

# Virgil Green shows he can do more than just block

By Rod Mackey

KUSA

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Demaryius Thomas and Emmanuel Sanders are pretty good, but if you really want to put up points in fantasy football then you may want to pick up Virgil Green.

That's of course an exaggeration but the tight end certainly stole the show at Broncos training camp Thursday with four touchdowns. The big man can do more than just block.

"I was just competing, going for balls and trying to make sure I came down with them," said Green. "I dropped a ball earlier in practice and I did not want to make that mistake again. I took advantage of my opportunities, made some plays and had fun out there today. Every day you have to go out there and be consistent. That's my biggest thing. I can make plays. I can do all the other things. I just have to be consistent and show them that I can do those things every single day."

Green also impressed his head coach with his performance.

"Virgil is the red-hot player of the day here in Dove Valley," said Gary Kubiak. "What a day he had. He made a bunch of plays in the red zone. We have a little bit of a program we are working on with Virgil. We are trying to keep him healthier than we have in the past. I think he's responded. I think Jeff is doing a good job. A couple young players there are coming in. We just have to keep going. It's a competitive position that was just a little bit behind when we came to camp."

This is Green's first season as the top tight end. No more playing second fiddle to guys like Owen Daniels or Julius Thomas. This is Virgil's time to shine.

"I live in the moment. I don't dwell on the past too much. I have always known that I have abilities like this, but it's all about living in the moment and taking advantage of your opportunities when they come past you. That's what I did today."

Green hasn't had many days like this, but he's hoping that will change this season.

"It does make you feel great. What would really make me feel great is if I went out there tomorrow and did it again. For me it is about consistency. That's the biggest I have to accomplish."

Green and the Broncos are officially a week away from the start of the season, the preseason. The Broncos visit the Bears next Thursday night.

# In sixth year with Broncos, Virgil Green knows it's time to be 'the guy'

By Andrew Mason  
DenverBroncos.com  
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In one respect, this offseason is like the previous five for tight end Virgil Green.

"Every year I come in thinking I can be the guy," he said. "I always feel like I can do things in the pass game. My specialty is being the physical guy up front in the run game and the pass-protection game, but I always come in every year thinking that I can be the guy in the pass game."

But there is no denying that this offseason is different -- and not just because of the change from a future Hall of Fame quarterback in Peyton Manning.

In other years, he prepared for the season as young depth, or, in the past two years, as the blocking complement to tight ends like Julius Thomas and, last year, Owen Daniels.

This year, there's no primary experienced starter in the tight end room. Green has the chance to be the No. 1 option -- not just as a blocker, but as an effective target in the passing game.

"I do feel that way," Green said. "With O.D. [Daniels] being gone, there is a better chance. In training camp, I really want to show that I can be not just a pass guy, but an every-down tight end guy."

Part of that is not just on Green's experience, but the evolution of the offense. There should be more opportunities for two-tight end formations than at any point since 2012, when veterans Jacob Tamme and Joel Dreessen ensured extensive use of the two-tight end formation as the base offensive package.

But that was in a different scheme than the one used now.

"The way our offense works, we can do anything," Green said.

With the quarterback position overhauled in the wake of Peyton Manning's retirement and Brock Osweiler's free-agent departure, the Broncos have a quarterback trio comprised of players acquired specifically for their fit in the offense run by Head Coach Gary Kubiak and Offensive Coordinator Rick Dennison.

"I think I can be real beneficial to this scheme," Green said. "Especially because we've got younger quarterbacks that can get out on the edge.

"We're learning more about the offense," he added later. You get the chance to just start over, hit the reset button and just learn the more detailed things we have to do to be a more fluid offense."

That should open possibilities for Green and his fellow tight ends.

"Talking with [Mark] Sanchez, he watched some film last year. He said some good things about the way I was moving -- which I enjoyed [hearing]," Green said. "So I think the tight ends will see the ball more."

Green says he already feels he has "great" chemistry with Sanchez.

"I feel like he's a great leader. I like the way he throws the ball. I like the way he moves," Green said. "He has a nice, tight spiral and is a smart guy, and that's what you look for in a quarterback."

Now Green hopes that Sanchez, Trevor Siemian and Paxton Lynch will find out that he is exactly what a quarterback will look for in a tight end.

# Virgil Green versed in versatility

By Allie Raymond

DenverBroncos.com

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Standing at an imposing height of 6 feet 5 inches with what looks like 255 pounds of sheer muscle, tight end Virgil Green says and looks like he can do just about anything.

But that's not quite the case.

"I can't draw," Green says, smiling. "My dad's really good at drawing, my brother's really good and I would try to draw and none of my artistic designs would ever come out decent."

While art may not be Green's strong suit, he says it's really the only thing he can't do. That's a bold statement, but one look at Green could make anyone believe it. "If I can try it, I can pretty much probably do it," Green said.

Not only has Green played most positions on the offense—including a few practice snaps on offensive line (though none at quarterback)—since his arrival in Denver four years ago, but he's also played a laundry list of other sports since he was a child. Green played football, baseball, basketball, track and field and soccer.

Combined, each has made him the all-around athlete he is today.

"Just being versatile – being able to do different things," said Green of what all those sports taught him. "Basketball, you have to be able to play defense and offense. So, I think that helps out athletically."

At Tulare Union High School in Tulare, California, Green lettered four years in basketball and a year in track and field. In basketball, he played power forward and in track, he participated in sprints, vertical jumps and even threw the shot put.

"I didn't start playing football until I got to high school," Green. "I was a basketball guy, I loved basketball, wanted to play basketball in the NBA. It didn't work out that way. I turned out to be a lot better at football, and I only went out because all my friends play, and that's how it all began."

In football, Green had the opportunity to showcase his talents and versatility across a multitude of positions before finding his fit.

"I played linebacker to start — outside linebacker — and then my junior year, they moved me to tight end, receiver," Green said. "Then my senior year I played wide receiver."

After a successful high school campaign, Green and his family were faced with a new challenge in his college recruitment.

"It was crazy," Green said. "My dad, he didn't play football or basketball or anything. He road dirt bikes for a living, growing up. He knew everything you could know about dirt bikes, but we didn't know too much about the recruiting process and things like that. We just went with our gut with how things felt. Nevada seemed like the right place for me to go."

At Nevada, Green moved back to tight end but continued to line up at different positions on offense in the Wolf Pack's scheme.

"In college, especially for a tight end, you have to play all positions, really," Green said. "To me, for any tight end at any level, you've got to be able to play multiple positions because it creates mismatches. It creates havoc for defenses and that's kind of what our coach demanded for us at Nevada. I carried the ball in college before, I've gotten a pitch, and I've gotten a shovel pass. I've pretty much done it all at the tight end position."

After sitting out his first season at Nevada due to injury, Green tallied 939 receiving yards on 72 receptions and added 11 touchdowns in his three seasons. From 2007-10, Green helped the Wolf Pack rank fifth in the nation with 500.2 total yards per game. As a senior, he recorded a personal-best 35 catches for 515 yards with five touchdowns, earning him first-team All-Mountain West Conference honors.

Those stats were good enough to get him a ticket to the 2011 NFL Combine in Indianapolis at Lucas Oil Stadium where he had his shot at proving his athleticism to scouts from all 32 teams. Upon his arrival, Green was heralded for his superior ball skills, something that could easily be attributed to his time on the basketball court. He was a top performer in the 40-yard dash, vertical jump, broad jump, three-cone drill and 60-yard shuttle — just like his days as a track and field athlete. Green excelled in the vertical jump, a common measure to show a player's explosiveness. His 42 1/2-inch vertical ties for the eighth-best mark all-time and the second-best for a tight end in NFL Combine history.

After an impressive showing at the combine, it wasn't surprising the Broncos selected Green in the 2011 Draft.

Four years later, he is still a vital part of the Broncos offense. Primarily a blocking tight end in his rookie season, Green saw action in 15 regular-season games while blocking for the league's No. 1 rushing attack (164.5 ypg). In his career, Green has amassed more than 200 receiving yards and averages nine yards per catch.

Last March, after four years with the Broncos, Green decided to re-sign and spend three more years playing in the orange and blue.

The choice was easy for Green and his wife Marianne, a former Nevada basketball player.

"I've built so many different relationships out here," Green said. "I work with United Way, my financial advisor lives out here, my wife has a job out here, it just all pretty much fit the puzzle for what we're trying to do in our life."

With the addition of new Head Coach Gary Kubiak and Offensive Coordinator Rick Dennison this spring, Green is excited and looking forward to the changes on the offense. In the first preseason game at Seattle, Green was the sole Bronco to haul in a touchdown on the night.

"Virgil is obviously a really good athlete," Tight Ends Coach Brian Pariani said. "Playing in this system is going to be really good for him because we're tight end-friendly. He has skills, he can catch the ball. You're able to see him put his foot in the ground and run away from people and he's had a chance to

make plays not only in practice, but he had a chance to go do it in a game. Once somebody does it in a game, no one can take it away from them.”

Green echoed Pariani’s sentiments on the offense. Against the Seahawks in August, he led the team in receiving with five catches for 45 yards.

“Somebody asked me earlier after the game if I think it is a tight end-friendly offense and I felt like the first three passes of the game, I caught three balls,” Green said. “So that’s pretty friendly to me. I just think it can do a lot of things in the run game and in the pass game and we can win a lot of games with that.”

Green also has impressed Kubiak this year beyond the X’s and O’s.

“Virgil’s a warrior,” Kubiak said. “He’s beat up, he’s had a finger, he’s had a toe, you name it — Virgil has not missed a day.”

That fighter attitude ties into Green’s goals for the 2015 season. Not one for losing, he’s committed to bringing a championship home to Denver no matter what.

“To me, I only play this game for one reason: It’s for championships,” Green said.

“My wife always tells me that I’m a sore loser and she’s correct. I am a sore loser. I hate losing, I don’t want to lose, I don’t accept losing, I pretty much don’t care how the game goes as long as we come out with the ‘W.’ I don’t care how many touchdowns I have in a game — if we lose, it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t count. It’s all about winning.”

