

Brandon Marshall one of many Broncos ready to take the baton

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
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The truest impact of a person is in what he or she leaves behind.

So Peyton Manning's effect on the Broncos cannot yet be measured. Sure, there were two Super Bowl appearances, one world title and 55 wins that the Broncos racked up in the four years in which he was their quarterback.

But Manning's impact on the locker room lingers in his teammates -- not just on the offensive side, but on defense.

You need look no further than the core of the Broncos' defensive alignment and its ensuing mayhem -- linebacker Brandon Marshall for that.

"Him talking to me and encouraging me and kind of helping me in my process, him helping the young guys [and] him just being here -- I think it definitely lives on, on and off the football field," Marshall said.

"Those guys come around once in a lifetime, or once every 100 years probably," he continued. "Peyton. Ray Lewis. So that's going to be instilled in the organization. That's going to be instilled in the culture. Peyton, he was here four years, and he instilled something in this culture that will be there for a while."

Marshall knows the defense will need to meet that standard of driving oneself from within that Manning demonstrated, because their daily work looks so different.

Every day during OTAs and training camp from 2012 through last year, Manning challenged the defense -- and toughened it in the process. In three of Manning's four seasons with the Broncos, the defense ranked in the league's top three in total yardage allowed; only a 2013 campaign shredded by injuries to Champ Bailey, Von Miller, Derek Wolfe and Chris Harris Jr. in the playoffs stood as an exception.

Now Marshall and the defense must work toward again being the league's best without perhaps the most cerebral quarterback ever to play the game exposing every mistake they make.

"Just being on the sideline looking, I'm like, 'Man, it's different,'" Marshall said. "We've got [Mark] Sanchez, Paxton [Lynch] and Trevor [Siemian], but it's just different without 18.

"I'm not going to lie, it was a sense of comfort when you had 18 under center. Everybody was at ease. Last year, he didn't have his best year, but regardless, you still went into the game each and every snap comfortable because we had Peyton Manning under center.

"Yeah, he threw all of those interceptions, but regardless, I think everybody still believed in him. We all did. He came out and played lights out against New England. It was just a sense of comfort that, 'OK, we've got Peyton; we're good.' Not to be relaxed, but, 'We've got 18 under center.'"

Now they don't, of course. No matter who starts in Week 1, the Broncos will have a quarterback still adjusting to the offense and still perfecting his timing with their receiving corps. So, once again, a heavy burden will fall on the defense.

And perhaps no one on the unit will carry an increased weight like Marshall will.

In his fourth season on the Broncos, Marshall has gradually grown into the quarterback of the defense. In moving to Danny Trevathan's vacated spot as the weak-side inside linebacker -- also known as the 'mo linebacker," he expects to see a little less traffic -- and a lot more opportunity to make the kind of plays he's racked up since Trevathan's injuries forced him into the lineup two years ago.

"I like it, man. You're more protected," Marshall said of the position shift. "You've kind of got free range a little bit, so I like that. It's kind of what I played my first year starting at the 'will.'"

Marshall was ready for extensive work in 2014 mostly because he studied feverishly, allowing his athleticism to do the rest. But Manning had an impact on getting him ready for that role, as well.

Manning is a perfectionist. The defense he counseled and challenged is, too -- which generated results last week, punctuated by its three-interception day to close the week last Thursday.

"[Aqib] Talib and some other guys were getting interceptions, and I'm like, 'Okay, we're going to be just like it was last year,' and once we get those edge rushers back, it's going to be hell -- again," Marshall said.

"It's tough on us because our defense is demanding. We play so much man coverage. It's demanding, but everyone rises to the occasion."

The defense will have to rise a bit more -- but Marshall thinks it has the talent and attitude to do it.

From 2012-14, the offense drove the Broncos to their success. Now, Chris Harris Jr. and Derek Wolfe are signed to long-term contracts. Marshall and Von Miller are potentially next in line, with a host of other young players developing. Aqib Talib, DeMarcus Ware, T.J. Ward and Darian Stewart have been outstanding free-agent signings.

This era could belong to the Broncos' defense. Could 2015 is just the beginning of a multi-year run of dominance on that side of the football -- in which the defense assumes a dominant place like the the Manning-led offense had?

"Absolutely," Marshall said. "And if you look at the guys [who got big contracts], nobody got their money and relaxed.

"They still want to be great. They got their money, and they still said, 'I've got something to prove.' Wolfe still has something to prove. Chris still has something to prove."

And that may be Manning's lasting gift: the attitude that permeates the team. When Manning arrived in Denver in 2012, he was already set for life and had a Super Bowl ring on his finger. If he had retired at that point, the Pro Football Hall of Fame induction was a lock.

But Manning kept plowing forward. He had his big contract; he then spent four years earning it and in the process delivering perhaps the best football of his career.

Marshall expects -- and has seen -- a similar mindset with others in Denver.

"They paid high-quality individuals as far as their work ethic and mindset, because sometimes you might pay a guy and he's like, 'OK, cool. I'm set.' D-Ware made a lot of money in his career, too.

"But guys hold each other accountable, and we've got the perfect culture to be great for a long time."

That culture and Manning's role in helping create it is the most important aspect, and his lasting gift to the Broncos' locker room.

Las Vegas product Brandon Marshall back in Super Bowl, eyes leading Broncos to title

By Ray Brewer
Las Vegas Sun
February 6, 2016

As the Denver Broncos team bus pulled up to MetLife Stadium in the New York area, Brandon Marshall started to realize this was no ordinary game. The Cimarron-Memorial High graduate was about to play in the Super Bowl.

“It was almost like a movie. The feeling was crazy,” Marshall remembers of the Broncos' Super Bowl 48 appearance against the Seattle Seahawks. “Just pulling up the stadium and how everything looked so big. I remember all of the signs and all of the fans. I was forever grateful for getting a chance to experience that.”

Sunday, he'll get the chance again.

Marshall and the Broncos are back in the Super Bowl, playing at 3:30 p.m. against the Carolina Panthers in Santa Clara, Calif. This time, though, Marshall's role is different.

Two years ago, Marshall was simply happy to be in the NFL, let alone in its biggest game. He was released by the Jacksonville Jaguars at the end of training camp, but a few weeks later found a spot on Denver's practice squad. He was promoted to the active roster two weeks before the playoffs started.

Now, Marshall is one of Denver's best linebackers, and arguably one of the best linebackers in all of football. In 2014, he played almost exclusively on special teams, and Denver was thoroughly beaten, 43-8.

“This time will be different. I will be starting and can leave my stamp on the game,” Marshall said.

He's already made a stamp on the Denver defense the past two seasons, his first as a full-time player in the league. Marshall, 26, has recorded more than 100 tackles in each of the past two seasons as a starter, including a team-best 113 tackles in 14 games in 2014, and 102 this season.

The difference between the stints has been obvious: The 6-foot-1, 250-pound Marshall is playing with more confidence.

“He was overthinking things earlier in his career,” said Mike Waters of Phase 1 Sports, where Marshall has trained in the offseason since high school.

Marshall was lightly recruited out of high school, but found a spot at UNR and became one of the program's all-time best defenders. He was a four-year starter in college and totaled 259 career tackles.

Waters remembers taking him to recruiting camps in Los Angeles, trying to get an athlete he believed was full of ability and desire noticed. Marshall still returns for offseason work at Phase 1 Sports.

“He still has that underdog mentality,” Waters said. “He understood he had to be patient and outwork everybody. Everything he went through those first couple of years in the league was already mentally prepared for.”

Marshall was so impressive in 2014 on the Denver practice squad that Peyton Manning, the legendary quarterback who is likely playing in his final game Sunday, recommended to team officials that Marshall be promoted to the active roster. Then, when Von Miller suffered a season-ending injury, Marshall got his chance.

He’s been a mainstay in Denver ever since.

“I am more comfortable with the game,” Marshall said. “I can step on the field at any time and not have anxiety because I have been there before.”

Come Sunday, the same will be true with the Super Bowl.

Denver's Marshall and Trevathan bounce back from injuries

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
February 4, 2016

The Super Bowl linebackers getting all the attention this week are Luke Kuechly and Thomas Davis.

This talented and tenacious twosome is the heart and soul of the Carolina Panthers' stingy defense. Kuechly is the first player at his position with pick-6s in back-to-back playoff games and Davis is playing with a fractured forearm.

Much respect, say the Denver Broncos.

But, also, pshaw!

In their view, the best linebackers in Super Bowl 50 are theirs.

Von Miller and DeMarcus Ware on the outside, Danny Trevathan and Brandon Marshall on the inside.

Between the edge rushers pounding the passer and the "No Fly Zone" secondary locking down receivers, Marshall and Trevathan collected a combined 234 tackles, three interceptions and 13 pass breakups while helping Denver lead the league in defense for the first time in franchise history.

When starting safeties T.J. Ward and Darian Stewart got hurt in the AFC championship game, Marshall and Trevathan found themselves covering Patriots wide receivers on go routes.

Successfully converting all that sideline-to-sideline speed into vertical velocity kept Tom Brady from burning them deep — and gave them an appreciation for their star-studded secondary.

"I told Chris, 'Now I know how it feels to be a corner,'" Marshall said. "Because I was tired as hell after that game."

"They did a great job," Harris said. "Having two inside linebackers who can cover, that's crucial in the NFL now the way the offenses are. I mean, these two cats might be the fastest linebackers in the league. I don't know if the Panthers have seen anyone faster from sideline to sideline than Danny and Brandon. Those guys are moving."

They're tough, too.

Marshall played all season with a broken screw in his right foot which will have to be removed after the Super Bowl. He'll also go for an MRI to see if he needs surgery on his right index finger, which he used to poke the football from Kansas City's Jamaal Charles' grasp in Week 2, forcing the fumble that Bradley Roby turned into a scoop-and-score in the waning seconds.

Trevathan has an appointment with an oral surgeon after the Super Bowl because he's been missing two molars for two months. He swallowed one and spat out the other in a game at San Diego on Dec. 6 when an O-lineman drove him into the ground in a pileup.

"Didn't have my mouthpiece, didn't have my chinstrap strapped and it came loose," Trevathan said. "Don't do that anymore."

These are bumps and bruises compared to what Marshall and Trevathan went through last offseason.

Trevathan played in just three games in 2014 because of a trio of injuries to his left knee, which he fractured in August and again in October before dislocating it in December, requiring surgery.

Marshall suffered a dreaded Lisfranc ligament injury in his right foot late in the season and underwent surgery in mid-March, too late for him to have the hardware removed before the 2015 season. The titanium screw broke during training camp, however, causing excruciating pain that he feared would send him to injured reserve in August before it suddenly subsided.

Marshall and Trevathan were rehab partners when Wade Phillips arrived and changed Denver's 4-3 defensive system to a 3-4 scheme that would put them on the field together when they got healthy.

"We worked hard together and it just made our bond stronger," Trevathan said. "We were pushing each other and both fighting to get back."

And envisioning greatness.

"I just felt we had good chemistry," Marshall said. "I saw how hungry he was, how hungry I was and I just know from that, OK, we're going to be great."

Now, they're preparing for the game of their lives — and maybe their last one together, too.

Trevathan is an unrestricted free agent in March and Marshall is a restricted free agent.

"Keeping us together would be gold," Marshall said.

"This is the Gold Bowl," Trevathan said. "I'm trying to make a name here. I know what it means for all of us. You got to cash in to cash out. It's way in the back of my mind, but this is the biggest game of my life, so it's all focused on this game. I know what I need to do to get to the next level, and playing my best in this (game) can help me get to the next level.

"I believe I could fit into any scheme. This game could make or break my contract. But, man, this is the Super Bowl. That's all this is about, winning the game."

So, Kuechly and Thomas can keep getting all the love; Marshall and Trevathan will take the Lombardi Trophy.

Brandon Marshall, Danny Trevathan recover together, return to top form together

By Nicki Jhabvala
Denver Post
January 16, 2016

A pea-sized white dot on the top of his left foot offers Brandon Marshall a reminder of the frustrating and painful journey.

Lodged in that foot are two screws that were inserted last March to repair a Lisfranc injury that cost him two games in 2014 and months of pain after the season.

The loneliness that came with months spent in a training room to rehabilitate was exacerbated only by the unanswerable questions: Would he recover in time for the 2015 opener? Would he ever be the same player? What about his future?

But Marshall was never really alone. Those same questions were shared by the guy who stood alongside him on the field this past season.

Draped over Danny Trevathan's left knee was a fresh two-inch scar, his reminder of the three separate leg injuries he endured in 2014 that kept him out of all but three games.

The Broncos' starting inside linebackers, both of whom are playing on expiring contracts, recovered from different but major surgeries together to excel this season. Both players, overlooked or cast aside early in their careers, returned to become the first Broncos tandem since 2009 to each have 100 or more tackles. And, they were invaluable cogs in Wade Phillips' 3-4 scheme, quietly but consistently guiding a defense that finished the season as the best in the league in multiple categories, and as one of the finest in team history.

Screwed ligaments for Brandon Marshall, Danny Trevathan

On the morning of Sept. 13, 2015, Marshall pulled up to Sports Authority Field eager for a fresh start. The balky ligaments in his foot were screwed in place and weren't about to keep him out of the Broncos' season opener against Baltimore.

But, as Marshall walked through the tunnel of the stadium, a sharp pain pierced his foot and refused to dissipate. During the preseason, Marshall believes, one of the screws broke that led to discomfort but no further damage to the foot. He plans to have both screws removed at the season's end.

"The whole game I was in pain," he recalled. "And I'm thinking like, 'Why, God?'"

In the Broncos' first two games of the season, both wins, Trevathan and Marshall ranked No. 1 and 2, respectively, in tackles. Marshall forced a fumble in the final seconds of the Sept. 17 victory at Kansas City that led to the game-winning scoop-and-score by cornerback Bradley Roby.

But it wasn't until around the third week of the season that Marshall's pain began to lessen.

"I kind of didn't know if I would make it through," he said. "It hurt running on it, you know what I mean? I'm just glad that it subsided and everything is good."

In Game 3 at Detroit, Marshall made a season-high 12 tackles, a number that would later be exceeded by Trevathan, who had a career-high 19 in a loss at Indianapolis on Nov. 8.

Trevathan was spared the season-opening aches Marshall experienced. But Trevathan, a player selected late (No. 188) in the 2012 draft, already had done his time.

In a timeline no player wants to live out, Trevathan suffered three different injuries to his left knee area in 2014, two fractures and a dislocated kneecap. He was placed on injured reserve Dec. 16 and underwent reconstructive surgery a few weeks later.

His season ended long before the Broncos' did. His offseason also began long before the rest of his teammates.

Each day during the offseason, Trevathan and Marshall could be found in the training and weight rooms of the Broncos' practice facility, slowly, painfully working their way back to full strength.

"Rehab is a boring, monotonous, hard process to go through," said Steve Antonopoulos, the Broncos' head athletic trainer. "They made it fun for each other. They worked hard. They challenged each other. When one guy was late, the other guy got on him and vice versa. It made it a fun experience, which it is not a fun thing to go through."

Throughout organized team activities and training camp, the recoveries of Trevathan and Marshall failed to follow predictable timelines. The only certainties: accompanying pain and inflammation.

"I got to be with him when he was hurting, crying and screaming because you have to go through that treatment," Trevathan said. "Seeing him fight through stuff like that, it made me respect him even more. When you have respect and have the attitude that we both could be one of the elite in the NFL, great things happen."

The company during rehabilitation offered comfort, and created an on-field chemistry that proved vital.

"We would be on the sidelines in OTAs and training camp, and we'd talk about this: OK, we'll do this when we're in,' you know what I mean, or 'We could do this,' " Marshall said. "... A lot of times, even now, we don't even have to say anything. If we're working together, we know a certain look and we don't have to say anything. We just know and it just happens."

It also sparked a friendly competition.

Denver linebackers share Ed Block Courage Award honors

On the afternoon of Jan. 3, Trevathan cemented his place atop the Broncos' leaderboard. Marshall was limited to only three snaps in his final game of the season, against the Chargers, because of another left foot injury, this time a high-ankle sprain. Trevathan continued in his partner's absence, recording nine total tackles in the victory to give him a team-high 110. Marshall finished a close second, with 101.

"I kind of came to terms with it and I was like, 'You know what? I'm proud of Danny.' I'm happy for everything that he overcame," said Marshall. "... For him to come back and have a great year, lead the team in tackles and all that, I was proud of him. I got him a gift because Danny is a great person."

