OTAs, it appears several are in position to make an immediate contribution. No. 5 overall pick Bradley Chubb's importance increased with the news of another wrist surgery for edge rusher Shane Ray. Wide receivers Courtland Sutton and DaeSean Hamilton have already wowed teammates. For offensive guard Sam Jones and running back Royce Freeman, open competition at their respective positions should provide ample opportunity to rise on the depth chart.

3. Offensive line health. Fortunately, the only full holdouts from Broncos OTAs were players rehabbing from injury. Unfortunately, that group included two projected offensive line starters picked up in free agency — left guard Ron Leary (knee) and right tackle Jared Veldheer (foot). Should they remained sidelined through minicamp, it would eliminate valuable time building chemistry up front. Leary and Veldheer, when healthy, can provide essential veteran leadership. The sooner they're back on the field practicing, the better.

4. Punt return auditions. Among the Broncos position battles that remain most open entering minicamp is the role of punt returner. Two wide receivers, Isaiah McKenzie and Jordan Taylor, held down the job with mixed results a year ago, while rookies like Hamilton, Freeman and running backs David Williams and Phillip Lindsay are eager to prove they belong. First-year Broncos special teams coordinator Tom McMahon was non-committal when asked who would earn the job by Week 1, but said: "We're going to have a great returner, whoever it is. And they'll develop."

5. Running back depth. C.J. Anderson's departure to Carolina opens up plenty of carries in a backfield that should feature a heavy dose of Devontae Booker and a yet-to-be-determined second option. The Broncos added two rushers in the draft (Freeman and Williams), plus Lindsay as an undrafted free agent from CU. Second-year Bronco De'Angelo Henderson will also be in the mix. Despite Denver's plethora of offensive woes in 2017, it still managed to rush for 1,852 yards, good for 12th-most in the NFL's regular season. The Broncos will aim for even better production this fall with likely a tailback-by-committee approach.

Broncos minicamp preview: Position by position look

By Mike Klis

9 News

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Stay healthy, guys. Vacation is almost here.

The Broncos will conclude their offseason program this week with a three-day minicamp Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Two rookies – first-round pick Bradley Chubb and third-rounder Royce Freeman – have yet to sign their four-year contract as of Monday but that's no big whip because they have workout agreements that don't expire until the start of training camp, or when they sign their contracts, whichever comes first.

Chubb is scheduled to receive a \$17.914 million signing bonus and a fully guaranteed, four-year, \$27.271 million contract. Freeman should get a signing bonus close to \$1 million with a four-year deal worth a tad more than \$4 million.

They will have to work a little harder this week for the money they are about to receive. The 10 OTA (organized team activity) sessions amounted to one on-field practice, strength and conditioning, and a couple hours of meetings. Minicamp has one full practice plus a walkthrough, conditioning and an added meeting or two.

The minicamp is a little more revealing about what head coach Vance Joseph and his staff feel about their players as it pertains to the start of training camp in late-July. Here's a review of each position as the Broncos enter minicamp:

QUARTERBACK

Case Keenum has performed like the franchise quarterback he was paid to become (\$18 million a year), which in turn has given the entire team greater confidence it will be improved this season.

Paxton Lynch is getting better but he has been pushed by Chad Kelly, who was getting his share of practice snaps with the No. 3 team.

OFFENSIVE LINE

Left guard Ron Leary (knee) and right tackle Jared Veldheer (foot/ankle) would be ready to go if the season started today. They have been held back as a precaution. They should be lined up with the No. 1 offense come training camp.

Garett Bolles is the left tackle, Max Garcia has been working at left guard in place of Leary, Matt Paradis at center, either Connor McGovern or Menelik Watson will be the right guard and Billy Turner or Cyrus Kouandjio have been at right tackle in place of Veldheer.

As of now it appears Garcia, Turner and either McGovern or Watson would be the top backups. J.J. Dielman and Kouandjio also have a chance to stick as reserves.

RUNNING BACK

Devontae Booker goes first, but Freeman hasn't been waiting long before he works in with the No. 1 offense. De'Angelo Henderson is also getting his reps, although his car accident last month did bang up his body. New running coach Curtis Modkins also mixes in rookies David Williams and Phillip Lindsay.

RECEIVERS

The story of OTAs so far has been rookies Courtland Sutton and DaeSean Hamilton getting their share of playing time with Keenum and Lynch.

The newcomers may have invigorated top two veterans Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders, who have looked good. Isaiah McKenzie has been making a play for the slot position.

Carlos Henderson, a third-round draft pick last year, must hurry and start making plays. Jordan Taylor will be rehabbing from double hip surgery until at least training camp.

TIGHT ENDS

Jake Butt is coming on. After essentially redshirting his rookie season last year to recover from his second ACL surgery, Butt has been making plays in the receiving game. The Broncos hope he can become their first, legitimate receiving threat from the tight end positions, especially in the red zone, since Julius Thomas in the first half of the 2014 season.

Jeff Heuerman will start as the in-line tight end, replacing the spot previously held by Virgil Green. Fifth-round rookie Troy Fumagalli has been sidelined to recover from sports hernia surgery.

DEFENSIVE LINE

We haven't seen Clinton McDonald, who has been out all offseason with a shoulder issue. We have seen Adam Gotsis, who has been participating while awaiting word from Atlanta, Georgia on a rape claim levied against him.

Derek Wolfe had a neck procedure that has him feeling like a man. Domata Peko Sr. is back for another year at nose tackle. Shelby Harris and Zach Kerr return to add depth.

The wild-card is second-year, second-round pick DeMarcus Walker. He must come on.

INSIDE LINEBACKER

Fourth-round rookie Josey Jewell is mixing in with the first-team defense even though starters Brandon Marshall and Todd Davis return.

Davis re-signed with the Broncos and will make \$6 million this season; Marshall's \$5 million salary is fully guaranteed.

Zaire Anderson, a backup the previous two years, has some young competition in sixth-round rookie Keishawn Bierria and second-year players Jerrol Garcia-Williams and Joe Jones.

OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS

This was the Broncos' most stacked position, at least until it was discovered Shane Ray's left wrist hasn't been healing correctly. Ray is expected to miss the first two to four games of the regular season, which leaves more playing time for Chubb and Shaq Barrett opposite Von Miller. Undrafted rookie Jeff Holland also has a chance to make the 53-man roster.

CORNERBACKS

The trade that sent Aqib Talib to the Los Angeles Rams creates questions if not concerns. Chris Harris Jr. goes from No. 2 to No. 1 corner. Bradley Roby goes from No. 3 to No. 2. Tramaine Brock, playing with his third team in three years, will be the No. 3 at 30.

Third-round rookie Isaac Yiadom and third-round, second-year corner Brendan Langley are the favorites to win the No. 4 and 5 cornerback spots.

SAFETIES

The addition of Su'a Cravens has quietly made this one of the Broncos' most crowded positions. Cravens is a strong safety who is best as a dime linebacker – the same position Will Parks played last season.

Justin Simmons returns after his breakout season as a first-time starter in 2017. Darian Stewart is a returning No Fly Zoner. Parks and Jamal Carter give the Broncos five solid safeties.

SPECIAL TEAMS

On paper, new punter Marquette King is an upgrade on Riley Dixon, especially when the Broncos are backed up and need to flip field position.

Placekicker Brandon McManus is coming off an off year. If he can three more field goal attempts than he did last year, he will have a good year.

The rookie Hamilton is getting a chance to be a returner.

Former Denver Bronco turned home remodeler under investigation following Contact7 investigation

By Jace Larson, Brittany Freeman

KMGH

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A former Denver Bronco, who started his own home remodeling business years afterward, is under investigation by the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office after a homeowner alleged he gave her forged documents showing he obtained the city permit needed to redo her basement.

Kevin Clark is under investigation after the homeowner in Centennial hired him to remodel her basement and then discovered the permit he claimed to have received from the city and subsequent inspections are not on file with the city.

Clark was a defensive back and kick returner who played for the Broncos from 1987 to 1991.

Cheryl Rivas provided Contact7 with copies of the documents she said Clark gave her and Contact7 gave copies of the documents to Centennial's Chief Building Inspector Tim Moroney.

"This is a document that has not been used at the city in over a decade," Moroney said of the documents that appeared to have initials signaling city inspections had been completed.

Rivas said she was given what she thought — and was told — was a building permit, but it too was altered.

"The header of the document has been manipulated by someone," Moroney said.

Moroney said the document is similar to a building permit application, but the word "application" has been moved. He said the city's phone and fax numbers have also been removed from the header of the document.

The city has no record of a building permit or inspections being performed at Rivas' home in recent years, he said.

A spokeswoman for the Arapahoe County Sheriff's office confirmed they had received a complaint about this matter and referred to Clark as a person of interest. The investigation is ongoing, and sheriff's office spokeswoman Julie Brooks said in order to maintain the integrity of the investigation she could not provide more information at this time.

Rivas hired Clark in February to remodel her basement and provided Contact7 with canceled checks totaling \$28,500 with Kevin Clark listed as the payee.

Rivas' basement is not finished, and she said Clark's work is subpar.

"This is bowed terribly here," she said, pointing to the baseboard of a wall that does not appear straight.

A wire protruded a few inches from the wall and appeared to have been cut off in another place.

She tried to turn on her outdoor sprinkler system last month and couldn't find the water shut-off valve that used to be above the door in a closet.

"I couldn't find the sprinkler valve in the ceiling," Rivas said. "He had just drywalled over it."

She said she has spoken to a sheriff's office investigator.

The paperwork that Rivas said Clark gave her notes an amount of \$2,000 for blueprints for her basement.

The building permit he provided her lists an architect named Paul Periea. There is no licensed architect in Colorado with that name, according to Department of Regulatory Agencies online records.

The phone number listed for Periea on the questionable permit is not active.

Clark has a criminal history after pleading guilty in 2015 to theft over \$20,000. He was sentenced to 10 years probation, according to a Colorado Bureau of Investigation criminal background check done by Denver7.

Contact7 investigated Clark in May after a family in Arapahoe County and another in Denver said he did shoddy work at their homes.

Rivas and the other two families said they have not sued Clark because of the cost to hire a lawyer and uncertainty about getting him to pay if they receive judgements.

Contact7 investigative reporter Jace Larson approached Clark in the driveway of the home he rents in Greenwood Village. He would not answer questions and asked the Denver7 crew to leave the property.

He did not respond to further questions, but previously told Larson he found homeowners' demands to be unreasonable.

No charges stemming from the most recent investigation have been filed as of Monday.

Bradley Chubb benefitting from first-team reps, work with Ware as he prepares for season

By STAFF

DenverBroncos.com

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On the night John Elway selected Bradley Chubb with the fifth-overall pick in the 2018 NFL Draft, he brushed off concerns that the Broncos could have too many top-notch players at outside linebacker.

“You can never have enough pass rushers,” Elway said. “He’ll be a great addition to the ones we already have, and so we’ll see if we can get after that quarterback a little bit.”

That same evening, Elway also said he expected Chubb to compete right away for playing time.

Just over six weeks later, Elway’s comments have turned out to be quite prescient.

As Shane Ray battles another wrist injury, Chubb must meet expectations alongside Von Miller. If he does, Elway’s decision to select the best player available may also fulfill a newfound need.

“I know Shane’s going to do everything to get back as fast as he can,” Chubb said Monday. “And when he gets back, we’re going to definitely need him. If that causes me to step up or ... into a certain role, I’ll be prepared for it.”

An increased number of first-team repetitions should help Chubb as he aims to prepare for the regular season. Alongside the ones, Chubb said, is where his mental understanding of the game increases most.

In college, Chubb said he often had a set assignment before a play that was independent of anything that might occur pre- or post-snap. In his short time in the NFL, though, Chubb has learned that he must be ready for a series of outcomes that could be affected by any number of variables.