He may not be an artist, but Green is poised for a breakout season, and fans and coaches alike will be able to see his unique palette of skills and how much it can add to the Broncos offense.

# Virgil Green breaks out as receiver for Broncos

By Troy Renck  
DenverPost.com  
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A battery of players defected as the Broncos sat on the curb and watched the parade go by in March. Free agency demands priorities and restraint, and Denver made difficult choices.

Throughout the process, tight end Virgil Green remained a top target. They weren't going to let him walk away given how well he profiled in coach Gary Kubiak's offense.

In the preseason opener at Seattle, Green delivered an intriguing performance laced with irony. For starters, Green has good hands. Just like everyone knew who watched him team at Nevada with Colin Kaepernick.

Green caught three passes on the Broncos' second drive, exploiting the underbelly in Seattle's zone coverage. That's three more passes than he caught last preseason.

"I went to the sideline, and I was like, 'This really is a tight-end friendly offense, '^" said Green, who signed a three-year, \$8.4-million deal to remain in Denver. "It just came real easy. But I can do a little better in my route running. I was getting a little excited out there."

Just as surprising was Green's trouble blocking. He earned "The Hulk," nickname because of his strength and power at the point of attack. Friday, he struggled, allowing linebacker Cliff Avril a free hit on quarterback Brock Osweiler, while drawing a flag for a false start.

For Green, it tempered his breakout as a receiver.

"It was not good. Not acceptable. My protection wasn't good at all. My run block was decent, but it can be better. I have high expectations for my blocking," Green said. "And it wasn't good at all."

Green's history suggests he will figure it out. He was a strong run blocker last season. A transition exists in pass protection. Green wasn't a regular on throwing downs last season — or any season — but Kubiak employs his tight ends in similar sets to create disguises to open up play action. He must do both well. It is a work in progress as he grows more comfortable in the communication differences in protection calls.

Green began Monday by working on his footwork and staying lower in his stance.

With Owen Daniels resting, Green showed potential Kubiak envisioned when he took the job. Green proved steady on short passes. And after Brock Osweiler found receiver Cody Latimer on multiple crossing routes, it freed Green to run free up the middle of the field as the safety bit on a 17-yard touchdown pass to Green. For Osweiler, practice sessions over the spring and summer at Kent Denver High School came to life.

"We have developed a real cohesiveness," Osweiler said.

Green credited Osweiler's read, calling it a "great decision."

As a free agent, Green explored the market, but never wanted to leave Denver. He appears to have made a solid choice. He is no longer typecast, and promises to grow into his larger role.

"I will get those blocking issues cleaned up," Green said. "I would always love to score touchdowns. What guy wouldn't? But I was fine with my old job because we won a lot of games, and that's all that is important. It's different for me now. I am understanding coverages better. I am having fun. When you stress out, you can't make plays. When I am having fun, everything just comes naturally."

# Virgil Green builds toward impactful season

By Allie Raymond

DenverBroncos.com

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Despite spending his offseason participating in training sessions and Broncos minicamp, fifth-year tight end Virgil Green says his mind still plays tricks on him before the start of training camp. Specifically, whether or not he can still play.

“Every year you go into a season having that time off and your mind plays games with you, wondering if you can actually still play,” Green said following Thursday’s training camp practice. “But once you put the pads on, that adrenaline gets a rushing and it’s like you’ve never left.”

After starting a career-high nine games last season while blocking for the NFL’s sixth-ranked rushing offense (147.7 yards per game), it may be safe to say that Green knows what he’s doing.

But with the introduction of a new head coach and offensive coordinator in Gary Kubiak and Rick Dennison, respectively, things have changed. Kubiak’s balanced offense will look to lean on Green and the tight end corps even more this season.

“The tight end position is going to be rebuilt a little bit,” Kubiak said. “When I say ‘rebuilt’ it’s with experience with Owen [Daniels] heading up the group and obviously Virgil is there. We have a couple of different concepts going on there.”

So far through training camp and OTAs, Green thinks the tight end group has found their stride.

“I think it’s been an easy transition,” Green said. “In the offseason you always wonder, like what it’s going to be like hearing Peyton call the plays in the huddle, if you’ll be able to pick it up fast enough, and I think everybody for the most part has done a good job of limiting assignment errors and things like that.”

One resource that Green finds invaluable is his fellow tight end, veteran Owen Daniels. After 10 NFL seasons in the NFL, Daniels has only played for teams coached by Kubiak.

“Every time we’re in those meetings, we’re all asking him questions and if he doesn’t know the answer, he’ll find it out for us,” Green said. “He’s just a great guy... having a guy that’s been a pro bowler in this system a couple of times and he knows exactly what’s happening, exactly what’s going on, it’s great for guys like myself, [Dominique Jones], Marcel [Jensen] and all those other guys.”

Green may be comfortable with the offense, but he still has things he’s working on.

“Me, I’m a strong guy so a lot of times I think I can just overpower people and that’s not the case,” said Green, who’s 6-foot-5 and 225 pounds. “I got to keep my pads low, have good footwork and use my hands.”

Training camp is far from over and there are still mistakes to be made, and fixed – but Green has the right mindset: “I’m the kind of guy to go out there and get the job done. Do my job.”

# This sleeping giant will emerge for the Broncos in 2015

By Fox Sports Staff Writer

FoxSports.com

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This isn't the same Broncos team that mounted a Super Bowl run two seasons ago.

Peyton Manning is back, but the role players around him aren't. Key pieces like Terrance Knighton, Orlando Franklin, and Rahim Moore will play ball in other cities this season.

Of course, the biggest name to leave Denver was a Manning favorite -- Julius Thomas. Luckily, the team has a ready and willing replacement already on the roster, waiting for his big break.

His name? Virgil Green.

When he was drafted, Green was touted as the player Thomas eventually became in Denver. The Nevada product was speedy, smooth out of his breaks, and possessed soft hands.

He had to take a backseat to Thomas' shining star for the past four years. And during that time, he's worked hard to develop a trait he barely needed in college -- blocking.

It'll suit him well in new head coach Gary Kubiak's tight end-friendly offense. Kubiak often deploys two-tight sets, meaning the fifth-year pro will see time with Owen Daniels as a starter.

There's no comparing the two in terms of athletic prowess, though. Green can get down the field in a blur. And like Thomas, he'll use his big frame to his advantage and out-wrestle smaller receivers.

Manning should look Green's way often. If he does, expect the tight end to triple or quadruple his career stats (23 catches, 206 yards) by season's end.

# Broncos believe Owen Daniels, Virgil Green just what they're looking for at tight end

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

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When the Denver Broncos let tight end Julius Thomas move on in free agency -- the Jacksonville Jaguars signed him to a five-year, \$46 million deal -- the team tried to react swiftly to fill what would be an important, yet changing, role in the new offense.

In search of more hybrid, blocking/receiving players at the position -- the type of player they did not think Thomas was -- they re-signed Virgil Green, a quality blocker the Broncos believe can have far more impact as a receiver than he has to this point, then signed Owen Daniels in free agency.

And there may be no greater authority, as a player, on coach Gary Kubiak's offense than Daniels. In his nine previous seasons, Daniels has only played in offenses that featured Kubiak as the team's coach or offensive coordinator.

"I've said this is an offense that demands a lot from the position," Daniels said. "And it's because you can be asked to do a lot of different things, even in one series, and line up all over the formation. It requires you to hit your landmarks, to be in the right place at the right time and mentally understand what those right places are."

And as the Broncos transition to an offense expected to run the ball more, it is a good time to remember wide receiver Rod Smith, who played for Denver in Kubiak's stint as offensive coordinator on Mike Shanahan's staff, once said of the offense, "If you want to catch the ball, you have to block first because if you don't block (in the run game), you don't play."

And as training camp approaches we'll take a position-by-position look at where things stand with the team.

Today: Tight ends.

Thursday: Offensive line.

How many coming to camp: 6.

How many the Broncos will keep: Some of the decisions will be rooted in semantics. The Broncos have seven players who would line up at tight end on the current roster.

One of those -- rookie Jeff Heurman -- suffered an ACL tear in rookie minicamp and is expected to miss the season. He would be formally moved to injured reserve if the Broncos believed they needed a roster spot before cut-downs begin.

But three players -- James Casey, Dominique Jones and Joe Don Duncan -- also are considerations to line up at fullback. Casey, a key special teams player, is expected to line up the majority of the time at fullback once the 53-man roster is determined.

So beyond Casey, the Broncos likely would keep three tight ends on the roster, starting with Green and Daniels. Jones has the most experience with the team among the other tight ends on the current depth chart, but Duncan, a rookie, could squeeze his way into the mix if he shows some versatility as a fullback option to go with his work at tight end.

The guy to watch: Of all of the players the Broncos have selected in John Elway's tenure as the team's top football decision-maker, Green was the first to be re-signed as a potential unrestricted free agent.

The Broncos signed Green to a three-year, \$8.4 million deal as free agency opened this past March. And they did it because they consider him a quality blocker in the team's offense.

But they also dove in because of his athleticism -- he was one of the fastest tight ends at the 2012 scouting combine with a 4.64 clocking on the electronic clock in the 40-yard dash -- and their optimism that he can evolve in the passing game. To this point, Green has just 23 career receptions -- never more than nine in any season -- and only one touchdown reception, which came in the 2014 regular-season finale.

If the Broncos have not hit in that projection, an awful lot of the passing game at the position will fall on Daniels' shoulders. But Green did flash some potential in the new scheme during offseason workouts.

Break it down: Daniels has been a model of receiving consistency in his career. In the seven seasons in which he has played at least 11 games, he has finished with at least 48 receptions five times.

Daniels has had four seasons with at least 50 receptions and figures to get plenty of targets in this offense as well. The two-tight end set likely will be the team's base formation on offense, unless something unexpected happens in training camp.