Awaiting Trevathan was a personalized bottle of Jim Beam bourbon whiskey with the inscription: Danny T. / 2015 / Broncos / Leading Tackler / The Lion / "110."

The gift, and the ranking, were Trevathan's alone.

But a shared honor soon followed. On Jan. 9, the two were selected by their teammates as the Broncos' Ed Block Courage Award co-winners for "exceptional courage, great character and inspiring effort." Never before had two players shared the award.

"That goes to show that this defense came a long way and Brandon and I came a long way," Trevathan said. "I think the Jaguars missed it really big when they let him go. I'm glad to have him here. That's my brother. We're going to finish out this year correctly."

Road to recovery for Marshall, Trevathan

Inside linebackers Brandon Marshall (foot) and Danny Trevathan (knee) both returned from major offseason surgeries to lead the Broncos' defense in tackles. A snapshot of their return to form in 2015:

BRANDON MARSHALL

STATS: 101 tackles (76 solo), 1.5 sacks, 1 interception, 4 passes defensed, 2 forced fumbles
Lisfranc surgery in March 2015
Ed Block Courage Award co-winner
Darrent Williams Good Guy Award winner

DANNY TREVATHAN

STATS: 110 total tackles (74 solo), 2 interceptions (one returned for TD), 6 passes defensed
Recorded career-high 19 tackles at Indianapolis
Reconstructive knee surgery January 2015
Ed Block Courage Award co-winner

Broncos defense by the numbers:

283.1 Yards allowed per game, the fewest in the NFL in 2015

199.6 Passing yards allowed per game, the fewest in the NFL

52 Sacks, an NFL high, recorded by 14 players

5 Defensive touchdowns (four interceptions, one fumble recovery), scored by the Broncos, tied for the third in the NFL

79 Points scored off 27 takeaways

69.4 Opponent quarterback rating when Denver blitzes in passing situations, the second-lowest in the NFL behind Carolina (65.3)

4.25 Yards allowed per play on first downs, second-fewest in the NFL, behind Carolina (3.92)

26.9 Percentage of opponent drives that ended in an offensive score, second-lowest in the NFL, behind Carolina (26.5%)

82 Quarterback pressures by Von Miller, tied for the most by an outside linebacker, according to Pro Football Focus

4 Broncos defenders selected to the Pro Bowl: cornerbacks Chris Harris and Aqib Talib, and outside linebackers DeMarcus Ware and Von Miller

Brandon Marshall receives Darrent Williams award

By Mike Klis

9 News

January 1, 2016

Brandon Marshall is a good guy. He's available to the press. He's never rude, always accommodating. His take is often insightful.

For all this, Marshall, a starting inside linebacker and the Broncos' leading tackler, received the 2016 Darrent Williams Good Guy Award following a vote of the local press.

"To me, it means a lot," Marshall said. "I was raised on integrity. ... My mom did a helluva of a job in raising me. I know she'll be proud of this because she'll know that she raised her boy in a way that people look up to him and a way that people respect him. It means a lot to me in that regard because I know that I've done a good job in trying to become the best man that I can be. I'm not perfect, nobody is, but still striving to be a great person each day."

Chris Harris Jr., David Bruton Jr. and Ryan Harris also received strong consideration. The award is named after the Broncos' late cornerback who was amiable in nature and not afraid to tell it like it is.

"To me, it means a lot. I was raised on integrity. For all of my peers to see me as this person and say, 'Okay, he's a really great

"I knew Darrent," said Broncos' head coach Gary Kubiak. "My last year here (as offensive coordinator in 2005) he was a rookie. I knew him. He was a very talented young man. All that I can say is that Brandon is a hell of a football player, but he's a great kid, too. I think we have a lot of guys that do a great job with you all. You all were the ones that voted for him? That's pretty special because that says something. You guys are a tough group. He's a really good kid. He's a leader on this team. He's become more and more of a leader every week, so we're really proud of him."

Previous winners were John Lynch (2007), Ebenezer Ekuban (2008), Elvis Dumervil (2009), Mario Haggan (2010), Champ Bailey (2011), Wesley Woodyard (2012), Chris Harris Jr. (2013) and Terrance Knighton (2014).

Darrent Williams was shot and killed by a gang member in a drive-by shooting on New Year's Eve 2006.

Broncos' Brandon Marshall wins Darrent Williams Good Guy Award

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

January 1, 2016

Denver Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall was the winner of this year's Darrent Williams Good Guy Award.

The award, presented by the Denver chapter of the Pro Football Writers of America, has been given annually since 2007. The award is named for Williams, a former Broncos cornerback who was killed in a drive-by shooting on Jan. 1, 2007, and is given to a player who handles the day-to-day responsibilities and interactions with the media with the same reliability, respect and enthusiasm Williams did.

"I knew Darrent," Kubiak said. "My last year here, he was a rookie (in 2005) ... very talented young man. All I can say is Brandon is a hell of a football player, but he is a great kid, too."

"I just know he was a great person, a great guy, high spirits, upbeat kind of guy," Marshall said. "His legacy lives on."

Marshall is the ninth consecutive defensive player to win the award. John Lynch won the first award, in 2007, and other former winners include Champ Bailey (2011) and Elvis Dumervil (2009).

Broncos cornerback Chris Harris Jr. won the award in 2013.

"I was raised on integrity," Marshall said. " ... My mom did a hell of a job raising me, I know she'll be proud of this because she'll know she raised her boy in a way that people look up to him, in the way people respect him. It means a lot to me because it means I've done a good job in trying to become the best man that I can be."

Brandon Marshall named Broncos' 2015 Good Guy Award winner

By Nicki Jhabvala
Denver Post
January 1, 2016

Inside linebacker Brandon Marshall was voted by the Denver chapter of the Pro Football Writers of America as the 2015 Darrent Williams Good Guy Award winner. Marshall will be in consideration for the PFWA's national award, given out after the season.

Marshall, the ninth-consecutive defensive Broncos player to win the award, will be given a plaque to honor his enthusiasm and cooperation with the media. The last player to win it was former defensive tackle Terrance Knighton, now with the Washington Redskins.

The 2015 award is given on the ninth anniversary of the death of Darrent Williams, the former Broncos' cornerback who was shot and killed in a drive-by shooting after his second season with the Broncos.

"To me, it means a lot. I was raised on integrity," Marshall said. "For all of my peers to see me as this person and say, 'OK, he's a really great person.' My mom did a (heck) of a job in raising me. I know she'll be proud of this because she'll know that she raised her boy in a way that people look up to him and a way that people respect him. It means a lot to me in that regard because I know that I've done a good job in trying to become the best man that I can be. I'm not perfect, nobody is, but still striving to be a great person each day."

Marshall recorded seven total tackles Monday against the Bengals to put him at a team-high 101 on the season. Coupled with Danny Trevathan's 100 tackles, the duo are the first Broncos since D.J. Williams and Brian Dawkins in 2009 to record at least 100 each in a season. They are just one of six linebacker tandems in the league this season to record 100 each.

Marshall also has 1.5 sacks, four pass break-ups, one interception and two forced fumbles this season. Last year, he recorded a career- and team-high 113 tackles in 14 games.

Other Broncos to have received significant consideration for the Broncos' 2015 award were safety David Bruton Jr., cornerback Chris Harris Jr. and offensive tackle Ryan Harris.

The last, and only, Bronco to win the PFWA's national Good Guy award its inception in 2005 was quarterback Tim Tebow, in 2012.

Previous Darrent Williams Good Guy Award winners:

Terrance Knighton (2014)
Chris Harris Jr. (2013)
Wesley Woodyard (2012)
Champ Bailey (2011)
Mario Haggan (2010)
Elvis Dumervil (2009)
Ebenezer Ekuban (2008)
John Lynch (2007)

Brandon Marshall turned career around with Broncos

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

December 31, 2015

Brandon Marshall of the Broncos watched closely as the Pro Bowl players were announced Dec. 22. All he could do was shake his head after it was revealed he wasn't one of the four inside linebackers chosen.

Marshall felt disrespected. It was something he wanted and felt he deserved. A week later it still was on his mind.

He talked to "Monday Night Football" analyst and former NFL head coach John Gruden, who told him he deserved to be picked.

"It's a lot of motivation because I thought I should have been on it," Marshall said. "It just adds fuel to the fire for next year and the playoffs to get my name out there so people know."

Marshall has eclipsed 100 tackles for the second straight season.

He and linebacker Danny Trevathan became the first Broncos duo since D.J. Williams and Brian Dawkins in 2009 to each make more than 100 tackles in a season.

"Him and Danny have been amazing," cornerback Chris Harris said. "Those guys have had Pro-Bowl years."

Marshall has been one of the NFL's best coverage linebackers, but this year he has become a complete linebacker and a more vocal teammate.

"He's a big-time leader on this football team," Broncos coach Gary Kubiak said. "He's a young player that all of a sudden the team started to gravitate to as we went through the season. Our guys respect him."

Marshall, 26, is the Broncos' signal caller on defense and one of their best players. It was Marshall who stripped the ball from Kansas City's Jamaal Charles, leading to Bradley Roby's recovery for the game-winning touchdown in the final seconds of the Broncos' 31-24 victory over the Chiefs in September.

Marshall broke his finger on the play, an injury he'll get repaired in the offseason.

That was one of a number of outstanding plays made by the fourth-year linebacker, but it holds more significance as Denver holds a one-game lead over Kansas City.

Marshall's ascent is just as impressive as his play.

Two seasons ago, his career was on the brink of being over. The former fifth-round pick had played in only six games over two years in Jacksonville, making only one tackle. He was released.

Denver's management gave Marshall a shot. He earned a starting role, and even though not a starter for the Pro Bowl received an alternate spot on the team.

"It's dope because to come from being cut three times and coaches not thinking I can play in the NFL to even being an alternate in the Pro Bowl for people to recognize me like 'This guy is a player, he's for real.' That's huge, man," Marshall said.

"I just kept working. I'll continue to work. I've had that chip on my shoulder since I left Jacksonville, and I don't think it's going anywhere."

The chip on his shoulder is larger than the screw in his foot. He had Lisfranc surgery in the offseason and doctors placed the screw in his right foot to repair the ligament.

Before the season began, that screw broke. Marshall continued playing. He said sometimes he feels it moving around in his foot. The pain comes and goes, but Marshall said he won't let it take him out.

He got hit with another blow Monday against Cincinnati when Broncos defensive end Derek Wolfe rolled up on his ankle late in the third quarter after Marshall made a tackle on Bengals running back Giovani Bernard.

The magnetic resonance imaging exam came back negative, but an ankle sprain would be hard to play on at Marshall's position with only a five-day turnaround.

He did not practice Thursday and his status is in jeopardy for Sunday's game against San Diego, but don't be surprised if Marshall tries to play.

"I wouldn't bet against him," Kubiak said. "That's the type of guy he is."

Scout team graduate Brandon Marshall remembers the struggle

By Brandon Marshall
Associated Press
October 28, 2015

Technically you still get paid six figures on the practice squad, but I can tell you when I was on the practice squad after taxes it was \$55,000 I made. We still get taxed in the highest bracket.

You try to help out your family, your mother, a little bit but they have to know — and you to let them know — you're on the practice squad. So, I can't do as much as I was able to do when I was on the active roster (before being demoted to the practice squad during his rookie season in 2012).

It's definitely different than being on the active roster.

You want to help but at the end of the day you don't know how long you're going to be on the team or how long you're going to be in the NFL. The practice squad doesn't guarantee you anything. I mean, the active roster doesn't either, but at least it's better than the practice squad. So, you need to let them know I can't give you the money this month or I can't give you this much.

(Marshall is making \$585,000 this season, or \$34,411 a week, a far cry from the \$5,700 a week he made on Jacksonville's practice squad in 2012 or the \$6,000 weekly pay check he earned on Denver's practice squad in 2013).

When you're on the practice squad, you feel like you're a part of the team but you have to be careful if the guys invite you out for dinner and drinks.

You can't do what everybody else is doing. You're counting all your pennies. And hopefully they understand, so if you want to hang out with them, hopefully they'll say, "OK, B-Marsh is on the practice squad, he doesn't have to pay." Or, "Let's get separate checks."

You've got to hang around with the right people.

I never had to beg off going out. I just had to be cognizant. I just went out and then when I got there if they wanted to split and I'm like, "I'm on the P-squad, so I can't chip in on whatever it is if it's expensive." So, it's something you've got to be smart about.

P-squad players are often caught in a tough spot on the field, too.

You've got to get the team ready for the game. But I also got to get myself ready. Other players, they might tell you not to go hard. But then if you get cut, then what? They're not going to pay you your salary if you get cut. They're not going to give you any money. You know what I'm saying? So, you've got to ignore those guys when they say all that, definitely.

(After the Jaguars cut Marshall again in 2013, he opted to join Denver's practice squad).

I remember I was at dinner with some of the guys that had made the team, and that's when my agent called me like, "Look man, they want you on the practice squad and you've got to choose between Denver, Oakland and Jacksonville. You've got 10 minutes."

I called T-Knight (Terrance Knighton, then with the Broncos) real quick, "Pot Roast, I'm like, Yo, what's y'all situation like? They want me on the practice squad, what should I do?"

And he's like, "Man, you come here, you work hard, you'll be fine, I promise you."

I'm like OK, didn't make me any promises. I'm like, wait, Oakland sounds good though. But they're in the same situation Jacksonville's in, they're not winning, their head coach might not be there. So, I called my agent back up and I said, "Hey, man. I'm going to Denver."

I was so refreshed when I got to Denver. New opportunity. New start. Let me make the best of it because you don't get too many opportunities, I've already gotten cut three times, let's not make it a fourth. And who knows the fourth time, it might be over for me. But I embraced it. I loved it.

Even being on the practice squad, I was enjoying it because I got to be around greatness, Peyton Manning and all these guys in the locker room, I was like we have a great team man and trying to learn from these guys. It just helped me out.

(Marshall was promoted for the season finale in 2013 and the playoffs, then made the 53-man roster in 2014, when he led the team with 110 tackles. He again leads the team with 48 stops so far this season).

Winning big on Brandon Marshall's gamble

By Woody Paige

Denver Post

October 10, 2015

Brandon M. Marshall, who was born and raised in Las Vegas and played college football at the University of Nevada, gambled.

And he won the jackpot.

Marshall could have been playing for the Oakland Raiders on Sunday. He might have been playing for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Marshall once was told he shouldn't be playing anywhere in pro football.

He will be playing Sunday for the Broncos as the No. 1-ranked inside linebacker in the NFL, according to Pro Football Focus. He has a rating of plus-8.7. Next on the list, at 5.3, is the Jets' David Harris.

Although others on the league's top-rated defense have been named players of the week, or the month, Marshall is the Broncos' MCP (most consistent player).

After being drafted by Jacksonville in the fifth round of the 2012 draft, Brandon was cut by the Jaguars three times. The Jags considered him a JAG (just another guy).

"My (position) coach said I wasn't good enough to play in the league, and I should find another profession," Marshall told me. "I was determined to prove him wrong."

When he was released the last time, at the end of training camp in 2013, Marshall pondered three alternatives: quit, take an offer to join the Raiders' practice squad or sign with the Broncos.

"I knew Denver was stacked (at outside linebacker)," Marshall said. "They had Von (Miller) and Danny (Trevathan). I had a better chance to play with the Raiders."

But first he made a phone call to former Jaguars teammate Terrance Knighton, then the Broncos' Pot Roast.

"He said if I worked very hard, I'd have an opportunity with a great team, and who knows what would happen?" Marshall said.

Knighton also sold the Broncos on the young linebacker, and the Broncos added him to the practice squad Sept. 2, 2013.

On Dec. 23, Miller was diagnosed with a torn ACL and declared out for the postseason. Marshall was elevated to the roster Dec. 24.

"Greatest Christmas gift I could ever get," he said. He played in the regular-season finale and three postseason games, including the Super Bowl.

A year ago, Marshall was supposed to be Trevathan's backup. But Trevathan suffered a knee injury before the regular season, and Marshall became the starter at weakside linebacker as well as the defense's play-caller.

All he did was lead the Broncos in tackles with 110, and his ninth start was his best. He recorded 13 tackles (11 unassisted) against ... guess who: the Raiders in the Broncos' comeback victory at Oakland.

He added 15 more the next week and became an "overnight star."

Soon after, I was talking with Marshall and brought up the fact he was a serious contender to make the Pro Bowl.

"That would be incredible, especially because of what happened to me in Jacksonville," he said.

