

A Q&A with Defensive Line Coach Bill Kollar

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
October 17, 2016

The defensive line may not have a nickname like the secondary's No Fly Zone, but they were just about as dominant up front, allowing the fewest rushing yards per carry. Defensive Line Coach Bill Kollar sat down with us to talk about his time as an NFL player, dreams realized by Super Bowl 50 and where his group can grow.

What were some of your fondest memories from your days as a player in Cincinnati and Tampa Bay?

You always enjoy the competition, the practices, getting out there and playing with your teammates. Obviously, practices were a lot different back then. There was a lot more hitting and stuff and you really bonded as a team overall and you really enjoyed those aspects of it.

Those early days of the Buccaneers with former head coach John McKay were interesting. What was it like with the organization in its infancy?

I got there the second year. We won the first game of the franchise in the 13th game of the season, then we won the last game and then came back the next year and [in 1979] ended up making it to the [NFC] Championship Game, so I mean, he was a heck of a guy. I really enjoyed him as a head coach. I had Abe Gibron as my position coach; Tom Bass was the defensive coordinator. I just had a great time down there, really enjoyed it. I spent six years down there playing and really enjoyed it.

What about rookie DE Adam Gotsis's tape makes you so intrigued?

For not having played football for that long, I like that he's a big guy [who] uses his hands pretty well. The shame of it is obviously he's coming off an ACL, so he's out there practicing and stuff right now but he's still not where you'd like him to end up being. So it's just going to take time for him to keep getting confidence back in his knee. It's probably 100 percent right now, but now it's getting your confidence back and getting back to playing. But I think he'll end up being a good player.

Derek Wolfe had an outstanding season last year despite missing the first four games. Where is his potential to grow even further?

I think he does a heck of a job. He's really good in the run game, really improved his pass rush last year. He plays hard and we're expecting him to have another big year this year.

How much had you dreamed of winning a Super Bowl?

You do that from way back. [...] I would have loved to have won one when I was a player, but I was unable to do that — but getting to two of them when I was coaching and got beat when I was in Atlanta and St. Louis, it just makes you sick. So to be able to end up winning that last year was just flat awesome.

So if losing Super Bowls makes you sick, what is the feeling after finally winning one?

It makes it that much more important because you definitely want to end up being able to say you were a world champ at one time or another. I'm not the youngest guy around so it depends on how many more years I have that I'll be coaching, so it was awesome that we ended up getting it last year.

Working for Coach Kubiak and Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillips for so long, what is it you like about working with them?

Both of them are great guys; I really enjoy it. The staff's got great camaraderie and stuff. It's just a tremendous situation working for Kubs and Wade.

In what ways, as a group, can the defensive line group grow?

Well, we hope that we're able to have a little better year than we did last year. Obviously guys have to come around. [...] We've got to use [DE Jared Crick], we've got to use Vance Walker, we've got to end up using Gotsis — whoever's out there, we've got to end up using. We've got to keep guys fresh and keep them going full speed. We're hoping we can do it with the group we end up keeping.

You're kind of known for getting your defensive linemen's hands up when the ball's released. Is that something that you did a lot as a player or something you've just seen an opportunity for as a coach?

You did it as a coach because you end up seeing the game's gone, now, so much quick passing and stuff. You don't have time to get back to the passer [by] rushing. You've got to make sure you end up getting your hands up, so it makes just a huge difference when you can end up knocking a ball down, and over the years, we've had a bunch of interceptions off of batted passes, too. So we try to work on it pretty close to every day.

Bill Kollar, Broncos d-line coach, wears passion on sleeve, bears any challenge

By Troy Renck
DenverPost.com
May 30, 2015

A little past 10 a.m. on Thursday, a few beads of sweat trickling off his forehead, Bill Kollar walks into the lobby at Broncos headquarters. He is there for an interview. He has been in front of the recorder before. He has a funny story about that.

"So this guy called me up in 1975 or so. He says, 'Go downtown (in Cincinnati) and take a picture with a bear for 50 bucks.' So I show up at this hall, and there's 50 people or so talking about how some guy is going to wrestle a bear," Kollar said. "I said, 'Wrestle a bear? What?'" And then I realize he's talking about me."