Green will get far more targets than he has in the past, or at least that's the Broncos' expectation. The No. 3 tight end spot, with Casey expected to line up at fullback much of the time, figures to be largely a blocking role at this point.

Heurman would have certainly been in the mix in the passing game had he not suffered his injury, but the Broncos don't have another player on the depth chart that projects for the kind of impact in the passing game Heurman would have had. So, in the end, this may be a position where the Broncos would take a look at a late signing in the preseason as the roster cuts come from around the league.

# Virgil Green knows he will carry plenty of expectations into training camp

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

July 2, 2015

When the Denver Broncos were set to begin free agency earlier this year, their initial moves may have been a surprise to some.

They didn't pull all of the financial rabbits out of the hats to re-sign tight end Julius Thomas, a two-time Pro Bowl selection. They didn't make bold moves to retain guard Orlando Franklin, safety Rahim Moore or defensive tackle Terrance Knighton.

No, when the first check was written in March it went to tight end Virgil Green, and it was Green who became the first player drafted in John Elway's tenure as the Broncos' top football executive who was then re-signed to a second contract.

Why?

Well, as the Broncos closed out their offseason program in recent weeks it was clear Green was a player the Broncos still believe resides at the intersection of flexibility, offensive fit, attitude and room to grow.

"Maybe so," Green said. "I think I understand my role, I think I understand what they want from me, and I think I have a lot more football in me to come out."

Or as Elway put it early on; "He's a type of guy that we want on the Denver Broncos and a guy that has that mentality of the hard work that it takes to be successful. ...We also continue to have high expectations. We think the sky is the limit for Virgil and we think he will flourish in what we're going to do offensively now."

The words "flourish" and "now" are the ones that ring the loudest as the Broncos transition from a record-setting offense that was most-often run out of a three-wide receiver set over the past two seasons to one that will feature far more two-tight end sets with coach Gary Kubiak in search of more balance.

Owen Daniels was signed shortly after Green put pen to paper this past March to be one of those tight ends, largely as a pass-catcher who can block when needed. But the Broncos believed in March, and believe it even more now having gone through organized team activities and minicamps, that Green can be the combination blocker/receiver at the position that has been a must-have in Kubiak's offenses.

"No question, that is a position that has to play well for us to be productive," Kubiak said. "We think Virgil and Owen, those are guys who can do everything we need them to do."

With Green, there is certainly an element of faith in the developmental process for the Broncos. Thomas was an immense, game-changing threat in the passing game, but as a blocker Denver's coaches were

consistently trying to figure out ways to limit his exposure, including letting Thomas alter his stance at times, to try and improve his work at the point of attack.

But in Green, they have a player they know can win at the line of scrimmage, but also one who has not caught more than nine passes in any of his previous four seasons and didn't have a touchdown catch in his career until the 2014 regular-season finale.

"But I've always felt like I could do a lot more," Green said. "I believe I can do what's needed of me. They didn't need me to catch a lot of passes, but I think that's part of my game where I can still make things happen. I love to block, I take pride in moving somebody against their will in those situations, but I take pride in receiving and I think I can do it."

Green was one of the fastest tight ends at the 2011 scouting combine, having been hand-timed at 4.54 in the 40-yard dash by multiple teams (he was a 4.64 on the electronic clock) and his athleticism showed in a 42 1/2-inch vertical jump, always a double-take number for personnel evaluators.

So, the Broncos, as they let Julius Thomas head into the open market with a price tag they believed was too high (he eventually signed a five-year, \$46 million deal with the Jacksonville Jaguars), believe there's more to come from a seventh-round pick in their 2011 draft class.

"I want those expectations," Green said. "I've always believed in my abilities and what I can do. It's all about opportunity and I think there will be more opportunity now."

# Tight end Virgil Green could catch bigger role in new-look offense

By Troy Renck  
DenverPost.com  
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Teams win when their best players perform. They accomplish special goals when role players exceed expectations.

Welcome to the 2015 season, Virgil Green.

As free agents one by one departed Denver, the Broncos made retaining Green a priority. He was the NFL's fourth-best blocking tight end last year, according to Pro Football Focus. He moved piles befitting his "Incredible Hulk" nickname.

But Green doesn't want his 6-foot-5, 255-pound frame to typecast him. Just because he hasn't caught many footballs doesn't mean he can't. Coach Gary Kubiak's fondness for using multiple-tight end formations is well known. Will that lead to Green being known well beyond Denver?

This offense, if nothing else, represents a chance for Green's impact to grow.

"Tight ends make your offense flexible," Kubiak said. "They give you the ability to do a lot of things, and (Green) has always handled himself on the line of scrimmage. He's a weapon in the pass game, but he's always done his job on the line. I think that's a place we can improve up front in everything we do, and that includes the tight ends."

Green is devoid of hype, respected by teammates for his head-down, rolled-up-sleeves approach. He learned to block in college out of necessity. He revels in it after reshaping his physique in the weight room.

"I love to line up," he said, "and move someone against their will."

In the Broncos' new zone-blocking offense, Green provides options for Kubiak's creative play-calling. Success comes from making different plays look the same at the point of attack. That only works if players are versatile. Think back to the Baltimore Ravens' 30-17 playoff victory over the Pittsburgh Steelers, with Kubiak serving as the boss of Baltimore's offense.

It might have been the Ravens' most impressive game of the 2014 season, and it included a big performance from former Colorado State tight end Crockett Gillmore. With the Steelers keying on Owen Daniels, Kubiak found routes to create space for Gillmore. Gillmore caught only 10 passes during the regular season but snared two for 30 yards and a touchdown in the Ravens' upset victory at Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

"They said we wanted to be aggressive. We were looking to throw the ball downfield, and stuck to the plan," Daniels said. "It opened some things up."

Green, 26, has been leaning on Daniels to learn the Broncos' new scheme. He wants to become a more well-rounded threat, and evolving into a weapon in the passing game represents the next step as he enters his fifth season. Green finished with six receptions for 74 yards and his first career touchdown last season.

"It's just the little details; I understand the plays, but trying to understand the details about running routes, and when to do certain things against the defender are questions that I ask him," Green said. "He's more than willing to help. He's a great vet. All the tight ends, and I'm pretty sure a lot of the guys on the team in general, look up to him."

Green's status changed this offseason when the Broncos showed how much they valued him. The offense could now change his value.

"We've been catching a lot of passes out there, all the tight ends really," Green said. "We all understand how the game works. We're going to go out there and compete. For the most part, each of us has to focus on our job and what we're doing. We can't too much focus on, 'He just caught that ball' or 'I didn't.' We work well together. We're just having fun out there."

# Virgil Green working to learn offense inside and out

By Ben Swanson

DenverBroncos.com

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Virgil Green has taken quickly to the Broncos' new offense, at least with the broad strokes, but knowledge is power and he's looking to gain the finer points with the help of Owen Daniels.

"I ask him questions all the time. He's probably going to get sick of me because just the little details about things," Green said with a chuckle.

As Daniels begins his 10th year with Head Coach Gary Kubiak, he brings a wealth of knowledge of the offense from which Green is hoping to glean valuable details to add to his working understanding of the offense.

"I understand the plays but trying to understand the details about running routes, when to do certain things that gets a defender are questions that I ask him," Green said. "And he's more than willing to help. He's a great vet. All the tight ends—and I'm pretty sure a lot of the guys on the team in general—look up to him and his veteran leadership."

Tight ends are essential to the new offense not only with the blocking scheme but with the reliance of a pass-run playcall mixture to keep defenses on their toes, especially with play-action, as Kubiak detailed last week: "It's hard to get the ball down field and make big plays. You've got to make them to be successful, so we felt like if we run the ball well and we play pass, and it looked the same, we'll be able to get the ball down the field."

That mix of run and pass is something that Green is eagerly waiting for, too, because he doesn't want to just be known for his blocking. He caught his first career touchdown pass last season against the Raiders and when he re-signed with the team in March he said, "I just want to be efficient and a guy that teams just don't have to say 'Oh, well, he's in—they're running.' I want to be a guy that teams say 'He's versatile, he can do all things, he can line up at fullback, slot receiver, tight end and be efficient at all those positions.'"

He added that so far in OTAs the tight ends are certainly getting that kind of work in to ensure that.

"We've been catching a lot of passes out there—all the tight ends, really. I think the way it complements each other is a lot of the plays look the same when we're coming off the ball and if it happens to be a run, that's what it is; if it happens to be a pass, that's what it is—but it's tough for defenses to hone in on things like that."

There's competition at tight end, too, with Daniels and Green joined by Marcel Jensen, James Casey, Dominique Jones and Joe Don Duncan. But Green says they're all aware of how competition can't play into their mindset and that they'll have to focus on what they do rather than what their teammates do as they compete and work together.

However, competition aside, Green is trying to get a complete understanding of the offense under his feet in these stages of the offseason program so he can hit all the notes he needs to when the season arrives in a few months.

"I'm very comfortable. I understand how things are supposed to be. Like I said, it's just understanding the little details about things and we have time to get those things

# Virgil Green says he's already studied Owen Daniels' work

By Jeff Legwold  
ESPN.com  
March 11, 2015

It should be easy for Virgil Green and Owen Daniels, who officially became Denver Broncos teammates Tuesday, to get along in the tight ends meeting room and on the practice field.

In Green's continued quest to be a bigger participant in the Broncos' passing game -- every season, it seems, Green has said he hoped the team would throw him the ball a little more -- Daniels is one of the players he studied along the way to try and make that happen.

"About two years ago I went to tight ends coach Clancy Barone, you know, and said 'from what I hear this Owen Daniels guy knows how to get open,'" Green said. "I asked [Barone] to put together a clip of Owen Daniels' route-running and everything. I've studied him, I feel like I can pick his brain on some things and better myself."

Green has 23 receptions in his NFL career, but from a scouting standpoint there is plenty reason to believe he could, and is ready to, take the next step as a player. Consider when he came into the 2011 draft, Green ran a 40-yard dash in 4.54 seconds (hand-timed) and his official time on the electronic clock was 4.64.