Marshall prematurely had to end the interview because that night he was hosting a clothing drive to benefit domestic violence victims, and his mom, Barbara, had arrived in town.

"I'm trying to make her proud of what I'm doing on and off the field," he said.

Three days later, Marshall tore up his foot in a game at San Diego. He missed the final two regular season games but returned, albeit injured, to play in the divisional round playoff loss to Indianapolis.

Marshall is a classy, sharp young man. Now he's a cinch 2016 Pro Bowl candidate at linebacker.

When the Broncos switched to a 3-4 scheme under defensive coordinator Wade Phillips during this offseason, Marshall moved inside. Miller and DeMarcus Ware are outside. There were suspicions that Marshall was too small (238 pounds on a 6-foot-1 frame) and maybe too fragile after foot surgery to handle inside duties. But he and Trevathan (back from his own surgeries) have teamed to give the Broncos a terrific Bran-Dan Tan-Dem.

Playing every down, Marshall again leads the Broncos in tackles, with 33, and had the forced fumble on Jamaal Charles that led to the Broncos winning in Kansas City. Trevathan is second in tackles with 22.

The Broncos' greatest inside linebackers in the 3-4 were Randy Gradishar and Bill Romanowski. Marshall could someday rank with those two.

"He has speed and quickness; he can defend the run and the pass, and he's a special player. ... It's just a matter of how bad he wants it," Romanowski said.

Marshall didn't listen to his Jag detractor.

He bet on the Broncos instead of the Raiders, and his gamble paid off.

Brandon Markeith Marshall has made a name for himself.

Brandon Marshall graded as NFL's top inside linebacker

By Mike Klis

9 News Sport

October 7, 2015

When it comes to scouting evaluations provided by Pro Football Focus, this year's Chris Harris Jr. is Brandon Marshall.

PFF loves the Denver Broncos' inside linebacker, giving Marshall the NFL's highest overall score at his position with an 8.7. The New York Jets' David Harris is a distant second with a 5.3 grade.

The Broncos' other inside linebacker, Danny Trevathan, ranks 16th with an even 0.0 score.

Chris Harris is still ranking high at cornerback, although the Broncos' fifth-year player is not getting the marks he had last year when he was rated No. 1 pretty much from week 1 to 17. Among the league cornerback starters who have played at least 75 percent of the snaps, Harris ranks 7th. His cornerback mate Aqib Talib is 11th.

Other Bronco players who PFF ranked No. 1 in the league at their positions through week 4: Von Miller at outside linebacker (19.6 score) and kicker Brandon McManus (9.6).

Devotion turns into dedication for Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall

By Troy Renck
Denver Post
September 13, 2015

It was a slow day in June, time for an NFL player to steal hours with his family during the offseason. Brandon Marshall, a Broncos starting inside linebacker, was headed to the airport but had a more important trip first. Asphalt disappearing under his car tires, Marshall turned down a street in West Las Vegas.

Through the most difficult times — the concern for his mother's safety, the anxiety about his own future — Marshall found solace at his granddad's home. Little Roy Williams, a World War II Navy veteran and master carpenter, had a way of putting people at ease. A man of faith and principle, Little created peace amid turbulence for young Brandon, let him know it was OK to dream.

"I always considered him the rock of our family," Marshall said. "He was the major father figure in my life. His home was everybody's safe house. You could get a good meal, good conversation, watch sports. Talking to him, it would just take my mind off a lot of things."

Marshall always thought about his granddad. But this June day was different, the gravitational pull strong. He knew he had to visit, recognizing Little's advice could help him deal with the lingering pain and doubt caused by the Lisfranc surgery on his right foot. Little had been in and out of a hospital the last few months. He wasn't feeling well, though it never occurred to Marshall he wouldn't improve.

"I was there at his house with my cousin Anthony. He said, 'Anthony, you are a successful engineer. Brandon, you are in the NFL. I am proud of you,'" recalled Marshall, hesitating. "Then he actually cried. I was shocked. It was the first time in my life I had seen him cry. It was then that I understood the impact we had on each other. And when I knew something was really wrong."

Little Roy Williams died a few weeks later at age 88, passing away July 7 after contracting pneumonia following surgery. The family gathered at his bedside: Brandon, along with mother Barbara and his brother, Marcus. When you mention Little two months later, the memories tumble out. Little — he had an uncle named Big — sitting in his maroon chair in his Las Vegas living room, dressed in his Los Angeles Lakers cap and sweat shirt, talking to her boys. The breakfasts at Denny's in Reno following Brandon's games at the University of Nevada.

A picture from one of those days is her favorite. One taken in a hospital remains the most poignant. Brandon is holding his granddad's hand in his final moments. "It means a lot to Brandon and I. It's very powerful," Barbara said.

"Tribute ... was beautiful"

Little's absence hurts Brandon. It can be heard in his voice. He has dedicated this season to his granddad, and honored him with a tattoo on his chest reading "Williams 7-1826— 7-7-15" while depicting a hand holding a hammer about to pound a nail.

"I didn't know about it. He wanted to surprise me. When he sent me the picture, it brought me to tears," Barbara said. "For him to give him that tribute. ... It was beautiful."

It's hard for Brandon to explain how much Little meant to him as he embarks on the most important season in his NFL career. Little was the one who explained things to him. He encouraged him to play sports. He rented a van for the family and drove Brandon off to college, where he started four seasons. He reminded him to keep his priorities straight. He taught him to be a man after Brandon and Marcus watched their father abuse Barbara, who courageously escaped to a shelter with her sons when they were 10 and 12, forging steps of hope that have led her to help victims of domestic violence.

"I was so fortunate my children had such a great man like that in their lives," said Barbara, whose son Marcus is a talented singer and songwriter. "He really taught them about respect and responsibility."

This season set up as a challenge before Little died. Marshall injured his right foot Dec. 14 at San Diego. He missed the final two games last season, then played sparingly in the playoff loss to the Colts. When the injury didn't heal, Marshall had surgery March 11. He will play this season with two screws in his foot, his recovery a month ahead of schedule as he starts Sunday's opener against the Ravens.

"I don't have control of what happens to me, but I have control over how I respond," said Marshall, echoing his granddad's advice. "It's going to nag at me. I have to work hard and rehab. I am still fighting these battles. It's painful. It's aggravating."

"But you know what? I have to push through this for my team, myself and my family. I am on a mission to prove I can overcome a Lisfranc injury and have a great season."

No denying super dream

It never dawned on Broncos tight end Virgil Green that Marshall would not play again. They first met at Nevada when Marshall lived across the street. Green recognized Marshall, then an outside linebacker, had uncommon focus.

"He was really mature, well beyond his years," Green said. "We trained a lot at the facility this offseason, and I just knew that somehow, someday Brandon would find a way to get back on the field."

Barbara likes to joke the three of them — she, Brandon and Little — could be triplets. They have inner strength, quiet confidence, their values mirroring each other.

Humility defines Marshall. He deflects praise, and talks about his team like it's his family.

He led the Broncos in tackles last season with 110, a rocket ride to prominence after the Jaguars cut him, forcing him to climb up from Denver's practice squad. The ascension began in 2013, a season he will forever remember because of Little.

It was after the third preseason game, and his granddad rang.

"He says, 'Hey, Brandon I had a dream that you were playing in the Super Bowl. In the Super Bowl!' At first I got excited. I thought it was cool. But then I thought about where I was at," Marshall said with a smile. "I said, 'Granddad, I am in Jacksonville, it might be a while.' He said, 'No, Brandon, I had the dream.'"

Marshall ended up in Denver. He was not an active player, at least not until Dec. 24, but his imagination ran wild.

"As the season went on, I realized we had a great team. Then next thing I know we are in the Super Bowl," Marshall said. "One of my favorite memories is talking to him about that, and telling him he was right."

Sunday will be a transition for Marshall. As part of his game-day ritual, he called his granddad on his way to the stadium. It began in college. They were snapshots back to Marshall's youth when he hung out in Little's home and talked sports.

"It was just great hearing his voice, you know?" Marshall said.

He will call his mom Sunday. They will pray and give thanks.

"I had to be here for this game. It's going to be emotional," Barbara said. "I am so used to talking to my dad during the games. We couldn't hear each other, but he wanted to know all the details. It's going to be tough. But it's good too. My dad's spirit lives on through Brandon."

They got better together; now Danny Trevathan and Brandon Marshall are ready to show they're back

By Andrew Mason
DenverBroncos.com
September 9, 2015

Although Brandon Marshall and Danny Trevathan have practiced together as the Broncos' inside linebackers for nearly a month, they only shared 10 plays in the preseason.

Last year, they lined up together on just 43 snaps as Trevathan was limited to just three regular-season games because of three different injuries.

It's a bit hard to fathom that their on-field work has been so infrequent, because it seems so natural to see them as a tandem. They line up in juxtaposition as the inside linebackers, they rehabilitated from injuries together, they are the Broncos' two most recent leading tacklers and they communicate on the practice field with the innate connection of twins.

And now, they're ready for a full game together. But most importantly, they're ready to announce that they're healed and back after an offseason defined by hundreds of thousands of small steps toward the leap onto Sports Authority Field this Sunday.

"I definitely think so. I've been practicing every snap," Marshall said. "I've been doing a lot of things and a lot of conditioning, so I think I'm ready.

"As far as my foot, I think my foot is ready, as well. In a game, your adrenaline is going to be going. Your adrenaline is going to be up, so you're not going to feel a whole lot. But I think I'll be fine."

Added Trevathan: "I'm ready to go. It's one thing to say it, but it's another thing to be out there playing. Come game time, I'm going to let my play speak for itself. A lot of people can say whatever they want, but when I'm on that field, I'm going to try and play the best that I can."

In 2013, Trevathan ranked 11th among all outside linebackers in the rankings compiled by ProFootballFocus.com. Last year, Marshall ranked fourth.

Building off performances like those will be "a little tougher" because of the offseason spent rehabilitating, Marshall acknowledged. But he's off to a good start in accepting the new reality he faces playing on a surgically repaired foot with two screws in it.

"My foot -- it doesn't feel good. I'm just going to push through it, take care of it as best I can and try to just manage it, manage the pain," Marshall said. "They [doctors] said it usually doesn't feel really good until a year later. That's what the doctor told me. I'm just going to keep pushing through and I'll be just fine."

Soft-tissue work is now a part of Marshall's daily routine. He said he stays late at the UHealth Training Center -- "I don't really like waking up that early," he said with a smile -- to receive the necessary treatment to expedite his long-term healing.

The soreness is something he accepts; he knew months ago that pain tolerance would be crucial to his performance this season.

"I'm just getting adjusted to it," he said. "It got better every day at first, but then it kind of just plateaued. I'm trying to just manage it, and make sure I can still do to keep it going."

Trevathan's injury and recovery are different. He consciously avoids being handcuffed by hesitation about the knee and the bones around it that succumbed to injury three times last year.

"I don't think about it. You can't think about it because it's there," he said. "You put in the work and treatment, so it's about you doing your business and not thinking about it."

"So it's there. You'll feel it when it's a little numb after you get a little stinger, but right now I'm not feeling anything. I'm just feeling good vibes and feeling like I'm ready to get back to playing football come Sunday."

And now, after well over 100 days of recovery, that moment is less than 100 hours away. The Broncos are about to find out — finally — what their two tackling machines can accomplish together.

"I'm excited," Marshall said. "I can't wait."

Brandon Marshall gets his foot back in the door with Broncos

By Nicki Jhabvala
DenverPost.com
August 22, 2015

Brandon Marshall was not among the Broncos' contingent who experienced a Houston homecoming Saturday night.

But he played as if he were right at home.

In his first game action since undergoing surgery on his right foot in March, Marshall played the first quarter of the preseason game against the Texans and compiled three tackles (all solo) and three passes defended.

He was undoubtedly the brightest spot in an otherwise sloppy first quarter for Denver, wreaking havoc quickly and efficiently.

If there was any doubt, Marshall is back. And his foot appears fine.

Last season, the middle linebacker led the Broncos in tackles with 113 despite hobbling to the finish line. He sat out the last two games but returned for the Broncos' divisional playoff loss to the Indianapolis Colts.

He now has two screws in his foot — and some minor pain that comes with them — and will have to leave the screws in for the remainder of this season. But he was ahead of schedule with his rehab during training camp and is back on the field, playing a crucial role in Wade Phillips' 3-4 defense.

Although Jack Del Rio's 4-3 alignment last season implemented some principles of the 3-4, Marshall's duties as the strongside linebacker changed.

"I'm still trying to learn all the ins and outs, but I think I have a pretty decent grasp on it," Marshall said. "Once I do (get more reps), I'll be able to make plays."

This is only the preseason, but for Marshall, Saturday's showing offered a measuring stick of his physical progress. It was a show of his comfort in Phillips' system. And it was a message of his comfort in the system.

"I felt good," he said after the game. "Obviously you want to improve on everything or some things each week. I thought I could have played against the run a little better, but I thought I did well against the pass. I just want to keep getting better, and as my foot keeps feeling better, I think I'll play better."

It also was a sign that the fourth-year pro is back where he feels most at home. On the field. Racking up tackles.

Marshall back on field but with a heavy heart

By Arnie Stapleton

Associated Press

August 1, 2015

Brandon Marshall is back on the football field, trying to replicate last year's breakout season despite two screws in his right foot and a heavy heart.

Marshall led the Broncos with 111 tackles last year despite being hobbled down the stretch by a right foot injury that required offseason surgery.

Because he didn't have the operation until March, he'll have to play the whole season before surgeons can remove hardware in his right foot, meaning he'll have to manage some pain along the way.

He said his foot feels fine so far, but the pain he's dealing with now is the grief over his grandfather's death.

Little Roy Williams, 88, died on July 7 after contracting pneumonia following surgery, Marshall said.

"He had an uncle named Big," Marshall said, "so they named him Little."

Marshall's mother, Barbara, is the youngest of a dozen children: "My mom, she's a daddy's girl, so we were always at his house," Marshall said. "He was just like a father to me."

After attending the funeral, Marshall retreated to Miami, where he got a tattoo on his left pectoral in honor of his grandfather, who was a carpenter.

It depicts a hammer and nails, one of them "piercing" his chest and drawing a trickle of "blood."

"He's on my chest," Marshall said.

Marshall's offseason was cut short because the Broncos wanted him and fellow inside linebacker Danny Trevathan (left kneecap) to report with the rookies Monday instead of with the veterans on Thursday.

"At first I didn't want to come in early but it honestly helped me," said Marshall, who missed all of the team's offseason field work.

Trevathan, the Broncos' top tackler in 2013, worked his way onto the field in June but spent most of the offseason practices with Marshall on the sideline.

The middle linebackers are the fulcrum of Wade Phillips' 3-4 defensive scheme, and there's major questions surrounding Marshall and Trevathan as they return from their injuries.

Not in their minds, though.

"Danny and I are very confident. We believe in each other. We believe in ourselves," Marshall said.

Trevathan said he and Marshall worked diligently all offseason in the classroom, weight room and training room.

"A lot of people had doubts about us and what we could do because of our injuries. It was just positive stuff with me and him," Trevathan said. "Brandon came in with the right attitude. I came in with the right attitude, and we've been attacking these practices day by day.

"We've been smart and taking care of each other. That's going to help us be one of the best duos in the league."

Safety T.J. Ward said he's glad to see Marshall and Trevathan back on the field, even if it's just cameos.

"Man, a tremendous boost just seeing them out there," Trevathan said. "They're not going full-speed, doing everything we're doing right now. But walkthroughs and 7-on-7s, just having them two down there has been great. Just seeing them down there is kind of another level of comfort."

Anguish or not, Marshall plans to approach this summer's camp with the same dogged determination that helped him have a breakout season last year after bouncing around the practice squads in Jacksonville and Denver.

"I can't let myself get comfortable and say, 'You know what, I've got a body of work, I'm good.' No, I can't do that," Marshall said. "I've got to treat it just like every other year because this is the most competitive sport in the world, man. Everybody's out for your job. And I want to be the best, so why would I let myself get comfortable?"

Trevathan and Marshall helping each other in recovery

By Christine Williamson

DenverBroncos.com

June 17, 2015

Danny Trevathan and Brandon Marshall are not quite the same players they were going into last season, or parts of them are not the same, at least. Trevathan has a reconstructed kneecap after enduring a few blows to his knee last October and Marshall's foot surgery in March left him with a few temporary screws to hold things together.

As they currently go through rehab every day, both players are shooting to be back on the field for training camp.