What happened next explains why Broncos boss Gary Kubiak desperately wanted Kollar to coach his defensive line. Kollar demands effort, doesn't put up with any, well, you know what, and coaches like his hair is on fire (if he had any).

Back to Cincinnati. Standing on a 4X4 loose rug, Kollar faced off with the bear. At 6-foot-3 and 255 pounds, Kollar was already a Tiger (technically a Cincinnati Bengal), so he figured he could trade a few headlocks with the beast.

"The bear is wearing a muzzle. They take it off. And he grabs a bottle of Coke and drinks the whole thing," Kollar said with a straight face.

On a sugar high, the bear charged Kollar, shoving him to the ground. Kollar, now peeved with cameras rolling, bull rushed the bear. The bear toppled over, leading to cheers and a proposition.

"They asked if I could take on a 9-foot Kodiak the next weekend in Columbus," Kollar said.

Kollar wisely moved on, finishing his career with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. In Abe Gibrón, his line coach, he found a kindred spirit and a blueprint. Gibrón coached with passion, losing his voice at practice. Kollar appears to be losing his mind at times. He screams words of encouragement, blending teaching technique with veins-popping noise.

"I always start out by telling them, I am going to be on your (backside). I am doing it for one reason: to get you to be as good a player you can be. I have guys say all the time that 'I hear you yelling at me in my sleep.' That's just the way it is. It's an automatic deal," said Kollar, 62, who is credited for speeding up reigning NFL defensive player of the year J.J. Watt's learning curve. "They either get it and do it the right way, or they are gone. That's just the way it is, dude."

Pull into the Broncos' parking lot, and you can hear Kollar before you see him. Talk to NFL insiders, and they wonder if Kollar could become the Broncos' most important offseason addition. He is challenged to wring out the potential in Sylvester Williams and Marvin Austin, while continuing Malik Jackson's ascension toward stardom.

"He's a serious guy, but he likes to have fun," Jackson said. "He's going to make you get your work in and make sure that we're the best defensive line in the league. That's what I'm learning. You have to have a great work ethic with him. If you don't and you're not willing to learn and go out there and produce, you're not going to play for him."

Williams received advice from Kollar months ago. It helped convince Williams to spend the bulk of the offseason in Denver training. The Broncos are counting on him to start at nose tackle, filling the enormous void left by the departure of Terrance Knighton.

"I'm excited to play for him," Williams said. "I think he can be a great guy. Like I said, he's got a lot of history in the NFL. What we noticed right away is that he is going to get us a lot better, and that's exciting."

Talk to Kollar and it becomes a trip into grainy black-and-white film. He is no-nonsense; as sympathetic as a parking ticket and as blunt as a hammer. He represents a stark contrast from last year's Denver coaching staff. Success can be reached through different paths. Kubiak has compiled a group whose passion manifests in volume — and sometimes requires earmuffs for those easily offended.

"Bill is loud," said defensive coordinator Wade Phillips, "but he's got a great knack for getting on people, getting them to go harder, but for them to like him. Normally a guy that's as loud as he is, that hollers at you, you think 'Wow.' They know it's in their best interest when he gets on them. Everybody coaches different ways, and I think his style is really good. It fits well with those guys."

Kollar left the Houston Texans on good terms. Texans coach Bill O'Brien granted the parallel move, which placed Kollar near family. One of his sons, Chad, a former SMU player, lives in Denver with his wife and two young children.

Kollar loves to play with the grandkids. He is in his 60s, but he doesn't lack energy. And, yes, he has a funny story about that.

"I have never had a cup of coffee in my life," Kollar said. "I have a soda now and then, but not that Red Bull stuff. All that caffeine with the way I am, my head might explode."