At that same combine, Julius Thomas ran a 4.64 40 (hand-timed) and was at 4.68 on the electronic clock. Athletically, Green and Thomas have similar traits.

Thomas is a more fluid player and has shown a better feel, thus far, reeling in passes in a crowd. But Green's teammates, including quarterback Peyton Manning, have said Green has flashed plenty of potential on the practice field and a player with his speed, strength and work ethic should be an ascending player.

But it always seemed the Broncos have needed Green to do something else besides catch the ball, to block somebody, or line up as a fullback. Now Green will have his best chance to do more and more importantly for him, to be asked to do more.

That said, Daniels is going to catch some passes -- he has at least 38 receptions in seven of his previous nine seasons and caught more passes in each of his seasons than Green has in his career -- but the veteran should certainly be able to help Green learn Gary Kubiak's offense, given Daniels has already spent nine years in it.

# Tough-minded Virgil Green ready to "flourish" in Broncos offense

By Troy Renck  
The Denver Post  
March 10, 2015

When Virgil Green wanted to improve on his pass routes he watched film on Owen Daniels. When he wanted to know more about Gary Kubiak's offense, he received a glowing review from former teammate Joel Dreessen. Everything pointed to the tight end staying with the Broncos this offseason.

When the money matched an expanded opportunity, Green accepted the Broncos' three-year, \$8.4-million contract, rebuffing the San Diego Chargers, Philadelphia Eagles and Chicago Bears.

"I am comfortable here. And learning a new offense isn't a big deal," Green said Tuesday. "I felt this was the right fit for me."

The Broncos didn't have to sell Green on the zone-blocking scheme. He played similar sets in college at Nevada, and realizes that Kubiak uses tight ends creatively in the passing game. Besides, Green knows why he was a priority to a Broncos' team that wants to establish a physical running game.

"At the end of the day, I am about tough, hard-nosed football. I love moving somebody against their will," said Green, whose 6-foot-5, 255-pound frame befits his "Incredible Hulk" nickname. "I know tight ends can flourish in this offense. But I understand how I am going to earn my keep on this team."

Daniels joined Green in Denver on Tuesday, agreeing to a three-year deal. The Broncos acted swiftly at tight end, anticipating the exit of Julius Thomas, whose deal with the Jacksonville Jaguars will become official when he passes a physical Wednesday. Daniels likely will be introduced Wednesday and welcomed by Green.

"I think it's great. I have been studying his (route running) for two years," Green said.

Thirteen teams expressed interest in Green, whose salary will average \$2.8 million annually. The Chargers made a strong push to land Green. The Bears and Eagles also pursued Green, but dropped out, leaving the Chargers going head-to-head against the Broncos.

Broncos general manager John Elway identified Green as a top internal target. Teammates consider Green a "glue guy" in the locker room, and he has earned respect for his professionalism.

"He's really worked his tail off the last four years. He's an impact guy we wanted on the Denver Broncos," Elway said Tuesday. "He has that mentality that we want. We are thrilled."

Green caught six passes last season, including his first touchdown. He's considered an underrated receiver.

"I want to be efficient. I don't want teams to say, 'He's in, they are running (the ball),' ^" Green said. "I prayed long and hard about this, and this is where I am comfortable."

# Broncos tight end Virgil Green provides incredible hulk-like blocking

By Troy E. Renck  
The Denver Post  
January 1, 2014

Virgil Green stepped from the shadows Sunday, his first career touchdown catch punctuating a growing presence in the Broncos' offense. For Green, a 6-foot-5, 255-pound chiseled beast, his road to recognition has been paved in dirt, grass, mud and muscle.

It started in Nevada, where it's not uncommon for folks to straddle the line between dreams and delusion. Green wanted to play college football. He figured he could be a star receiver for the Wolf Pack, a team that featured quarterback Colin Kaepernick and linebacker Brandon Marshall.

The coaches moved him to tight end.

"And I hated it. I hated blocking," Green said. "But I started to get recognition from not only my teammates and coaches, but the media for springing guys for touchdowns. I realized how valuable my role was. Whatever my job is blocking, I want to do it well and look physical doing it."

The startling transformation from a 215-pound college freshman into an earth mover for the Broncos' revived running game draws comparisons to Bruce Banner's ripped jeans and anger management issues. That's fine by Green. Long ago, he began calling himself the Hulk, a nod to his last name and adoration for the comic book character who wreaks havoc. Virgil's younger brother Jeremiah, a former Nevada star who last played in the Canadian Football League, fueled the vision, answering to the nickname Green Goblin.

"He was the villain because he was the linebacker. The Hulk, man, the last four years if it comes on, I watch the entire movie. I love it," Green said. "We fed off it. We played together at Nevada."

Broncos fans know Green better now than at any time during his previous three seasons. Offensive coordinator Adam Gase and quarterback Peyton Manning hinted of his value after the early-season loss at Seattle when Green exited with a first-half concussion. His importance became apparent over the season's final six games during which Green has played roughly 70 percent of the snaps because of Julius Thomas' lingering ankle sprain.

Denver committed to the run after a humbling loss at St. Louis. The Broncos improved from 89.9 yards rushing per game, ranking 27th overall, to 111.6, which sits 15th in the league.

Adding an extra "tackle" and leaning on Green as a blocker helped breathe life into the ground game. It is a weapon that didn't exist consistently last season, which creates confidence for their Jan. 11 postseason opener.

"We've seen how successful it can be. I am going to really come out and be an animal in the playoffs," Green said. "I will be firing off the ball to make sure to move my guy and make sure that our running back has a clean read."

Green's presence and production is a microcosm of an evolving offense. The Broncos want Thomas as a weapon near the end zone, but he admits he hasn't been himself. He hopes that with the bye that he can "get over the hump and get back to guy I used to be." Since that is no longer a certainty, Green's impact can't be overstated.

Known as a bruiser, he has shown finesse, providing evidence that he shouldn't be typecast. Gase said Green deserves credit for taking advantage of additional practice reps, insisting he "trusts" Green in the passing game.

"At Nevada, I didn't learn much about route running and how to get open against different coverages. It's just been a learning process, learning how Peyton (Manning) talks, learning how the coaches talk. Julius has done a great job of adjusting well. His mind wasn't molded like mine was," Green said. "He had a free mind to work with. Watching him and seeing how he's getting open has truly helped me to start to understand things better."

Manning discussed his desire to get Green a touchdown for weeks. He didn't throw the pass to Green last Sunday, but he called the play.

"We've been trying like crazy to get him one," Manning said of the 1-yard scoring toss from Brock Osweiler. "It was good Virgil got his."

The reaction of teammates explained Green's popularity in the locker room. They rushed to greet him, knowing how long he had waited for the opportunity.

Green couldn't hide his smile. The Raiders probably were better off not making him angry. Opponents don't seem to like him much when he's angry.

"When I was at Nevada, I started to bulk up in the weight room. I worked extremely hard to become the best pound-for-pound lifter," Green said. "But at the end of day, regardless of my weight, it's about coming off the ball and hitting the

guy across from me. That's what is going on in my head. I don't care how big the guy is. It means nothing. I have to impose my will."

# Broncos' Virgil Green finally gets elusive first TD catch

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

December 28, 2014

DENVER -- Just over a month ago it was Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning who vowed to get tight end Virgil Green his first touchdown reception.

Manning felt that Green, who has routinely been asked to roll up his sleeves and do plenty of heavy lifting at the position in the no-frills aspects of the game, deserved a little scoring glory as well.

Following the Broncos' Nov. 23 win over the Miami Dolphins, Manning went as far as to say; "I'm going to get him that first touchdown pass. I'm going to do it. We're going to do it. It's just a matter of time. So we're on a mission there."

Mission accomplished in Sunday's 47-14 victory over the Oakland Raiders in Sports Authority Field at Mile High as Green, in his 56th regular-season game as a Broncos tight end, caught his first career scoring pass. But it was from Broncos backup quarterback Brock Osweiler.

"Finally, finally," said Broncos wide receiver Demaryius Thomas. "I'm happy for my man, I'm so happy about it. ... He deserves it, for everything he does, he just deserves it."

Green caught a career-best three passes in Sunday's win for a career-high 46 yards, all to go with the 1-yard scoring reception with 1 minute, 56 seconds to play in the game. The play brought a big smile to Manning's face from the sideline and was celebrated plenty by Green's teammates once he made it into the bench area.

"I'm happy to catch a ball from Brock as well, I don't care," Green said with a smile. "It makes no difference to me. Whoever wants to throw the ball to me, it works for me."

Green, a 6-foot-5, 255-pounder who was in John Elway's first draft class in 2011, has routinely been the guy blocking at the position. When the Broncos went to a two-tight end set, Green blocked and Julius Thomas caught touchdown passes.

But when Thomas suffered a left ankle injury Nov. 16 against the St. Louis Rams, the Broncos cranked up the run game and that put Green into the lineup more. But

as Thomas has struggled to get back to full speed, the Broncos have started to use Green in all situations.

In Sunday's win he was often the lone tight end in the formation when the Broncos went to a three-wide receiver look, something that used to be Thomas' domain virtually all of the time. The Broncos also used Green plenty, with reserve tackle Chris Clark as well, in a two-tight end look.

And in the end, in terms of snap count and when, and where, he lines up Green has essentially been the Broncos' No. 1 tight end in recent weeks. Thomas, who still looks to be favoring the ankle at times, has three receptions combined in the last three games and has been held without a touchdown in those three games.

"I just want to contribute, however they need me," Green said. "I believe in what I can do. If they want me to block, I think I can get it done, if they need me to catch the ball I can do that too. I just want to help."

# Tight end Virgil Green provides blocking presence for Broncos

By Mike Klis  
The Denver Post  
December 1, 2014

There is "next man up" and there is getting Wally Pipp'd.

Virgil Green or Julius Thomas?