Although the rest of the team will most likely spend time away during the summer break, Trevathan expects to be at the training facility everyday.

"I have no days off," said Trevathan. "Ever since I had my surgery, I came here. I told them I just want to work. Even if I'm not doing movement I want to be icing or doing something to get this knee better."

While the rest of the Broncos defense has been utilizing this offseason to adjust to new Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillip's 3-4 system, Trevathan and Marshall have been taking it all in on the sidelines. Though they haven't been able to get out on the field just yet, the two linebackers have gotten a chance to work alongside one another in the training room.

"I wish he wasn't in there [but] it helps us," said Trevathan about Marshall's injury. "It's always reassuring and it's positive. [OLB] Von [Miller] and [CB] Chris [Harris Jr.] were together [rehabbing] and you saw how they came back."

A year ago, Miller and Harris were both recovering from ACL tears around the same time and said that being together pushed one another to get better. Both would end up returning like they didn't miss a step, having outstanding seasons that ended in trips to the Pro Bowl.

"That's what me and Brandon are taking out there. We want to be the best —the best fielding linebackers, the best-looking linebackers—everything."

Since both players haven't been able to put in physical reps on the field, they've been getting all of their position work on the mental side in the classroom.

"Me and Danny try to do the same thing," said Marshall. "There's a lot of responsibility so I think mental reps are just as important. Obviously you need to be in there, but mental reps can help you a lot."

The goal for Marshall and Trevathan is to return in time for training camp, but timetable aside, both players are looking forward to stepping on the field with one another when the time comes.

"It's an exciting thing," said Trevathan. "[We're] two capable players and we're two of the best linebackers in the league. It's time for people to start noticing that. We came in with kind of a chip on our shoulders. Us lining up next to each other is just extra motivation. I look into his eyes and he looks

into my eyes and we both know that we both have the ability to play and be the best out there. It's time for us to make a name for ourselves."

Brandon Marshall planning to be ready for training camp this summer

By Troy E. Renck
DenverPost.com
June 4, 2015

Forget the Broncos' reshuffled offensive line for a second. Equal concern remains about a player standing across from the group: inside linebacker Brandon Marshall.

Last season's breakout star suffered a Lisfranc injury in his left foot Dec. 14 at San Diego, but has begun jogging between stations at practice and even backpedaled lightly this week. He's not cleared to run, but every step of his recovery leads him to believe he will be ready for training camp.

"I just tell people to trust me," Marshall said Thursday. "I have persevered my whole life. There's nothing too big I can't handle. I am getting better every day. I have no doubts."

Marshall finished last season with 113 tackles, including 91 solo stops. He had offseason surgery March 11 after under- going a second magnetic resonance imaging exam when the foot failed to heal.

C.J. Anderson makes a promise

Running back C.J. Anderson offered a simple solution to the Broncos' revamped offensive line. "We will make them right, that's a promise. It's on us to make the right cuts," Anderson said. "It would be unacceptable to make them look bad."

Anderson occasionally will have help from a fullback. But as of yet, that doesn't include Juwan Thompson. The second-year player from Duke is working at tailback, with James Casey and Joe Don Duncan operating at fullback.

Malik Jackson not worried about contract

Defensive end Malik Jackson, a blossoming star, said the Broncos have not discussed a contract extension with him. He is not "worried about it," and assumes something will happen after the season. He has been one of the team's most productive defenders the past two years. ...

Virgil Green is leaning on tight end Owen Daniels to help learn the offense. Daniels has spent his career with coach Gary Kubiak. "I ask him questions all the time. He's probably going to get sick of me. He knows the little details about things," Green said.

Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall welcomes big bonus

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
March 13, 2015

Play and they will pay.

Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall drew a relatively meager \$495,000 salary in 2014. But because he played so much, he will be rewarded by the NFL on April 1 with a team-high performance pay distribution check of \$277,471 — 56 percent of his salary.

"It was probably as much as my take-home pay during the year," Marshall said. "It's a blessing. It shows the fruits of my labor is paying off. I'm glad for the (collective bargaining agreement) because this makes up for the year (2013) that I spent on the practice squad."

After Marshall, the Broncos' largest performance bonuses that were announced Friday by the NFL's management council went to running back C.J. Anderson (\$150,963), defensive lineman Malik Jackson (\$150,845), rookie linebacker Corey Nelson (\$147,712) and tight end Julius Thomas (\$134,585).

Anderson also had a \$495,000 salary last year, so his bonus marked a 30.5 percent increase in pay.

"It's a blessing. I'm happy," Anderson said. "I feel like I'm getting paid to do the job I'm expected to do."

Performance pay is based on a formula in which the bigger bonuses are given to those who make the least and play the most.

Peyton Manning had the playing time, but he also drew a \$20 million salary in 2014. His performance bonus was \$7,904.

Sign of the times. Free-agent defensive lineman Vance Walker visited Seattle then Denver.

Free-agent safety Darian Stewart visited Denver and Atlanta.

Free-agent guard Shelley Smith visited Seattle and Denver, and was supposed to meet with Atlanta on Saturday.

A one, and a two, and a three. Walker, Stewart and Smith all signed with the Broncos.

Free-agency breakdown: Brandon Marshall

ESPN.com

Jeff Legwold

Sunday, March 01, 2015

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- The Denver Broncos have one of the longer lists of free agents in the league and just under two weeks out from the formal opening of the NFL's festival of checks, it's a good time to take a one-a-day look at some of the impending Broncos free agents.

Wait, what? Marshall is a free agent? No, he isn't -- at least not an unrestricted free agent who is free to negotiate with any team.

And he isn't even a restricted free agent, a player who could solicit offers from other teams that the Broncos would have the right to match, though he did appear on a list or two regarding free agency in recent weeks as a restricted free agent.

Because of the strange journey Marshall has taken to this point and perhaps how long it took for folks to notice him, he simply has one of the most unique profiles of any player in the league whose current contract will expire on March 9.

Marshall is an exclusive rights free agent, meaning only the Broncos can offer him a contract. If the Broncos do not offer him a contract, however, then he would become a free agent.

That won't happen because Marshall isn't a back-of-the-roster guy, hoping to hang on. He was their leading tackler this past season with 113, or 39 more than the next player (safety T.J. Ward) and that's despite the fact he missed the final two games of the regular season with a foot injury.

He is a player former defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio said was playing at a Pro Bowl level last season. Broncos' executive vice president of football operations/general manager John Elway has already said he sees Marshall starting at middle linebacker -- one of the two inside linebacker spots in the team's new 3-4 scheme.

"I like how Brandon fits in the defense," Elway said. "We like where we're at there and he played really well for us last season."

A player like that has usually been drafted. A player like that has usually been signed to a four-year deal and when that deal ends, he's an unrestricted free agent looking for a windfall, much like most of the players in the Broncos' 2011 draft class, a group that includes tight end Julius Thomas, guard Orlando Franklin and safety Rahim Moore.

But like Chris Harris Jr. before him, Marshall has been a real find, who has done it the hard way. Harris went from undrafted rookie in 2011 to getting a five-year, \$42.5 million contract extension he signed in December.

Marshall signed with the Broncos in September 2013 after he had been waived by the Jacksonville Jaguars for a third time; he said this past season "after three you do kind of wonder if you have it what it takes, but I tried not to lose my confidence."

Marshall spent almost all of the 2013 season on the Broncos' practice squad until he was signed to the active roster in Week 17 when Von Miller went to injured reserve. Marshall was on the roster for the final regular-season game and the Broncos' three playoff games.

This past year Marshall moved into the starting lineup and stayed there.

But his five-game season as a rookie with the Jaguars -- he was cut twice during that season alone, before being cut a third time in training camp in '13 -- to go with that end-of-season stint in '13 with the Broncos means Marshall has still accrued just two official seasons on his résumé.

So he's not the kind of free agent the Broncos would have to be concerned about losing this time around, but he is exactly the kind of player they would have to reward at some point down the road.

Community Conversation: Brandon Marshall

Denverbroncos.com

January 2, 2015

Each week of the season DenverBroncos.com will highlight the off-field contributions of a Denver Bronco. This week we talked to linebacker Brandon Marshall, who hosted a clothing drive in early December benefiting the Rose Andom Center for survivors of domestic violence.

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

"I feel like we have a platform—we're role models in the community and a lot of people look up to us. So I feel like it's our duty, our job to give back and show the youth that positive things come from people that make it out in the community."

What has been one of your favorite Broncos community events to participate in?

"I liked [S] T.J.'s [Ward] event at Target. It was cool to see the kids excited and buying gifts. You should have seen their faces—they were loving it. So I think that was my favorite."

You've had a long and windy path to where you are today— being cut by Jacksonville to being the Broncos' leading tackler even though you missed two games—does that shape your message to people about hard work and perseverance?

"Oh yeah, that's my story. Everybody has a story, this is my story. I definitely will push it to people and let them know that regardless of the situation and regardless of what it looks like, regardless of what you think, the outcome can still be in your favor if you stick with it, if you stay positive and keep working. I'll continue to push that for the rest of my life. This is my story I'll be able to tell my kids and my kids' kids and whoever want to know. That will hopefully give them hope to keep pushing even through the dark times."

You hosted a clothing drive to benefit the Rose Andom Center, why was something you wanted to do and why was that an organization you wanted to work with?

"It was important to me because first of all, me, my mother and my brother had to stay in a shelter when we were younger (after surviving an incident of domestic

violence). Second, it's so cold in Denver, I feel like people need clothes. They need coats and shoes and whatever else we could bring. This was my first individual community event and I was really excited about it. I was really happy about it because I don't want to just spend my time playing football or be known as this football player. I want to be known as 'this guy who was vocal in the community, a great guy, but also a really good football player.' I'm just going to continue to strive to be all of those things."

Why did you start sharing your family's story about how domestic violence impacted you, and how do you hope it helps others?

"I just wanted to let people know that are in tough situations like that or any other situation that just because you may have been in that situation or are in that situation now, doesn't mean that you won't have a brighter day in the future. I'm pretty successful myself, my mom is doing well, my brother is doing well—just because we all were in that situation, it didn't define us. It's an incident that happened, it's part of my life, but look at us now—we're doing well and we want to share that message with people."

What was it like to have your mom, a domestic violence advocate, and your brother, now a social worker, on-site with you for the clothing drive and to be able to share that with Rose Adom, also a survivor of domestic violence?

"It was amazing to see Rose. She was so excited, she was happy. Just to see her—she's the face of the whole organization, the face of [The Rose Adom Center]. My mom was really excited—she was excited just to be there (laughs)—she's an advocate of it. But it was just a great experience. I loved seeing Rose and I loved seeing my mom."

How do you hope to continue your work with the Rose Adom Center to increase awareness for domestic violence issues and support systems?

"We'll definitely keep in touch and hopefully I'll be in Denver for years to come and we'll keep going forward with the clothing drive and hopefully some other things."

Another sort of Christmas story: There is life after abuse

By Ed Graney
Las Vegas Review-Journal
December 25, 2014

She always kept a bag packed in the car. She always wanted to be prepared. That's what they tell you anyway — that until a victim of domestic violence has an alternate plan and the courage to see it through, the abuse will be repeated.

The beatings won't end.

It was Christmas time 15 years ago in Las Vegas, and Barbara Marshall and her two sons were hiding in a local shelter, concealed with other victims from those who inflicted all the pain and suffering, cloaked in secrecy among others crouched in the corner, shut off from the outside world and more bruises.

"I had reached the point where I couldn't take it any more," Marshall said. "My children were witnessing the violence and nobody should have to live through that, whether it's one time or 30 times. We had to leave. We had to get out."

Brandon Marshall was 10 then, far from the NFL linebacker for the Denver Broncos you see on television now, and watching his father abuse his mother left a indelible scar on him and brother Marcus, who was 12 at the time.

There is a reason the Associated Press ranked the NFL's troubles with domestic violence as its top sports story of 2014, a mess of a crisis defined by a videotape of Baltimore Ravens running back Ray Rice knocking his now-wife unconscious in an Atlantic City casino elevator in February.

It has become a lightning rod of discussion that led to sweeping initiative within the league, a torrent of controversy defined by widespread criticism of commissioner Roger Goodell's handling of such matters and, well, most everything else he has done the last eight years.

Marshall knows only this: His standing as an NFL player allows him a platform to help others.

Example: Earlier this season, Marshall held a clothing drive in Denver to collect coats and other winter items for survivors of domestic violence. The mayor (Michael Hancock) attended to show his support, his sister having been killed in a domestic violence incident in 2002.

Marshall was a fifth-round draft pick of Jacksonville in 2012, a former Cimarron-Memorial and UNR standout who is just now finding his way in the league. He leads the Broncos in tackles this season with 113, but missed Monday's loss at Cincinnati with an injured foot.

"I spent my first two years in the league solidifying my place, and now that people recognize me, I want to use my voice," he said. "(Domestic violence) shouldn't be tolerated in any walk of life. It's cowardly. As a 10-year old, watching it happen, you feel helpless. Once we were in the shelter, my brother and I felt we were then the men of the house and had to protect our mom at all costs.

"I think the entire experience shaped me in huge ways. I saw the abuse first-hand. I told myself right then that there were goals I wanted to accomplish and I wasn't going to let anything stand in my way. I was going to treat women with respect. Our mom never gave up. She was always strong for us. She epitomizes hard work and perseverance. She means the world to me."

Barbara lives in Virginia now, having visited friends in the state a few years ago and taken to the area. There, she works as a domestic violence advocate, using her own experience to help others.

Her advice to victims is not uncommon, that while seeking help is arguably the toughest part of the healing process, you don't have to be the one crouching in the corner of a shelter.

That there is life after abuse.

That it doesn't have to control your existence.

Her sons grew up (Marcus is married, has three children and is a singer/songwriter here in Las Vegas) and she left it up to them whether or not to have a relationship with their father.

They have one.

She doesn't.

Fifteen years ago sometimes feels like yesterday. It was Christmas then, too, a mother and her two sons hiding in a shelter with 30 other abused women and 60 other children, trying to discover some happiness and joy from the holiday and yet unsure what the future held and if the violence was really over.

"I know that time scared both boys," Barbara said. "They went into survival mode and became little soldiers, zeroing in on the idea that they would be better in life, that treating women like that was wrong. I'm extremely proud of them.

"Brandon is now able to meet people through his position in the NFL and really help them. He's taking care of his business. The journey to this place in our lives means we can breathe. No worry. No stress. We are safe. We are OK.

"I understand many don't want to speak out. But we feel this need to share, especially considering what has happened in the NFL. Maybe we just help one person, but even that would make it all worth it."

Brandon Marshall's rise both long and meteoric

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
December 12, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Getting waived by the hapless Jacksonville Jaguars for what seemed like the hundredth time, linebacker Brandon Marshall took a drive down I-95 South toward St. Augustine, Florida.

Alone with his thoughts, Marshall wondered what had gone wrong and if he'd ever get another chance in the NFL.

"After being cut so many times you start to kind of question your abilities," said Marshall, who's taken a twisting, turning road to become Denver's top tackler.

He hit the highway that afternoon in search of himself.

"I took some time for myself to really think. You know, what am I doing wrong? Or, is it me? Or, why is it happening? Because, I've never been cut before. I've always been someone that the team could count on. So, for that to happen, I was just wondering what was wrong."

He couldn't come up with an answer but he did find some perspective.

"The only answer I came up with was just control what you can control," Marshall said. "Just keep working no matter what the circumstances are because I feel like we all go through hard times in life, football, with jobs, whatever. I feel like a lot of people don't reach their potential or at least their peak because they give up too soon. Or they don't push through the hard times."

"I think that's what makes a successful person, because if you keep pushing through the rough times you know then it's almost like a cocoon phase. You come out a better version of yourself."

That is the story of Marshall's journey from the guy who couldn't even carve out a job for himself on one of the worst teams in the NFL to one who's an every-down linebacker and arguably the defensive MVP on one of the league's best teams.

"I would say he's playing at a Pro Bowl level for an inside backer in this league," defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio said. "He's very productive, very active. He does a lot, doesn't come off the field. He's had a Pro Bowl kind of year."

Marshall was humbled by such high praise.

"He's been around a lot of Pro Bowl guys, Ray Lewis, he's been around a bunch of Pro Bowl guys. So, for him to say that about me it means a lot. I guess I'm in pretty good company," Marshall said Friday.

Marshall is both a tale of perseverance and overnight success.

