

# Denver Broncos mini-camp: Recap of practice No. 1

By Ryan O' Halloran  
The Denver Post  
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The Broncos held the first of three mandatory minicamp practices today. Here is a recap:

**Injury report.** The usual group of players who have not worked at all during OTAs continued to work on the side. Guard Ron Leary (knee), right tackle Jared Veldheer (foot), tight end Troy Fumagalli (groin), receiver Jordan Taylor (hips) and defensive lineman Clinton McDonald (shoulder). Linebacker Shane Ray (wrist) was a spectator.

Ray said he will have surgery Thursday and it will involve a bone scan. He's hopeful to be ready for the Sept. 9 opener against Seattle.

Coach Vance Joseph said Leary and Veldheer will be ready for training camp.

**Thomas injured.** Receiver Demaryius Thomas was unable to finish practice because of what Joseph called a "tweaked" foot. Trainers attended to Thomas, who tried to lightly job on the side before shutting it down.

**Tryout players.** Six players are here this week on a tryout basis — punter Colby Wadman (UC Davis), linebackers T.J. McCollum (Purdue) and Bo Bower (Iowa), defensive ends Antonio Simmons (Georgia Tech) and Nordly Capi (Colorado State/Akron) and defensive tackle Caushaud Lyons (Tusculum).

The Broncos have one open roster spot.

**Moving up.** As expected, Bradley Chubb took most of the first-team defense work even though Joseph pointed out he had been taking first-team reps before Ray's re-injury.

Billy Turner — who did not practice last Monday when the media was allowed to watch — took the first-team right tackle reps. Max Garcia filled in for Leary at right guard.

**Practice highlights.** Defensive end DeMarcus Walker was pulled off the field for a snap after jumping off-sides. ... Quarterback Chad Kelly showed good arm strength by delivering a dart to receiver John Diarse on an out route. ... Thomas was injured during the first-team offense's second series of 11-on-11 work. ... Linebacker Marcus Rush showed good awareness backing into zone coverage to break up a Paxton Lynch pass to the left sideline. ... Cornerback Chris Harris intercepted Case Keenum on a pass intended for Isaiah McKenzie. ... Safety Dymonte Thomas and cornerback C.J. Smith had pass break-ups against Lynch during a six-play segment. ... Defensive end Zach Kerr batted down a Kelly pass. ... Each of the running backs — Devontae Booker, Royce Freeman, David Williams and Phillip Lindsay — took reps with the first team. ... Receiver Courtland Sutton had four catches during 11-on-11.

# Broncos Briefs: Shane Ray says “possible timetable” is 2-3 months

By Ryan O’ Halloran  
The Denver Post  
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Broncos linebacker Shane Ray hopes a fourth surgery on his left wrist will be the charm, allowing him to play pain-free and possibly be available for the Sept. 9 opener against Seattle.

Ray will travel to Houston for surgery on Thursday and he said he’ll have a “bone fusion” to repair damage.

“It’s super frustrating because you go all offseason thinking you’re good and thinking you’re 100 percent healthy and then you get a check-up and find out you’ve got some injured stuff in there and need to get it fixed,” Ray said Tuesday. “For me, it was like ‘Dang, another step in recovery when I thought I was good after surgery last year.’”

Ray said his “possible timetable,” for return is 2-3 months.

“But I think, because it’s bone and not like repairing ligaments, I’ll be able to heal a lot faster and try and be ready for Game 1,” he said.

Broncos coach Vance Joseph declined to estimate Ray’s return date, only saying, “He’ll be back (in) the early part of the season.”

Ray was limited to eight games last year due to a wrist injury. He participated in the Broncos’ offseason program, including the first two weeks of organized team activities. Even though he was on the field, Ray still experienced discomfort.

“My wrist has been sore since last year and I was thinking in my head that it’s because of the recovery and part of the process,” he said. “When I got back here, it was still sore. I started to go through practice and workouts and it wasn’t getting any better. I asked to get a check-up and thankfully we caught it now instead of training camp.”

Said Joseph: “He understands he’ll be back to help us and we’ll get it totally fixed so he can play at a high level again. We know what it is and can finally fix it the right way.”

Footnotes. Broncos receiver Demaryius Thomas sustained a foot injury during team drills Tuesday. After being attended to by trainers, he tried to lightly job before being shut down. Joseph said Thomas “tweaked” his foot.

... Joseph said left guard Ron Leary (knee) and right tackle Jared Veldheer (foot) will be ready for training camp next month. They missed all 10 organized team activity workouts and will not practice this week. Joseph said neither player has experienced a setback. “We’re just being really, really smart, especially with guys we know have experience playing in this league,” Joseph said....Joseph said the three minicamp practices this week are “not much different,” than the 10 OTAs. “We want to build our library in all three phases to carry us through the season (and) continue to work on technique and our overall scheme of

things," he said. ... Cornerback Chris Harris had the only interception of 11-on-11 work Tuesday, picking off quarterback Case Keenum. ... Keenum's book, "Playing For More," will be released Sept. 4. Hall of Fame coach Tony Dungy wrote the foreword. "It's pretty special to me – I'll let people in and tell some pretty cool stories that many people probably haven't heard," Keenum said. ... Keenum was coy when asked if he will have a passing camp with his teammates before training camp. "I may or may not," he said.

# Broncos Mailbag: What is Denver's plan for quarterback Chad Kelly?

By Ryan O'Halloran  
The Denver Post  
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Hi, I'm that critical Broncos fan on Twitter and here's my question: Are the Broncos better off switching schemes from a 3-4 to 4-3 on defense and hiring an offensive coach if the 2018 Broncos don't produce a winning record?

— Jon Misak, Sayreville, N.J.

Ryan: Jon is all about looking ahead, evidently. Everything is on the table if the Broncos don't have a winning record this year and general manager John Elway opts for sweeping changes. If the Broncos move on from coach Vance Joseph, the natural assumption is they will go the opposite of what they had, meaning an offensive guy with head-coaching experience. Switching to a 4-3 defensive scheme could also be done because they have Bradley Chubb to play strong-side end and Von Miller to play opposite him. But we're a long way from that. The positive to a 3-4 scheme is the offense — conceivably — doesn't know where the fourth pass rusher is coming from.

Any chance the Broncos are looking at Sam Beal or Adonis Alexander in the supplemental draft? And if so, what round might they invest in them?

— Clarence Alberts II, San Antonio, Texas

Ryan: The Broncos have not participated in the supplemental draft since 1989 when they used a 1990 first-round pick to select Alabama running back Bobby Humphrey. Because Beal (Western Michigan) and Alexander (Virginia Tech) are cornerbacks, I don't see them going that route since they drafted Issac Yiadom in this year's third round. The Broncos' top five corners could be set: Chris Harris, Bradley Roby, Tramaine Brock, Yiadom and Brendan Langley. Beal and Alexander, if they get drafted, are likely in rounds 5-7. No player has been taken in the supplemental draft since 2015.

What are the Broncos' plans for QB Chad Kelly? Is he still being considered a future Broncos starting QB? I think they should keep him in mind for the job. I know John Elway said he is not kicking Paxton Lynch to the curb but every chance he gets to start he gets hurt.

— Victor, Alameda, Calif.

Ryan: I'm interested in seeing Kelly play during the preseason — because that's likely the only time we'll see him play. I think Plan A for the Broncos is to have Lynch be the No. 2 and Kelly be the No. 3. Lynch squandered his chance to be the immediate answer as the starter, but the Broncos want him to hang on to the backup spot — he's taken all of the second-team reps during the three OTAs we were able to watch.

One of Denver's biggest problems last season was finding a reliable third receiving option on offense. Who are the likely candidates to fill that role this year?

— Ken Masters, Denver

Ryan: Broncos fans should be excited about rookie receivers Courtland Sutton and DaeSean Hamilton, the team's second- and fourth-round selections. Both have looked fluid during the OTA workouts and have

earned praise from the coaching staff for their progress picking up the offense. Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders are the Nos. 1-2 receivers, but Sutton/Hamilton should be a good Nos. 3-4 tandem.

Hey, Ryan. Welcome to Denver! What's the tight end situation looking like for this team?

— Connor, Westminster

Ryan: Thanks, Connor. In a word, the Broncos' tight ends are "inexperienced." None are older than 26. Going into camp, I think the top three will be Jake Butt, Jeff Heurman and Troy Fumagalli. Butt missed last year with an ACL injury but has looked sharp in the OTAs. Fumagalli has not practiced yet (groin) but told me Monday he will be ready for training camp. They will be counting on a young group to produce.

What's your prediction on who the starters will be on this defense? And with Shane Ray's surgery, is it safe to assume Bradley Chubb is a Day 1 starter?

— Mike, Thornton

Ryan: Second question, first. With Ray expected to miss a few months, yes, I think Chubb will be the starting strong-side linebacker against Seattle in Week 1. The first question (base defense): DE — Derek Wolfe. NT — Domata Peko. DE — Adam Gostis. WLB — Von Miller. ILB — Brandon Marshall. ILB — Todd Davis. SLB — Chubb. CB — Chris Harris. CB — Bradley Roby. FS — Darian Stewart. SS — Justin Simmons. Nickel — Tramaine Brock. Pass rushers — Shaq Barrett and Ray.