The question would have seemed preposterous two weeks ago. Nine games through a 16-game season, Thomas was the most lethal red-zone receiving target in the league. The Broncos' starting tight end had an NFL-record 12 touchdown catches as he provided arguably the greatest mismatch in the Broncos' passing game, especially in tight quarters.

But Thomas was so old Broncos offense. No-huddle. Shotgun. Sling it here. Chuck it there.

Green is the new Broncos. Huddle up. Move quarterback Peyton Manning under center. Block it here. Pound it there.

In the past two games, with Thomas down from a sprained ankle and Green starting, the Broncos have rushed for 201 and 214 yards.

The Broncos won both games to again threaten New England for the AFC's best record and No. 1 playoff seed.

If Thomas returns from his ankle injury this week, who should the Broncos play at tight end?

"We've used them both before," Broncos coach John Fox said in a quiet hallway at the team's Dove Valley headquarters. "We've used a lot of personnel groups. Now it was tough when both Julius and Virgil were out."

Not to get carried away with a blocking tight end, but Green has been absent from all three Broncos defeats this year. He suffered a concussion on the first series of the Broncos' first loss in Seattle — when the game plan was built around him as a fullback/second tight end.

He later suffered a midseason calf strain that forced him to miss the Broncos' losses at New England and St. Louis.

Thomas went down in the first quarter of the St. Louis game with the ankle injury. His absence, coupled with a 54-pass/nine-rush ratio in a 22-7 loss to the Rams that upset Fox's coaching instincts, delivered a call for more running into the Broncos' game plan.

C.J. Anderson was the running back to carry out such a plan. And Green was the tight end.

"A lot of people are saying I'm the magic potion, but it's all of us," Green said. "We decided to come to a resolve to do what we have to do to win games. If that means running the ball, then we have to do that. If it means passing, we'll do that. We're just trying to do what we can to win games."

To be clear, the Broncos are a better team with Thomas than without him. They especially missed him Sunday night against the Kansas City Chiefs when the Broncos won 29-16 despite converting only one touchdown in six trips inside the red zone.

And it's not like Thomas can't block. He has become an effective backside blocker, although Green is superior at the point of attack and setting the edge.

There is no comparison when it comes to catching the ball. Thomas is a weapon.

After essentially missing the past three games, Thomas was going to be eased back into his role, anyway, even if Green had not become such a key component in the running game.

But there is room for both.

"I don't know going into each week what that run-pass distribution is going to be," Thomas said. "It's just a feel thing. We are going to go with whatever is working well. We have been able to consistently run the ball, and if that's the case, we will continue to do that when I get back. We have been doing a lot of one big tight end, one regular tight end, but if I am in, we could easily change that to two tight-end personnel sets like we did earlier in the year."

# Catches or not, Virgil Green still gives Denver's offense options

By Jeff Legwold  
ESPN.com  
December 4, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- In his four seasons with the Denver Broncos tight end Virgil Green has caught 20 passes, he's run the ball twice and doesn't have a touchdown.

Yet, Green is a player quarterback Peyton Manning has called "one of our tough guys on this team." His work has been important enough that Manning has vowed to try and find a way to get Green his inaugural scoring catch. With Julius Thomas still working his way back from a left ankle sprain he suffered against the St. Louis Rams and Jacob Tamme having already missed practice time this week with a rib injury, Green is, at the moment, the only healthy tight end on the roster.

So, the guy who has largely been asked to block for other much of the time, may get a few more chances to catch a pass or two.

"Absolutely. I'd be a fool if I said that wasn't in my mind," Green said when asked if he's like to be more involved in the passing game. "But at the same time, I have to do what the team needs me to do to win games and I'm a committed teammate and I want to do things to get wins. I'm not a selfish player. I don't look too much for my own stats. I just look to help my team win games."

For a team still searching at times to find itself offense, Green's presence in the offense allows the Broncos to add a little more power to all of the athleticism they have in the passing game. Green missed three games with a calf injury -- New England, Oakland and St. Louis -- and the Broncos were in a two-tight end look for 23, 0 and three snaps respectively in those three games.

Against the Rams, when Thomas also suffered an ankle injury in the first quarter, the Broncos ran the ball just 10 times for 28 yards, an eye-opening total for an offense even as proficient throwing the ball as the Broncos have been since Manning's arrival.

"[Green] is a physical player who gives us a presence," Manning said.

With Green's return to the lineup over the last two weeks, the Broncos have rushed 80 times combined, the highest total in back-to-back games this season and third-

highest of Manning's tenure. Denver pounded the ball out of the two-tight end set 20 times against the Dolphins and 26 times this past Sunday against the Kansas City Chiefs. The Broncos rushed for 201 and 214 yards respectively in those two wins.

"I take a lot of pride in it," Green said. "In college we ran the ball quite a bit so it's something that has been ingrained in my mind to make those big blocks and spring guys to get them down the field."

Sunday, the Buffalo Bills will be the sixth defense the Broncos have faced this season currently ranked in the league's top 10 in scoring defense. But some offenses have found some room to run on the perimeter, especially outside the right tackle where teams have averaged 6.48 yards per carry against the Bills defense.

With Mario Williams and Jerry Hughes at defensive end, Buffalo leads the league in sacks with 48 and are one just two teams -- Philadelphia is the other -- to have topped 40 sacks on the season.

"I'd probably say 80 percent is 'want to'," Green said. "As long as you go out there with the willingness to hit somebody, you can move somebody off the line of scrimmage. This week we've got big Mario Williams out there, so we're going to have to get our technique down pat because you just can't win with him just coming off the ball hard. You've got to use technique. ... He's going to make sure you don't run that ball outside. He can set that edge and he's 290 [pounds]. I'm about 240, 250 so there is a huge weight discrepancy there, but at the end of the day, I'm going into the game with a mindset that regardless of how big he is I'm going to move him off the ball. Whether that happens on every play or not, I don't know, but that's my mindset and my goal for this game."

# Tight end Virgil Green receptive to blocking for Denver Broncos

By Irv Moss

The Denver Post

November 28, 2014

If and when it happens, Broncos tight end Virgil Green doesn't have a predetermined celebration script.

NFL players have different expressions to celebrate when they score a touchdown. Green doesn't know whether he will spike the ball, do a dance or nonchalantly hand the ball to an official, but he can't wait to find out what he will do when he finally puts six points on the scoreboard.

In his three-plus seasons with the Broncos, Green hasn't scored on any of his 19 pass receptions.

"It has been a long time since I've scored a touchdown," Green said Thursday after practice. "I'll probably be super excited if it happens. I'll go crazy, but I can't go overboard. Julius (teammate Julius Thomas) will come out there and calm me down."

It's another part of Green's game that drew raves in a rejuvenated Denver running game that overpowered the Miami Dolphins last Sunday. With Green at tight end, the Broncos rushed for 201 yards — including 167 yards from undrafted running back C.J. Anderson.

"I'm a versatile guy, but I like to block," Green said. "That's what this team has me doing and I don't mind doing it."

Green has only two receptions this season, for 18 yards, but he has missed some games because of an injured ankle. In comparison, Thomas has 40 receptions for 426 yards and 12 touchdowns and Jacob Tamme has 11 catches for 87 yards and two touchdowns.

Broncos coach John Fox said Green's statistics are deceiving and possibly influenced by the game plan.

"I think historically he has done that," Fox said when asked whether Green could become a factor in Denver's offense as a pass catcher. "We've definitely leaned on Julius Thomas no doubt as far as a receiver, but Virgil's very capable."

Green has to look back to his senior year at Nevada to remember his last touchdown. In the Wolf Pack's 2010 season, he had 35 receptions for 515 yards and five touchdowns.

But Green doesn't dispute that blocking is his specialty.

"In blocking you have to be technically sound, but there's also a huge mental part to it," he said. "You have to say to yourself that the player across from me isn't going to beat me. Absolutely, I'm a tough guy. My dad was in the military. I was taught to never back down from anybody."

Green's teammates know him by his performance on the field. They call him "The Hulk."

"I don't know if it's obvious what he does as a blocker, but it helps," Anderson said.

Added offensive tackle Ryan Clady: "In order to run the ball, you have to have a good blocking tight end at the point of attack. He was a factor for sure last week."

Green's primary focus is lining up against elite defensive linemen and learning what he can to improve his game.

"I'm not focused on scoring touchdowns," Green said. "I just want to help this team win and get to the Super Bowl."

Still, it will be interesting to see whether it will be a dance, a spike of the ball or a casual handoff to an official after Green scores the first touchdown of his NFL career.

# Community Conversation: Virgil Green

DenverBroncos.com

November 28, 2014

*Each week of the season DenverBroncos.com will highlight the off-field contributions of a Denver Bronco. This week we talked to tight end Virgil Green, who spends his time working with the United Way in addition to being involved with the Broncos' community work.*

## **Why is it so important for you as an NFL player to give back to the community?**

"I work a lot with kids, giving back to the kids, and it's great to see the smiles on their faces. A lot of times you don't know what they're going through at home or even in school, so to give back in that way and to give them a sense of peace for however long that may be is always great to do."

## **What have been some of your favorite Broncos community events to participate in?**

"The Play 60 Hometown Huddle—the last one I was at—was pretty enjoyable. That game (organized by the Playworks staff), I had never seen that game played but we made it fun for the kids."

## **Who was an NFL player who you looked up to for his community work and leadership?**

"There have been a lot of guys here—[S] David Bruton, [former Bronco/current Tennessee Titans LB] Wesley Woodyard, [former Bronco/current Jacksonville Jaguars G] Zane Beadles—those guys go above and beyond the call of duty. I think if a lot of guys took what they did and even did half of what they did, we could make a big impact."

## **How did you get involved in working with the United Way?**

"My publicist asked me if it was something I would like to do. I had worked with the Boys & Girls Clubs every summer in college, so I had worked with kids quite a bit in my college years. I decided to jump all over it. It's been very humbling and a blessing in my life."