The Kollar file

Bill Kollar brings fire to the coaching staff and real-life experience. He played nine years in the NFL as a defensive lineman, and moved seamlessly into three decades of coaching. His résumé:

Denver Broncos: Defensive line coach, 2015

Houston Texans: Defensive line coach, 2014; assistant head coach/defensive line, 2009-13

Buffalo Bills: Defensive line coach, 2006-08

St. Louis Rams: Defensive line coach, 2001-05

Atlanta Falcons: Defensive line coach, 1990-2000

Purdue University: Defensive line and special-teams coach, 1988-89

University of Illinois: Defensive line and special-teams coach, 1986-87; graduate assistant, 1985

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Defensive assistant and special-teams coach, 1984

Report: Texans D-line coach Bill Kollar to join Gary Kubiak in Denver

Pro Football Talk
Curtis Crabtree
Friday, January 23, 2015

Denver head coach Gary Kubiak is adding a familiar face to his coaching staff.

According to John McClain of the Houston Chronicle, Texans defensive line coach Bill Kollar will be joining the Broncos coaching staffing the same position.

Houston allowed Kollar out of his contract to make the lateral move to Denver.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to work with Gary again," Kollar said. "I want to thank him for giving me this opportunity to come to Denver."

Kollar spent five years on Kubiak's staff with the Texans before Kubiak was fired as head coach following the 2013 season.

Broncos add Bill Kollar as defensive line coach

The Denver Post
Mike Klis and Troy Renck
Saturday, January 24, 2015

Even as the search for a coordinator remains in a holding pattern, the Broncos have agreed to hire defensive line coach Bill Kollar, two NFL sources confirmed on Friday.

Kollar spent the past five seasons with the Houston Texans working with former Houston head coach Gary Kubiak and, for part of the time, Wade Phillips. Phillips is a candidate for the Broncos' defensive coordinator's job, but the team continues to explore its options with Cincinnati Bengals defensive backs coach Vance Joseph. The Bengals denied permission for the Broncos to interview Joseph, which is permitted since it is not for a head coaching position.

Kollar, who began his coaching career in 1984 with Tampa Bay after playing in the NFL for eight seasons, led a Texans' revival in 2011 when the team switched to a more aggressive 3-4 scheme. The Texans let Kollar out of his contract to pursue the lateral move and rejoin Kubiak in Denver.

The Houston Chronicle first reported the story.

Broncos agree to terms with Kollar as defensive line coach

DenverBroncos.com
Saturday, January 24, 2015

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — The Denver Broncos agreed to terms with Bill Kollar to be their defensive line coach, it was announced on Friday.

Kollar owns 26 years of experience coaching defensive lines in the NFL, including the last six seasons in Houston coaching that position.

Prior to his time with the Texans, he served as defensive line coach for Buffalo (2007-08), St. Louis (2001-05) and Atlanta (1990-2000).

During Kollar's six seasons with the Texans, the team's defensive line helped the club to a top-10 NFL ranking in run defense four times. His 2011 and 2012 units were among the league's best as Houston posted 44 sacks apiece during those seasons and held teams to less than 100 rushing yards per game.

He coached defensive linemen Mario Williams and J.J. Watt during his time in Houston with the duo combining for four Pro Bowl selections. Watt was named NFL Defensive Player of the Year by the Associated Press in 2012 after leading the league with 20.5 sacks and becoming the first player in history with at least 14 sacks and 14 passes defensed in the same season.

Prior to his two-year stint with Buffalo, he spent five seasons coaching the defensive line in St. Louis. Defensive end Leonard Little ranked fifth in the NFL with 55.5 sacks during that span and was named to the Pro Bowl in 2003. Kollar's defensive line was instrumental in the Rams' 2001 Super Bowl run as the club ranked third in the NFL in rush defense (85.9 ypg) while tying for the seventh-most sacks (45) in the league.

Kollar spent a decade coaching the defensive line for the Falcons, highlighted by an NFC Championship in 1998 and an appearance in Super Bowl XXXIII against Denver.

An eight-year defensive lineman for Cincinnati and Tampa Bay after being selected by the Bengals in the first round (23rd overall) of the 1974 NFL Draft, Kollar began his coaching career with the Buccaneers as a defensive assistant/special teams coach in 1984.

He spent two seasons each at the University of Illinois and Purdue University before returning to the NFL with Atlanta in 1990.