A third-round draft pick out of Nevada in 2012, he was cut three times by the Jaguars. The Broncos signed him to their practice squad last season, and coach John Fox approached him during a blowout of the Eagles.

"He came up to me on the sideline and we were winning big — and I'm a practice squad guy; he doesn't have to say anything to me. And he came up and said, 'Brandon, keep working because you're going to get your opportunity,'" Marshall said. "It gave me extra motivation to keep working."

Marshall was promoted to the active roster on Christmas Eve and played in the season finale and the playoffs.

Last summer, he earned a job in the nickel defense alongside Danny Trevathan and was thrust into a much bigger role with Trevathan missing most of the season with two fractures in his left leg. Marshall leads the team with 106 tackles.

Trevathan is eligible to come off IR this weekend when the Broncos (10-3) visit San Diego (8-5), but that doesn't mean Marshall will relinquish the defensive play-calling duties. He'll once again play alongside Trevathan in the nickel.

"I'm real eager. We're both playmakers. We both have great instincts. We both can make plays. So, to have him back will be tremendous," Marshall said.

Although he admits he still wonders at times why he couldn't find a spot in Jacksonville, Marshall also knows getting jettisoned by the Jaguars helped him become the player he is today.

"If you quit, they're right and then where are you? You're stuck where you were at and you have nowhere to go," he said. "So, no matter what, I decided I was going to keep pushing through."

Notes: With all their success, the Broncos could lose Del Rio and OC Adam Gase to head coaching opportunities in the offseason. "I think every year when you have good team success individuals get recognized, whether it's players or coaches," Fox said. "I think it's a very positive thing. We've had guys get opportunities before and I'm sure we will again."

Brandon Marshall on those who cut him: 'If you quit, they're right'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

December 12, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- Maybe if they had only cut him once, Brandon Marshall wouldn't pay attention to what the Jacksonville Jaguars are doing.

Maybe if the Jaguars had only cut him twice he wouldn't search out their results as often. Maybe, just maybe, if the Jaguars had not cut him three times Marshall wouldn't look at a 2-11 team and wonder how they couldn't find a place for him.

"Sometimes, I do," the Denver Broncos linebacker said after Friday's practice. "I watch a lot of their games actually. I know some of the guys, one of the guys I was on practice squad with is doing well, Ryan Davis, he's got like seven sacks, he's doing well. He's the one I guess they didn't let get away."

But Marshall is currently the leading tackler for the No. 4 total defense with 106 tackles in 13 games, or 47 more than the Broncos' next player, safety T.J. Ward. That's a long and winding road, including a find-yourself stint on Interstate 95 in north Florida, from a linebacker who was waived twice by the Jaguars in his rookie season in 2012 and then waived again by the team as 2013's training camp drew to a close.

"After being cut so many times, you do start to question," Marshall said. "After the second time I got cut, I took a long drive, 95 South out of Jacksonville, went to St. Augustine, and I was just thinking, I took some time to myself ... 'What am I doing wrong? Is it me? Why is this happening to me?' I've never been cut before, I've always been someone the team could count on."

On those 41 or so miles of interstate highway, Marshall mulled over being a fifth-round draft pick by the Jaguars and how he couldn't manage to make their depth chart.

"The only answer I came up with was just control what you can control, just control what you can control, keep working no matter what the circumstances are," Marshall said. "Because we all go through hard times, life, football, with jobs, whatever. I felt like a lot of people don't reach their potential, don't reach their peak because they give up too soon. They don't push through the hard times. I think that's what makes a successful person, because if you keep pushing through

the rough times, then you come out, it's almost like cocoon phase, you come out better version of yourself."

And with that thought there was this as well: "If you quit they're right. And then where are you? You're stuck where you was at and nowhere to go."

The story didn't turn all rainbows and sunshine, at least from a football perspective. When Marshall was cut by the Jaguars in training camp in '13, the Broncos signed him to their practice squad.

But instead of cruising in neutral on what Broncos head coach John Fox calls "the developmental squad," Marshall went about the business of being chief irritant to the Broncos' record-setting offense last season, becoming a scout-team all-star.

He was such a star that during the Broncos' 52-20 win over the Philadelphia Eagles in Week 4 last season, Fox strolled over to Marshall, who was on the sideline in street clothes, and gave him a boost.

"Coach Fox came up to me on the sideline and we were winning big and I'm a practice squad player he doesn't have to say anything to me," Marshall said. "He came up to me and said 'Brandon keep working because you're going to get your opportunity.' I thought that was big, me being on practice squad and in the middle of the game, he has a game to coach, come up and talk to me about that. I thought that was big, that gave me extra motivation to keep working."

That opportunity came when Danny Trevathan got hurt in the preseason and again against the New York Jets, and Marshall now finds himself calling the plays in defensive huddle as a linebacker.

He's isn't just there to keep the spot warm either. Trevathan will be moved back on to the roster Saturday from injured reserve/designated to return, but the Broncos will now find a way for Trevathan to play alongside Marshall, because when asked this week if Marshall had played at a Pro Bowl level, Del Rio said;

"I would say he's playing at a Pro Bowl level. For an inside backer in this league, very productive, very active, he does a lot, he doesn't come off the field. He's had a Pro Bowl kind of year. Now what happens typically is you wake people up on the first year and then the next year they vote for you. But who knows ... he's been central to a lot of what we're doing."

"He's coached ... Ray Lewis, Ed Reed, so for him to say that about me means a lot," Marshall said. "It means I'm in pretty good company so far."

Marshall supports domestic violence survivors with clothing drive

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
December 9, 2014

DENVER —Just as easily that trauma can bring out emotions, so can it rob survivors of them.

When Barbara Marshall and her two sons, Brandon and Marcus, fled to an emergency shelter to protect themselves after her ex-husband broke into their house, they saw the array of personal and emotional impacts that domestic violence can cause.

"I think it can make you shut down," Barbara Marshall said. "You can just totally shut down and withdraw. I did see that, too, in the shelter. There were some women, they just sat in the corner and they didn't interact with anyone."

The Marshalls spent 26 days in the shelter 16 years ago with about 30 other women and 60 children. The shelter provided food and safety, but lest they put themselves at risk, those at the shelter had to live secluded lives, unable to tell people where they were. It was an experience that stuck with all of them.

"It's cold in the aspect of there's a lot battered people in there, emotional or emotionless people," Brandon Marshall said. "It's hard because everybody's a little down."

Barbara Marshall and her children grew stronger since those hard times. She instilled in them a perseverance and a dedication. Brandon is now a linebacker for the Broncos, having battled his way from the bottom up into a key role on the defense, and Marcus is now a social worker.

So they all came together on Tuesday wanting to give warmth in more than one way to those who have gone through or are going through the same situation Marshall and his family faced, especially with winter weather here in Denver. So he partnered up with McDonald's and Bailey's Moving & Storage to hold a clothing drive to collect coats and winter clothing for survivors of domestic violence.

"Anything I could do to help or anything that we could do to keep their spirits up is a big plus," Marshall said. "It'll mean a lot, because they might not have access to a coat. There's some nice stuff in here and for them to get new clothes, a new jacket, a new shirt, new shoes, I think it'll mean a lot to them and lift their spirits up."

People drove in to the parking lot at the McDonald's on West Colfax Avenue to drop off their clothes, which filled up big boxes quickly, and the Marshalls eagerly thanked them with photos, autographs or simply a conversation.

The clothing drive, which benefitted the Rose Adom Center—Colorado's first family justice center and what will be an enormous resource for survivors of domestic violence in many facets—also got a very prominent visitor with Denver's Mayor Michael Hancock swinging by to show his support. Hancock, whose sister Karen died from domestic violence, has been motivated to address the issue and support survivors.

"Having lost my sister, and having had many conversations with survivors of domestic violence, whether [they're] family members or those who have come through it themselves, personally, this is a powerful situation in our community and one in which we all have to be diligent to make sure we deal with it effectively," Mayor Hancock said.

The Rose Adom Center plans to open its doors this summer, acting as a hub for over a dozen public and private agencies to offer vital services to domestic violence survivors, and Hancock couldn't be happier to see it so close to fully operating status.

"We've been working on this for so long, and to finally make the progress that we can begin to see the end of the road coming, at least in terms of opening the doors for the first time," Hancock said, "that's an exciting point. We want to get to the point where we're serving people as opposed to raising money for the center."

The center, named for Denver entrepreneur, McDonald's franchise owner and domestic violence survivor Rose Adom, partnered up with the Broncos, who helped fund the center and will collaborate with the center in the future. In addition to the clothing drive, Marshall also helped just a little bit more on Tuesday, giving Adom a personal check to help the center gather resources going forward.

"For those of us who really don't think too much about it because we can afford to go buy a new coat when we need one, it's hard to describe to someone who doesn't have the need, how important it is to have warm clothing, warm coats in the wintertime," Adom said.

For Brandon Marshall and his mother, the clothing drive was a way for them to connect with and help people who were in their situation 16 years ago and just need something to let them know people care and want to support them in difficult times.

"It would just make them feel special," Barbara Marshall said. "You're going through a dark time. It's hard. And to receive a gift, someone thought about you.

When you feel like you're all alone, then to receive a gift like that, it's awesome. It's a great feeling."

And this time of year, it's all the more important to get someone out of the cold, inside and out.

NFL educates teams on basics of domestic violence, sexual assault

By Lindsay H. Jones
USA TODAY Sports
November 12, 2014

NEW YORK -- It took a graphic, shocking video of an NFL player knocking out his fiancée for the league to realize it had majorly mishandled cases involving its players accused of violent crimes against women.

The NFL world has seen what domestic violence looks like, thanks to a grainy surveillance video that showed former Baltimore Raven Ray Rice slugging his now wife in an elevator. Now the league is starting from scratch to teach all its employees, what domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse are, how these crimes occur and what to do if it happens.

The NFL recently gave USA TODAY Sports an inside look at its new 45-minute education program that builds on the basics with blunt definitions of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse and establishes silence is no longer a solution.

For domestic violence, it means learning the signs of an unhealthy relationship, from control issues and jealousy that escalates into verbal and physical abuse. For sexual assault, it means explaining consent, and ways to tell if someone is incapacitated by alcohol or drugs.

"It is important ... to make sure you are very clear about what these issues are. They are crimes and we want to make sure that we are clear when we're communicating with individuals about what they are, what they look like," said Deana Garner, the NFL's director of player engagement and education. "These are very intimate issues that affect people in a very real way, so you have to balance that as far as how you deliver that information."

The goal is to create a baseline knowledge and an understanding that league employees, and especially its players, must hold each other accountable to prevent future family violence or sexual assault incidents.

It's what domestic violence experts describe as the "bystander approach," where ignorance is no longer an excuse, and silence not a solution.

"We all have a responsibility to be an active participant, an active bystander, meaning we have to decide: Do you want to take action, or do you want to be a

silent witness? That's basically saying you're condoning it, and that is not the impression that anyone has given me," said Garner, who is also part of the league's employees and advisors leading the sessions. "They don't want to continue to be silent, if they had never spoken out or taken action before."

The mandatory presentation has been presented to all 32 NFL owners and will be given to all of the teams by the end of the season. It includes video clips that feature a testimonial from Pittsburgh Steelers cornerback William Gay and a call to action from Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson.

Local and national resources — from hotlines and counselors and shelters — and suggestions for what players can do if they believe one of their peers might be in an unhealthy situation are also part of the discussion. The league says it beefed up its focus on the bystander approach after receiving criticism from the NFL Players Association that the initial seminar presented to owners earlier this season too broadly treated players as potential criminals.

"We understand that the majority of the NFL family are making good choices. Most men are not perpetrators and they will never be perpetrators. It's important that we understand that we as men play a role in addressing domestic violence," said Dwight Hollier, a former NFL linebacker-turned-counselor who works in the NFL's player engagement department. "Our silence signals acceptance, and we can no longer be silent. We are sharing education so that we can all be aware, so we can make our families aware, and we can recognize the challenges we face."

Ruth Glenn, the executive director of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, whose organization has not been asked to consult the NFL recently, said it appears the league has most of the education program right.

"I actually think the bystander piece is one of the most critical pieces, because those guys are going to know about it sooner, about each other. The ability of [player] X to go to [player] Y and say, 'You've got a problem, and you've got to get it fixed,' is probably, in my mind, is as important as anything else," Glenn said.

Perhaps no part of the presentation has been more impactful than the video segment featuring Gay, who has become one of the most vocal advocates against domestic violence.

Gay's mother, Carolyn Hall, was murdered by her husband, when Gay was a child, and in the video segment, he shares what it was like showing up at the hospital, where his mother was dying from multiple bullet wounds, and not being allowed to see her. Gay told USA TODAY Sports recently that he remembers his mother as a fighter, but someone who didn't know that there was a way out of her abusive relationship, and becoming an advocate now is Gay's way to honor her.

"The William Gay video, it tears me up. We could just play that video and I think everyone understands why we need to have these conversations and what kind of role we can play in addressing these issues. That video speaks to how important it is to address domestic violence," Hollier said. "It's been out there and we know that domestic violence is out there and it affects everyone in some form or fashion — but when you see something like that, you can't act like you don't know."

Each team will complete the education program by the end of the season and the league will begin making it available to the families of players and other staff in coming weeks, all while NFL officials and their group of domestic violence advisors are working to revise the personal conduct policy and create a formalized domestic violence training program.

Extending the program beyond players and staff was among the topics board members of the official players' wives organization, Off the Field, addressed when they met recently with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell. The family education sessions will be available to anyone living in a player or league employee's house, or a significant other like a girlfriend.

For the player wives' group, the meeting with Goodell was the first time they have been included in policy decisions. Among the suggestions the group shared was the need for a "formal system designed to provide a non-punitive approach" wives can take when red flags arise within their families, said Gail Easley, the wife of former NFL safety Kenny Easley.

"I think that is vital, and critical. If wives are seen as part of the team that supports the player, then there are many opportunities to resolve these issues before they escalate and potentially ruin both the career of the player and the lives of his family," Easley said.

Glenn's advice to the NFL, should the league call and ask for it, would be to make sure the results of the training programs are evaluated at one, two and three-year intervals.

"What have been the outcomes and consequences of this training, positive or negative. Have they really made a difference? Because I really am concerned that there will be the impression or the thought that they can do this once and they will have arrived," Glenn said. "It will take time to change a culture. They won't know that if they let it go, and if they don't take a look back."

A quarter of the NFL's teams have already received the education program.

The Denver Broncos were among the first teams to see the program, and linebacker Brandon Marshall said it didn't include many things he hadn't heard before. But Marshall has already seen domestic violence up close, when he saw his

father assault his mother when Marshall was in fifth grade. To escape, Barbara Marshall fled with her two sons to a battered women's shelter, where they lived until her husband turned himself in to police.

The impactful part of Garner's presentation, Marshall said, was a discussion of practical ways to speak up if a family violence situation is beginning to arise.

"It's hard for someone to just come out and say, 'This is going on in our home,'" said Marshall, who has partnered with Denver Rose Amond, a family justice center in Denver. "I've never even called a woman a name. I know men who will call women names and derogatory terms. I've never hit a woman, I've never flinched at a woman. I just know that's not me and who I want to be. Yeah, I know it's in my lineage, my dad did it — but that's not how I have to be. I don't have to repeat the same action. I just know I won't do that, and that's something I look forward to passing on to my kids, and that's how to treat women, how to respect women as well."

Broncos LB Brandon Marshall ascends quickly by getting noticed

By Troy E. Renck
The Denver Post
November 13, 2014

Good thing Brandon Marshall can't take a hint.

When the Jacksonville Jaguars cut him three times, most recently 15 months ago, the former fifth-round pick refused to relinquish his dream. He believed he could play in the NFL but needed to find someone who believed in him.

The Broncos and Oakland Raiders called. Then Marshall called former Jacksonville teammate Terrance Knighton.

"He was at a crossroads. He had doubts," said Knighton, a defensive tackle. "I told him there was a good opportunity here, that it would get better if he kept working hard."

Marshall arrived in Denver questioning his ability. After a few weeks on the practice squad, teammates questioned why he wasn't on the active roster. Marshall recognized a Peyton Manning audible, calling out the correct coverage.

"I was new. The coaches didn't know me. I could have just been another practice squad guy to them," Marshall said. "I said, 'OK, what's going to make me stand out?' I had to go all out, all the time."

Nine games and seven starts into this season, only Marshall's profile has changed. The weakside linebacker leads the Broncos with 75 tackles, and Wednesday he made one of the biggest hits in practice. He's the Vin Diesel of linebackers, fast and furious.