And when he’s out on the field with the first-team defense, he better know all of his potential responsibilities.

“When the game is so much faster by being with the vets and being with the guys who have been doing it for eight to 10 years, you have to have a sense of urgency,” Chubb said. “When I take reps with the ones, I feel like that helps me out learning a little bit better. There’s no, ‘Hey, what do I [have] on this play?’ Because those guys, they expect me to know it.”

Chubb’s transition won’t be purely mental, though.

He’ll have to make the physical adjustment, too, and that includes trying to bring his strong-arm rush move with him from NC State.

A couple weeks ago, the Broncos were visited by perhaps the best possible person to help Chubb adapt his signature move to the pro game.

After all, DeMarcus Ware often used similar power moves as he racked up 138.5 sacks during his 12-year NFL career.

“[DeMarcus] helped me out a lot just doing different pass rush moves with him,” said Chubb of Ware’s visit to OTAs. “He’s a bigger guy, as well, so he was just telling me the things he did to have success for so long in his career. He said whenever I needed anything to just text him or let him know.”

Chubb hasn’t done that yet, but he plans to send Ware videos of his pass-rushing moves to receive further critiques.

As the fifth-overall pick prepares for the season, every little bit of advice should help.

Because while every team hopes to find pass rushers, having a pair of elite ones is even better.

2018 Taste of the Broncos presented by King Soopers set for September 10

By STAFF

DenverBroncos.com

June 12, 2018

The Broncos' premier culinary festival, which features Broncos players as servers dishing out some of the city's best food, will take place Sept. 10, the team announced Monday.

The event has become a fan favorite in the area, and it's not hard to see why.

However, sometimes it is hard to actually see the tangible impact of the event when it comes to the community impact.

But that became crystal clear when the Broncos visited the Food Bank of the Rockies' Denver warehouse as part of the team's Rookie Community Service Day and players could see the massive shelves of food products. As the event's primary beneficiary, the charity has received funds to give out about 400,000 meals to the community over the past few years since the team hosted the first Taste of the Broncos in 2015.

The organization has been thrilled to be a part of such success and the 2018 edition should again be spectacular for patrons, the Food Bank and those served by the Food Bank.

"We really love to bring the gourmet tailgate theme into the community and having players helping serving food, walking, talking with the crowds, having some music, playing the "Monday Night Football" game that'll be going on as well," said Kim Ruotsala, the Food Bank's chief development officer. "We like to keep it a real happy, light experience more than an event, so that people can actually come and have an experience with the Broncos and with the great restaurants. Troy Guard is one of the leading chefs here in Denver and he actually helps coordinate all of the restaurants, so it's an absolute fantastic time."

And that also brings opportunities to taste delicious concoctions that haven't even yet been offered to the general public yet.

"Sometimes we have restaurants at Taste that aren't even restaurants existing yet," Ruotsala said. "They're just concepts that are being introduced. Being able to have the creativity that the chefs bring to Taste of the Broncos is just amazing."

Tickets will go on sale June 19, so circle the date on your calendar or set a reminder to ensure you'll join the Broncos at the 2018 Taste of the Broncos.

2018 Fantasy Football Draft Prep: Ranking the Fantasy Assets for the Denver Broncos

By Heath Cummings
CBS Sports
June 12, 2018

Case Keenum was awesome in 2017 and the Broncos are betting he can do it again. Looking at his career before 2017, that looks like a risky proposition. Before his breakout season Keenum had thrown 777 passes in the NFL and had a 58.4 percent completion percentage, 6.7 Y/A, 3.1 percent touchdown rate and a 78.4 rating.

Those are not the numbers of a quality starting quarterback.

That's not to diminish what Keenum did in 2017; he was awesome. But now he moves to a new team with a new system, and there's really not a lot of reason to think he'll be a startable quarterback in Fantasy.

And that's OK for his receivers. Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders caught passes from Trevor Siemian, Brock Osweiler and Paxton Lynch last season. If Keenum is just average, that will be an upgrade for them. Anything else is gravy.

What will be more interesting is the running game. The Broncos let C.J. Anderson walk and replaced him with Royce Freeman in the draft. Freeman will battle Devontae Booker for the starting role, but all indications are they'll both get touches. Freeman is a bigger back, so I'd expect he will score more touchdowns, but Booker should be more involved in the passing game.

Let's take a look at the expectations for all of these players.

*Rankings expressed below are in terms of expected Fantasy points. This is a part of our actual Fantasy Football rankings but not a direct correlation to my rankings. Things like injury risk, upside, etc. factor into rankings but they're not being talked about here. This is simply an expectation as the team is currently constructed.

PLAYER	EXPECTED FP	POS. RANK	EXPECTED PPR FP	POS. RANK
Demaryius Thomas	154.5	#13	243	#11
Royce Freeman	125.9	#22	169.9	#21
Devontae Booker	123.3	#37	169.2	#28
Emmanuel Sanders	119.4	#42	190	#38
Case Keenum	293.5	#22	293.5	#22

Breaking down the touches

Bill Musgrave has been an offensive coordinator in the NFL for nine years and the Broncos are his fifth team. Looking at the performance of those offenses, it's easy to wonder how he's pulled it off. He's once led an offense that was top 10 in either points or total yards.

Early in his career, Musgrave relied heavily on the run but he's run more pass-heavy offenses the last three years. Musgrove's pass attack has been very WR-centric, with more than 62 percent of the targets going to receivers. That should mesh well with the Broncos' offensive weaponry, but it limits the running backs' value, especially if they're splitting carries.

BRONCOS TOUCHES

PLAYER	RUSHARE	RUATT	RESHARE	TGT	REC	TD
Royce Freeman	50%	204	8%	43	31	8
Devontae Booker	30%	122	11%	63	46	6
Demaryius Thomas	0%	0	25%	143	89	67
Emmanuel Sanders	0%	0	22%	126	70	5
Courtland Sutton	0%	0	15%	86	47	4
Jake Butt	0%	0	10%	57	40	4

Of note:

Courtland Sutton is the other interesting rookie in Denver. It may take an injury to Sanders or Thomas for him to be Fantasy relevant, but he should help Keenum right away.