Is Denver seriously giving Isaiah McKenzie another chance at the punt return job? He was garbage last year. I know Jordan Taylor just had hip surgery. Please tell me he's coming back as the punt returner.

— Mary Jenkins, Aurora

Ryan: Mary is not alone in their disgust about McKenzie getting another shot to win the punt return spot. Taylor needs to get back on the field before he can enter that competition. Phillip Lindsay and DaeSean Hamilton have caught punts during the OTA sessions. The interesting part for McKenzie and Lindsay — is punt returner their only route to making the 53-man roster?

# Broncos LB Shaquil Barrett approaches free agency determined to stay in Denver

By Kyle Frederickson

The Denver Post

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Shaquil Barrett isn't a native Coloradan, but call him an honorary son. He's earned the title.

Barrett, born and raised in Baltimore, spent three seasons at outside linebacker for Colorado State, went undrafted and now enters his fifth season with the Broncos. After 123 tackles, 11 sacks and seven forced fumbles while in a Denver uniform, however, he faces a crossroad.

Barrett is set to become an unrestricted free agent after this season. His performance this year will dictate whether he re-signs with the Broncos or gets offers elsewhere. If Barrett had it his way?

"The plan is to stay as long as possible," he told The Denver Post on Tuesday following Day 1 of Broncos' mandatory minicamp in Dove Valley. "I love it here."

Now, more than ever, the Broncos love Barrett, too, and more specifically the depth he brings to the linebacking position. News that Shane Ray will have a fourth wrist surgery that is expected to keep him out between two and three months only amplifies Barrett's role, which is similar to his 2015 Broncos' debut when Barrett was promoted from the practice squad and asked to fill the shoes of injured edge rusher DeMarcus Ware.

"No, no, it doesn't change my approach," Barrett clarified, "because you know you're always one play away."

He's actually rooting for Ray's quick recovery.

"Shane is an important part of our defense," Barrett said. "With our defense at full strength, there's pretty much nobody who can handle us. Having him go down is going to leave a little hole in the defense right now."

Barrett, 25, remains confident regardless of the competition within his position group. That includes No. 5 overall NFL draft pick Bradley Chubb. "I'm pretty sure he's worthy of the No. 1 pick," Barrett said. "We got lucky."

And, over the course of organized team activities and one minicamp practice, Barrett has showcased versatility that should allow him to be inserted however the Broncos best see fit. Coach Vance Joseph told reporters Tuesday that Barrett has lined up at Sam and Will linebacker — plus as an off-ball linebacker in "dime" packages on passing downs.

"I always approach it the same way and I always know I need to get better," Barrett said. "Trim my body up a little bit and keep watching film as much as I can. If I just stay dedicated throughout the whole season, no matter how we're doing as a team, I think I'll have a pretty good year."

Added Joseph: "Shaq can be a special player. He's shown over the years, the more he's played, the more plays he can make. I'm excited to see Shaq get more opportunities because in my mind, he can be a top-tier rusher in this league."

In March, the Broncos placed a second-round tender on Barrett which gives him a one-year, \$2.91 million contract. Barrett understands the urgency to produce. High expectations are among the top reasons he aims to remain a Bronco for the long haul.

"We don't accept mediocrity and we always want to contend for a championship," Barrett said. "I don't want to be on a team that's rebuilding or losing. We always fight every year."

# Big change in Broncos offense: Quick-throwing Keenum

By Mike Klis

9 News

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There is one noticeable difference between the offense Case Keenum is running for Bill Musgrave, and the one Trevor Siemian ran for Mike McCoy last year.

Keenum is getting the ball out of his hand.

"I always thought that it was my job to get the ball out of my hands, get it into the fast guys' hands and let them do something with it," Keenum said.

What you hear now about last year's offense is every play was like a science project. Complicated equations for play calls. Some of the interceptions thrown by Trevor Siemian and Brock Osweiler occurred in part because a receiver ran the wrong route. Can't always run the correct route if you're confused on which pattern to run.

Running backs stayed in to block. During the minicamp here Tuesday and throughout the offseason, the backs have been swinging out to catch the ball.

It's simple – providing you have the quarterback who knows where to throw the ball before the snap.

"I want to master this offense," Keenum said. "I want to get on the same page as Matt [Paradis, the center], as D.T. [Demaryius Thomas], Emmanuel [Sanders] and all those guys on the outside so that we don't have to communicate as much on the field. We're communicating so much during the offseason and off the field that it just comes naturally."

One more benefit to quicker passes: The offensive line doesn't have to block as long.

# Broncos minicamp notes: Failed physical brings new deal to McDonald

By Mike Klis

9 News

June 13, 2018

Although the Broncos and Clinton McDonald are optimistic the interior defensive lineman will be fully healthy by the start of the 2018 season, it's clear his physical ailment is taking a little longer than expected to heal.

Because it has, McDonald was unable to pass his physical on Monday. When he didn't pass his physical, the Broncos agreed to restructure his two-year, \$7 million contract so he would have a chance to make up a \$1 million roster bonus he lost by failing the physical.

McDonald, 31, had 5.0 sacks as a Bucs' defensive tackle last season, but then had a procedure in his shoulder and chest area before he headed into free agency. The Broncos were aware of the procedure when they reached agreement with him on a two-year, \$7 million contract.

Like all NFL contracts, McDonald had to pass his physical exam to execute his deal. Although the agreement was reached back on March 21, the Broncos gave McDonald nearly three months -- until Monday, the day before mandatory minicamp -- to pass his physical exam.

Here was the initial 2018 portion of McDonald's contract: \$3 million base salary -- fully guaranteed once he passed his physical -- and \$1 million roster bonus.

When he didn't pass his physical, the \$1 million roster bonus automatically became void and the \$3 million salary was no longer guaranteed.

The Broncos could have kept it that way. Instead, they gave McDonald a second chance. His new 2018 deal: \$1 million salary, non-guaranteed and \$3 million in roster bonuses. He can collect \$140,625 per game, up to \$2.25 million if he is on the Broncos' 53-man roster for all 16 games in 2018.

He can collect an additional \$46,875 per game up to \$750,000 if he is activated on the 46-man game-day roster.

The Broncos did McDonald a solid with this restructure.

McDonald has been mending slowly but surely. He had not been observing the Broncos' OTA (organized team activity) practices, but Tuesday he was working on the side with assistant strength and conditioning coach Anthony Lomando.

McDonald is healing -- just not as quickly as he had hoped.

Ray hoping to play in season opener

Pass-rushing outside linebacker Shane Ray said his injured left wrist started feeling sore after last season, even after he had returned to play following multiple procedures.

It was still sore this offseason and a checkup two weeks ago revealed “some damage in there that needed to be fixed,” he said.

He will have the wrist operated again Thursday in Houston. Although the expectation is Ray will be out three months – and therefore miss the early part of the regular season – he plans on accelerating his recovery.

“I’ve been hearing different things but two, two and a half, three months is a possible timetable,” Ray said. “But I think with this – because it’s bone and not the original surgery where they had to repair ligaments – [the fact] this is just a bone repair that I’ll be able to heal a lot faster and be ready for day one.”

#### Minicamp observations

\*Who is Marcus Rush and why was he lining up with the Denver first-team defense at left outside linebacker?

Rush, a week shy of his 27th birthday, prepped at Cincinnati’s famous Moeller High School and played his college ball at Michigan State.

Undrafted in 2015, he spent his entire rookie season on the San Francisco 49ers’ practice squad. In the 2016 preseason, his 6.0 sacks led the NFL. Yet, he settled for practice squads with the 49ers and Jacksonville that season, then Kansas City’s practice squad the first-half of 2017.

He was on the Broncos’ practice squad the final two weeks of last season. Rush got first-team reps Tuesday in place of Von Miller, who was getting a few vet reps off.

\*Broncos’ No. 1 receiver Demaryius Thomas tweaked his foot early in practice Tuesday and watched the rest of the workout. He was replaced by fourth-round rookie DaeSean Hamilton while second-round rookie Courtland Sutton got some time in the slot with the No. 2 offense.

\*Paxton Lynch took every rep with the second-team offense. Chad Kelly stuck with the No. 3 offense.

Through the first half of practice, Kelly was the more consistent performer. But later in a move-the-ball series, Lynch made the play of minicamp by rolling left and throwing a dart down the sideline complete to River Cracraft. Lynch’s offense finished off the drive with a touchdown.

\*All three rookie running backs – Royce Freeman, Phillip Lindsay and David Williams – got their turns with Case Keenum’s first-string offense. Lindsay caught a couple swing passes that allowed him to showcase his acceleration and speed.