"In the four-minute drill, BMarsh popped me. I just laughed because I always try to have fun," said C.J. Anderson, who is expected to start at running back Sunday against the St. Louis Rams. "He plays with a chip on his shoulder. He told me I played like that (against the Raiders). Going through what he's gone through made him hungry. He's a (heck) of a player."

Being too quick can be a direct path to the bench without proper technique. What distinguishes Marshall isn't that he arrives at the point of contact on time — he ran the 40-yard dash in 4.62 seconds on his pro day — but his ability to tackle once there. In NFL parlance, Marshall, 6-foot-1½, 238 pounds, plays downhill, a startling

transformation for a player who admitted "tackling was a weakness coming out of college."

He reads and reacts fast — something learned and honed last season — freeing him to pursue the ball carrier with ferocity.

He posted 13 tackles Sunday against the Oakland Raiders and is one of two NFL linebackers with at least 70 tackles and five passes defended this season, a testament to improved balance, controlled aggression and strong fundamentals.

"Naturally athletic and explosive," coach John Fox explained.

Free safety Rahim Moore expanded on the subject. No one possesses a better view of Marshall's weekly clinic. Moore said Marshall could have been the Broncos' player of the game in any of the team's recent victories. Moore singled out coverage of Arizona's Larry Fitzgerald on a corner route.

"I had two seconds to figure it out. Nameless, faceless opponent. I trusted the technique," Marshall said of that play.

He also had repeated third-down stops against the San Diego Chargers.

"He plays like his backside is on fire," Moore said of Marshall. "The defensive tackles make it easier on us, the way they get in their gaps. But he breaks on the ball. His momentum is always going forward. Also, he's a hard-nosed cat. A baller."

Defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio recognized Marshall's growing confidence in practices. When Danny Trevathan broke his left shin in the preseason, then injured his left knee against the New York Jets, Del Rio turned over play-calling responsibilities to Marshall.

Marshall admitted dealing with nerves in the season opener but has transitioned seamlessly in games.

"We want our linebackers to run their portion of it in meetings, make the calls and be strong with it so that the communication is taking place in the meeting that we want on the field," Del Rio said. "So he gets plenty of reps doing it, and I think he's getting more comfortable."

Through big hits, Marshall has become a big hit. He anchors a defense with Super Bowl aspirations. Jacksonville seems like a long time ago and a long way away.

"I did have doubts. Usually when a guy gets cut three times, they are out of the league," Marshall said. "Truth be told, I thought I practiced hard there. It just didn't fit. But when I got to Denver, I wasn't going to let this be the end of the line. I was going to make them notice me."

Marshall finds his place in the NFL

By Lauren Giudice
denverbroncos.com
November 8, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. – In front of the entire country, Brandon Marshall showed he belonged on an NFL roster two years after the team that drafted him decided he didn't belong on theirs.

On fourth-and-goal at the Denver half-yard line, Andrew Luck kept the ball and tried plow through the Broncos' defensive front. His attempt proved futile and he was denied at the line as the Broncos swarmed him and pushed him backwards for a loss.

The first Bronco to meet Luck was Marshall. That play, in the third quarter of the Broncos' first game of the season, was the moment when Marshall realized that he belongs in the NFL.

There were plenty of reasons for him to think otherwise.

From October 2012 to September of 2013, Marshall was waived from the Jacksonville Jaguars three times, including twice in one week. He spent some time on the practice squad during that period, but the uncertainty of his role on the team, and his future in the NFL, weighed on him.

"It's a feeling of rejection," Marshall said of being cut. "It's almost them saying, 'Well you're not good enough so we're going to move on from you.'"

A four year-starter at Nevada where he totaled 259 career tackles, he was accustomed to being "the man" – the person who teammates admire and fans respect. He learned quickly after arriving in Jacksonville the ruthlessness of the NFL and how unforgiving this business is.

"Everybody coming from college, you don't get cut," he said. "You have a scholarship, you're on the team and you were the man on the team. So coming from being the man in college and coming to the NFL, you think you're going to be the man and that doesn't turn out. It's a feeling of rejection.

"It hurts but it's a part of the NFL."

While getting cut is a norm in the league, that feeling of rejection and not being good enough doesn't soften the more times you're waived. Marshall knows all too well what it's like to be the guy packing his belongings.

But that dejected player clearing his locker is long gone now. Just two seasons after struggling to make the roster of the 2-14 Jaguars, he is starting at weakside linebacker for the Broncos and leading the team in tackles.

His rise to the starting role came through unfortunate circumstances as starter Danny Trevathan incurred a fracture near the knee of his left leg on Aug. 12 during training camp practice, which sidelined him for the Broncos' first three games of the season. After Trevathan suffered a different fracture in the same knee on the defense's second snap against the Jets, he was placed on injured reserve with designation to return, giving him the option to come back for the Dec. 14 game against the Chargers.

Once Trevathan was carted off the field in East Rutherford, Marshall didn't hesitate. He grabbed a new helmet, equipped with a radio receiver to hear the calls, and was ready to play.

"Our defense, we never flinch," he said. "So I just came in and I'm like, 'Let's go, man.' We live for this."

These Broncos know better than most the difficulty of replacing first teamers, as they went into the Super Bowl with five defensive starters injured and unable to play. While Marshall is new to hearing his name called as he leaves the tunnel at Sports Authority Field at Mile High, he has adopted this role nearly seamlessly.

Throughout training camp Marshall was playing with the first team primarily as a nickel linebacker, but has evolved into an every-down 'backer, stepping up and becoming what his team needs him to be.

It wasn't an easy journey here as he played in just one game in 2012 for the Jaguars and spent the first 16 weeks of the 2013 season on the Broncos' practice squad. But he sought out the advice of friend and former Jaguars teammate Terrance Knighton when he was evaluating his options after he exhausted his stay in Jacksonville.

Knighton didn't lie to Marshall about his chances of making the team: He told him that he would need to work hard, but that the Broncos were a top-notch organization. Marshall was also considering Oakland and while it likely would have been easier for the linebacker to rise through the ranks there, he followed Knighton to the Mile High City.

"He just said come here and work hard and it's a great organization and you'll be fine," Marshall said. "I trusted that."

"I played with the guy in Jacksonville, seen him get drafted, seen him get cut a few times, come back and keep fighting," Knighton said. "And last year he actually

called me when he was a free agent and said he had a few choices on practice squad that he could make, and I said 'Come to Denver. Just come in, work hard, do what you gotta do. You're going to be on practice squad but work your way up to the active roster.' He did that late in the season. He had a good offseason, came into OTAs working hard, and he's earned his position. I had supreme confidence in him."

While Marshall's fourth-down stop on Luck was his favorite of the season, the Nevada native has racked up plenty of highlights. He played like a veteran during the Broncos' convincing win over the Chargers in Week 8 and seemed to be involved in every play on defense, continuously denying Branden Oliver running room. Pro Football Focus rated Marshall 3.1 and noted that he finished the game with 10 defensive stops, with the whole team combined for 21.

He earned himself the game ball following that performance.

"I have been impressed with Brandon Marshall," Head Coach John Fox said the Monday after the game. "If you go way back, everybody knows his history and where he started the race in the evaluation process. He just keeps getting better and that's something that we talk about a lot.

"He's responded to that and I think he's got opportunity. I know people laugh about 'next man up' but he wouldn't have this opportunity if it hadn't been for an injury and he's taken full advantage of it."

Marshall's experience in Jacksonville makes him more appreciative of not only being a starter, but actually being able to contribute.

"I think I look at it differently than some guys that maybe haven't been waived and haven't been cut," Marshall said. "I have a different outlook on it for the simple fact that I know that at any day it can be taken away. I got cut twice in one week before and both times I had no idea. I just know, okay, well I have to do this if I want to stay in the league and if I want to stay productive."

He certainly has been productive with 60 tackles through eight games and he is just one of four linebackers in the NFL with at least five pass break ups. He and the Ravens' C.J. Mosley are the only linebackers this season with at least 50 tackles and five passes defended.

In addition to Marshall's ability to make plays, he's also been taken on a leadership role as he is the player calling the signals in the huddle. A near-NFL reject just a couple years ago is now leading well-established league veterans like DeMarcus Ware, T.J. Ward and Aqib Talib.

That fact alone speaks volumes of his progress and willingness to adapt to any role.

"You know when you get that sort of opportunity or second opportunities to play the game, you sit back and think about what's important, you think about opportunity you have," Ware said. "I feel like he sees that moment and he is where he is right now from how hard he's worked.

"Sometimes when you're at the bottom you figure out how to crawl to the top. I think it started with him being, first of all, a listener at the bottom and now a more vocal leader at the top."

Marshall has been everywhere during the Broncos' first eight games. His contributions have been numerous and his play has been instrumental in allowing the Broncos to move up the defensive ranks, as they are now first in the NFL in rushing yards per game and seventh in total yards allowed.

Since his time in Jacksonville, he believes he has improved in all aspects of his game. In college he struggled with missed tackles, but based on the tape, that appears to be a lapse of the past. He also noted that his pass coverage and his speed have improved and while he wasn't on the active roster for most of last season, that time on the practice squad helped him develop into the playmaker he is today.

"When you go against an offense like this, which is one of the most potent in NFL history, you go up against an offense with Wes Welker and all these guys, it allows you to get better," Marshall said. "It pushes you to a different limit and if you're working diligently like you should be on practice squad, then you'll improve."

Facing the likes of Welker, Demaryius Thomas, Peyton Manning and Knowshon Moreno on the practice squad last season forced him to improve. He said when he was on the Jaguars' practice squad for six weeks, he didn't see himself develop. Practicing against the Broncos' potent offense, he had the choice to rise or fall behind. He chose the former.

Marshall and T.J. Ward were the only two Broncos to play every defensive snap during the Broncos' first three games of the season. Marshall averages over 68 defensive snaps per game, good for 93.8 percent of the D's time on the field.

Defensive Coordinator Jack Del Rio said part of the mindset that allows Marshall to do so well is that he doesn't dwell on his past, but instead, he's looking to improve.

"I think he's more interested in being what he can be as a player, not really worried about what was, but thinking more about what he can make of this opportunity and with career," Del Rio said Thursday. "I'm really proud of him. He's going to get better. That's what I keep telling him. I say, 'Look, you've done a nice job. You need to continue to get better and you can continue. There's room for you to grow, so continue to work hard and do the things you've been doing.'"

Del Rio has been very complimentary of Marshall since he undertook the starting role, regarding both his play and his leadership. Preceding the Broncos' Thursday night game against the Chargers, he spoke about the expectations that the defensive coaches have for linebackers, which go beyond making key tackles. The linebackers need to run their personnel and be excellent communicators. Marshall is thriving in those additional facets of his expanded role.

Just as the defensive coaching staff did last season in preparing the second-stringers for starting roles, Del Rio made sure Marshall was prepared to be a contributor.

"We work hard as a staff to make sure that the guys that are in backup roles are preparing to be a guy that could be called on," Del Rio said. "And then when they are called on, we make sure that we lean on some of the things that we have taught them. We build their confidence, and we do that through some of the basic fundamentals and how we do it: understanding of the scheme, and then their confidence will grow as they have success and as they earn it.

"I think that's what's happened with Brandon. He's done a great job coming in and working hard. The staff, Richard Smith, all the coaches have done a good job working hard with him and he's the guy that's gotten it done for us on the field."

Marshall's focus doesn't stray. Even watching from the sidelines at practice, his intensity and willingness to learn is obvious.

He hardly reflects on how he and his status in the NFL have evolved. Just as he remains focused in practice, he's focused on the task ahead. On the rare occasion that he does allow himself to take the time to think about his past and his progress, it humbles him.

"I think the experience of being cut made me who I am today," he said. "Everybody goes through different things for different reasons.

"We each have different tests and challenges. I think my first two years kind of molded me into the mindset I have today and the player I am today."

Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall forging his own NFL identity

By Mike Garafolo
Fox Sports
October 23, 2014

At the end of his 2012 rookie season, after bouncing back and forth between the practice squad and active roster, Jacksonville Jaguars linebacker Brandon Marshall had a conversation with position coach Mark Duffner that would stick with him.

"He said, 'You have to get your stuff together because I don't know if you're going to make it, if this is for you,'" Marshall recalled in a conversation with FOX Sports the other day. "I got upset. I got mad. I didn't want to yell or say something I shouldn't say, so I just kept it in internally and used that for motivation. That was fuel to the fire. "I'll never forget he said that. To this day I still think about it."

That was a 2-14 Jaguars team -- tied for worst in the NFL -- and here was one of the coaches of the team telling a fifth-round draft pick he might not be cut out to play in the league. Aside from being out of the NFL completely, it doesn't get any lower than that. Yet within about 20 months, Marshall has proven this league is for him.

Due to a recurring knee injury to Denver Broncos weakside linebacker Danny Trevathan, Marshall has gone from a near-castoff on one of the NFL's worst teams to a starter on one of its best. He's leading a much-improved Broncos defense in tackles and is calling the signals in the huddle on game days and heading up meetings during the week. During Thursday night's AFC West showdown with the San Diego Chargers, he will stare into the eyes of proven veterans such as DeMarcus Ware, Von Miller, Aqib Talib and T.J. Ward and command them to follow him.

Marshall's tale is one of the under-told stories of this NFL season. It's a testament to professional dedication, a story of personal perseverance in overcoming a rough upbringing in a home where domestic violence was a constant threat. And a story of mistaken identity ("I do not play for the Bears," reads his Twitter profile, in reference to wide receiver Brandon Marshall, who played for the Broncos and Miami Dolphins before heading to Chicago.)

And it's still being written.

"When he got cut by Jacksonville, he was at a crossroads in his life when he was kind of doubting himself," said Broncos defensive tackle Terrance Knighton, a teammate of Marshall's with the Jaguars as well. "He had an opportunity to come here, and I told him to just keep working, keep get better. He's taking advantage of everything and he's not looking back.

"He prepares well, he practices well, his body is changing physically. He's treating it like a true professional."

Marshall didn't step right into a prominent role with the Broncos when he arrived last September. In fact, he spent nearly the entire season on the practice squad. But like Knighton said, Marshall handled his job like a true pro.

By all accounts from teammates and staff members, Marshall gave the starting offense fits in practice. He covered tight end Julius Thomas better than most opposing linebackers did on Sundays, he stopped the run and he even flustered Peyton Manning. During a late-season practice, Marshall recognized what play the offense was about to run based on the formation, so he yelled out, "Sprintout left!"

"You should've seen how he looked at me. He was in shock," a laughing Marshall said of Manning. "He snapped the ball, and it was a sprintout. I was like, 'I knew it!' That was one of my favorite moments."

The Broncos hand out a scout-team player of the week award. Marshall estimated he won it 10 or 11 times last year.

This year, when Trevathan suffered a cracked bone in his leg in training camp, the Broncos were confident Marshall could step in at the weakside spot for a few weeks. In his first three games, Marshall had a combined 30 tackles, two passes defensed, one sack and a forced fumble. Trevathan returned in Week 5, but one game later, he suffered another crack in the same bone and the team placed him on injured reserve with a designation to return, which means Marshall knew he had another eight-week stint as a starter coming his way.

This time around, he had built up credibility with the veterans because of his play early in the season. In Sunday's blowout victory over the San Francisco 49ers, Marshall led the team with eight tackles and added a pass defensed.

The stat that couldn't be measured was the confidence with which he led the defense during the week of preparation for that game.

"We want our linebackers to run their portion of it, make the calls and be strong with it so that the communication is taking place in the meeting that we want on the field," defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio said. "So he gets plenty of reps doing it and he's getting better at it. I think he's getting more comfortable."

It takes a strong will for a player with little experience to step up in front of the kind of veterans the Broncos have on their defense and speak in a confident voice the way Marshall has. Ask him where and how he developed that side of his personality and he will point you to his childhood.

Marshall was 9 years old when his father burst into the house where Brandon, his mother Barbara, his older brother Marcus and two younger cousins were staying. Brandon's father had been in and out of his life for some time and was struggling with a separation from Barbara, so the family immediately recognized the threat of the unannounced visit.

Brandon recalls picking up his little cousin and running. He says his father chased another cousin into a bedroom, where he then knocked a phone out of the cousin's hands as the cousin was trying to call the police.

"He and my mom were in the bathroom scuffling for a minute," Brandon recalls now in a hushed tone. "When he walked out, he gave me this look. I'll never forget it. He just wasn't himself. He's a different man now, but ..."