## **Your United Way work deals primarily with helping kids be successful in school, why is that important and did you have any people who stood out as helping you when you were in school?**

"I always tell kids that yeah, I'm a football player but without school I don't get to where I'm at. You have to go to college. You have to attain a certain GPA. My parents, they were very stern with me and my brother. The rule was you had to have a 2.0 (GPA) from the school, but my parents told me 3.0—you had to have a 3.0 and they were not playing around with that—if you did not have a 3.0 you weren't playing. So my family was really tough on us growing up and I think that's helped me in my career."

**What are some of your favorite parts of being involved in working with the United Way?**

"Just getting out of my box a little bit. I'm kind of a quiet, reserved guy and I don't typically show my feelings towards people that I don't really know. Just going with those kids—a lot of people don't know I can speak a little Spanish. I had to read a book in Spanish to the kids one time and I felt so embarrassed for a minute because I hadn't read any Spanish words in a while and I was sweating. But the kids all thought it was funny and then I thought it was funny and I stopped sweating. Just things like that where I can get to be a kid again and have a stress-free life for 30 minutes or an hour is cool."

**You've also gotten involved with the Play 60 platform, what do you stress to kids when talking to them about staying active?**

"To be physically fit—I'm proud of my body and where I've come from. I've learned a lot about health and how to be healthier. Growing up, I ate a lot of fast food growing up. I ate a lot of fast food in college. We didn't have all the information that the kids have available to them today. I drank a lot of soda growing up. So to have a Play 60 and Fuel Up to Play 60 type thing come and teach these kids how to do things outside, how to eat healthier and creative ways to do those things is something that is very beneficial. I wish I would have had it when I was younger."

**Your wife, Marianne, played college basketball at Nevada, how does she help you stay active in the offseason?**

"Absolutely. We play basketball a lot in the offseason. We go play a little game of horse and she beats me. Me and [TE] Julius [Thomas] go to 24 Hour Fitness and hoop, too. Sometimes I lead her through workouts there but she hates it because I'm a little too overbearing and I don't take no for an answer when it comes to working out. But she's a competitor just like I am, so our household is very peaceful because we understand each other and we know we're both competitors so we know not to egg each other on."

# Anderson's arrival, Green's return keys Broncos

By Arnie Stapleton  
Associated Press  
November 27, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Just in time for nasty weather, the Denver Broncos have discovered a grinding ground game thanks to C.J. Anderson's arrival and Virgil Green's return.

Anderson, the Broncos' second-year, third-string running back, has made the most of his opportunity with Ronnie Hillman (foot) and Montee Ball (groin) hurt.

Since taking over as the primary running back three weeks ago, Anderson has averaged 5.8 yards a carry and 11.7 yards a catch. He had 167 yards and a touchdown on 27 carries in Denver's win over Miami last week.

He caught his first TD pass against Oakland, a 51-yard masterpiece on a screen play that sparked Denver's rout of the Raiders and he scored his first career rushing TD against the Dolphins.

"C.J. is taking advantage of his opportunity," Peyton Manning said. "I think his knowledge of the offense has a lot to do with how fast he's able to play. When I say fast, he's not thinking a lot back there. He knows the protections and he knows the pass patterns. He feels good about the run plays and the cuts on where to go. When you're thinking a lot back there and not exactly sure what to do, you just don't play as fast."

Running backs coach Eric Stutesville said he sometimes has to act like a teacher admonishing his star student not to blurt out all the answers when he quizzes his running backs.

"That is a real credit to him for being a real student of the game in his short time here," Manning said. "So we're calling all the same plays, if not more, with him in there and it's allowed him to run the ball well and catch the ball well and really make some plays and really make a lot of guys miss."

Anderson's addition in the backfield has given the Broncos (8-3) a running threat to go with Manning's passing prowess: Last week Denver achieved perfect balance — 35 runs, 35 throws — and while that will be hard to repeat, it gives the Broncos an unpredictability that had been missing.

"This team has good flexibility," Manning said.

Manning has enjoyed watching No. 22 leaving linemen and linebackers in the dust after so many of Denver's runs were thwarted in the backfield over the first half of the season.

In the first two months, the Broncos had 33 runs that went for no gain or negative yardage and they've only had seven such runs since Anderson took over, including just one loss of yards in 35 runs last week.

Helping out the ground game is the return of Green, whose three-game absence with a strained calf coincided with the revamped O-line's nosedive that led to heavy criticism last week.

"It was really good to get him back," Manning said. "He's one of our tough guys on this team and it was killing him not to play due to his injury. It was good for him to get back out there. It allows us to do more things from a personnel standpoint and formations.

"I'm going to get him that first touchdown pass. I'm going to do it. We're going to do it. It's just a matter of time. So, we're on a mission."

Both Green and Anderson bring a physical style to the Broncos' offense.

"He's itching to hit somebody. And that's Virg," Anderson said. "He likes going out there and playing physical. And that's what we need in this run game. And my running style is physical. So, hopefully it just builds up this offense."

Anderson said he believes Green could be a factor in the passing game, too.

Green sounds as though he'd be happy to just keep hitting guys, though.

"I missed it. Outrageously, I missed it," Green said.

Notes: LB Brandon Marshall (concussion) didn't practice Thursday but did go through stretching. If he's out Sunday night at Kansas City, the Broncos would turn to a rotation of LBs, including Steven Johnson, rookies Lamin Barrow and Corey Nelson and newcomer Todd Davis. ... TE Julius Thomas (ankle, limited) returned to practice for the first time since getting hurt Nov. 16 at St. Louis.

# Peyton Manning says he wants to add Virgil Green to touchdown list

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

November 27, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning has thrown touchdown passes to 47 different players in his career, a list that spans Marvin Harrison (112 touchdowns from Manning) to Demaryius Thomas (33) to Broncos defensive tackle Mitch Unrein (one).

But Manning, who is always on the hunt for touchdowns, would like to add at least one more to the list. Sort of like a reward for a job well done, because Broncos tight end Virgil Green is no stranger to rolling up his sleeves and getting his hands dirty for some of the heavy lifting on offense.

"I'm going to get him that first touchdown pass," Manning said. "I'm going to do it. We're going to do it. It's just a matter of time. So we're on a mission there."

Green, a 6-foot-5, 255-pound tight end, was in John Elway's first draft class in 2011, after he returned to the team to be Pat Bowlen's chief football decision-maker. Green had been one of the fastest (a 4.54-second clocking in the 40-yard dash) and athletic (42½-inch vertical jump) tight ends in the draft class.

With the Broncos, he also happens to be the guy asked to be the blocker at the position. He has played 51 career games for the Broncos, and has 19 catches with zero touchdowns.

Told this week of Manning's vow to get him a scoring pass, Green took a more wait-and-see approach.

"I'm looking forward to it, but all I can do is just play and do what's asked of me when they ask me to do it," Green said.

In Sunday's win against the Miami Dolphins, the Broncos made a far more concerted effort to run the ball -- 35 rushing plays in the game to go with 35 pass attempts -- as they worked out of a two-tight-end set for 20 snaps in the game, including penalty plays, and were able to do it because Green was back in the lineup after missing three games with a calf injury. The Broncos finished with 201 yards rushing, including 167 from C.J. Anderson.

"Virgil played really well on Sunday," Manning said. "It was really good to get him back. He's one of our tough guys on this team, and it was killing him not to play due to his injury. ... It allows us to do more things from a personnel standpoint and formations. ... He is a physical player, and I thought his presence was felt on Sunday having him back out there."

"A guy like me, I like to work," Green said. "I don't like to be sitting out. I don't like to just watch other guys. I like to work. So just sitting out, it hit me pretty hard. But at the same time, you realize how much you love this game and how much you appreciate all the opportunities. I was excited to get back."

With Julius Thomas out against the Dolphins because of a left ankle injury, the Broncos often used Green and reserve tackle Paul Cornick as the team's two tight ends. Green played 54 snaps in the game, and Cornick played 17.

With Sunday night's AFC West showdown against the Kansas City Chiefs looming, the Broncos, including coach John Fox, have also talked about maintaining the presence of the run in the team's offense. The last time they faced the Chiefs, in Week 2, wide receiver Wes Welker was still serving his suspension for violating the league's former policy on performance-enhancing drugs, and the Broncos lined up in a two-tight-end look for all but two snaps in the game -- they had one play with three wide receivers, and Manning had a kneel down to end the game.

Green said he hopes to again be part of the mix -- Thomas did not practice Wednesday because of the ankle injury -- and if a scoring pass lands in his hands, it would be a nice bonus.

"[Blocking] is just part of my job description," Green said. "I like to be as perfect as I can. [Tight ends] Coach [Clancy] Barone is on us real tough at the tight end position, and I'm just trying to get out there and just do my job. Don't focus on anybody else's job but my own."

# Green says he's ready to return to lineup

By Arnie Stapleton  
Associated Press  
November 22, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — The tight end turnstile keeps spinning in Denver, where Julius Thomas is hurting but Virgil Green is on the mend.

Both are listed as questionable for Sunday's showdown with the Miami Dolphins (6-4).

Thomas leads the league with a dozen TD catches but he was unable to practice Friday after showing up with helmet in hand and every intention of working through the sprained left ankle he sustained in St. Louis last week.

Green, the team's best blocking tight end, expects to return to the lineup this weekend after missing three games with a strained right calf, which happens to coincide with the offensive line's nosedive.

"My body feels as good as it's felt since camp started," said Green, who pulled up lame in practice earlier this month, re-injuring a calf that had bothered him in training camp.

"It wasn't as bad as camp, but it just took a lot of time this time to heal up," Green said. "Everything starts from down there. If it were a strained quad or a strained hamstring, you could put a sleeve on it and go. But all your power starts from your calf."

Green said he started feeling better last week but the training staff suggested he needed another week to let it fully heal so it won't be a lingering problem down the stretch.

He could have help shore up the run-blocking and blitz pickup that's come under heavy criticism since the Broncos (7-3) made wholesale changes on their offensive line three weeks ago. They've gone 1-2 since and lost their air of Super Bowl favorite.