# Broncos' 9 highest-paid players headed by pass rushers Miller, Chubb

By Mike Klis

9 News

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Just think, if Von Miller and Bradley Chubb become just the second pass-rush duo in NFL history to combine for 37 sacks this year, the Broncos would still be paying \$1 million per sack.

Miller, the Broncos' outside linebacker who primarily rushes from the defensive left side, and Chubb, the team's first-round rookie who presumably will be pass rushing from the right outside linebacker spot, are the team's two highest-paid players in 2018.

Even after restructuring his contract that makes him the NFL's highest-paid defensive player for a third consecutive year, Miller will make \$19 million this year.

Chubb, who will receive a one-time enormous balloon payment that is a \$17.914 million signing bonus, will make \$18.394 million this season. At least he will when he signs his rookie contract.

These are the cash payouts for 2018 and not the salary-cap figures that can be manipulated through bonus proration and other formulas.

With the Broncos' cash payroll for their top 51 players this season listed at \$187.787 million, a whopping 19.9 percent is allocated to their two edge rushers.

The 9 highest-paid Broncos in 2018 cash payout:

1. Von Miller, OLB ..... \$19 million  
\$2.5 million salary; \$16 million restructure signing bonus; \$500,000 workout bonus
2. Bradley Chubb, OLB ..... \$18.394 million  
\$17.914 million signing bonus; \$480,000 salary
3. Case Keenum, QB ..... \$18 million  
\$6 million signing bonus; \$4 million roster bonus; \$8 million salary
4. Demaryius Thomas, WR .... \$12.5 million  
\$4 million bonus; \$8.5 million salary
5. Derek Wolfe, DE ..... \$8.55 million  
\$8 million salary; \$500,000 per game roster bonus (\$31,250 per game); \$50,000 workout bonus. Does not include \$1 million bonus due next March.
6. Bradley Roby, CB ..... \$8.526 million  
\$8.526 million salary

7. Chris Harris Jr., CB ..... \$8.5 million  
\$1.1 million option bonus; \$7.4 million salary

8. Emmanuel Sanders, WR .... \$8.25 million  
\$8.15 million salary; \$100,000 workout bonus

9. Ron Leary, OG ..... \$8 million  
\$7.65 million salary; \$100,000 workout bonus; \$250,000 roster bonus (\$15,625 per game)

Others: Jared Veldheer, RT, \$7 million; Menelik Watson, G-T, \$6.125 million; Todd Davis, ILB, \$6 million

The 9 highest-paid Broncos will make a combined \$109.72 million, or 58.4 percent of the 51-man payroll. The top 12 Broncos will draw a combined \$128.945 million, or 68.7 percent of the payroll.

If that sounds inequitable, see the global economy where 1 percent of the citizens account for 50.1 percent of world's wealth, according to Credit Suisse.

The Broncos, by the way would be doing well if they pay out \$1 million a sack for their top pass-rushing duo of Miller and Chubb this year. Only one pass-rushing duo has reached at least 37 sacks combined since the NFL started keeping sacks as an official stat in 1982. Chris Doleman (21.0) and Keith Millard (18.0) had 39 sacks for the 1989 Minnesota Vikings.

# Emmanuel Sanders hosts annual 'An Evening with Emmanuel Sanders' following mini camp

By Rod Mackey

9 News

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After spending the day working out with his Broncos teammates at mini camp, Emmanuel Sanders spent his evening hosting his annual event An Evening with Emmanuel Sanders, a big event that helps fund his foundation.

An Evening with Emmanuel Sanders helped to raise money in support for Emmanuel's Locker, another event that provides sports equipment to children who can not afford it.

"Growing up I felt like I lacked certain opportunities that other kids were afforded," said Sanders recalling his childhood days.

"I wanted to give these children the same opportunities every child should be given regardless of their economic status. I want to level the playing field for them so they can succeed."

Kepner Beacon Middle School was the first recipient of Sanders' first Emmanuel's Locker giveaway. Many of their students attended Tuesday night's event to spend time with Sanders and thank him for all that his foundation has done.

# Broncos rookies spend the day before minicamp giving back

By Rod Mackey

9 News

June 13, 2018

The Broncos rookies spent their Tuesday morning on the field at the first day of minicamp, but they may have been even busier the day before.

Monday, all 18 of the newest Broncos gave back around Denver. They began their day with some manual labor as they volunteered to help box food and canned goods at Food Bank of the Rockies.

Usually they make it a competition, but this year they did it as a team.

"The bond has been amazing," Bradley Chubb said about how close the rookies have become. "When we first got here and got on the bus from the plane, no one said a word -- no one was talking. Now the way we interact it's like we've known each other for ten years now. It's pretty cool to see."

Then they volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club. Broncos Receiver Courtland Sutton spent a lot of time in one when he was a child.

He told 9NEWS his mom worked at one, so this trip was extra special for him.

"For a lot of the kids whose parents work all day, it keeps them from having to be home all day," Sutton said. "You get to be around youth you probably don't get to go to school with, but you get to build relationships and friendships."

Friendships and relationships are the exact thing the Broncos rookies are building.

# Clinton McDonald agrees to restructured contract with Broncos

By Field Yates  
ESPN Insider  
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Denver Broncos defensive tackle Clinton McDonald has agreed to a restructured contract, dropping his base salary from \$3 million to \$1 million, according to league sources.

The move was likely prompted by McDonald's inability (or inability) to pass a physical, as the terms of the deal he signed with Denver earlier this offseason stated that his \$3 million base salary for 2018 and \$1 million roster bonus would be fully guaranteed if McDonald were able to pass a physical on or before June 11. Failing to pass the physical would guarantee just \$1 million in base value on the deal.

Under the terms of the new deal, McDonald still has a chance to earn the full \$4 million he was due initially, if he can stay healthy and on the field this season. McDonald can earn \$140,625 for each game that he is on the team's 53-man roster (up to \$2.25 million total) and another \$46,875 for each game that he is on the team's 46-man game day roster (up to \$750,000 total).

The 31-year-old, who had surgery on his shoulder earlier this offseason, signed a two-year deal to help bolster the Denver defensive line after four seasons in Tampa Bay.

# Health and ‘mastery’: Broncos set goals, agenda for final stretch of offseason program

By Nicki Jhabvala

The Athletic

June 13, 2018

Von Miller spoke the truth last month and in the weeks since, his comments have spawned talk radio fodder and debate among media and fans alike.

“You really can’t put too much into OTAs,” he said, eliciting a chorus of gasps from afar. “Last year in OTAs I thought we were going to win the Super Bowl. You really can’t put too much into it.

“I know we’re all kind out here brainwashed, out yelling this: ‘Go hard!’ But at the end of the day, we don’t have pads on. We don’t have pads on, we only have helmets on. ... We’re trying to get everybody out here healthy and into the season. I would rather guys not practice in OTAs or training camp, but play in the season because that’s where we really need the guys.”

It’s easy to see how this was spun. Remember Allen Iverson’s “practice” rant? Of course you do.

But there’s reasoned thought, even a mandate, behind Miller’s words. Heading into minicamp this week, coach Vance Joseph gave his players six goals to try to attain in their final days of offseason work.

“And No. 6 was to come out of this thing healthy,” Joseph said. “So I’m going to stand by that.”

It’s why tackle Jared Veldheer, though medically cleared from an ankle injury he suffered last season, continues to observe and work with a trainer to the side of practice.

It’s why receiver Demaryius Thomas was held out for much of the team drills on Tuesday after he “tweaked” his right foot. “It’s the offseason, it’s minicamp, so I want to be smart with our guys,” Joseph said.

And it’s why, Joseph says, guard Ron Leary continues to be cautious with his return as he recovers from knee soreness.

“Again, we’re just being really, really smart,” Joseph said. “Especially with guys we know and that have experience playing in this league. Having three or four weeks for Veldheer, who has over 100 starts at tackle in this league, it makes more sense to get him totally healthy so he can play in the fall for us. Same with Leary. We know what Leary can do. It’s important to get him healthy so he can help us in the fall. Both of those guys are going to be ready for training camp.”

But precaution shouldn’t be mistaken for wasted days — as Miller even pointed out back in May. With quarterback Case Keenum running the offense, Bill Musgrave installing a newish system and young players joining the ranks of veterans in all three phases, these final days of practice are vital. And many players (and coaches) have set lofty goals.

To wit:

— There's been discussion of Keenum, his receivers, backs and tight ends gathering during the upcoming break for an informal passing camp, but the quarterback is keeping those details air tight and away from the prying eyes of media. Maybe it'll be in Houston. Maybe it'll be in Arizona. Maybe it'll be elsewhere.

Maybe it won't happen at all. Or maybe it will.

In the meantime, the first taste of minicamp Tuesday gave him and the offense plenty to chew on. Different looks from the defense resulted in an up-and-down day from the offense during team drills. A bullet pass here, a pick there. An impressive run here, a stalled drive there.

Sure, it's just minicamp and quarterbacks are still "throwing against air." But this three-day homestretch is more than that.

Ten OTA practices and three days of mandatory minicamp is less than two weeks of real work before the pads come on in training camp.