An All-American defensive lineman at Montana State University, Kollar was born on Nov. 27, 1952, in Warren, Ohio.

JJ Watt signs off on Broncos' hiring of Bill Kollar for D-line

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
January 23, 2015

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — For a guy who played quarterback in college, Jay Rodgers did a nice job as the Broncos' defensive line coach the past three seasons.

Bill Kollar, 62, is a defensive line coach who played defensive line. A former first-round draft pick, and an NFL coach for 25 consecutive years, Kollar is the Broncos' new defensive line coach.

It's the second time new Broncos head coach Gary Kubiak has hired Kollar. He first hired him in 2009 for the Houston Texans, where Kollar stayed through this season.

"He's always going to shoot you straight," Texans star J.J. Watt, the NFL's best defensive lineman, said after his Pro Bowl team's practice Friday at Scottsdale Community College. "He's going to coach you hard and tell you like it is. Kubiak, Kollar, everybody, yeah, you guys (in Denver) have got a great staff."

A homegrown Pro Bowler. Denver has the Broncos. Denver can claim Calais Campbell too.

Born and raised in Denver, and a graduate of South High School, Campbell did his hometown proud by making his first Pro Bowl as a defensive lineman with the Arizona Cardinals.

Hanging out with his sister, Keyonne, after practice Friday, Campbell got to talking about all of the great athletes Denver and the state of Colorado have produced.

"No. 1 was Chauncey," Campbell said. "That was my guy."

Chauncey Billups was a high school basketball star at George Washington the same time Keyonne was cheerleader at the school.

The 6-foot-8, 300-pound Campbell is more friendly than towering. How often does Campbell get back home?

"All the time," he said. "I've still got family there, my brother and sister. Lot of my good friends."

Campbell had a 23-yard interception return to the 5-yard line against Peyton Manning and the Broncos in Game 4 this season. But while playing defensive end later in that game, he suffered a knee injury from an illegal chop block delivered by Denver tight end Julius Thomas.

Campbell missed two games because of a sprained medial collateral ligament. He returned and ended up in the Pro Bowl. Thomas wound up suffering an ankle injury that plagued him during the second half of the season and caused him to sit out the Pro Bowl.

"We talked. I don't hold grudges," Campbell said. "He sent his apologies and I accepted it."

That time Bill Kollar wrestled a bear

By Tania Ganguli

ESPN.com

April 14, 2014

Back in the 1970s, presumably when Houston Texans defensive line coach Bill Kollar played for the Cincinnati Bengals, in the days when players had to find ways to make some extra money in the offseason, a PR person called him for the opportunity to earn \$50 to take a picture with a bear.

And, well, I'll let him finish from the story he relayed during his induction into the Senior Bowl hall of fame.

"I said, 'OK, that sounds pretty good,'" Kollar said. "I go downtown, I get down, there's probably 50 people there. I walk in I say what's going on? They say, 'Somebody's going to wrestle the bear.' I said, 'What?' They said, 'Somebody's gonna wrestle the bear!' I said, 'I wonder who the heck's going to end up doing that.'"

Him, it turned out.

"They said, 'Just stay in tight with it, you'll be all right, it won't be a problem,'" Kollar continued. "I start going and I lock up and I take one little step back and the bear just tackles me right? Gets on top and I'm over here kicking and stuff. It's on TV and I'm thinking holy Christ, this looks bad. So they get the bear off of me and I get back up you know. ...They tie us up again and I just bulled it. I just went and put it over backwards, I'm on top of him now. Everybody went nuts. This bear was probably 7 feet. I told the guy, 'I know how to do it now.' He said, 'We're going to Columbus next week, we've got a Kodiak coming in. Would you like to wrestle him? He's 10 feet.' I said, 'No I'll end up passing on that.'"

"Nowadays these guys walk across the street and they get a thousand bucks."

Ain't that the truth.

Watch Kollar tell the story [here](#). And a huge thanks to Drew Dougherty of the Texans' official website for initially tweeting about this. My day has improved as a result. And I bet yours did, too.

Bill Kollar selected to Sr. Bowl Hall of Fame

By Drew Dougherty
HoustonTexans.com
March 31, 2014

40 years ago, Bill Kollar played in the Senior Bowl.