"Absolutely, I can help, not just protection-wise but in the run game. That's something that I take a lot of pride in," Green said. "It's something I feed off. I love to hit. I'm smiling right now — just the thought of hitting somebody is a great feeling."

Green doesn't just want to be known as a good blocker. He said if Thomas can't play, he hopes the Broncos allow him to display his versatility as a pass-catcher and even runner at times.

While the Broncos will welcome Green's blocking prowess up front, they'd sorely miss Thomas, who's a matchup nightmare for defenses.

"Julius is the one player where you are able to get really unequal matchups," offensive coordinator Adam Gase said. "He's a tough matchup whether it's a safety or linebacker. You saw against New England they put a corner on him. That just shows you how challenging it is for defenses to plan for him."

In Green, the Broncos have a different style of tight end who's valuable in other ways.

"I'd love for J.T. to play. I really don't know where he's at right now, but if he doesn't go, I feel like it's an opportunity for me to show that I'm not just a blocking tight end," Green said. "I can catch. People know I can run the ball as well, so it's an opportunity for me and I have to jump all over it."

Green, a fourth-year tight end from Nevada, said he feels he can be a wild-card for the Broncos as they try to get back on that Super Bowl Express.

"I do feel that way because a lot of people don't know much about me. They just know that I can block," Green said. "But people who do know about me know that I'm a very athletic guy. I just have to take advantage of the opportunities that the offense gives me and that Peyton Manning gives me."

# Virgil Green is Broncos' Mr. Versatility

By Arnie Stapleton  
Associated Press  
October 2, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Virgil Green has emerged as the most versatile member of Denver's offense.

Last month alone, the fourth-year pro from Nevada lined up as a traditional tight end, split out wide and in the slot, at H-back, halfback and fullback.

No wonder Peyton Manning lamented losing him to a concussion early in Denver's 26-20 overtime loss at Seattle last month, suggesting his departure forced the Broncos (2-1) to crumple much of their game plan.

Football fans tend to overlook Green, a member of the same 2011 draft class as Julius Thomas, a fantasy player's dream who has caught an AFC-high 17 touchdown passes since 2013.

Green is still searching for the end zone. He has 19 career catches and one carry. Yet, his coaches and teammates recognize his across-the-board importance.

"People don't notice the little things, but he's a very big part of our offense," wide receiver Demaryius Thomas said. "Without Virgil, our offense won't be able to run like we want it to."

They saw that at Seattle when Green went out in the first half and the Broncos fell behind 17-3 before Manning staged a furious fourth-quarter rally that tied it.

"I thought Virgil's injury was significant," Manning said afterward. "We had a good drive with him in there. Once he went out it limited some of the things we wanted to do (with formations), and I thought we became one-dimensional because of his injury and score. That is not what you want to do with these guys."

The two-tight end sets the Broncos rely on so heavily depend on Green's multifaceted skill set.

"His ability to be a dual threat for us in pass protection and run blocking" makes him so vital, offensive coordinator Adam Gase said Thursday. "And then he does enough in the passing game to where you can't fall asleep on him. He's a very powerful guy and brings a little different aspect for us at that position."

Green takes all these comments as compliments.

"It does mean a lot to me, but at the same token I have to be consistent. There have been times where I haven't been real consistent this year," Green said. "One of my focuses is to be consistent, especially in the run game, get things going for us because I know we're going to handle things in the passing game. But as long as I can move guys off the line of scrimmage and be consistent with it, our offense will be flawless."

Although Thomas is a Pro Bowler in line for a megadeal, Green insisted there's really not that much that separates the two fourth-year tight ends.

"I really don't think me and Julius are really all that different," Green said. "He's just had more opportunities. Athletically, I'm as fast as Julius. I can move just like Julius. I'm as smart as Julius. So, I don't think there's too much of a discrepancy there."

That's why he cringes at the notion that Thomas is a receiving tight end and Green is a blocking tight end.

"I think we have all-round tight ends," Green said. "If you look at our offense, I don't just line up and block. A lot of times I do go to fullback. Sometimes I am split out. So, we have a lot of versatile tight ends and I don't think that I'm just a blocking guy. If my number's called, I can do work, too."

Still, there are some obvious differences between the two.

"'Virg' does a great job of helping us in our run game," Thomas said. "He's a guy that goes out there and gets after it every single play. We can count on him to be a guy that's going to set the tone."

With a thicker upper torso, Green uses brute force to block whereas Thomas relies more on leverage.

"I take pride in moving guys off the line of scrimmage. That's my forte. But for Julius, he knows how to position and do things like that," Green said. "So, in that sense we're different because I want to be a bruiser."

Green would love to catch some TD passes like Thomas, who leads the NFL with five so far.

"Of course. If I were to sit here and say I wouldn't like to score touchdowns, that would be a blatant lie," he said. "But at the same token, I know my role in the offense and all I want to do is win. I want to win a Super Bowl."

Notes: For the first time since training camp started in late July, the Broncos had 100 percent participation at practice Thursday as S David Bruton (ankle) returned to action.

# Bruton, Green Participate in United Way Photoshoot

By David DeChant  
DenverBroncos.com  
July 21, 2014

DENVER -- David Bruton and Virgil Green put in a little bit of work for a little bit of play Monday at the Denver Broncos Boys and Girls Club.

The two players joined several of the club's kids for United Way's billboard photoshoot, encouraging kids to play 60 minutes a day to prevent childhood obesity. The shoot was the 10th of 32 stops for the NFL United Way Road Trip, which will wrap up after a stop with every NFL team on Aug. 8.

"There are a lot of kids out there that need to be active, need to stay active," Green said. "Whether you're in shape or not, you always need to stay active."

"The platform that they have right now is incredible," said Tracey Holmes, the NFL Partnership Director at United Way Worldwide. "Adults want to hear what they have to say. Kids want to hear what they have to say. They have an incredible opportunity to change the culture."

Bruton, who was in Dallas last week promoting nutrition at the GENYOUth Summit, was excited to help "deliver a message," focusing on getting the kids to encourage each other.

"That's what these efforts are about," he said. "Kids taking control of these programs. Just taking a strong grasp on the program and making it their own."

Green has been working with United Way in various programs since he entered the league and still enjoys interacting with the kids.

"It's always great to see the kids smiling," he said. "Even though we're doing something that took a little order, it was still fun and enjoyable."

Once the shoot was finished, order evaporated as Bruton and Green led teams against each other in tug-of-war. Bruton, with the clear size disadvantage, resorted to trick techniques, having his team let go of the rope immediately. But Green wasn't fooled, standing his ground without falling backward.

"I knew he was up to something," Green said with a laugh.

When both teams returned to full speed, Green came out on top again.

"Initially, David was kind of pulling kind of hard and then I had to shift into overdrive and make sure my kids went home with the win," he said.

# Green Earning More Reps, Opportunities

By David DeChant  
DenverBroncos.com  
July 3, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- Virgil Green might be known best by some Broncos fans for his 6-yard carry against the Patriots in last year's AFC Championship Game.

That normally wouldn't be odd, except that Green plays tight end.

"I'm down for whatever," he said near the end of OTAs. "If I'm at running back, fullback, wherever. As long as I'm out on the field, I like being out there."

It makes sense that posters of Green aren't hanging on the walls of teenagers all over Colorado. A seventh-round pick out of Nevada, he has 17 catches for 132 yards in his three NFL seasons and hasn't scored a touchdown. In Peyton Manning's first year in Denver, Jacob Tamme and Joel Dreessen were freshly signed veterans who Manning trusted. Last year, Julius Thomas broke out and even pushed the vets to the background.

But Green has quietly carved out a much bigger role than his limited offensive production would suggest. In 2013, he played in 26.4 percent of the Broncos' offensive snaps, more than both Tamme (21.9) and Dreessen (13.2). Particularly notable was Green's playing time in the two games that Thomas missed, Weeks 12 and 13 against the Patriots and Chiefs respectively. Of the 170 snaps in those games, Green was on the field for 111, good for 65.3 percent. Tamme had 49 snaps and Dreessen had 12 over the same span.

By no means did Green replace Thomas' receiving numbers -- understandable, considering the wealth of proven options elsewhere -- but the fact that he took the lion's share of the snaps shows the confidence he invokes from the coaches, and just how far he's come in his three NFL seasons.

Green was drafted three rounds after Thomas in 2011 and required some grooming in his transition from the pistol offense he played in during college. Developing wasn't made easier for either player when the offseason was shortened by the lockout.

"We came in with our backs against the wall to begin with," Green said. "And we just kind of had to lean on each other to learn the offense." 2 Photos

Now in his fourth year, Green continues to flash more capability and comfort on the field, looking active while catching a number of passes from Manning during OTAs and minicamp. After watching his draft classmate ascend from the unknown to stardom last season, Green is eager to show how he can build on 2013.

"To see his success is only added more fuel to my fire because I feel like I'm a gifted enough athlete to do the same kind of things," Green said of Thomas.

A gifted athlete Green certainly is, and his body style seems a bit different than most tight ends. His measurables are similar to those of Thomas, but Green appears less lanky and surprisingly compact, seemingly without an ounce of fat on his body.

Perhaps the leaner, stouter body type promotes his jack-of-all-trades ability. Most of Green's snaps still come at tight end, but he also played 55.4 percent of Denver's special teams plays in 2013 and functions as the team's fullback when needed, in addition to the occasional foray at running back.

"Each year I try to teach myself something new and different every year and master it," he said. "So that's just the point where I'm getting to: I have everything learned, so now I'm just trying to master all those things."

It remains to be seen whether or not his production on offense will grow, as Manning's collection of weapons is perhaps even deeper than it was last year. The team's propensity for three-receiver sets and Thomas' continued development won't make it any easier for Green to see the ball either. But Green is clearly becoming a more reliable receiver, showing sure hands and focusing on adapting his routes to opposing defenses.

"Peyton expects things to be done a certain way against certain coverages, so you just have to learn those things and respond at a quick pace," he said.