"Obviously we've had our goals, that we wanted to get on the same page, we wanted to talk the same language. This was kind of from the beginning of spring, but just a mastery of the offense, that's what I want. I want to master this offense," Keenum said. "I'm always trying to perfect my craft. I think to get to master level — it's hard to say. It's different for every offense. We're getting there. We're getting close, but I never feel like I've arrived. I'm always working, I'm always looking for little nuances and little things, like, 'Hey, when you get this look into this play, think about this.' I always try to add notes to my folders and add notes to different looks and plays, so no matter what comes up, I'm prepared for it and I'm ready for it."

Musgrave, who was elevated to full-time coordinator at the end of last season, has revised the playbook, changing plays and terminology. The primary reasons? To simplify the system and to play off the strengths of their quarterbacks, notably Keenum.

Through OTAs and the start of minicamp, Keenum said he already feels more comfortable. But he's aiming for a certain perspective.

"I think I have gotten better. It's just a constant thing where you're trying to see the defense like Bill sees it," he said. "As the play caller, what's he trying to get to here on this play? We've got priceless reps right now. It's priceless experience running so many different plays and so many different looks against a defense that's really, really good. I think we're getting a lot better. I still think that these next two days are going to be really important for us."

— During OTAs, defensive coordinator Joe Woods said the Broncos were onto "level two" in defensive enhancements since their Super Bowl 50 season. One of their general goals, however, is creating pressure. And then more pressure and more pressure.

The Broncos ranked third in total yards (290), fifth in rushing yards (89.4) and fourth in passing yards (200.6) allowed per game last season. But they totaled 33 sacks — well below their 42 and 52 the previous two seasons.

“Yeah, we’re definitely working on it,” linebacker Brandon Marshall said. “We have these periods where we have first-, second- or third-down pressures — we want to put pressure on the quarterback. I think that’s what made us so successful in 2015 when we won the Super Bowl. We put pressure on them. We played Tom Brady in the AFC Championship Game and we hit him 20-some times. I think that’s the key. Last year we kind of lacked on it and so they want to work on it.”

— The first two days of minicamp this week are Shane Ray’s last couple of days on the field (observing) before he begins another rehabilitation stint for his left wrist. The outside linebacker and former first-round pick will undergo a fourth surgery on the wrist Thursday in Houston to repair a bone that did not heal properly after the initial procedure. He’s facing anywhere from two-three months of recovery, but expects to be cleared to return to the weight room in only two or three weeks after the procedure.

“I mean, my wrist has been sore since last year after the season and I’m thinking in my head it’s probably just because of the recovery and part of the process,” Ray said. “When I got back here it was still sore and I started going through practices and workouts and it wasn’t getting better. I was supposed to get a checkup and thankfully we caught it now instead of training camp. There’s still some damage in there that needs to be fixed and I got to get it fixed.”

The timing certainly could have been worse, but it’s far from ideal for Ray. Because the Broncos declined to exercise Ray’s fifth-year option, he enters a contract season and his next deal will likely be contingent on his return to full health.

“I can’t let that stress me out. Of course everybody knows that this is my contract year and everything, but most importantly is I can’t go in ensure my next contract if I’m not healthy,” he said. “I don’t want to go out there like I did last year and try to force something and put bad film out there and let that be the judge of who I am as a player. A lot of that happened. The injury, I should have sat down, I went out and played, it wasn’t as good as it should have been obviously because of the injury and I feel like a lot of people tried to use that against me. So this time I’m going to be smart, I’m going to do the best thing for me, which is to make sure I’m 100 percent healthy, and then once I’m 100 percent healthy, I’ll be out here and be able to be the player that coaches and my teammates know that I am.”

# Case Keenum pays attention to every detail as he looks to revive Broncos

By Troy Renck

KMGH

June 13, 2018

The juxtaposition remains striking. A year ago, Case Keenum walked into Minnesota Vikings training camp as an afterthought. As the Broncos wind down minicamp, he spoke about his upcoming book and his obsession with a new offense.

Everything is different. And yet, it's not. He's still a quarterback driven by an insatiable appetite and ingrained humility.

"I want to master this offense. I want to master the nuances. I want to be able to say, 'This worked, but maybe try this on that play,'" Keenum said after the first day of the Broncos' final four-day mandatory minicamp before they break for the summer. "From where we are today to where we were a month ago, we've made some big steps."

The Broncos' progress starts and ends with Keenum. He has emerged as the leader through his actions. He did not walk into the meeting rooms and throw a C on his chest. He earned respect -- the only way he knows -- by showing up early, working late and not letting anything slide.

"He works with us to make us all better," rookie receiver DaeSean Hamilton said.

Keenum is attempting to change the narrative around him. Everywhere he goes -- he insists that he's not recognized, nor does it matter -- the journeyman label follows him like a lost puppy. He became a coveted free agent by throwing for 22 touchdowns and seven interceptions with the Vikings. Now comes the hard part. The next season.

Keenum recognizes he has doubters. Yet, he uses it as fuel. No longer burdened with a sprained neck from looking over his shoulder, Keenum appears comfortable as The Man for the first time since his last season in college at Houston.

"Yeah, he's a great leader. Every day—the majority of the days—he'll come in and ask me and D.T. to go and watch practices and we'll sit in the back room and watch film and go over what he's thinking and what we're thinking. I've been a part of two Super Bowl teams and that's what it takes," receiver Emmanuel Sanders said. "That extra work that's not mandatory, where guys are in there working out or working on their mental game. That right there, when it's fourth quarter or when it's fourth-and-5 or third-and-8. That's the stuff that gets you over the hill."

The Broncos' offense might as well have been climbing Pike's Peak in Crocs the past two seasons. Denver averaged 18.1 points per game a year ago, ranking 27th overall. The Broncos quarterbacks threw 22 interceptions. Only the Browns were worse. The league has changed. Boring is better offensively. The Broncos require a quarterback who can take care of the ball and take chances. Keenum learned this in Minnesota.

So miraculous was his season, multiple people approached him about writing a book. He agreed to the project. The working title is "Playing for More." It boasts stories about Keenum's journey, and stories that helped define him on and off the field.

As he spoke about being an author, Keenum never wavered. He talked like a leader. And that, more than anything else, is the takeaway this offseason. The Broncos know who is in charge. Now the challenge is real: Can Keenum lead them out of the darkness and back to the playoffs?

"We have to keep working," said Keenum, who plans to hold a passing camp with his receivers at an undisclosed location and will continue working with head trainer Loren Landow on his conditioning over the next few weeks. "I want a mastery of this offense."

#### Footnotes

Linebacker Shane Ray told Denver7 he will undergo a cleanup procedure on his left wrist on Thursday. He is frustrated, but recognizes it is necessary given the pain that returned. He has not given up hope of being ready for opening night, saying his recovery could range from "2-to-3 months." "I will stay positive," Ray said. ... Receiver Courtland Sutton continues to open eyes with his play. It's becoming increasingly likely he pushes for snaps early in training camp as the Broncos look to create multiple receiving threats.

# Broncos' Shane Ray optimistic 4th surgery will be the fix

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

June 13, 2018

Shane Ray is aiming to keep both his weight and his spirits up as he heads into a fourth surgery on his troublesome left wrist.

"I ain't been getting down about it. I just need to get it fixed so I can play and be 100" percent, Ray said Tuesday after watching his team's first minicamp practice.

Ray said he's optimistic he won't lose as much weight or strength as he did last year, when he dropped 17 pounds and essentially played one-handed for half the season before opting for a third operation in December so that he could get a jumpstart on his offseason rehab.

Ray dropped to 225 pounds last season, when he posted just 15 tackles and a single sack a year after collecting 48 tackles and eight sacks.

"I've already gotten myself up to 247, 250" pounds, Ray said. "I'm planning on being back in the weight room within two to three weeks. So, it's not like I'm going to be sidelined as long as I was last year."

Ray is also switching doctors for Thursday's operation in Houston. He hopes to return to practice by mid-August and play in the season opener against Seattle on Sept. 9.

Ray broke his left wrist at the start of training camp last year when he got tangled up with offensive lineman Menelik Watson. After surgery to repair both bones and ligaments, he missed the first six games and the final two.

With a jumpstart on his rehab, "I thought I was out in the clear" by the start of the offseason program two months ago, Ray said. "But I'd wake up every day and I'm like, 'Man, my wrist is still hurting.'"

The soreness didn't subside and swelling appeared, so he sought medical advice last week when doctors discovered an unhealed, fractured bone and recommended yet another operation.

"It's frustrating but all I can do is try to keep a positive mind," Ray said. "I'm more anxious to just get it done and over with so I can start my healing process and get back out here with my team."

The setback is bad timing for Ray, whose fifth-year option the Broncos declined to exercise last month, denying him a \$9.23 million guaranteed salary in 2019. That would have surpassed the four-year, \$9.18 million rookie contract he signed in 2015 after winning SEC Defensive Player of the Year honors at Missouri.