On April 10, he's getting inducted into its Hall of Fame.

The Texans' defensive line coach was the MVP at the annual all-star game in 1974, and he joins Denver Bronco DeMarcus Ware and former Rams wideout Torry Holt in the 26th class of the Senior Bowl Hall of Fame.

"I was obviously ecstatic," Kollar said Monday. "It's a heck of a deal to have an opportunity to go into the Hall of Fame there at the Senior Bowl, and I'm really, really happy."

Reese's Senior Bowl Executive Director Phil Savage called Kollar a month ago with the happy news, and the former Montana State standout reflected on his experience in Mobile.

"Playing at a smaller school, you could just tell, once you end up playing, guys are guys, players are players, and I really enjoyed it," Kollar said. "I had a heck of a time down there in Mobile."

The performance at the Senior Bowl, as well as his play in the East-West Shrine Game before that, helped propel Kollar into the first round, where the Bengals chose him. He played three seasons in Cincinnati, and five more in Tampa Bay. He's been an NFL assistant for 25 seasons, and he's coached the Texans defensive linemen since 2009.

"Bill was the MVP of the 1974 game and has now become the MVP of defensive line coaches in the NFL over the past 25 years," Savage said in a Senior Bowl press release.

Kollar, Ware and Holt bring the total number of Hall of Fame inductees to 105. Almost 5,000 players have played in the game.

Defensive line coach Bill Kollar will stay

By Deepi Sidhu
HoustonTexans.com
January 7, 2014

Head coach Bill O'Brien will keep defensive line coach Bill Kollar as part of his new staff. O'Brien has been impressed with Kollar's accomplishments and coaching style.

J.J. Watt credits Kollar, his first and only NFL position coach, for his development. On Friday, Watt was named to the Associated Press All-Pro First Team for the second-consecutive season. He recorded 117 tackles, 10.5 sacks, 22 tackles for loss, a league-high 46 quarterback hits, 3 forced fumbles, 2 fumble recoveries, seven passes defended, and two blocked field goals this season. Since 2012, Watt leads defensive linemen in the NFL with 134 solo tackles and 23 passes defended.

"Coach Kollar is a fiery guy, but he's really, really smart," Watt said on August 4. "Coach Kollar really knows his stuff. In the meeting room especially, he points things out. He's really good at picking things out of other teams and tendencies and things like that that you can use. His experience, he's been around for so long, he's a great asset for our team."

Nose tackle Earl Mitchell led the league at his position with 48 tackles and 30 solo tackles in 2013. Antonio Smith finished with a combined 101 tackles over the last two seasons, and was also named to his first Pro Bowl under Kollar after the 2011 season.

"Antonio's done a heck of a job for us ever since he got here," Kollar said last May. "He was third of all defensive tackles in the league (in 2012) in sacks, which people don't realize. He's a defensive tackle, really. He plays a three-technique all the time. He never plays out on end so he's an inside guy at 285 pounds. Antonio is definitely a big part of this defense and does a heck of a job for us."

Kollar, who finished his fifth season with the Texans in 2013, has 25 years of NFL coaching experience with the last 24 as a defensive line coach. He also played eight seasons in the NFL as a defensive lineman. Prior to Houston, Kollar spent three years as the Buffalo Bills defensive line coach.

Bill Kollar happy with win, happy to be alive

By Tania Ganguli
Houston Chronicle
November 15, 2012

Some shortness of breath turned into a much bigger issue for Texans defensive line coach Bill Kollar on Sunday in Chicago.

Kollar was hospitalized with blood clots in his lungs and calves and missed the game. He returned to Houston on Wednesday afternoon and returned to practice Thursday.

“We had a great win and I’m alive,” Kollar said. “So I’m pretty happy about that.”

The blood clots were discovered after Kollar experienced shortness of breath. Having been through a similar issue in the past, Kollar knew what was happening and quickly dealt with it. He had knee surgery three weeks ago and was on blood thinners to prevent clots, but they did not work.