After the incident, the family moved into a shelter, where they knew they'd be safe until Brandon's father turned himself in to the police. They remained there for 26 days, according to Barbara. Brandon's father served about three years in prison following the incident.

"During that time (in the shelter), it helped us grow closer and we saw there were other people who had worse stories than ours," said Barbara, who now lives in Virginia but travels to Denver about once per month to see her son. "That just helped my children see that, even through adversity, you can grow. I tried to keep them going and motivated." Brandon and his father now speak occasionally. Though their relationship hasn't completely healed, Brandon remains in touch with his father and visited him last year when he was sick.

It's Barbara whom Brandon credits with serving as his inspiration. She cared for the family for years and remained hopeful even when they were living in a mobile home during Brandon's early years. One year on her birthday, Barbara was asked by her father what she wanted for a gift.

"She said, 'I just want a tank of gas to get to work,'" Brandon said, recalling the story his grandfather told him. "It was just things like that and my mom's resiliency, with us not having the best situation and my dad being in and out. When that big incident finally happened, when we had to run from him because he was being abusive, me, my mom and brother jelled, we became tight-knit. It was just us. We knew we had to hold each other down."

The recent run of domestic-violence incidents involving NFL players brought back some harsh memories for Marshall.

"That's tough. No man should put his hands on a woman," he said. "I saw what my mom had to go through. I would never do it. Just having that experience and seeing what it does to a woman, it's not right at all."

All of the adversity Marshall experienced in his early years and even at the start of his NFL career has only made the recent good times that much sweeter. He knows life is good when one of his biggest problems is being confused for his name doppelgänger.

When the Broncos' Marshall tweeted a Bible verse, a fan retweeted him and added, "And the Lord urges thee to get some freaking fantasy points bro." A Bears fan quickly informed the young man the divine intervention was misdirected.

But Marshall's favorite story about mistaken identity came when he went to his hometown of Las Vegas on Memorial Day weekend and was told by a friend that a club wanted him to host an event. Knowing he'd get VIP treatment and a nice payday, Marshall said sure. When he arrived and was escorted inside the club, he could tell the people running the party were expecting a different Brandon Marshall.

"I heard somebody say, 'That ain't him. Get him out of here,'" Marshall recalled. "They tell me they want to see my NFL card, so I give them that, they Google me and they're like, 'Is this you?' 'No, I play linebacker for the Broncos.' 'Ohhhhhhh!'"

"They're mad at me, like I'm the impostor, but I'm mad because I'm the right one, they just think I'm the other one."

Marshall just realizes he has to make a name for himself. It was that way for him even when he was in Jacksonville and was struggling to gain the trust of the coaches. On the way to practice one day, a young linebacker named Greg Jones, who was also a late-round pick struggling to hang on to his NFL career, sensed he needed a pep talk.

"I've seen you play and I don't know why they treat you like this," said Jones, who had a brief stint as a starter with the New York Giants but is now out of the league.

"Those simple words were so profound. He didn't have to say anything else," Marshall said. "Just him saying that let me know I am good enough, I can play in this league, I am a good talent. He probably doesn't know until this day, but that little speech propelled me. When I was on practice squad, I was like, 'I can do it.' It lifted my spirits and I just kept working."

"And now, look where I am."

Broncos' Brandon Marshall is now used to being mistaken for Bears' Brandon Marshall

By Lindsay Jones
FTW/USAToday.com
September 23, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. – Denver Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall grew accustomed to being mistaken – in name only – for the NFL's other Brandon Marshall, the much more famous wide receiver now with the Chicago Bears. But sometimes having the same name as one of the NFL's most famous wide receivers can get exhausting.

Monday night was one of those times, especially after the Bears' Marshall suffered a leg injury during the Bears' Monday Night Football game against the New York Jets.

Hundreds of Twitter users flooded the wrong Marshall's timeline, many of them berating Marshall for not catching enough passes. Some implored him to get back on the field. Others cursed at him. Most seemed concerned about their fantasy teams, while others were confused about how Marshall could be tweeting and replying during the game.

"There was another situation when it happened last year, but he was doing good. This time, they were mad because he got hurt," Marshall told USA TODAY Sports on Tuesday.

"I was bored, so I was like, 'I'm just going to play along.'"

Marshall estimated he received about 700 Twitter mentions from the time the Monday night game started and when he awoke Tuesday morning. He couldn't read all of them, but he skimmed through them and replied to some of his favorites.

Finally, he turned off his notifications and went into his Twitter account to update his bio, adding "I do not play for the Bears!!"

"It's been happening forever obviously, I just think it's magnified because he's more visible because of the stuff he's doing, and then fantasy is always crazy," Marshall said.

But now that Marshall is making a name for himself – he's started three games for the Broncos, and currently is tied for the team lead in tackles – maybe there will be less confusion.

"I guess I got to keep working, maybe I need a pick six," Marshall said.

This Brandon Marshall is NFL's Rodney Dangerfield

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
September 11, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Linebacker Brandon Marshall led the Denver Broncos with nine tackles in his first career NFL start and added a key tackle on special teams that reversed a 92-yard touchdown return.

So, when he reaches into his locker Wednesday for a rare bit of fan mail, he figures he's about to open a letter congratulating him.

Out pop two football cards of the OTHER Brandon Marshall, the one making millions of dollars catching passes for the Chicago Bears. And a note, asking if he could autograph the cards and mail them back in the return envelope to a town in Iowa.

"Hey, I don't get why you would send a Chicago Bears card to the Broncos facility. It doesn't make sense," Marshall said as he showed his fellow linebackers who were laughing along with him.

Marshall gets confused with his superstar namesake all the time on Twitter and Instagram.

"Now I get it in the mail, too," Marshall said. "I get it all over, man."

He'll need more games like he had Sunday night when he was filling in for leading tackler Danny Trevathan to finally get some respect, it looks like.

Then, maybe fans will send him his real football cards to sign.

"Exactly. But I don't even know if I have a card, honestly," said Marshall, who was drafted in the fifth round out of Nevada by Jacksonville in 2012 only to get cut three times by the Jaguars. "I've never seen a rookie card of mine. Even though I was drafted. Maybe they'll make one."

Marshall relayed defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio's calls and never came out of the game for a breather in Denver's 31-24 win over Indy. He played all 74 defensive snaps, tied for the team lead with Rahim Moore, and six more on special teams.

"There's nothing like that first regular season game," coach John Fox said. "The speed of the game picks up, obviously the length of your playing time (does, too). So, we've got to do a little bit better job of maybe taking some of those pitches off of him. But all in all, I think he did well."

Marshall had some moments he'd like back, like when he couldn't bring down tight end Dwayne Allen on a long touchdown catch-and-run. But the good plays outnumbered the bad ones.

Marshall's biggest play came when he stuffed Andrew Luck's sneak on fourth-and-goal. He also came up with a huge play on special teams after being pressed into additional duties when Nate Irving banged a knee and briefly left the game.

"That made it even more tiring for me on defense," Marshall said. "But I've still got to do what I have to do to help us win the game."

He did by dragging down punt returner Griff Whalen at the Colts 10-yard line early in the fourth quarter only to see Whalen pop up and run for what was originally ruled a 92-yard touchdown.

Replays showed Marshall forced Whalen's right knee to the grass, however, and the call was corrected.

"I knew he was down. That's why I got up and I was like, 'What's going on?' He's still running but he was down," Marshall said.

Trevathan is expected to miss another two games, and Marshall's hoping for more games like his debut, then to contribute heavily in the linebacker rotation and on special teams.

If that happens, he might finally make a name for himself and stop getting confused with the other Brandon Marshall, the one makes more money in one week — \$535,294 — than the Broncos' Marshall will all season — \$495,000.

He held up the two football cards from the mistaken fan again.

"Maybe I should just sign these with my No. 54 and send them back. Maybe I'll do that," he said as he went in search of a Sharpie.

Marshall stands strong in first NFL start

By Ben Swanson
denverbroncos.com
September 8, 2014

DENVER — Long before we saw Brandon Marshall make his momentous goal-line stand stopping Andrew Luck on fourth down, he was stuck in a tough spot trying to figure out where his NFL career was headed on the practice squad.

After Marshall was cut for the third time by the Jacksonville Jaguars in August of 2013, he had to find new surroundings. Jacksonville had drafted him in the fifth round of the 2012 draft, but they wavered on retaining him, shuffling him off and on their practice squad before cutting ties a year later.

Looking at a spot on a practice squad for one of two teams — Denver or Oakland — Marshall looked for advice from an old friend: Terrance Knighton.

Knighton had been on the Jaguars with Marshall before he left for greener pastures in Denver, and Marshall wanted to get the skinny on playing in their defense before making a choice.

"I said 'Come to Denver. Just come in, work hard, do what you gotta do,'" Knighton recalled. "'You're going to be on practice squad, but work your way up to the active roster.'"

The move has paid dividends for Marshall, who has been forced to acclimate quickly in a big-time starting position with the knee injury to starting linebacker Danny Trevathan. To Marshall's credit, he's played pretty admirably, though much of what we've seen this season in that starting role has been in the preseason. But his solid preseason play looked like it carried over to the first regular season game.

Marshall totaled 10 tackles (eight solo), including two for loss and one pass deflection.

The biggest of those was the aforementioned defensive stop with mere feet separating Andrew Luck from the end zone on fourth down in the third quarter. Refused easy entry on his initial effort to sneak across the goal line, Luck bounced back and tried to muster up a second endeavor. But Marshall wasn't going to wait for that. He met Luck behind the line of scrimmage and downed him for a short loss that forced the Colts into turning the ball over on downs.

"We knew they were going to try to sneak," Marshall said. "They got a big quarterback. The guy's like 235, 240 so we got in our little sneak formation and the guy bounced right to me and I made the play."

Luck's mobility and size has made his ability to pick up yards on the ground notorious for defenses preparing to play him.

At 235 pounds, Luck can pick up some steam when his legs start churning. But Marshall is 242 pounds and with Luck struggling to keep his forward momentum, the linebacker easily wrapped him up.

That wasn't all Marshall did, of course. As part of the corps of linebackers, Marshall's play was instrumental in helping control Indianapolis' run game, which was held to 54 total yards.

The defense, which relentlessly put the clamps on the Colts' offense in the first half, unfortunately relented in giving up big offensive plays in the fourth quarter. Such is the danger in playing against Luck, who led the Colts to a playoff comeback victory in January after being down 28 points against the Chiefs.

"We saw what he did in the playoffs," Marshall said of Luck after Sunday's game. "He came back from a huge deficit. That's just the ebbs and flows of every game. They have a great team. You know, they're getting paid as well. We just have to keep fighting and try to finish."otos: Broncos vs. Colts

Finish they did, though it was not without drama. With Luck mounting another comeback bid trying to march Indianapolis to the end zone for a tying touchdown with under three minutes left in the game, the defense had to make one last stop to seal the win. The Colts had gotten into enemy territory, but they couldn't convert in their last four attempts, failing to connect on a last gasp that was defended perfectly by cornerback Bradley Roby.

It takes an entire team to step up together to close out a game like that. The team got impact performances at all positions on defense: The defensive line brought pressure on the quarterback and helped contain the Colts' rushing attack. The secondary forced turnovers and covered well. It was an all-around great defensive effort against a very strong passing offense. For his part, Marshall, too, has stepped up his play in proportion to his new role as a starter. It's one that requires a lot of confidence, but he's put in the work to back it up.

"When I'm out there, I just got to believe I'm the best player on the field. Whether it's the case or not, you have to know that or you have to believe that in yourself," he said. "You have to have this confidence in you that you're the best out there. I work like it, so I have to believe it. I go out there to try to give it perfect effort and

hopefully I'll have many more games like this, but better than this because I thought I could have played better."

Regardless, that kind of game in a prime-time season opener is a very respectable start to build upon for Marshall.

Busting your butt under the bright lights before a roaring crowd and NBC's cameras just makes that 2013 phone call with Terrance Knighton about a practice squad spot seem all the more distant, yet all the more significant.

"He said, 'You'll love it here and you'll do well.' I believed him," Marshall said.

"I got on the flight the next day, and now I'm here."

Marshall leads Broncos in shutout

By Lauren Guidice
DenverBroncos.com
August 17, 2014

SANTA CLARA, Calif. – In his first game starting at weakside linebacker and calling the plays on defense, Brandon Marshall and the Broncos shut out the 49ers.

Not bad.

It may have been just a preseason game, but Marshall's five-tackle performance, where he took reps with both the first team and second team defense, shows his progress and his potential in replacing injured Danny Trevathan.

Marshall said he "felt at home."

"I feel comfortable," Marshall said. "It's all about your preparation. I prepared well. I thought I played pretty decent, so I was excited about being out there."

Though this was his first career game having the helmet microphone and calling the plays, he enjoyed the challenge.

"I've always been just waiting to get the calls from somebody else," he said. "To be out there and make the call is fun. I like it -- it's fun. I like it. It keeps you really focused. It keeps you in tuned to everything else going on."

Marshall played the first quarter and some of the second. But the first-team defense, along with Marshall, set a tone for the defense that was maintained the rest of the game. During the first quarter with the No. 1 defense on the field, Colin Kaepernick and Co. were kept out of the end zone.

The 49ers only gained 166 more yards during the remainder of the contest and, with two missed field goals, were left with a goose egg in their unveiling of Levi's Stadium.

"You shut any team out, especially the Niners with what they've done these past few years, [it's exciting]," T.J. Ward said. "You get a shutout against any team, that shows your depth, especially in the preseason with first, second, third string. They all came to play, and I think we did a great job today."

Ward was pleased with Marshall's willingness to step up and lead the defense and said that "wasn't too big for him."

He consistently plugged holes and prevented San Francisco's running game from finding momentum, and it only gained 69 yards on the ground. Marshall and the

rest of the defense contained Kaepernick, whose ability to make big plays on the ground can cause headaches for any defense.

"The fact he can hurt you with his feet, you got to respect that part of him," Terrance Knighton said. "We just want to do a good job of keeping guys in the pocket and corralling him. We got guys like DeMarcus [Ware] and Malik [Jackson] and [Derek] Wolfe, guys who can chase down quarterbacks like that. It makes it a lot easier, and I'm pretty sure they're aware of the guys they got rushing."

Kaepernick finished five of nine for 39 yards. Marshall was appreciative of the defensive line for their performance.

"We have great defensive tackles," Marshall said. "I need to take those guys out for steaks or shrimps or whatever they want, because those guys do a great job of keeping us clean. Any great linebacker has good defensive linemen in front of them, so I'm just happy to have those guys in front of me."

While linebackers are key in coordinating and organizing the defense, Marshall didn't miss a beat. The Broncos have a "next man up" attitude. When one player goes down, the next on the depth chart is expected to be ready. Marshall took on that challenge.

He had some pregame nerves but once the game began with that first snap the anxiety disappeared and his preparation took over. While Marshall only played in one game last season with one defensive tackle and one special-teams tackle, he has a unique perspective with extensive knowledge of the Broncos defense as he was on the Broncos' practice squad for the first 16 weeks of last season.

Cornerback Tony Carter, who had one of the defense's two interceptions of the day, has spent time on both the Broncos and Patriots practice squads.

"He's one of the guys who knows what he's doing out there," Carter said. "I'm excited for him to get the opportunity... I was on the practice squad myself when I first came in the league and it definitely helps you learn everything and grasp the system. He's doing a good job."

Taking reps with the first-team defense was an exciting opportunity for Marshall, especially since it gave him the opportunity to line up on the other side of former Nevada teammate Kaepernick.

Marshall left one goal out on the field.

"I wanted to [sack him] but they didn't call a blitz," Marshall said. "Next time, maybe I'll get him."

With little experience, Brandon Marshall now calling Broncos defensive plays

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
August 15, 2014

Mere days ago, Brandon Marshall had barely stepped on an NFL field when it counted. His next NFL tackle will be his second.

High school, college or pros, Marshall had said few words in a defensive huddle, much less call a play.

"Never," he said. "I never played Mike (middle) backer in my life. Never made any calls."

That all changed Thursday, when the Broncos' equipment guys put a speaker in Marshall's helmet. Marshall not only went from backup replacing the injured Danny Trevathan as the Broncos' starting weakside linebacker, he suddenly was calling the plays for the likes of DeMarcus Ware.

"It's funny, he was looking back at me today: 'What's the call?' " Marshall said. "I tell him, 'It's this, it's this.' And then this guy over here says, 'What's the call?' I tell him. I have to make sure I speak loud and speak clear and confidently so everybody can hear me."

