

How he fits: Marquette King

By Andrew Mason
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When the Broncos turn new punter Marquette King loose at 5,280 feet above sea level, grab a fistful of popcorn, turn your eyes skyward and prepare to watch one blast after another.

In five career games in Denver, King has posted a net average of 44.0 yards and a gross average of 50.0 yards. That, combined with an upward career trajectory that saw him post his best net average last season -- 42.7 yards -- is why the Broncos pounced when the Raiders released him.

His Denver tally represents a small sample size -- just 39 punts in those games -- but when you consider that those averages are 2.3 yards and 4.4 yards better than the Broncos' home punting averages in that span, then you get a sense of what King can bring -- and why he's so excited about coming to the Broncos.

"I've always enjoyed punting out here in the altitude just because the ball travels further," King said. "It's something I'm going to have to get used to too. I definitely have to get a feel for my leg when it comes to putting the ball inside the corners and everything."

He should be able to succeed. King's placement numbers have been better in Denver than elsewhere; he's dropped 41.0 percent of his punts in Denver inside the 20-yard line, compared with 36.2 percent elsewhere. King also has a slightly better touchback percentage (7.69) in Denver than elsewhere (7.75).

"Denver is a punter's paradise," he said. "While I'm competing, I'm going to see if I can take advantage of it."

Naysayers have pointed to King's past proclivity for penalties. But last year, he only had one infraction -- a 15-yard unsportsmanlike-conduct foul in the Raiders' Week 4 loss to the Broncos.

King easily nullified that -- and more -- with his overall performance over the course of the season, in which he posted a career-best 42.7-yard net punting average. When taking his net average and factoring in an average number of punts in 2017 over a game (4.75) and season (76.0), that means that King would have given his team 143.5 yards of field position over the average punter. Even deducting 15 yards from that, that would still have left him with the fourth-best net yards-over-average in the league last year.

"The flags -- I got three flags two years ago and one flag last year -- [they are] in the past," King said. "I'm just looking forward to doing my thing and making sure I'm working on my composure and doing the right things to making sure the team is in the best situation possible."

The Broncos hope that their special teams in general is in the best situation, as well. Last year, the unit's performance declined. Punter Riley Dixon's numbers took a dip; his net average dropped by 1.1 yards, although his gross average was nearly steady, only falling by 0.1 yards per punt.

Still, the across-the-board issues on special teams have already led to changes, starting with the arrival of new coordinator Tom McMahon. The Broncos have already signed another kicker and long snapper to provide competition. Last week, Head Coach Vance Joseph said that Jordan Taylor, who replaced Isaiah McKenzie on punt returns late last year, is the current first-teamer, although he must work his way back from two hip surgeries first.

King was signed to help ensure that the 2017 special-teams nightmare doesn't recur in 2018.

"I know I'm going to put the work in like I always do. That's no question," King said. "Just compete and hopefully everything works out like it's supposed to."

Marquette King is fired up about playing at altitude

By Darin Gantt
Pro Football Talk
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NewRaiders coach Jon Gruden apparently put a low premium on punters, but Marquette King's likely to be very happy at high altitude.

Via Peter King of SI.com, the new Broncos punter has flourished in games in Denver, with his already strong leg having even more pop there.

In five games in Denver, his 39 punts have averaged 50.03 gross and 45.51 net yards. In 75 games anywhere else, his gross average was 46.48 and his net was 40.68.

So basically, King's five yards better per kick at elevation.

"Denver's a punter's paradise," King (Marquette, not Peter) said. "The ball definitely travels a lot further. I've always enjoyed punting out here in the altitude just because the ball travels further."

Of course, there's more to special teams success than just being able to kick the tar out of the ball, and the Broncos coaches are going to have to work to get King used to the difference to keep him from just blasting everything through the end zone.

But getting King (Marquette, not Peter) for a three-year, \$7 million deal seems like good business, since he was already one of the league's strongest punters (and fun, which it's important to remember the game is still allowed to be).