Kollar said he tried to watch the Bears game from the emergency room, but there weren’t any televisions available. He could not fly back with the team because it is dangerous to fly with blood clots.

Defensive line coach Bill Kollar returns to practice

By Drew Dougherty
HoustonTexans.com
November 15, 2012

Bill Kollar was back at practice on Thursday afternoon, and naturally, he was happy to be on the field instead of a hospital room.

"Awesome," Kollar said when asked to describe how it felt to return. "It's really tough; it's almost like you're totally away from it when you're not there at the game. It really is a really funny feeling.

The Texans' assistant head coach/defensive line coach was sent to a Chicago hospital before Sunday night's game against the Bears because of blood clots in his lungs and calves. He was treated there, but didn't fly home to Houston until Wednesday afternoon. He was a welcome sight this morning at the Methodist Training Center.

"It woke everybody up," defensive coordinator Wade Phillips said. "It's great to have him back. All of you know he's a tremendous coach, and he got a big hand when he was in the meeting today from the players for him returning. We're obviously glad he's back and going to be OK."

Head coach Gary Kubiak was happy to have Kollar back as well, and said the assistant's health was most important. But seeing the 24-year NFL coaching veteran also brought a charge of "energy" which was appreciated by Kubiak and the players.

"It sure is fun to have him back at practice and out there griping today, so it was good," Kubiak said. Kollar, who said he's had blood clots in the past, went through knee surgery a few weeks ago and was taking blood thinner medication for 10 days afterwards.

"Unfortunately, though, it didn't work quite as well as we had hoped and the blood clots occurred," Kollar said.

Before the game at Soldier Field, Kollar said he "had a hard time breathing." He was transported by ambulance to the hospital where he underwent testing and treatment. In the process, he missed the bulk of a game in which the Texans' defense didn't allow a touchdown.

"I was over at the hospital at the start of the game and I kept telling them I wanted a TV and they didn't have any down in the emergency room," Kollar said. "So I never really got to see it until the fourth quarter started, but obviously I was really excited the way the game went and to get the win like that was sure awesome."

Kollar worked in meetings with the defensive staff on Wednesday afternoon, starting around 3 p.m.

Some D-line insight from Texans new assistant

By Paul Kuharsky
ESPN.com
April, 16, 2009

Bill Kollar plans to scream, cajole, irritate and pester.

The Texans' new defensive line coach casts himself not just as a coach, but as a button-pusher. He says his style is similar to that of a friend he once crossed coaching paths with briefly at Purdue -- Jim Washburn.

Washburn has coached the Tennessee Titans defensive line with great success -- and at high volume -- since 1999. As the Texans looked to start reinventing their defense, they lured Kollar from Buffalo.

Kollar pledges to do what he needs to squeeze all he can out of a group that features 2006 No. 1 overall draft pick Mario Williams. The Texans didn't produce enough good play around the Pro Bowl defensive end last season. Houston's linemen, then, can expect constant reminders that they are to run to the ball on all occasions and never take a play off.

Kollar will rotate his people. With the free-agent additions of defensive end Antonio Smith (from the Arizona Cardinals) and tackle Shaun Cody (from the Detroit Lions), he should have better depth than his predecessor, Jethro Franklin, did. The Texans are sure to also draft at least one defensive lineman.

"Obviously we're teachers, but we're also motivators," Kollar said. "If you had a whole group of players that were self motivated, that went nuts, you wouldn't have to worry about it. That would be fine. But I've never had a group like that and I don't know how many guys do or if there is a group like that. So I think everybody now and then can be helped to keep going by a little kick in the rear."

Kollar, a 1974-first-round draft pick of the Cincinnati Bengals who played eight seasons as a defensive lineman in the NFL, is still getting to know the Texans. Much of his sense of them still comes more off tape than from his own interaction and experiences.

In a phone chat with the AFC South Blog this week, he was willing to frame each of his linemen, providing his general feelings about each of them -- feelings that can obviously change significantly between now and opening day.

Smith: "A guy who works his butt off, gives you 100 percent all the time. We think he will end up definitely helping us. He's got good technique and knows how to use his hands and stuff. He's not the most agile guy out there that's going to run a 4.5 or something like that. But he really uses his hands well, watching him over the last few years he does a really good job."