Moreover, the Broncos selected North Carolina State pass rusher Bradley Chubb with the fifth pick in this year's draft. Chubb lined up opposite Von Miller as both a down lineman in a 4-3 scheme and stand-up rusher in the 3-4 Tuesday.

Being sidelined for two to three months heading into a contract year isn't ideal, but "I can't let that stress me out," Ray said.

"Of course, everybody knows this is my contract year, but most importantly, I can't go ensure my next contract if I'm not healthy. I don't want to go out there like I did last year and try to force something and put bad film out there and let that be the judge of who I am as a player. Because a lot of that happened," Ray said.

"With the injury, I should have sat down. I went out and played. It wasn't good as it should have been obviously because of the injury. And I feel like a lot of people tried to use that against me. So, this time I'm going to be smart. I'm going to do the best thing for me, which is to make sure I'm 100 percent healthy. And then once I'm 100 percent healthy, I'll be able to be out here and be the player that my coaches and my teammates know I am."

# Denver Broncos coach Vance Joseph opens minicamp as a boss, not a buddy. Progress!

By Paul Klee  
Colorado Springs Gazette  
June 13, 2018

It was an offsides penalty at 11:43 a.m. on a Tuesday in June. Despite our darnedest attempts to make a Broncos minicamp sound important, that's all it was, nothing more.

Or was it?

Backup quarterback Paxton Lynch barked the call. Pass-rusher DeMarcus Walker jumped. Yellow penalty flags bounced across the turf.

"No! Get out of there!" the head coach disciplined the perpetrator.

Whoa! Who's the guy wearing Vance Joseph's whistle and sending guys to their room without dessert?

Dove Valley Country Club opened its doors last year. Is it closing up shop? In Joseph's dumpster fire of a rookie season, anything short of burning down the building would earn a pat on the butt and "get 'em next time." Accountability was something the Broncos flaunted on T-shirts and forget on Sundays.

"Players mature," Joseph said after the Broncos opened mandatory workouts under bluebird skies at the UCHealth Training Center.

True, true. But when it comes to the 2018 Denver Broncos it's not the players on the field I'm worried about. It's the head coach on the sideline who has everything to prove. The Broncos haven't suffered back-to-back losing seasons in over 40 years. Finally, it looked like someone told them.

To make 5-11 a distant memory, discipline must be Rule No. 1.

Sure, Super Bowl 50 MVP Von Miller has earned the right to play hooky from an OTA workout that an All-Pro pass-rusher simply doesn't need. Same for Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders. But the veterans on the roster have yet to buy in to the Vance Joseph era. Listen closely, and when Sanders made it crystal clear he has no interest in catching passes from the slot ("If the ball is not coming there, I don't to be there. Point blank, period," he said) and Miller said he's able to tell the rookies "what's not important" during OTAs, my red-flag antenna beeped again.

Who makes the rules around here?

So the best thing I saw on Tuesday was the head coach putting his foot down. More of that, please! It was in stark contrast to Joseph saying that Paxton Lynch can "relax" in his role as a backup — a bonehead comment from the coach that ruffled feathers in the front office.

When 5-11 happens, no one should relax. See, Gary Kubiak might've come across as the king of the "aw, shucks" routine. But any man who's been lucky enough to play for Ol' Kubes would say that you don't

want to poke the bear. His claws leave a mark. The 2017 season felt like Joseph simply wanted guys to accept his friend request on Facebook.

And they didn't respect him for it.

Here's hoping that's starting to change. Respect is the buzzword among the rookies, which in time will be just as dynamic as it has been advertised in this space. Bradley Chubb? Injury-prone Shane Ray is watching his Broncos career flash before his eyes. Courtland Sutton? Woo, boy. It looks like John Elway drafted the next Brandon Marshall, the wide receiver.

"He's a friendly target," starting quarterback Case Keenum said of the 6-foot-4, 216-pound Sutton.

Just as important as athletic ability is how Chubb, Sutton and the rest of the young'uns seem to know their rung on the Totem pole. As he left the practice field on Tuesday, Sutton hustled straight over to a familiar face with an outstretched hand: "Mr. Atwater! Good to see you, sir."

It's no surprise there were seven team captains in the Broncos' draft class. They get it.

So does the new quarterback.

"I want to master this offense," Keenum said.

Are these Broncos a good team or a bad team? Dunno. Like we were saying, it's only June. But they have no chance to reverse course without reversing how they've been coached. They need a boss, not a buddy.

# Broncos minicamp Day 1 observations

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
June 13, 2018

Each day of OTAs, minicamp or training camp provides a different kind of test. For the quarterbacks, Tuesday's first minicamp provided an examination of their poise.

Denver's front seven -- with the occasional aid of its safeties -- cranked up the heat on all three quarterbacks throughout the practice.

At times, the offense was able to adapt. One example came midway through practice, when Case Keenum faced down a blitz up the middle and quickly spotted rookie running back Phillip Lindsay tucked in behind a defender near the line of scrimmage. Keenum hit Lindsay, and the speedy rookie took off for a long gain, showing the offense's ability to exploit a heavy rush.

Two snaps later, Keenum delivered again, dodging a rush from Todd Davis to find an open Jeff Heurman near the left sideline.

But on the two plays that followed, the defense responded with vigor. First, DeMarcus Walker swatted down a Keenum pass in the backfield. On the next snap, Bradley Chubb leapt to knock down a pass despite being engaged with two blockers.

That sort of give-and-take in pressure scenarios was a positive for the Broncos. It expanded the possibilities of young pass rushers like Chubb and Walker.

It also demonstrated Keenum's ability to make quick decisions and exploit areas vacated by pass rushers. Keenum demonstrated that in his work with the Vikings last season, posting a 78.5 passer rating when pressured, according to Pro Football Focus.

That placed him seventh in the league among quarterbacks who took at least 25 percent of their team's snaps. It was also 13.9 rating points above the league average and 36.4 rating points over what the Broncos posted last year.

"The defense mixed it up a little bit and brought some good pressures, so we have a lot of good tape to watch from today," Keenum said.

"We did some good things, but there are a few balls I want back. We're growing and we're learning. It's spring. From where we are today from where we were a month ago, I think we've made some big steps. There's a lot to grow on, too."

For the defense, there is also plenty of room to grow from last year, when the Broncos ranked 17th in the league in sack rate, bringing down opposing quarterbacks once every 15.9 pass plays. That represented a steep decline from 2016 (5th, one every 14.1 pass plays) and was a far cry from 2015 (1st, one every 12.0 pass plays).

Bringing the Broncos back to their 2015 pass-rush prowess is one reason why they drafted Chubb. It also explains why pass rushing has been a point of emphasis this spring.

"We're definitely working on it," inside linebacker Brandon Marshall said. "I'm not sure where we were in sacks last year (22nd with 33 sacks), but we have these [practice] periods where we have first, second [or] third-down pressures.

"We want to put pressure on the quarterback. I think that's what made us so successful in 2015 when we won the Super Bowl. We put pressure on them. We played Tom Brady in the AFC Championship Game and we hit him [17] times. So I think that's the key. Last year we kind of lacked on it, so they want to work on it."

So far, so good. During the four practices open to media observation in the past four weeks, pressure from the front seven -- supplemented occasionally by safeties -- has been a constant, offering a sign that the defense should be able to have a bounce-back season.

The pressure also opens up horizons for the defensive backs. Chris Harris Jr. picked off a Keenum pass intended for Isaiah McKenzie near the left sideline, and outside linebacker Marcus Rush nearly picked off a Paxton Lynch pass intended for Courtland Sutton that was released as rookie Josey Jewell brought pressure from the inside.

"It's going to help us out a lot, man," safety Darian Stewart said. "Those guys up front have been doing great things. [Defensive Line Coach] Bill [Kollar] is working them. Even when we've got seven-on-seven, he's making sure that they get their work in. I think they're going to be a lot better this year, and it's going to help us get a lot of [interceptions]."

Days like Tuesday offer the Broncos hope that their pass rush can return to its overpowering form.

#### OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PRACTICE:

All three offensive units found success in a move-the-ball period that saw the offense take over at its 40-yard line.

Keenum led the No. 1 offense to a pair of first downs before its turn was wrapped up. He completed three of four passes on the drive, finding Andy Janovich, Emmanuel Sanders and Royce Freeman.

Lynch marched the No. 2 offense 60 yards to a touchdown against the second-team defense. He completed all six of his passes on the drive, with half of them going to Courtland Sutton, including a 9-yard strike for a touchdown on a quick slant route.

Kelly converted two third downs on six plays before the horn blew on his turn. On the first connection, a third-and-6, he rolled left after the line picked up a blitz from Joe Jones and found River Cracraft for a 6-yard gain.

Three plays later, with the offense in third-and-2 after a pair of Freeman runs, Kelly hit John Diarse on a slant route to move the chains. The horn blew to end the period after that.

... Kelly had his ups and downs Tuesday, but had one of the best plays of the day, hitting tight end Matt LaCosse in stride for a long reception down the seam that would have likely been a touchdown in game conditions.

