

# Focus up front: Vance Joseph breaks down the state of the Broncos' offensive line

By Andrew Mason  
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While not a finished process, the building of the Broncos' offensive line is at a more advanced state than it was at this time last year.

While there will be competition, Head Coach Vance Joseph said that if OTAs started today, he would expect to see Garrett Bolles at left tackle, Ron Leary at left guard, Matt Paradis at center, Connor McGovern at right guard and Jared Veldheer at right tackle, with competitive situations for McGovern with Max Garcia and Veldheer with Menelik Watson.

"At the end of the day, there's going to be competition everywhere," Joseph said.

This personnel grouping and alignment would return Leary to left guard, the position he played in Dallas before signing with the Broncos as a free agent last year.

"Obviously, Leary was a left guard in Dallas when we signed him, and I'm a firm believer [that] when you sign free agents to do a certain skill set for you, you don't want to change those guys," Joseph said. "So I think our football team will be better with Leary playing left guard."

Leary moved to right guard last year when Garcia shifted back to left guard, the spot at which he was most comfortable. This year, Garcia could see time at both guard spots.

"I know Max. Max wants to play. McGovern wants to play. And Leary will play," Joseph said. "So I think it's going to be competition, and iron sharpens iron, and that's what you want."

McGovern impressed Joseph in his late-season run at right guard in place of the injured Leary. The 2016 fifth-round pick started the final five games of the 2017 season at right guard, and he also earned distinction by filling in for Paradis at center throughout the offseason and training camp.

"I thought McGovern played well the last month of the season, so he would have a chance to be our right guard," Joseph said.

Backups like Billy Turner, who re-signed last week, and J.J. Dielman, whom the Broncos plucked off Cincinnati's practice squad late last year, will also be in the mix. Dielman, in particular, was a player the Broncos "coveted" in last year's draft, Joseph said.

Dielman was one of four Utah offensive linemen drafted last year, along with Bolles, guard Isaac Asiata (Miami, Round 5) and tackle Sam Tevi (Los Angeles Chargers, Round 6).

"That was the best college line [in 2016]," Joseph said. "But [Dielman] was a great leader in college. You ask all of those kids, 'Who would you take with you from your college O-line?' and it was always J.J. Dielman. And he was the [second-]lowest drafted guy. But from a leadership standpoint, he was the guy,

and that's important when you're a center. He also played guard, and he was a tackle at sophomore in college, so I'm looking forward to getting him on the field, because he was a guy that we really, really liked."

Joseph also believes that Dielman's presence can help Bolles.

"Him and Bolles are really tight," Joseph said. "That's always a good thing, to have one of your buddies there who can push you behind the scenes to be a better player, so we're excited about him. He's played center, he's played guard, he's played some right tackle. So we're excited to see what he can bring."

Maximizing Bolles' potential is one of the top priorities after a rookie season that saw him start all 16 games as he was thrown into the fire.

"I would say this about Garrett: First of all, physically, he has to get bigger and stronger. That's his first issue. His second issue is technique," Joseph said.

"But as a rookie, to survive 16 weeks at left tackle, that's going to pay dividends for him. So I'm excited to watch him come back and get better and better," Joseph said. "But he is a talent that just needs time to grow into the position, but he is going to be a very, very good player for us in the future."

Joseph believes the altered responsibilities of the offensive-line coaches will help Bolles grow. With the coaching responsibilities divided by position. Chris Strausser will handle offensive tackles, while Sean Kugler coaches the guards and centers.

Joseph said he got the idea for shifting the duties up front from his work on defense, particularly his background as a secondary coach.

"Defensive backs usually have two coaches now, because there's so much information, and there's really two different skill sets between safeties and cornerbacks," Bolles said. "So why not have two offensive-line coaches? Because the center and guard, it's different skill sets than the tackles."

"Obviously we have a No. 1 pick in Bolles, and tackle is so important to you playing great offense, so we wanted to give those guys their own coach."

And if the offense is to find its footing after a frustrating season, improvement from Bolles and the entire line is a necessity.

# **Billy Turner signs new one-year contract with Broncos**

By Ben Swanson

DenverBroncos.com

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Offensive lineman Billy Turner signed a new one-year contract with the Broncos, the team announced Monday.

Turner, a veteran of four NFL seasons, has been with the Broncos since October 2016, when Denver claimed the guard off waivers from Baltimore. Previously, Turner spent three seasons in Miami, starting in 14 of the 20 games in which he appeared for the Dolphins.

For the Broncos, Turner has played in four games. His 2017 season ended abruptly and prematurely when Turner suffered a hand injury when filling in for starting right tackle Menelik Watson, who left the game with a calf injury. Turner was placed on injured reserve the following Tuesday.

Prior to his NFL career, Turner was a standout collegiate player at North Dakota State, earning two FCS All-American selections as the Bison won three FCS national championships.



# **Broncos hold onto guard Billy Turner**

By Darin Gantt  
Pro Football Talk  
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The Broncos held onto some offensive line depth over the weekend.

Per the league's transaction wire, the Broncos re-signed free agent guard Billy Turner.

The Broncos claimed Turner off waivers from the Dolphins in 2016, and he filled in as a starter at right tackle last year before breaking his hand and ending up on injured reserve.

The former third-round pick gives them some flexibility as they try to figure out how they're going to protect new quarterback Case Keenum this year.

# Broncos re-sign OL Billy Turner to one-year contract

By Nicki Jhabvala  
The Denver Post  
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As the Broncos continue to search for additional help on their offensive line, they re-signed veteran Billy Turner to a one-year deal, an NFL source confirmed.

Turner, a four-year lineman, first joined the Broncos as a waiver claim in 2016 and served as a backup at guard and tackle last year. But his 2017 season was cut short after he suffered a broken hand while filling in for right tackle Menelik Watson in the Broncos' Week 6 loss to the New York Giants. Giants defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul pushed off Turner to get to quarterback Trevor Siemian for the sack, and Turner came out of the play holding his hand in pain.

Though Turner played the remainder of the game, he underwent surgery the following evening and was subsequently placed on season-ending injured reserve.

Turner, for now, is expected to vie for a spot at either guard or tackle, but the Broncos' front five remains an unknown as they continue to shop in free agency and mull their options in the draft.