Jake Butt missed all of last year recovering from an injury and still isn't at the top of the depth chart, but I expect he'll be there by August. Butt may not get enough targets, but he's one of my favorite Dynasty stashes at the position.

The projected difference between Freeman and Booker doesn't do enough to highlight the difference in upside between the two. I can see Freeman taking on a workhorse role, rushing for 1,000 yards and scoring 10 touchdowns. I don't have enough imagination to see that for Booker.

The Leftovers

De'Angelo Henderson is by far the most interesting Bronco we haven't talked about. The addition of Freeman hurt his stock, but he could be a very complementary back to Freeman if Booker continues to disappoint. Henderson needs to show he's improved his ball security before he sees extensive action, but he's someone to watch.

Prisco's Top 100 NFL Players of 2018: Rodgers tops Brady for No. 1, Jaguars have most on list

By Pete Prisco
CBS Sports
June 12, 2018

Who are the NFL's best players?

Who is the best quarterback? Top pass rusher? Receiver?

The debate is settled with my 2018 list of Top 100 NFL players, a list that looks back at the 2017 season, but also ahead to 2018.

That means injured players from a year ago, players like the Houston Texans' J.J. Watt and Odell Beckham Jr. of the New York Giants, are still featured prominently near the top of the rankings since they appear to be healthy again – or will be by the time camp rolls around.

The one player who continues to have injury concerns is Indianapolis Colts quarterback Andrew Luck, who still hasn't thrown a football after shoulder surgery, so I left him off this list. If healthy, he's in the middle of it.

The top overall player for the second straight year is Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers. He missed time last year with a shoulder injury, but he's the best player in the league when on the field.

He edges out Tom Brady, who is right there in the second spot. The rest of the top 10 features a lot of usual suspects, but there are a lot of new entries this year throughout the top 100.

If you're wondering what team has the most players, it's the Jacksonville Jaguars with eight in the top 100 – six of them defensive players -- just edging out the Los Angeles Rams, who have seven.

1 Aaron Rodgers
GREEN BAY PACKERS QB

When he's on his game, and on the field, there is nobody better. I know he doesn't have the rings of Tom Brady, but right now he is the NFL's best – even coming off an injury-marred season.

2 Tom Brady
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS QB

To be doing what he's doing at his age is unreal. The man is the gold standard when it comes to franchise quarterbacks and might be the best ever.

3 Aaron Donald
LOS ANGELES RAMS DE

The reigning Defensive Player of the Year is a force on the inside and should be even better this year with more help next to him in Ndamukong Suh. The Rams need to make him the highest-paid defensive player in the league.

4 Von Miller
DENVER BRONCOS OLB
He remains the game's best edge rusher, a player who can also play the run. Miller's ability to disrupt games is why he's near the top of the list.

5 Antonio Brown
PITTSBURGH STEELERS WR
He continues to put up amazing numbers for the Steelers. There is no sign at all of him slowing either as he led the NFL in receiving yards last season.

6 Jalen Ramsey
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS CB
He is now the NFL's best corner, a big, long player who can play either man or zone and excel at it. He plays with the swagger of a Deion Sanders.

7 Rob Gronkowski
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS TE
He is the standard by which tight ends are measured. Gronkowski is on his way to Canton, but injuries have been a concern.

8 Khalil Mack
OAKLAND RAIDERS DE
His season wasn't quite as good as the year before, but he remains one of the top edge rushers in the league. A new defense should help his sack numbers.

9 J.J. Watt
HOUSTON TEXANS DE
He's coming off a season shortened by injury, which has been a recurring theme for him lately. But when he's healthy – and he reportedly is that now – he is still a player who can ruin an offense.

10 Cameron Jordan
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS DE
For some reason, he doesn't seem to get the due he deserves as one of the league's best down players. He had his best season in 2017 with 13 sacks.

11 Luke Kuechly
CAROLINA PANTHERS MLB
He remains a game-changing player in the middle of Carolina's defense. He is good against the run, but also really good against the pass.

12 Todd Gurley
LOS ANGELES RAMS RB
He was special in 2017, putting up big numbers running it and catching it out of the backfield. He should again be a legitimate MVP candidate.

13 Julio Jones
ATLANTA FALCONS WR
He remains one of the top receivers in the league. But he does need to catch more touchdowns.

14 Odell Beckham

NEW YORK GIANTS WR

He played in just three games because of a broken ankle last season, but when he's on the field he is one of the game's best and a player who can change a game with one catch and run.

15 Calais Campbell

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS DT

In his first season with the Jaguars, he could have easily been the Defensive Player of the Year with 14½ sacks. He was even better off the field for a young group of defenders.

16 Harrison Smith

MINNESOTA VIKINGS FS

He is a playmaking safety who can do it all, rush, cover and play the run. His versatility is perfect for the modern NFL.

17 Joey Bosa

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS DE

Entering his third season, he is one of the league's best edge rushers. Watch for him to be higher on this list next year.

18 DeAndre Hopkins

HOUSTON TEXANS WR

Now that he finally has a quarterback in Deshaun Watson, Hopkins should be even better. He's put up big numbers with below-average passers, so look out.

19 Le'Veon Bell

PITTSBURGH STEELERS RB

He can do it all, run it, catch it and he's a good blocker. His contract situation shouldn't overshadow how great he is as a player.

20 Drew Brees

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS QB

Closing in on the age of 40, he remains one of the league's best quarterbacks. The help from the running game last season cut his numbers some, but not the production.

21 David Johnson

ARIZONA CARDINALS RB

When he's healthy, he's right near the top of the list of backs. He missed most of last season with a broken wrist, but he is healthy and again should be a big part of the Arizona offense.

22 Tyron Smith

DALLAS COWBOYS T

Back issues limited him to 13 games last season, which is a concern moving forward. When he's on the field, he's the best left tackle in the game.