Williams: "A heck of a guy, a heck of a player. I've really been impressed with the guy... He works his butt off out there and I think he just wants to keep getting better and better and take the team to the playoffs. And the better your team is, the better accolades your players end up getting."

"People know about the sacks, but he's a hell of a run player too. As long and as strong as he is, he does a heck of a job in both aspects."

Defensive tackle Amobi Okoye: "I know he had that high ankle sprain [last year] and it's tough to play with. We're obviously hoping that's all past him now and with a young guy like that hopefully by the third year they hopefully kick in and become the player that they are going to be. We're hoping that happens this year..."

"He's 22 [in June] and you look at it and sort of feel like the first two years in the league were his junior and senior year of college and he's just sort of had a jump on the guys coming out this year because he's already been playing with the big boys instead of still playing in college. Now you're hoping he's able to take it to the next level, stay healthy, that's always a big factor in anybody's career."

Defensive tackle Travis Johnson: "The guy plays hard, he's more of a run-down player, he's sort of trying to anchor down in the middle compared to a pass rusher. What happens when you end up taking a defensive tackle or a defensive end in the first round, you expect production in both the run and the pass. [The Texans selected Johnson in the first round in 2005.]

"The funny thing is, if you go back over years, very seldom do your nose men turn out to be pass rushers. They are the guys in there getting doubled all the time and anchoring down and then usually -- I won't say all the time, but usually - when it becomes third down, you might take another guy, you might take one of your outside guys and move him inside. And those [nose] guys sort of end up getting their break in passing situations. You can look at it quite a few different ways, but that's how I sort of view it and it really happens that way for a lot of guys."

Cody: "He's been unable to do anything so far here. I remember watching him and liking him coming out of USC. He had some injury problems there in Detroit, we're hoping that all those are past him now and we see him as able to play either spot inside which turns out to be a big plus for him, it turns out to give you more playing time and for us it helps depth-wise."

"We see him probably a little more as a solid player in the run game than he is a pass rush guy. Anytime you get a pass rush guy who can get up the field and go, we'd love to have it. When he was in college and so far at Detroit, he's a little more of a run down player than a pass rusher."

End Tim Bulman: "A real hard worker, a real tough kid when you watch him. I've sort of been impressed so far with what I have seen of him... I know he was down at Arizona when Kyle Vanden Bosch was down there and Vanden Bosch didn't have a lot of success down there, I know he was injured, he blew a couple of knees out and stuff. But I think Tim has seen what Vanden Bosch was able to do on a new team and I am sure he's hoping that's a possibility that it could happen for him."

Defensive tackle Frank Okam: "He's more of an anchor guy, we're hoping he can end up getting in there and plug up the gap and help with short-line pursuit and stuff... A lot of second-year guys that really didn't play that much their first year, sometimes they make a big step. We'll just sort of see how it ends up going with him."

End Stanley McClover, who spent almost all of 2008 on IR with a right knee injury: "He's still probably not at 100 percent. I really saw no film on him, he got hurt in the first game I think. I really don't know much about him at all."

End Jesse Nading: "Played a little bit last year, mainly in passing situations. Showed a little quickness here and there. Maybe a little undersized but has some good mobility, has pretty good feet."

Defensive tackle DelJuan Robinson: "He's a big stop guy, too, in there."

A final thought:

Prevailing wisdom has been that the Texans need an upgrade inside to play the nose next to Okoye. Kollar sounds pleased with the pool he's already got to choose from, and he could and could get another candidate in the draft.

"We've got quite a few on the inside especially at the nose we should end up having some good competition with Johnson, Cody, Okam and Robinson," he said.

But if one of the ends emerges as a good rusher opposite Williams or the Texans add that guy in the draft, it sure sounds like Smith could be the interior answer on passing downs.

"He's definitely a good inside rusher, I mean he's slippery inside, he uses his hands well," Kollar said. "He ended up playing a lot inside last year on first and second down. He just does a good job, he plays with great leverage, he was able to slip through gaps. He can give you some rush from the inside, that's for sure."