... It was a strong day for the Broncos' three rookie running backs, all of whom had explosive plays throughout the practice.

Seventh-round pick Dave Williams had perhaps the strongest run of the day, sweeping left and waiting for the hole to develop before bursting through it and galloping down the left sideline for a long gain. Williams and Freeman's vision, patience and decisive cuts have led to a slew of lengthy carries over the last few weeks.

Lindsay was active in the passing game, serving as a crucial outlet for all three quarterbacks under pressure. He frequently turned his receptions into lengthy gallops.

"He'll be a good scatback," inside linebacker Marshall said. "I think he'll be a great third-down back. He's quick. I think he can create some matchup problems."

"The running backs, all of them are doing a great job," Stewart added. "They're going to help us win a lot of games."

... Second-team defensive backs Dymonte Thomas and C.J. Smith each broke up passes from Lynch during a practice period. Thomas dove to swat away a pass from tight end Jake Butt, while Moore lunged to deflect a pass before Cracraft could nab it.

Thomas, who played in three games late last season, has caught Stewart's eye.

"He's been doing some great stuff [and] he's going to be doing some great stuff for us," Stewart said.

... Diarse was active once again. During one period, he caught consecutive passes from Kelly, first making a tip-toe grab near the right sideline, then hauling in a pass on a slant route despite blanket coverage from first-year safety Jordan Moore.

... On May 24, Marshall said at a press conference that he wanted to lose weight so he could do a better job covering tight ends, noting his goal was to be at 227 pounds.

Tuesday morning, Marshall said he weighed in at two pounds below his goal, checking in at a lean 225 pounds. It has shown in his play, as he looks faster in coverage than in previous years.

"At OTAs, I lost 11 pounds," he said. "I want to be able to more efficiently. I want to feel better on the field. I want to have less body fat. I think that's important."

"I could be 240 [pounds], but if I've got a lot of body fat, it's going to slow me down. I want to get down, and then in these next five weeks when I'm off, I can focus on my strength training and build muscle. I want to just lose the fat and be stronger, leaner and more effective."

# Ray to undergo surgery, Thomas held out for portion of practice

By STAFF

DenverBroncos.com

June 13, 2018

Head Coach Vance Joseph confirmed reports Tuesday that outside linebacker Shane Ray will undergo a procedure on his left wrist.

Joseph did not specify when Ray will return to the field.

“We don’t have a time frame for Shane,” Joseph said, “He’s having surgery on Thursday in Houston. Once that’s done, we’ll figure out what the time frame is. He’ll be [back in the] early part of the season.”

Ray told reporters he expected to be back within two to three months.

Wide receiver Demaryius Thomas also missed a portion of practice as the team held him out for precautionary reasons.

“He tweaked his foot a little bit,” Joseph said. “It’s the offseason, it’s minicamp. So I want to be smart with our guys. I gave our guys six minicamp goals, and No. 6 was to come out of this thing healthy. So I’m going to stand by that.”

Joseph also updated the status of two offensive linemen who have yet to participate in the Broncos’ offseason practices.

Both Jared Veldheer (foot) and Ron Leary (knee soreness) did not practice Tuesday after missing the entirety of OTAs.

Joseph said Tuesday neither player has suffered a hiccup in their recovery process and that both would be ready for training camp when the team reports in late July.

“We’re just being really, really smart — especially with guys that we know that’s got experience playing in this league,” Joseph said. “Having three or four weeks [of OTA work] for Veldheer, who’s had over 100 starts at tackle in this league, it makes no sense. It makes more sense to get him totally healthy so he can play in the fall for us. And same for Leary. We know what Leary can do. It’s important to get him healthy so he can help us in the fall.

“Both of those guys are going to be ready for training camp.”

The Broncos will continue their mandatory minicamp on Wednesday.

# A new chapter: Author (and quarterback) Case Keenum pens memoir, 'Playing for More'

By STAFF

DenverBroncos.com

June 13, 2018

Though few Broncos players have drawn more attention this offseason than new starting quarterback Case Keenum, the veteran signal caller has spent at least part of the previous few months working on a more private endeavor.

Keenum, a seventh-year player who enters his first NFL season as an unquestioned starter, will soon publish his first book, "Playing for More: Trust Beyond What You Can See."

Following his breakout 2017 season in which he guided the Minnesota Vikings to an 11-3 record as a starter and led an improbable comeback win that's been dubbed the "Minneapolis Miracle," Keenum decided to share an inside look at his NFL journey.

"It's pretty cool," Keenum said Tuesday. "After this past season, I had three or four people approach me about writing a book. I never dreamed that I would possibly be able to author a book, but I had some really good help. Andrew Perloff, who's with 'The Dan Patrick Show,' is helping me out.

"It's kind of the story of me off the field, not just on the field, but why I play, why I do what I do and why I get to stand up here and talk to you guys — be the Denver Broncos' quarterback. It's pretty special to me and I let people in and tell some pretty cool stories that a lot of people may not have heard.

"It's just a blessing. God has been so good in my life. If it encourages and challenges somebody, then I've accomplished something with it."

Broncos Head Coach Vance Joseph has had a first-hand look at several parts of Keenum's journey. The pair spent two seasons together in Houston, including a stretch in 2013 during which Keenum earned the first starts of his career.

"Obviously, it's been some years [since then] and players mature," Joseph said. "Case has been through a lot of ups and downs in his career, and he's had success at a high level, speaking of last year. He's ready for the challenge. He's been a great leader for our football team and having a chance to finally be the guy from Day 1 has been fun for Case. I'm excited for him. He's had a great journey.

"It's going to be a great book, I'm sure, and he'll have a good season for us."

Keenum will release "Playing for More" in September, but the book is now available for preorder on major retail websites.

# The NFL usually puts money first, so why isn't it going all in on legalized gambling?

By Terez Paylor  
Yahoo! Sports  
June 13, 2018

When news broke last month about the Supreme Court's decision to allow states outside Nevada to legalize sports betting, many assumed the NFL would immediately become infatuated with finding a way to monetize that opportunity.

Given the league's well-earned reputation for putting the almighty dollar first — and the potential to horn in on the billions of dollars that illegal sportsbooks are believed to rake in yearly in America — it hardly seemed unreasonable.

But while the NBA and MLB have already partnered together to introduce legislation in several states that, if passed, would allow them to get a cut of those profits, SportsCorp Ltd. co-founder Marc Ganis — whose sports business consulting firm has worked closely with the NFL and its owners for years — told Yahoo Sports that America's biggest sports league is wise for eschewing action at the statewide level in favor of a more holistic approach.

"Federal legislation is by far preferable, rather than having to debate this in each state legislature," said Ganis, who is so respected in league circles that he's jokingly referred to by some as the league's 33rd owner. "[Utah senator] Orrin Hatch has already said he's going to submit legislation. That's really where the focus needs to be for everything from economics to the integrity to the consistency across state lines."

That opinion is shared by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, who recently released a statement urging Congress to pursue legislation with the following four principles in mind:

There must be substantial consumer protections;  
Sports leagues can protect our content and intellectual property from those who attempt to steal or misuse it;  
Fans will have access to official, reliable league data; and  
Law enforcement will have the resources, monitoring and enforcement tools necessary to protect our fans and penalize bad actors here at home and abroad.  
That statement is fairly boilerplate stuff, but overlooking the key phrase dropped in the middle of principle No. 4 — "bad actors here at home and abroad" — would be a mistake.

The NFL has been in the headlines for the wrong reasons recently, thanks to the ongoing furor over its new anthem policy and President Donald Trump's insistence on taking shots whenever his mood suits him, and the last thing the it needs is to evoke a game-fixing scandal — like something you might see in Europe — by rushing to capitalize off sports betting profits without first putting the proper protections for its teams, players and fans in place.

Hence Goodell's concern about "bad agents," and the league's cautious approach to monetizing sports betting efforts.

“If there’s legal wagering, the expectation is the wagers that will be bet will grow astronomically and that kind of growth also creates incentives for bad actors and actions,” Ganis said. “There’s been, almost, a regular litany of alleged game-fixing [in Europe] — primarily in soccer, but also in tennis. [These are things] that seem to have their source being gambling in one form or another.

“Knock on wood, we’ve been fortunate we haven’t had that since the ‘60s here.”

That’s right. Ever since Detroit Lions star Alex Karras and Green Bay Packers star Paul Hornung were suspended for placing bets on NFL games in 1963, the NFL has not dealt with a single public gambling controversy. This is not a coincidence, either.

“The NFL has to be vigilant, constantly, because there’s so much illegal wagering taking place,” Ganis said.

From the commissioner to the teams themselves — many of whom hire full-time security directors who are former federal agents — the NFL has devoted a significant number of resources to prevent and snuff out any issues its players or team/league personnel may have with shady characters before they become problems. There’s a concern that a more open gambling marketplace will only increase the number of shady characters the league must protect the game from, particularly from other continents.