23 Marshal Yanda
BALTIMORE RAVENS G

He was lost in the second week with a broken ankle in 2017. He is expected to be ready to go for camp and when he's on the field he's one of the best guards in the league.

24 Casey Hayward
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS CB

He quietly had one of the best corner seasons in the league last year. He's been a real steal for the Chargers in free agency.

25 Bobby Wagner
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS MLB

He was the best middle linebacker in the league last season. On a defense hit with injuries, he was their best player.

26 Zack Martin
DALLAS COWBOYS G

His ability to dominate inside is why the Cowboys have been so good running the ball with him as a starter. He's about to get a huge contract.

27 Xavier Rhodes
MINNESOTA VIKINGS CB

He is an elite cover corner who plays on one of the best defenses. Rhodes is just now getting to his peak.

28 Travis Kelce
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS TE

He is the second-best tight end in the league. He is a physical presence who puts a lot of pressure on a defense.

29 Patrick Peterson
ARIZONA CARDINALS CB

Peterson continues to be an outstanding cover player who travels with the opposition's best receiver.

30 Chris Harris
DENVER BRONCOS CB

Early in his career he was underrated, but is now one of the better cover corners in the league. He can play inside or outside and with Aqib Talib now with the Rams, he is the top dog by far in their secondary.

31 Ezekiel Elliott
DALLAS COWBOYS RB

When he's on the field, he's one of the best runners in the league. Missing time due to suspension last season really hurt the Cowboys.

32 A.J. Bouye
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS CB

He is the "other" corner on the Jaguars roster, but that doesn't mean he's not one of the league's best.

33 Marshon Lattimore
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS CB

As a rookie, he was outstanding as a cover corner, helping to fix a position that has been a major problem for the Saints for years. He had five interceptions and showed the ability to play the ball in the air.

34 Michael Thomas
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS WR

In his second season, he became the go-to player for Drew Brees with 104 catches. Scary thought: He might just be scratching the surface of what he can do.

35 A.J. Green
CINCINNATI BENGALS WR

He had 77 catches with eight touchdowns on an offense that was hit hard by injuries and had bad line play last season. Are his best years going to waste?

36 Fletcher Cox
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES DT

He is a disruptive force inside for the Eagles, a guy who plays the run really well is also a good pass rusher.

37 Melvin Ingram
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS OLB

Playing opposite Joey Bosa, he is a premier pass rusher in his own right. Ingram plays with a nasty style and had his best season in 2017.

38 David DeCastro
PITTSBURGH STEELERS G

He plays the game with power and has improved greatly as a pass protector. He has lived up to the first-round hype.

39 David Bakhtiari
GREEN BAY PACKERS T

He is outstanding protecting the blind side for the Packers. In pass protection, he's as good as any left tackle.

40 Geno Atkins
CINCINNATI BENGALS DT

Atkins was back looking like the young Atkins last season. He is a power player with unreal quickness.

41 Matt Ryan
ATLANTA FALCONS QB

His numbers were down some from his 2017 MVP season, but there were reasons for it, including a new offensive coordinator. He played better than the perception of his game.

42 Russell Wilson
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS QB

His ability to turn bad plays into great ones is as good as any quarterback in the league. This year, the offense should be his, which will help his numbers go up.

43 Jadeveon Clowney

HOUSTON TEXANS OLB

With injuries to J.J. Watt and Whitney Mercilus last season, Clowney lived up to his pre-draft hype for the first time. Injuries do remain a concern.

44 LeSean McCoy

BUFFALO BILLS RB

He was the main reason why the Bills somehow snuck into the playoff last season. Imagine if he had more help around him?

45 Alvin Kamara

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS RB

As a rookie he was special, earning Offensive Rookie of the Year honors. This season he will get more carries, which is a good thing.

46 Demarcus Lawrence

DALLAS COWBOYS DE

He had his breakout season in 2017 after overcoming a back injury. Now comes the tough part: Doing it again.

47 Chandler Jones

ARIZONA CARDINALS OLB

He led the NFL in sacks last season with 17 and emerged as one of the better edge rushers.

48 Travis Frederick

DALLAS COWBOYS C

His ability to block for the run is a big part of the Cowboys offense. He remains one of the two or three best centers in the game.

49 Tre'Davious White

BUFFALO BILLS CB

As a rookie, he was impressive in coverage. He didn't back down from any challenge thrown his way. He was one of the true bright spots on the Bills defense.

50 Jurrell Casey

TENNESSEE TITANS DE

He can push the pocket in the passing game, but he's also good against the run. Plays with quickness and power.

51 Ndamukong Suh

LOS ANGELES RAMS DT

He never lived up to the money in Miami, but he was still a heck of a player on their line. Now he gets to play next to Aaron Donald, which might make him even better.

52 Philip Rivers
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS QB

He threw for 4,515 yards, with 28 touchdown passes and 10 picks, which was down from 21 the year before. His yards-per-attempt average of 7.9 was his highest since 2013.

53 Grady Jarrett
ATLANTA FALCONS DT

He has emerged as one of the best inside players in the NFL. His quickness is as good as any down player in the league.

54 Brandon Graham
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES DE

He doesn't pile up huge sack numbers – getting 9½ last season -- but his presence is felt with the way he consistently pressures the quarterback.

55 Gerald McCoy
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS DT

His six sacks last season were his lowest total since 2012, but he didn't have much help around him. He is still a disruptive force inside.

56 Andrew Norwell
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS G

With Carolina last season, he was one of the top guards in the game. He will amp up the Jaguars' run game in a big way.

57 Damon Harrison
NEW YORK GIANTS DT

The man they call "Snacks" is a power player inside who dominates against the run. He doesn't get the due he deserves.

58 Mike Daniels
GREEN BAY PACKERS DE

He continues to be a dominant down player on a defense that doesn't have many playmakers. He certainly stands out.

59 Marcus Peters
LOS ANGELES RAMS CB

He plays a cocky brand of corner, but he usually backs it up. A change of scenery will be good for him.