Even if there aren't more throws available to come his way, his multi-tool skillset should ensure he'll be on the field often once again.

"(In college) coach always preached to the eleven guys, 'Do your part,'" Green said. "And that's just how I figure my role is. Just do my part."

# Former Pack TE Green seeks playing time

Dan Hinxman  
Reno Gazette-Journal  
July 21, 2013

STATELINE — Denver Broncos tight end Virgil Green finds himself in the same spot he was in last year — entering training camp as part of a deep talent pool.

Green, the former Nevada Wolf Pack tight end, was effectively the Broncos' third or fourth tight end last season, and all four of them return. Denver also drafted rookie Lucas Reed out of New Mexico, giving the Broncos five tight ends.

Coach John Fox, who competed in the American Century Championship celebrity golf tournament at Edgewood Tahoe this weekend, said he can't say today how much the 6-foot-5, 255-pound Green will play this year.

"Our starters are Joel Dreesen and Jacob Tammé," Fox said after completing his round Saturday. "They'll determine (by their play) how much they get to play and where they fit."

The Broncos also have Julius Thomas, who has played in only nine games the past two seasons because of injury. He has been impressive in summer camps and has played with the first team.

Fox said he likes Green, a third-year player who caught three and five passes, respectively, in his first two seasons, and he sees him developing into "a really good tight end."

"He's an inline blocker, probably one of our strongest ones," Fox said of Green, who got married last week. "He can play some fullback in our two-back offense. ...

"He's strong, tough, a smart kid, a good teammate. He does have good speed. He is powerful as a blocker. As a young player, it's just getting more assignment savvy."

# **Start of the Magic: Green's Week 7 onside kick recovery was key moment in Broncos' season**

ERIC GALVAN  
Visalia Times  
January 7, 2012

Virgil Green kind of laughs at the notion that the "magic" surrounding the Denver Broncos couldn't have been possible without him.

"Yeah, I think that's taking it a little too far," the Tulare Union graduate and Broncos rookie tight end said in a phone interview this week.

But, let's go back a little and give Green a little context.

When talking about the Denver Broncos these days a conversation inevitably turns to one Timothy Richard Tebow.

The Tebow phenomena has swept the NFL-loving world and has fans and detractors chiming in with their given opinions about the second-year quarterback.

The Broncos enter the postseason at 8-8 overall, winners of the AFC West, and host the Pittsburgh Steelers in the first round of the playoffs at 1:30 p.m. Sunday.

However, the team enters Sunday on a three-game losing streak, coming off a regular season-ending 7-3 loss at home against the Kansas City Chiefs.

But it was back in Week 7 when Broncos head coach John Fox — his team sitting a dismal 1-4, it's playoff hopes getting further and further away — decided to make a change at quarterback. Kyle Orton was out and Tebow was in.

But through more than three and a half quarters of his first NFL start, Tebow's Broncos were down 15-0 on the road at the Miami Dolphins.

He led the team to a touchdown with less than 5 minutes to play, cutting the deficit to 15-7 when the Broncos decided to go for an onside kick.

The low-percentage attempt — a roughly 20-percent success rate — was what Denver needed to stay in the game.

On the onside kickoff team for the Broncos was Green. The ball needed to go at least 10 yards or hit a Dolphins player before anyone on the Broncos could make a legal play on it.

Green raced downfield on the attempt, made a play on the ball, fought through a sea of Dolphins, battled through bodies of players and came up with the football.

The Broncos were still alive. Tebow's magic would be on full display as he led Denver down for a touchdown and the game-tying two-point conversion. In overtime, the magic continued as the Broncos, behind Tebow, would go on to beat Miami 18-15.

It was at that point that the NFL's world changed. The Broncos would go on to win six of their next seven games, including a six-game winning streak. Through it, the talk was, and still is, revolved around Tebow — his deficiencies, his intangibles, his future and just about everything else.

Lost in the shuffle, though, has been that one onside kick recovery that led to it all. That one kick recovered by a man from Tulare.

And, his response when asked if he might be responsible for all this was that underplayed, "I think that's taking it a little too far."

But that's who Green is. He's a humble person, that team-first, good locker room guy that coaches love.

He's not overly concerned that in his rookie season he caught just three passes for 24 yards and only had one reception the final three months of the year.

For Green he prides himself on the little things that help the greater good of the team.

So, he looks at this week's challenge against the Steelers — year in and out one of the best defenses in the NFL — and is focused on the details.

"Technically, we need to be more sound," Green said. "We've gotten away from our technique. You just have to get with your coaches, have them be more detailed with you and be harder on you when it comes to watching tape."

When the Broncos took Green in the seventh round of the NFL Draft, he was taken primarily for his run-blocking skills. At the University of Nevada, Green was a strong run blocker, but was very involved in the Wolf Pack's passing game.

In training camp, he stood out as a stout run blocker and has helped the Broncos lead the league in rushing this season.

Jim Skipper, the running backs coach for the Tennessee Titans, served as Fox's running backs coach and assistant head coach with the Carolina Panthers for nine seasons from 2002 to 2010 and was the offensive coordinator with the New York Giants from 1997-2000 while Fox was the team's defensive coordinator.

He knows a John Fox offense and knows the importance of the tight end in the scheme.

"The thing with John, is he's a firm believer in running the ball," Skipper said during a phone interview this week. "He's a disciple of [former Steelers head coach] Chuck Noll. And you start with that running game on the offensive side.

"With your tight ends, that tight end is very vital in that scheme. You look at a tight end as your extra offensive lineman," Skipper said. "The way the NFL is now, a lot of teams will have a pass-catching tight end and a run-blocking tight end. If you have someone who can do both, he's just a hard animal to find."

And Green, at least in college, proved he can be that type of "animal."

On Sunday, he'll continue to prove his worth against one of the toughest defenses in the league.

Green understands the struggles his offense has gone through in recent weeks and believes it can get things going Sunday.

"This is the NFL. People are going to watch film on you," he said. "They'll have their game plan. We just have to execute better and not let other teams' game plans [dictate what we do]."

If the Steelers are able to dictate what Denver does, Green knows his season will be over.

Still, in just his first professional football season he was able to play on a team that won a division and made it to the playoffs.

Had things gone different last Sunday, that might not have been the case. But making the playoffs or not, won't define this season's successes.

"Had we not made the playoffs, I don't want to say it would've been a failure," Green said. "You look at it and we're in a situation where you're going to have a lot of guys at home watching the playoffs.

"And us, we get to decide our own destiny," he said. "You want to be out there making big plays, not just watching."

Back in Miami, Green made arguably the biggest play of the Broncos' season. On Sunday, he'll look to help keep the magic going.

# Broncos' TE Virgil Green growing into role

By Lindsay H. Jones  
The Denver Post  
September 18, 2011

Virgil Green wasn't any different from other teenage boys, with big dreams of becoming a professional athlete. When he was 14 years old and closed his eyes, he pictured himself driving the lane as an NBA power forward and hammering down dunks.

But nature changed Green's plans. When he reached 6-foot-2, he stopped growing during his junior year of high school in Tulare, Calif.

Green, who played four years in Nevada's pistol offense, shifted his focus to football but kept his basketball instincts intact. It showed at the NFL scouting combine in February, where Green put up terrific numbers, including a 42 1/2-inch vertical leap, a 10-foot, 10-inch broad jump and a 4.64 40-yard dash.

A seventh-round draft pick, Green beat out two veterans to become one of three tight ends on the Broncos' 53-man roster. Q: I know you went to high school in California. Tell me about your childhood before that.

A: My dad (Virgil Sr.) was in the military, so we moved around a lot for the first 10 years of my life. We were in Southern California, San Antonio and Fort Bragg, N.C. Kind of been all over the southern half of the country. It was cool because I got to experience different cultures. Then coming back to California — I was young at first when I lived there, so coming back I got to see the more chilled, laid-back life, and that's the type of person I've become.

Q: How did you end up at the University of Nevada?

A: They were the first school that offered me. I had a couple of schools that offered and then pulled out, but Nevada was a school that stuck with me. I felt they were loyal, and that's where I should go.

Q: What was it like playing in the pistol offense there?

A: My first two to three years, we were fixing things; my last two years, we almost perfected it. To me, in my eyes, as long as you have the right guys in there, there was almost no way to stop it. One game, we had 800 yards of total offense.

Q: What did that do for your development as a player and your preparation for the NFL?

A: Being in an offense where we produced a lot, it really helped build my confidence as a player. If you're out there and all you do is score touchdowns, you start to

think, "This is what an offense should be — an offense that scores on every single drive, no matter what." You accept nothing less.

Q: You got a lot of publicity after the NFL combine. How did you prepare?

A: I kind of knew going in there, with the kind of body that God has blessed me with, that I could go and, as my trainer liked to say, put up Vernon Davis-type numbers. We just went real hard on being explosive and showing that I could jump high, jump far and move well for my size.

Q: Were you surprised, then, after that combine performance, to not get drafted until the seventh round?

A: I knew people were questioning my knee. The situation where I had the microfracture surgery my freshman year of college. But it didn't bother me too much that it bothered people. It was just something I had to deal with. Ultimately, I was happy I ended up with the Broncos. I love the coaches, all my teammates and I'm excited to see where my career takes me.

Q: You were one of two tight ends the Broncos drafted, along with Julius Thomas. Do you see you two as the team's tight ends of the future?

A: I think every day we just try to come out and get better and make each other better. I may help him with something; he may help me with something.

Q: Could you challenge him on the basketball court?

A: We haven't played yet. I only played in intramurals in college. And I only dunk. I don't shoot. If it's not a dunk, I'm not even doing it.

Q: So you're saying that if the Broncos held a dunk contest . . .

A: I probably would win.

## **About Virgil Green**

Position: Tight end

College: Nevada

Experience: Rookie

Draft: Seventh round 2011 (No. 204 overall)

College stats: 50 games, 34 starts; 72 catches, 939 yards, 11 touchdowns