“There’s a lot of overseas gambling that takes place, and you want to be a position where you’re not just protecting against what might happen within the 50 United States, you want to protect against what might happen if there’s broad-based gambling on the NFL in sports books, legal and illegal, anywhere in the world,” Ganis said.

Given the additional millions the league stands to gain from a more open gambling culture, however, the NFL is willing to take the risk. In fact, the league is already doing some things to prepare for the future. A spokesman for the NFL told Yahoo Sports that the league is providing training this summer for players, team and league personnel on ways to avoid precarious sports betting situations, and Ganis said that at some point, the league will reach out to the players’ and referees’ association so they can all get on the same page about the best way to protect their constituents from tricky situations without infringing on their rights.

“There may be some privacy issues,” Ganis said.

But the big focus, at least for the immediate future, will be on pushing Congress to enact laws that will not only force above-board gambling entities to reach agreements with the content rights holders (i.e. the leagues) before taking bets, but also neutralize the “bad agents” the league is so wary of.

And while the timeline for the enactment of those laws — or even whether they are likely — is unclear at the moment, what is known is that there is plenty that still needs to be done before the NFL will feel comfortable cashing in on the looser sports betting economy that is almost sure to come in America.

“We have barely scratched the surface on this topic,” Ganis said. “ ... It has a long, long way to go. This is just the beginning.”

# Bradley Chubb prepared to fill in for injured Shane Ray

By Kevin Patra

NFL.com

June 13, 2018

The moment Bradley Chubb fell into the Denver Broncos' laps at the No. 5 spot in the 2018 draft, the N.C. State product was going to push Shane Ray for playing time. Ray's latest hand injury ensured the rookie would get the edge on the starting gig.

With Ray expected to miss three months following another wrist surgery, Chubb will open this week's mandatory minicamp working with the starters.

"I know Shane's going to do everything to get back as fast as he can," Chubb said Monday, via the team's official website. "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."

Chubb reportedly spent most of OTAs with the second team behind Ray, rotating in with the starters in the pass-rushing package. With Ray's timeline putting the start of his season in doubt, Chubb's acclimation to the first-team unit is likely to be fast-tracked.

"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 presence lessens the blow of Ray's injury. With Von Miller, Shaq Barrett and Chubb as edge rushers, Vance Joseph's defense has more than enough firepower to rankle quarterbacks.

# What to watch for as 28 NFL squads open minicamp

By Kevin Patra

NFL.com

June 13, 2018

The last work before the NFL takes its proverbial summer break kicks off Tuesday for most teams.

Mandatory minicamps run from Tuesday to Thursday (June 12-14) for 28 NFL clubs.

Outside of workouts going from voluntary to mandatory, not much changes from Phase 3 of organized team activities. Practices remain pad-less. No live contact is allowed, but 7-on-7, 9-on-7, and 11-on-11 drills are permitted. Teams can hold two practices per day for the three-day period, as long as the players' time on the field doesn't surpass a total of three-and-a-half hours per day, and the second session is a walkthrough.

The biggest difference between OTAs and minicamp is players under contract not in attendance are subject to maximum fines of \$14,070 for the first day, \$28,150 for the second day, and \$42,215 for the third day -- totaling \$84,435. Players, like Le'Veon Bell, who have been franchise tagged but have yet to sign the tender are not under contract and therefore not subject to fines for skipping workouts.

Close of business on Thursday represents the end of the spring portion of the team workout period. Players will be on their own until training camps open in mid-July.

NFL Network will air three live hours of Inside Minicamp Live coverage on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday starting at 4 p.m. ET.

Let's run down one storyline to track for each of the 28 teams running mandatory minicamps this week:

**Arizona Cardinals:** What is David Johnson's status? The dual-threat running back sat out of workouts last week, and will not participate this week as he seeks a new deal. After he missed most of the 2017 season and is now entering a new offense, will the Cards concede to that request? The Cardinals planned to base the offense around the multifaceted runner. It's hard to prepare for that plan if Johnson is standing on the sideline -- or worse, disgruntled heading into training camp.

**Atlanta Falcons:** Julio Jones' absence will be the main talking point of Falcons minicamp. Despite his previous comments, Jones clearly wants a new contract after four straight seasons of 1,400-plus yards. But with three years left on his deal, it's a tricky negotiation. While all the hullabaloo will be about Jones skipping workouts, let's skew positive for a moment and consider that this could benefit the likes of rookie Calvin Ridley. While it's never ideal for a star to miss time, it's not the end of the world not to have Jones for three more days in the middle of June. Meanwhile, Matt Ryan will have more snaps to break in Ridley. The rookie getting more reps with Ryan before training camp can only aid the rookie's transition into what could be the most high-powered offense in the NFL -- once they figure out Julio's situation.

**Baltimore Ravens:** Will Joe Flacco make progress with his remade receiving corps? With Lamar Jackson breathing down his neck, this is a pivotal season for Flacco. Building a rapport with Michael Crabtree, John Brown and Willie Snead will go a long way to helping rejuvenate the frustratingly tedious offense we've

seen the past several seasons. There is also the backup QB gig to keep track of in the Charm City, where Jackson and Robert Griffin III are competing for the No. 2 gig.

**Buffalo Bills:** Will Josh Allen make strides toward wresting away the starting gig? Thus far during OTAs open to the media, Nathan Peterman and AJ McCarron have taken the reps with the starters. Coach Sean McDermott said he's open to giving Allen first-team reps, calling the situation "fluid." Will Allen earn those starter reps in minicamp or will the bazooka-armed rookie remain in backup mode heading into training camp?

**Carolina Panthers:** How is the installation of Norv Turner's offense coming along? We should get a better indication of Turner's true plans for Cam Newton this week moving through training camp. How the new offensive coordinator uses running back Christian McCaffrey will also be notable. After Newton missed last year's offseason work, the Panthers' plans for adjusting the offense was scrapped a few weeks into the season. Cam is healthy this time around, which should aid Turner's plans to tweak the game plan for 2018.

**Cincinnati Bengals:** Is receiver John Ross ready to make noise in 2018? After putting up a goose-egg as a rookie, the former first-round pick is healthy and ready to compete. Ross' speed could bring a dynamic element opposite A.J. Green in the Bengals revamped offense. Andy Dalton's best seasons have come when he's buffered by talent at every level. Ross becoming a deep threat would certainly aid the quarterback.

**Cleveland Browns:** How will rookies not named Baker Mayfield shake up the depth chart? Hue Jackson insists Tyrod Taylor is the starter, and he's not going to come off that claim for a three-day minicamp in June. The Browns, however, have several other youngsters who could make noise. Everything we've heard about Denzel Ward has been great, and he should lock down a starting spot. Can Nick Chubb begin to siphon snaps from Carlos Hyde? Where will second-round o-lineman Austin Corbett slide in? The Browns have made a bevy of offseason moves. Now we begin the process of seeing how those changes shake out.

**Dallas Cowboys:** How is Byron Jones' transition to corner? We're sure to hear plenty about the Dez Bryant-less receiving corps and the "Dak-friendly" offense this week. I'm just as curious about the Jones move from safety to cornerback. We've heard little about the former first-round pick changing positions (which is weird because he is a high-profile player for the Cowboys). If he makes some plays the next three days -- or conversely, struggles -- we should hear much more about the transition.

**Denver Broncos:** How is the Case Keenum revolution working? We've only heard positives about the new Broncos quarterback as a leader. Now he has the chance to build on that rapport within Bill Musgrave's system the next three days. Also, keep an eye on the running back rotation with Devontae Booker, De'Angelo Henderson and rookie Royce Freeman vying for snaps. Booker is the early favorite, but there is plenty of room for others to siphon carries.

**Green Bay Packers:** What will defensive coordinator Mike Pettine's front look like? With Clay Matthews taking a softball off the schnoz, Pettine will have more snaps to tinker with his backup pass rushers. Behind Matthews and Nick Perry sits a trove of question marks on a re-made defense. Minicamp will also provide Pettine time to work out his talented but young secondary.

**Houston Texans:** How are Texans players progressing from injuries? Deshaun Watson, J.J. Watt, Jadeveon Clowney and Whitney Mercilus are all coming off surgeries. Don't expect them to participate much this

week, but we should get updates on their statuses heading into training camp. Watson was working in 7-on-7s and individual drills during OTAs. Could he graduate even further? Any work for the QB would be beneficial as Bill O'Brien re-tailors the offense. Texans safety Andre Hal was just diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma late last Friday, and we should get player reactions this week to that crappy news.

Indianapolis Colts: Will Andrew Luck ever throw a football again???? Hyperbole aside, this week marks the final time in a team setting Luck could toss a pigskin before training camp. Seemingly all offseason the Colts' goal has been for Luck to be ready for training camp. Can the QB be completely ready if he hasn't even played catch in Frank Reich's system before school lets out for the summer? It won't be the end of the world if Luck doesn't throw this week but it's getting awfully close to panic time.

Editor's note: Luck was spotted throwing footballs during practice Tuesday.