60 Eric Berry
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS SS

He is coming off a season where he was lost in the first week with a torn Achilles tendon. He's overcome so much in the past, so why not expect him back playing at a high level again this season?

61 Kawann Short
CAROLINA PANTHERS DT

He's by far their best defensive lineman, dominating against the run and with his ability to push the pocket inside. He had 7½ sacks last season.

62 Lavonte David
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS OLB

He was one of the few bright spots on a bad Tampa Bay defense. His speed makes his game work.

63 Ben Roethlisberger
PITTSBURGH STEELERS QB

He remains a player who can beat a team with his arm, but is really dangerous when the play breaks down. Since his impressive 2014 season, his numbers haven't been as good.

64 Kareem Hunt
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS RB

He was the leading rusher in the league last season as a rookie, which was impressive for a third-round pick. He should be even better in 2018.

65 William Jackson
CINCINNATI BENGALS CB

He emerged as a shutdown corner last season, his first on the field after missing his rookie season in 2016. He had two impressive games against Antonio Brown.

66 Alex Mack
ATLANTA FALCONS C

He had another good season for the Falcons, especially blocking for the run. He turns 33 this year, so he's getting up in the years.

67 Eric Weddle
BALTIMORE RAVENS DB

He finished tied for third in interceptions with six last season and is still a top-tier safety.

68 Matthew Stafford
DETROIT LIONS QB

He had another good season in 2017, throwing 28 touchdown passes and 10 picks. He also threw for 4,446 yards.

69 Aqib Talib
LOS ANGELES RAMS DB

This 32-year-old showed last season he still has the tools to be an outstanding cover player. He will be a nice fit with the Rams.

70 Carson Wentz
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES QB

He was in the MVP conversation last season before he was lost with a torn ACL. He's expected back for the opener, and he should be back to his winning ways.

71 Leonard Williams
NEW YORK JETS DE

He wasn't as dominant as he was in 2017, but he remains a big-time force on the Jets line. He just needs more help around him.

72 Jason Kelce
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES C

His smarts and quickness are imperative to the Eagles offense as he remains one of the top centers.

73 Tyreek Hill
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS WR

The NFL's fastest player showed what he's capable of doing when he settled in as a receiver last season. He averaged 15.8 yards per catch.

74 Darius Slay
DETROIT LIONS CB

He tied for the league lead in interceptions with eight, showing the ability to handle the league's best receivers.

75 Andrew Whitworth
LOS ANGELES RAMS T

In his first season with the Rams, he helped steady a line that was in need of it. He continues to be one of the best in the league.

76 Telvin Smith
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS OLB

He is a run-and-chase linebacker who knows how to get to the football. He is one of the leaders on one of the NFL's best defenses.

77 Malik Jackson
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS DT

He had a better second season with the Jaguars than in 2016, when he signed as a big-ticket free agent. His ability to push the pocket inside is a big part of their defense.

78 Earl Thomas
SEATTLE SEAHAWKS FS

Injuries have slowed his career some, but when he's on the field he's still a game-changing player on the back end.

79 Yannick Ngakoue
JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS DE

On a dominant defensive line, he had his breakout season in 2017. Watch for a lot more from him in 2018 and for him to be much higher on this list next year.

80 Keenan Allen
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS WR

He had 102 catches (fourth in the league) for 1,393 yards (third in the league). He showed how good he could be when he's healthy.

81 Leonard Fournette

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS RB

He fought through some injuries last season and was still a productive rookie. With a better line in front of him this season, his numbers will go up.

82 Zach Ertz
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES TE

He was a big reason why the Eagles' offense was able to help the team win a Super Bowl. He had 74 catches with eight touchdowns.

83 Landon Collins
NEW YORK GIANTS DB

He wasn't quite as good as he was in 2016, but he continued to be a playmaker on their defense. Look for a better year from him in 2018.

84 Cameron Heyward
PITTSBURGH STEELERS DT

He had his best season in 2017 with a career-best 12 sacks. He's also outstanding against the run in their scheme.

85 Joe Staley
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS T

At the age of 33, he is coming off another good season at left tackle for the 49ers. He's the rock on their line.

86 Mike Evans
TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS WR

His numbers dropped from 2016, but he still had 71 catches and averaged 14.1 yards per catch. His touchdowns fell from 12 in 2016 to five last season.

87 Larry Fitzgerald
ARIZONA CARDINALS WR

All he does is continue to catch passes. He was second in the league with 109 catches and had six touchdowns. He's become more of a possession receiver, but he can move the chains.

88 Malcolm Jenkins
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES DB

He is a versatile player who can do a lot of things and is a big reason why the Eagles are the Super Bowl champs.

89 Deion Jones
ATLANTA FALCONS MLB

He made big strides in his season season. I would expect an even bigger jump in 2018.

90 Kevin Byard
TENNESSEE TITANS DB

He tied for the league lead in interceptions with eight last season. Even though Deion Sanders might not know who he is, his opponents sure do.

91 Micah Hyde
BUFFALO BILLS SS

In his first season with the Bills, he showed why they made the move to sign him as a free agent. He was all over the field and had five picks.

92 Adam Thielen
MINNESOTA VIKINGS WR

He was fifth in the league in receiving yards with 1,276 on his 91 catches last season for an average of 14.0 per catch.

93 Adrian Amos
CHICAGO BEARS SS

This young safety was impressive in his third season with the Bears. He's good against the run and the pass.

94 Davante Adams
GREEN BAY PACKERS WR

He had another good season for the Packers in 2017, catching 74 passes with 10 touchdowns.

95 DeForest Buckner
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS DT

In his two seasons, he has become a force for the 49ers. I expect his sack numbers to rise this season.

96 Kendall Fuller
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS CB

He was much more than a throw-in in the Alex Smith trade to the Redskins. He was special as a slot player last year.

97 Jared Goff
LOS ANGELES RAMS QB

After a slow start in his rookie season, he really came on under Sean McVay last year in his second. He will be much higher up this list next year.