Marshall, a third-year linebacker from Nevada, was surprised to be given such a heady task.

He thought the job of relaying signals from defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio to the huddle would go to middle linebacker Nate Irving.

But middle linebackers as defensive leaders are so 20th century. The Broncos employ their various sub packages (extra defensive backs) about 65 percent of the time. Irving starts in the base — and when he's in there he does often yell out the defensive signals after he is relayed the call from Marshall — but then comes out in sub packages.

Marshall plays every snap.

"I enjoyed it," he said. "Today was my first day. You have to get the call, you have to make sure everybody gets the call — because you have guys asking for it. Then you have to look at the (offensive) formation. You have to make sure everybody's lined up. You have to make sure you're lined up, take care of your own

responsibility. After all that, you have to play fast. There's a lot to it. I liked it, actually. Keeps you focused."

Wait a minute. Part of the job is to look at the offensive formation. Does that mean Marshall is out there matching wits in practice with Peyton Manning?

"Today I tried to make a check off one of his checks," Marshall said, smiling.

Lamin Barrow, a rookie weakside linebacker, will call the plays for the second-team defense Sunday in the Broncos' preseason game against San Francisco. Steven Johnson, a third-year middle linebacker, will call plays as usual for the third-team defense.

Broncos' Marshall: 'I will get it done'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

August 14, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- He's gotten bombarded on Twitter because, well, folks think he's another Brandon Marshall.

But @BMarshh54 is not the former Denver Broncos wide receiver now with the Chicago Bears who bears the same name. He is, however, the guy the Broncos will give the first chance to replace one of their most difficult players to replace on defense, injured linebacker Danny Trevathan.

Trevathan suffered a medial tibial impaction fracture in his left leg during Tuesday's morning practice and is expected to miss six to eight weeks in his recovery. And while Broncos head coach John Fox is not usually one to immediately declare the player who will replace an injured teammate, it was Marshall who got the first swing after Trevathan left Tuesday's first practice.

Marshall also worked in Trevathan's weakside linebacker spot later in the day as well when the team had an evening walk-through and is expected to line up with the starters when the team returns to the field Thursday morning. Asked if that's how it would go in the weeks to come -- the Broncos hope Trevathan will return to the lineup following their bye for a Week 5 game against the Arizona Cardinals -- Fox simply offered:

"Time will tell. In this league it's all about opportunity, we'll see what they do."

Marshall, though, is first in line with rookie Lamin Barrow and Corey Nelson -- both Broncos draft picks this past May -- as fallback possibilities. But it's Marshall who has already lined up alongside Trevathan at linebacker in some of the Broncos' specialty packages during this training camp and it's Marshall who the Broncos thought enough of to promote to the active roster from their practice squad just before the playoffs last December when Von Miller went to injured reserve.

"I'm very confident," Marshall said. "Confidence is a big part of this game and I know I have the skill set; I have the mind to do it. So it's just a matter of the opportunity. So if I ever have the opportunity, I will get it done."

This will be his opportunity, at least until Trevathan, who was the team's leading tackler last season with 124, returns to the lineup. The difficulty in replacing

Trevathan, even over the short term, will be that the Broncos really don't have another player at the position who can do what Trevathan does as well as Trevathan does it.

Trevathan is stout enough to hold up in run defense along the line of scrimmage and athletic enough to work in coverage down the field. He has top-tier closing speed to the ball and he finishes plays when he gets there.

So, there will likely have to be a mix-and-match approach -- everyone will get a first look at that in Sunday's preseason game against the San Francisco 49ers -- until Trevathan's return. In large part that's because Marshall was already being used in one of the linebacker spots in the Broncos' nickel package before Trevathan was injured.

When the Broncos have lined up the second-team nickel in practice it's been Barrow and Marshall at the two linebacker spots, so that should be how it looks with the starters now. Barrow has also worked as the backup middle linebacker in the base defense and the Broncos liked his athleticism in his pre-draft work as Barrow showed the ability in the high-powered SEC to shed blockers and get to the ball in his career at LSU.

"This is an opportunity for some young guys to get some work done," Fox said. "We'll hold down the fort until [Trevathan] gets back."

Brandon Marshall out to make a name for himself

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
August 14, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Brandon Marshall is embracing the opportunity to make a name for himself with the Denver Broncos.

If he can do that, maybe fans will stop mistaking him for the Chicago Bears' 30-year-old star wide receiver with the same name, the one who wore out his welcome in Denver five years ago.

The Brandon Marshall now playing in Denver was drafted in the fifth round out of Nevada in 2012 by the Jacksonville Jaguars, who would cut him three times before the Broncos added him on their practice squad last year and then activated him for the season finale and the playoffs.

The 24-year-old linebacker is getting first crack at filling in for Danny Trevathan after Denver's leading tackler broke his left knee at Tuesday's practice.

This Brandon (Markieth) Marshall gets confused with that Brandon (Tyrone) Marshall "all day, every day," he said. "Twitter, Instagram, you name it."

On Instagram, fans see his face, his jersey and his No. 54, "but they still ask me, 'Why do you post so many Broncos pictures?'" Marshall said.

He estimates that he gets about 150 misdirected tweets every day from people mistaking him for the five-time Pro Bowl receiver who has made public his borderline personality disorder and who makes more money in one week — \$535,294 — than Marshall will all season — \$495,000.

"People ask me for donations," Marshall said. "People talk about mental health and say you're doing a great job. I used to respond as jokes but now I don't even respond. I figure, 'One day I'm just going to make a name for myself.'"

He's getting that chance with Trevathan out for the remainder of the preseason and likely the first month of the regular season.

Marshall, who was already playing alongside Trevathan in the nickel, has a message for Broncos fans who don't really know much about him.

"I'm ready. I've always been ready," he said. "I've been playing this game since I was 8 years old. So, it's really nothing for me."

Oh, and his Twitter handle is @BMarshh54. THAT Brandon Marshall's is @BMarshall.

And this Brandon Marshall promises there will be no drop-off in Denver's defense even though Trevathan led the team with 124 tackles last season and added a team-best two dozen more in the playoffs.

"I will get it done," said Marshall, who had the earpiece in his helmet at practice Thursday so he could get the calls from coordinator Jack Del Rio and relay them to the defense just like Trevathan does.

Marshall played weakside linebacker in the base, alongside Lamin Barrow in the nickel and as the lone linebacker in the dime defense.

"It was a new experience for me," Marshall said. "I've never played 'mike' linebacker before. I've never made the calls before. It was fun, actually. It stressed me in a way I've never been stressed before. But I liked it. I liked the challenge since I know the defense. And like I said, they only sign smart linebackers here and they expect you to know everything."

Del Rio said Marshall turned heads last season with his work ethic, and now "I'm excited to get a chance to really evaluate him in a more prominent role. He's an athletic linebacker. Much like Danny, he has a nose for the ball. And we'll just see where it goes."

Notes: RB C.J. Anderson returned to practice one week after leaving the Broncos' preseason opener with a concussion. ... The Broncos have replaced the blare of simulated crowd noise at practice with a variety of popular songs. Says coach John Fox: "It makes them focus more. If they know the song, like the song, they have to concentrate on what they're doing whereas the jet engine noise isn't quite as distracting."

Broncos LB Brandon Marshall living Super Bowl dream of grandfather

By Thomas George
The Denver Post
January 29, 2014

NEWARK, N.J. — This Brandon Marshall is not that Brandon Marshall.

Oh, he gets it. The confusion comes in quirky ways. He gazed at the glut of reporters crammed into Super Bowl media day Tuesday at the Prudential Center and realized if he were that Brandon Marshall, he would be swamped.

But that Brandon Marshall — the Broncos receiver from 2006-09 — is now a Chicago Bear.

This Brandon Marshall was drafted by Jacksonville in 2012, played in five games, was cut three times, was signed by the Broncos last September, rode the practice squad for 15 games, made the Broncos' active roster on Christmas Eve and now is on special teams and is a reserve linebacker who will play in Super Bowl XLVIII.

That Brandon Marshall has played eight NFL seasons and in 123 NFL games. This Brandon Marshall has played two NFL seasons and in eight NFL games. That Brandon Marshall is a five-time Pro Bowl player. This Brandon Marshall has six career tackles. That Brandon Marshall can be as flamboyant and raucous as any NFL player you will find. This Brandon Marshall speaks as softly as a lullaby.

This Brandon Marshall is in the Super Bowl. Everyone knows his name, but few know him at all.

He is the kind of player, the type of person who brings texture to the Super Bowl, who makes it real and makes it full of wonder. This colossal game has a way of finding the anonymous and making them distinctive. It can thrust the humble into focus.

What's in a name?

"Coming up, nearly everybody here was a star on their college teams," said Marshall, who was that at the University of Nevada. "But sometimes you can go from being the big fish in a small pond to being the small fish in a big pond. Sometimes you get here and it seems like your NFL career is instantly hanging in the balance. I kept fighting. I'm one of those guys where one team's trash became another team's treasure."

He received tweets in September when Denver signed him that read: "You back with the Broncos? On the practice squad!"

And: "Glad you are back!"

Even now, he gets them: "Great catch, Brandon! You were great this week!"

A Broncos fan mailed him a photo of that Brandon Marshall and wanted him to sign it and send it back.

"At the airport sometimes," said Marshall, "I show the security my I.D., and they yell, 'You're Brandon Marshall!' "

Yes he is. This one. Not that one.

He is 24. He grew up in Las Vegas the youngest of three children. He arrived in Denver last September ready to work. His teammates noticed. His coaches noticed. And when linebacker Von Miller was lost due to a torn ACL against Houston in the 15th game of the regular season, the Broncos rewarded Marshall.

It sent a resounding message to the player, and to the team.

"He was executing in practice, turning heads, working hard and studying hard," Broncos linebacker Danny Trevathan said. "We all knew as his teammates that he was a player. But sometimes in this league, players don't get what they deserve. He deserved that. It's a great feeling for the guys around him to see that he got what he deserved. That makes every player believe more in what is being preached and in the team and even in the franchise. He deserves it all."

A roster spot. A special-teams nod. The backup at "Will" linebacker to Trevathan.

"Great kid," Broncos coach John Fox said of Marshall. "He's going to be a really good young player for us."

Marshall's grandfather had a dream.

"A couple of weeks before I was cut in Jacksonville last August, my grandfather called me and said he had this dream," Marshall said of "Little" Roy Williams, 86, who lives in Las Vegas. "He said he woke up at 2 in the morning after having a dream that I was playing in the Super Bowl. He was so excited. I was thinking it was a nice thought, but we were a building team in Jacksonville that was far from that goal. And now, less than five months later, I'm a Bronco really here in the Super Bowl.

"Everything has happened the way it was supposed to," Marshall said. "God has a plan for me. It's the right time. Right now."

For Brandon Marshall, a Broncos promotion is great gift

By Joan Niesen
The Denver Post
December 29, 2013

Brandon Marshall got the best Christmas gift he could have imagined. As much of America was sitting down to Christmas Eve dinner Tuesday night, the linebacker received word that the Broncos would be signing him off their practice squad and to their 53-man roster. It was only two days after Von Miller suffered a season-ending knee injury in Houston. When the Broncos put Miller on injured reserve, they decided to fill his roster slot with a player they had been watching for 16 weeks rather than go outside the team. Marshall is plenty familiar with the Broncos, and he also knows that his role will be small: special teams and whatever he's asked to do. He's not looking for a lot of playing time, just for an opportunity.

Q: Where were you when you found out the good news?

A: I was about to get a massage. I was in the massage room. I got a call from a 303 (Denver area code) number and then my agent called me and was like, "Yeah, man, they're going to sign you." After that, I just came right in. I was so excited.

Q: Were you in the Denver area for Christmas when it happened, or did you escape for your day off?

A: I was here. Yeah, I was here, so I got the call, and it was the best Christmas present I'd ever had. I have a couple of friends out here, so I went to their family's house and we ate, stuff like that. It was nice, nothing too much.

Q: Are you going to buy yourself some kind of special gift or a reward for your big promotion?

A: I will now. I'm not sure exactly what yet, but I think I might get a Louis Vuitton duffel bag. It's something to travel with, travel in style.

Q: So you have a few practices on the active roster behind you. Is there much of a difference?

A: It's the same thing. But it seems a little different, because I'm tired. They throw me into different things more, so I'm more tired than I was before. But I'm happy. That comes with the territory. They're going to get every dime out of me.

Q: Unlike most of these free agents the Broncos have brought in, you've been here for several months. Have you been able to explore the area?

A: I'm not really an outdoorsy person, but I've been to Black Hawk a couple times, the casino. I haven't done anything besides that, besides going downtown, stuff like that.

Q: What are your hobbies outside of football?

A: I like to play video games. I like watching movies. That's probably my favorite hobby, watching movies.

Q: What's the best movie you've seen lately?

A: I saw ("The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug"). It's long, but it's good, really good. Lots of action. I'd never seen a Harry Potter or a Hobbit movie.

Q: Is there anything else you're looking forward to seeing?

A: Oh, I saw "Anchorman." That was funny. And "The Wolf of Wall Street." I love movies. I try to go as much as I can.

Editor's note

Each Sunday, The Denver Post's Broncos reporters help readers get to know the players on a more personal level.

Marshall's career path

2004-07: Played running back, tight end and linebacker for Cimarron- Memorial High School in Las Vegas.

2008-11: Played for Nevada, where he was a four-year starter at linebacker. He had career totals of 259 tackles, six sacks and three interceptions with the Wolf Pack.

2012: Picked 142nd overall in the NFL draft by the Jaguars. Spent his rookie season with Jacksonville, where he played in five games and spent part of the year on the practice squad.

2013: Signed with the Broncos to their practice squad before the season and was activated to the team's 53-man roster Tuesday.

Marshall Gets Christmas Gift

By Brandon Moree
DenverBroncos.com
December 26, 2013

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. – Just hours before Santa Claus set out to deliver presents, linebacker Brandon Marshall got some news that was just as good as anything under the tree.

The Broncos signed him to the active roster after he spent the first 16 weeks of the 2013 season on the club's practice squad.

"This is the best Christmas gift I've ever gotten," Marshall said. "To play for my childhood team, this is a blessing."

Marshall's activation came after the team lost Von Miller for the rest of the season with an ACL injury. Head Coach John Fox has talked all season about the "next-man up" mentality that the team has to have, and Marshall shares that mentality.

He added that he was happy that the team picked him to be that next man.

Marshall, originally from Las Vegas, said that he grew up a Broncos fan because of the John Elway and Terrell Davis-led teams of the late '90s that won back-to-back Super Bowls.

"It was very surreal and at the same time it was very humbling and I was grateful for it," Marshall said of joining the Broncos. "At the same time I was like, 'Let's get to work now. Let me try to give these guys a good look and hopefully I'll get up.' It finally happened."

Marshall played at Nevada for four seasons and racked up 259 tackles, 40 tackles for loss, six sacks and seven fumble recoveries in his collegiate career. He was drafted in the fifth round (142nd overall) by the Jaguars in the 2012 draft.

In Jacksonville, he played in five games and registered a pair of tackles.

Marshall said he expects his role to include a lot of special teams duty for now but he's hoping to expand that moving forward.

"I just feel like it's one small step because I still have a long way to go," Marshall said. "I'm not satisfied right now with just getting off the practice squad so it was just a small step to the next goal, which is to get on the field more often.

"I'm grateful for it, but I know that I have a lot more work to do."

Broncos Sign Marshall to Active Roster

By Stuart Zaas
DenverBroncos.com
December 24, 2013

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. – Linebacker Von Miller was officially placed on injured reserve and linebacker Brandon Marshall was signed to the active roster, the Broncos announced on Tuesday.

A day earlier, it was announced that Miller suffered a torn ACL in Sunday's Week 16 win at Houston that would end his season.

Marshall, who spent the first 16 weeks of the 2013 season on the Broncos practice squad, played five games as a rookie for Jacksonville last season.

A second-year player out of Nevada, Marshall was drafted by the Jaguars in the fifth round (142nd overall) of the 2012 NFL Draft. He totaled 259 tackles with 40 tackles for a loss, six sacks, three interceptions, three forced fumbles and seven fumble recoveries during his career with the Wolf Pack.

Taking Marshall's spot on the practice squad is wide receiver Nathan Palmer, who spent a portion of the 2013 on the Miami Dolphins practice squad.

Palmer appeared in five games and caught one pass as a rookie with Indianapolis in 2012.