Jacksonville Jaguars: How will the wideouts corps shake out? The biggest question heading into training camp for the finally stable Jaguars is how Blake Bortles' pass-catchers will line up. The Jags lack a go-to target but have a bevy of second fiddles with upside. Will Dede Westbrook, Keelan Cole, second-round pick D.J. Chark or Rashad Greene push their way up the depth chart? Currently Marqise Lee and Donte Moncrief hold the top two spots, but neither is irreplaceable.

Kansas City Chiefs: Can we stream Patrick Mahomes videos straight into my veins? Sure, there are more questions about the revamped defense in K.C., but who isn't giddy about the chance to see some ridonkulous throws from Mahomes this week? The Chiefs have been stingy with their availability this offseason, making mandatory minicamp one of the few times we'll get to see live reports and videos of the quarterback's progress. Soak as much of it in as you can. It will be weeks before more football is practiced.

Los Angeles Chargers: How will the Chargers replace Hunter Henry? The tight end's ACL tear threw a wrench in the 2018 offensive plans. The Bolts have yet to replace their starter. If they decide against re-signing Antonio Gates later this summer, what plan will Ken Whisenhunt employ to overcome Henry's loss? More Melvin Gordon catches? More four-receiver sets with Mike Williams playing a big-body role? We could see some of the tinkering strategies this week, which could inform the front office whether it needs to make a pre-training camp move or stay the course.

Los Angeles Rams: Will Aaron Donald report? The Defensive Player of the Year doesn't sound like he'll be in attendance this week unless something changes at the last minute. Donald deserves to get paid, but he owns so little leverage a deal isn't simple. Surely the Rams would like Donald on the field, but forfeiting around \$84,000 might be worth it for the game-wrecking lineman to retain the small slice of leverage he owns -- withholding his services. Donald missed time last offseason and still won DPOY. His absence won't be world-altering for the revamped Rams D.

Editor's note: Donald is withholding his services this week, per NFL Network's Steve Wyche.

Minnesota Vikings: We could point out Kirk Cousins assimilating into a new offense. We could talk about Dalvin Cook coming off injury. We could ask if Laquon Treadwell is still alive. We could point out Anthony Barr still wants a new contract. Instead of those storylines, we'll highlight the looming kicker battle between Kai Forbath and rookie Daniel Carlson. At this stage, it appears the fifth-round rookie has the edge. Will he keep it as the pressure ramps up? For a franchise with a nightmare history when it comes to kickers, this is no small battle.

**New Orleans Saints:** What effect will Mark Ingram's suspension play? The running back is expected to report for minicamp after sitting out OTAs. Ingram will serve a four-game PED suspension to open the season and wants a new contract. Those are two separate, yet related, issues he'll be asked to address this week. On the field, will Sean Payton give some of Ingram's reps to younger players in anticipation the starter won't be around to open the season?

**New York Giants:** What will Odell Beckham do? The receiver is reportedly planning to attend minicamp -- he reported for a portion of OTAs earlier this season. If that plan doesn't change, will OBJ participate or will he be a spectator? First, he'd have to be cleared medically, something coach Pat Shurmur previously said the wideout is close to accomplishing. If he is cleared but doesn't have a new contract, will he still sit out? NFL Network Insider Ian Rapoport reported earlier this offseason that Beckham didn't want to set foot on the field without a new deal. The report came before the trade rumors swirled and Beckham reported for OTAs. How much OBJ does this week could speak volumes.

**New York Jets:** How is the QB situation shaping up? Obviously, Sam Darnold will be the No. 1 player to watch -- with beat writers surely charting his every snap and throw. Can the first-round pick continue his offseason progress and set himself up to take over the starting gig earlier than anticipated? Will Teddy Bridgewater continue what's reportedly been an impressive offseason and give the Jets a trade asset or at least a difficult decision? How does presumptive starter Josh McCown fit into all the hype surrounding the other two QBs?

**Oakland Raiders:** Khalil Mack is expected to skip minicamp, Rapoport reported on Monday. The defensive leader's absence will be a major talking point, but it's not the most interesting aspect of Jon Gruden's first mandatory minicamp. How will the new coach continue to integrate his system? The Raiders offseason leaves them with some intriguing questions on Gruden's offense. Can Doug Martin continue to impress? How will Jordy Nelson and Martavis Bryant mesh with Derek Carr? Where will first-round pick Kolton Miller find a home on the line?

**Philadelphia Eagles:** We're sure to get another update on Carson Wentz, who took part in 7-on-7s in OTAs. The other offensive depth chart situation to watch is the running back rotation. Jay Ajayi is set as the primary back. The rotation behind him is up for grabs. How much will Darren Sproles factor in the offense? Will Corey Clement build on his outrageous Super Bowl performance? Wendell Smallwood, Donnell Pumphrey, Matt Jones and Josh Adams will continue the battle for a roster spot.

**Pittsburgh Steelers:** Le'Veon Bell won't be at minicamp as he continues to sit out hoping for a massive new deal. The rest of the Killer Bs will be there, but let's focus on the defense. The Steelers are still trying to fill the huge hole left by linebacker Ryan Shazier. Pittsburgh signed Jon Bostic in free agency, but it's been Tyler Matakevich reportedly playing next to Vince Williams in the Shazier role. How will that rotation work out as we head toward the pads coming on in training camp? What role will first-round safety Terrell Edmunds earn moving forward with fellow safeties Morgan Burnett and Sean Davis ahead of him on the depth chart?

**San Francisco 49ers:** How is the 49ers offense accelerating in a full offseason with Jimmy Garoppolo? The Niners have recently discussed how they were flying by the seat of their pants after acquiring Jimmy G in the middle of last season. They still went 5-0 with Garoppolo starting. Now that he's in the midst of a full offseason in Kyle Shanahan's system, the chemistry should be even better. The addition of running back

Jerick McKinnon, the selection of rookie wideout Dante Pettis and the return of Pierre Garcon from injury provide San Francisco some hella intriguing weapons heading into training camp.

Seattle Seahawks: Earl Thomas will skip minicamp sans a new deal. Pete Carroll expects Frank Clark and Byron Maxwell, who have also missed OTAs, to attend. With Thomas boycotting and Kam Chancellor still in career limbo with a neck injury, there are questions at safety in Seattle. Bradley McDougald and Delano Hill have manned the safety spots this spring. How will the depth chart shake out if either Thomas or Chancellor doesn't return? Up front there are questions along the line where the Seahawks traded Michael Bennett and released Cliff Avril. Dion Jordan won't work out this week after undergoing surgery but is hopeful to be back by training camp. A once stable Seahawks defense has many questions heading into the summer.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: How pumped up is the remade defensive line? Jason Pierre-Paul is expected to report to Bucs workouts for the first time this spring. The additions of JPP, Vinny Curry, first-round pick Vita Vea, Beau Allen and Mitch Unrein to go along with Gerald McCoy, Noah Spence and William Gholston make the Bucs D-line one of the most improved units on paper in the entire NFL. This week we get to see them together for the first time.

Tennessee Titans: How far along is Matt LaFleur in applying his offense? Any time the Titans O is on the field this offseason it's an opportunity to see Marcus Mariota in a friendlier system. The QB has discussed adjusting his throwing base this offseason to improve his rhythm. How is that progress coming along? Will the usage of Derrick Henry and Dion Lewis change at all? How is Mariota's rapport with his receivers improving, especially second-year wideout Corey Davis?

Washington Redskins: How is the Alex Smith acclimation project chugging along? On a similar thread, how will the receiver and running back depth charts start to shake out? Importing Smith has flown slightly under the radar this offseason, which happens after finding a stable veteran following years of uncertainty. Everyone just assumes Smith will slide seamlessly into Jay Gruden's system. How is Smith's link with Josh Doctson, Jamison Crowder and Paul Richardson growing? How will the WR depth chart behind the starting trio begin to unfold? Will rookie Derrius Guice immediately take over the starting role or will the coaching staff make him beat out Rob Kelley for early-down snaps?

Clearly these are not all the storylines that will take place as 28 teams come together for three days of workouts, practices, and meetings. Check back as Around The NFL breaks down all the important talking points this week.

# Clinton McDonald restructures his brand new deal with Broncos

By Darin Gantt  
Pro Football Talk  
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Clinton McDonald just signed with the Broncos this offseason, but he's not ready to pass a physical, so the contract just got smaller.

According to Field Yates of ESPN, McDonald agreed to a restructured contract, which dropped his base salary for the year from \$3 million to \$1 million, but allows him to make up the difference if he stays on the field.

McDonald had shoulder surgery earlier this offseason, and he initially had a \$1 million roster bonus which would have been fully guaranteed if he passed his physical before June 11 (yesterday). Since he didn't, the terms were changed.

Under the new deal, the 31-year-old McDonald can earn \$140,625 for each game that he's on the 53-man roster (up to \$2.25 million) and another \$46,875 for each game that he is active on gamedays (up to \$750,000 total).

If he can stay healthy and play all 16 games, he can still make the full \$4 million he was scheduled to make when he signed with the Broncos in March.