98 Everson Griffen
MINNESOTA VIKINGS DE

All he does is continue to pressure the quarterback. He had 13 sacks last season for the Vikings.

99 Trey Flowers
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS DE

He's the best defensive player on a defense that doesn't have enough good players.

100 Chris Jones
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS DE

This is a rising player who will be much higher on this list next season. He really came on last season for the Chiefs.

Just missed

Stefon Diggs, WR, Minnesota Vikings; Cam Newton, QB, Carolina Panthers; Julian Edelman, WR, New England Patriots; Myles Jack, LB, Jacksonville Jaguars; Linval Joseph, DT, Minnesota Vikings; Devin McCourty, S, New England Patriots; Michael Bennett, DE, Philadelphia Eagles; Vic Beasley, DE-OLB, Atlanta Falcons; Takkarist McKinley, DE, Atlanta Falcons; Jack Conklin, T, Tennessee Titans; Devonta Freeman, RB, Atlanta Falcons; Lamarcus Joyner, S, Los Angeles Rams; Glover Quin, S, Detroit Lions; Doug Baldwin, WR, Seattle Seahawks; Trent Williams, T, Washington Redskins; David Andrews, C, New England Patriots; Derek Carr, QB, Oakland Raiders; Delanie Walker, TE, Tennessee Titans; Taylor Lewan, T, Tennessee Titans; Akiem Hicks, DT, Chicago Bears; Justin Houston, OLB, Kansas City Chiefs; Kirk Cousins, QB, Minnesota Vikings and Keanu Neal, S, Atlanta Falcons.

NFL, MLB will participate in NYC Pride March for the first time this month

By Ryan Young
Yahoo! Sports
June 12, 2018

When thousands of people take to the streets of Manhattan for the New York City Pride March later this month, two of the biggest professional sports leagues in the United States will be participating for the first time.

The NFL and MLB will be making their debut in the parade, joining the NHL, NBA and WNBA on June 24. The five leagues are all currently registered to march in the parade and will have floats, according to Cyd Ziegler of OutSports.com. The MLS and the National Women's Hockey League are set to have employees and players marching in the parade, too.

The MLB will send nearly 200 employees to the march, including Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem. Former umpire Dale Scott and former player and current league executive Billy Bean — who are both openly gay — will also participate.

Former Kansas City Chiefs and New England Patriots lineman Ryan O'Callaghan — who came out as gay last year — will participate and be featured on the league's float. San Francisco 49ers assistant coach Katie Sowers, who was the first openly gay coach and the second woman ever to hold a full-time coaching position in the NFL, will also take part.

Tennis legend Billie Jean King is one of four grand marshals for the event, too.

The NBA and WNBA were the first professional sports leagues to officially participate in the event in 2016, and both NBA commissioner Adam Silver and WNBA president Lisa Borders have marched in the past. Former NBA player Jason Collins — who was the first active NBA player to come out as gay — will be featured on the league's float.

The NHL is returning to the event for the second year in a row, too, and will also participate in the Toronto Pride Parade on the same day.

Bradley Chubb on Shane Ray injury: I'll be prepared to step up

By Josh Alper
Pro Football Talk
June 12, 2018

Broncos linebacker Shane Ray is headed for another round of wrist surgery that could affect his availability at the start of the regular season.

The Broncos have experience dealing with Ray's absence after last year's wrist trouble, but they have a much better option to fill the role across from Von Miller this season. Fifth-overall pick Bradley Chubb is on the roster now and showed some deference to his veteran teammate when discussing how Ray's injury impacts him.

"I know Shane is going to do whatever it takes to get back as fast as he can and when he gets back, we're going to definitely need him," Chubb said, via the Denver Post. "If that causes me to have to step up and step into a certain role, I'll be prepared."

Part of Chubb's preparation has been getting advice from DeMarcus Ware, something he said he will continue to do as he tries to fully grasp the transition from college to the Broncos.

Any change to Chubb's role if Ray is out would likely come in the volume of work as the rookie wasn't going to be on the bench all game under any circumstances. If he develops as hoped between now and September, a better question might become what kind of role Ray will have when he's healthy enough to play again.

Case Keenum takes leadership reins in Denver

By Charean Williams

Pro Football Talk

June 12, 2018

After Case Keenum signed his two-year, \$36 million deal with the Broncos, he said he was “excited to earn the right to be a leader.” The quarterback has done just that since arriving in Denver.

“The first thing is that he takes control of everything,” receiver Demaryius Thomas said, via Nicki Jhabvala of The Athletic. “Not just offense but the whole group. Offense, defense, special teams and all. He takes control of the huddle. I know that I was in the huddle one day and I said, ‘Wait, wait, wait. We’re missing. . .’ and he said, ‘I’ve got this,’ and I said, ‘OK.’ So, it’s stuff like that. It’s good to have him around. We’re still working to get that connection going.”

Keenum has called leadership a “daily mindset.” The Broncos, who have sought a leader at the position since Peyton Manning’s retirement, have noticed.

Keenum has credibility, having led the Vikings to the NFC Championship Game last season.

“You have a bona fide leader,” defensive end Shelby Harris said. “You have one guy that you can look toward, like, ‘This is our guy for the season.’ Don’t get me wrong, I thought Trevor [Siemian] was a great quarterback. I thought he did great things last year. And I think Paxton [Lynch] is a good quarterback. But when you have a QB battle, it’s like, ‘Who takes the reins? Who’s the one who steps up and is the leader?’ But this year with Case, you have a leader. You have a guy you can go to, a guy that has won games in the league. You saw what he did with the Vikings last year. So, it’s a great relief for our team to be able to have that guy for this year and hopefully for years to come.”

Report: Shane Ray set for surgery this week in Houston

By Charean Williams

Pro Football Talk

June 12, 2018

Shane Ray is scheduled for surgery later this week in Houston, Nicki Jhabvala of The Athletic reports. The Broncos outside linebacker has had three previous surgeries on his left wrist in the past year.

His rehab is expected to last three months, putting his availability for the start of the regular season in question.