Kollar spares no one when he screams, hollers

By Paul Newberry
Associated Press
August 04, 1999

GREENVILLE, S.C. -- With sweat gushing through the fibers of his gray sweatsuit, Bill Kollar hovers over the unfortunate defensive lineman who made the mistake of stumbling across the line too early.

"You're a foot away from the ball!" Kollar screams. "How the hell can you jump offside?"

In these days of big-money contracts, the man in charge of the Atlanta Falcons defensive line is a throwback to the days when a coach didn't mind yelling at his players.

He ridicules. He compliments. He scolds. He prods. He encourages. He threatens. All at a vocal range that starts with a husky scream and only seems to get louder as practice wears on. It doesn't matter if the target is making \$10 million or the minimum.

"He's definitely a rarity in the NFL," defensive tackle Shane Dronett said. "Most coaches feel the guys today are making so much money, they can't holler at them. Bill doesn't care."

Just ask Patrick Kerney, who became an instant millionaire when the Falcons picked him in the first round. The rookie end has been at the loud end of an incessant verbal assault from Kollar in the early days of training camp at Furman University.

"Finish him!" Kollar screamed Tuesday, chastising Kerney for allowing himself to get pushed aside by an offensive tackle during a rushing drill. "When you've got him beat on the outside, keep going. You must LIKE to get blocked."

Kerney has been through his share of screamers in high school and college, but nothing prepared him for the Kollar Holler.

"It's two hours straight," Kerney said, shaking his head. "From the first whistle to the end of practice, he's on you. ... I'm sure he doesn't have any heart problems, because he doesn't keep anything bottled up."

Then there's the sweatsuit. No matter what time of day or year, the 46-year-old Kollar is always bundled up like he's coaching at Lambeau Field in late December.

"I like to sweat," Kollar said, looking like he had just been dunked in a swimming pool after two hours on the practice field under a 90-degree sun.

Dronett has a different theory: "I think he's a nut."

Even on days when the temperature climbs into the 100s -- as it did during the opening week of camp - Kollar refuses to wear short pants. That fashion phobia can be traced to his post-playing days, when he returned to his alma mater, Montana State, to complete his degree.

One day, when Kollar was working out in a pair of shorts, his college strength coach caught an eyeful of those skinny legs and badly mangled knee.

"Boy, he got on my legs bad," Kollar remembered. "He said, 'You've got to be kidding me. You in shorts?' From that day on, I don't wear shorts anymore. Not on the golf course or anything."

No matter how unorthodox, it's hard to argue with Kollar's methods. When Dan Reeves was hired as head coach in 1997, Kollar was the only holdover from the the previous staff.

In fact, Kollar has managed to outlast two head coaches during a 10-year stint with the Falcons, keeping his job when both Jerry Glanville and June Jones were fired.

Kollar has taken an undersized, nondescript group -- there are no first-round draft picks among the starters -- and molded it into the "Bomb Squad," one of the best defensive lines in the NFL.

"You have to have people who pursue and get to the football," Reeves said. "If you don't do that for Bill, you're not going to play. He's one of the best coaches I've ever been around."

Last season, the Falcons were the second-ranked team against the run and surrendered just six rushing touchdowns during their Super Bowl season.

"Whether it's on the practice field or in the game, I want you going full speed the whole time," Kollar said. "You always have a chance to be a pretty decent player if you're able to outwork the guy you're playing across from."

During his playing days, Kollar would have fit right in with the guys he's coaching now. He was never the best athlete on the field but still managed to carve a distinguished, eight-year career as a defensive lineman for Cincinnati and Tampa Bay.

With the Buccaneers, Kollar had his first contact with the man who would serve as the role model for his own coaching career: the late Abe Gibron.

"Boy, he just kept on you all the time," Kollar said, sounding like he's describing himself. "When you were getting tired and wanted to try to take a play off, boy, that guy was on you, pushing you to play harder. He would help you get over that hump."

Now, Kollar is passing on that same philosophy to his players.

"He keeps you intense, he keeps you focused," Kerney said. "One little slip and he's going to be on you."