Ray missed eight games last season with the injury and made only 16 tackles and a sack.

The Broncos chose not to pick up the \$9.23 million option on Ray's contract for 2019. He is scheduled to become a free agent in March.

Broncos waive Deiontrez Mount

By Charean Williams

Pro Football Talk

June 12, 2018

The Broncos waived linebacker Deiontrez Mount with an injury designation Monday. Mount tore his Achilles during an organized team activity May 29.

He will revert to the team's injured reserve list if he clears waivers.

The Titans made Mount a sixth-round pick in 2015, and he had an interception in four games as a rookie. He played one game for the Colts in 2016 and spent the 2017 offseason with them. Indianapolis waived Mount in August.

Mount joined the Broncos late last summer and opened the season on their practice squad. He appeared in seven games, making seven tackles.

New Jersey legalizes sports betting

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
June 12, 2018

The state that sparked the legalization of betting in all American states will start accepting bets later this week.

Via the New York Times, New Jersey governor Phil Murphy signed on Monday a bill that legalizes sports wagering in the state whose lawsuit to overturn the federal ban made it to the Supreme Court. The betting will commence on Thursday.

“Today, we’re finally making the dream of legalized sports betting a reality for New Jersey,” Murphy said in a statement, per the Times. “It means that our casinos in Atlantic City and our racetracks throughout our state can attract new business and new fans, boosting their own long-term financial prospects. This is the right move for New Jersey and it will strengthen our economy.”

The real question is if (when) betting will be available through mobile devices, allowing wagers to be placed by people who haven’t left their homes. Eventually, bets will surely be placed during Jets and Giants games at MetLife Stadium, on a variety of specific propositions like the outcome of a given play or a given drive.

College coach warps reality to make point about NFL aspirations

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
June 12, 2018

Most if not all college football coaches recruit high-school talent with the vague notion that their programs provide a stepping stone to the professional game. Even if the percentage of players who make it through the NCAA to the NFL is way too small to justify putting such notions in the heads of young players, the college coaches don't hesitate to do it, because they know that any football player who is successful enough to be recruited by an FBS-level school already has entertained the idea of getting paid a lot of money to do what he's been doing (and will continue to do, for at least three years) for free.

Besides, college football coaches aren't putting the notions in the heads of the players. The notions had been hatched from the moment the players first showed dominance against their peers; the college football coaches are merely giving giant buttons that long to be pressed a gentle nudge.

Bronco Mendenhall, the third-year Virginia football coach, said Friday at a UVa Board of Visitors meeting that he's trying to get his players not to think about playing in the NFL. Mendenhall explained at part of the discussion that he routinely asks his players to explain what their futures hold.

"Almost all say, even at [Virginia], my goal is to play in the NFL," Mendenhall said, via the Lynchburg (Va.) News & Advance.

"And then my simple response is, 'And?' It's amazing the uncomfortable silence that immediately proceeds that."

But silence, even of the uncomfortable kind, is far better than misguided, ill-informed, and inaccurate noise. Which is what Mendenhall supplied, by rattling off statistics that have no apparent basis in fact.

First, he claimed that "85 percent of the makeup of the NFL, those young people all come, 85 percent from single-parent homes." Apart from likely being a wildly gross exaggeration of reality, it's unclear what his point is.

Second, Mendenhall suggested that four of five players who succeed in the NFL are destined to leave the game broken, in multiple ways.

"The lucky ones that make it to their second contract — that means there is some sustainability — when they leave the NFL, they are all of the following — this is 78 percent, almost 80 percent," Mendenhall said.

"They are divorced, bankrupt, a substance abuser and disabled, all four. That's almost 80 percent of the lucky ones that make it to their second contract."

So 80 percent of all players who earn a second contract in the NFL, according to Mendenhall, leave the game divorced and bankrupt and a substance abuser and disabled. Not one of the four. All of the four.

A UVA athletics spokesperson was asked where Mendenhall got his statistics. The response? “No idea.”

We’ve got no idea regarding what Mendenhall is trying to prove, but it’s safe to say that the coaches against whom he recruits will be printing and laminating his comments for use in recruiting.

Report: Oliver Luck getting \$20 million guaranteed from the XFL

By Mike Florio
Pro Football Talk
June 12, 2018

It's not the \$40 million per year that NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell makes, but new XFL Commissioner Oliver Luck will be able to buy steak whenever he wants.

According to SportsBusiness Journal (via Rachel Bachman of the Wall Street Journal), Luck will receive \$20 million guaranteed over multiple years as the leader of Vince McMahon's resurrected football venture. The number could end up going north of \$30 million, if the league succeeds.

The number of years in "multiple" is key, for a couple of reasons. First, it reveals the average salary; \$20 million over three years obviously has much more annual value than \$20 million over five years. Second, it may shed light on the number of years that are funded by McMahon for the second attempt to make the XFL a first-class operation.

"Vince in a very sort of clear-eyed way analyzed the original XFL [and] realized that there are a number of things that needed to be done better," Luck said last week in a visit to the #PFTPM podcast. "Clearly there was a belief that the quality of play simply wasn't at the point that it needed to be, particularly when you consider there was national television. We're going to be very, very focused, laser-like focused on making sure that as we prepare for a 2020 launch. The good news is we have the time to do this in a very sort of methodical manner. Very focused on producing a high level of play. We believe that football is popular because people understand it in many cases in this country and want to make sure that we're offering a great level of play.

"I think our business plan is solid. I think the capital structure and that money of course is coming from Vince who's got an incredible passion for the game. I think that's solid. All in all I think that lessons were learned from the original league. Also I think at the end of the day, it's a little bit of a different era in the sense of technology and what we have available both from a health and safety standpoint, for players, for coaches in terms of competition on the field, for practice, for fan engagement. I think it's almost a different world if you think about what was around 2001 versus today. I think that's going to be a real benefit for us."

Regardless of how it turns out, Luck will be getting real money to turn the XFL into a real football league. If similar money is available for players, the tug of war between the AAF and the XFL could get interesting.