

Broncos believe Brock Olivo has learned special-teams lessons well

By Jeff Legwold

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The Denver Broncos know firsthand the kind of impact that Dave Toub has on special-teams play.

Toub's units have tormented the Broncos over the years. With the Chiefs last season, Tyreek Hill returned a kickoff 86 yards for a touchdown against Denver. Toub had Devin Hester as his returner when he was the Chicago Bears' special-teams coach before that. Hester returned a punt and a kickoff for a score against the Broncos in a rain-swept 37-34 victory over Denver in November 2007.

The Broncos interviewed Toub for their head coaching job earlier this year. But when they hired Vance Joseph instead, Joseph then hired Toub's special-teams assistant -- Brock Olivo -- with the hope some of Toub's teachings rubbed off.

The Broncos need to raise the bar on special teams.

"That guy has some energy," Broncos punter Riley Dixon said. "To see somebody who cares so much about it, as much as we do, because so many times, special teams is overlooked by some coaches. Or they don't have the passion that us specialists have for that position or for that part of the game. To see a guy with as much fire and energy that he has is awesome."

What Toub has done in recent years shouldn't be minimized or ignored. This past week, Football Outsiders ranked the top 30 special-teams units over the last 30 NFL seasons and Toub coached five of them: the Chiefs in 2013 and 2016 and the Bears in 2006, 2007 and 2011.

The colorful Olivo, who coached football in Italy and ran for office in Missouri's ninth congressional district, has repeatedly credited Toub for preparing him for the job. Olivo hopes to replicate even some of Toub's success.

"You pull together all of the good ideas that you think are the best of what we know and we roll from there," Olivo said. "The majority of it is what I brought over from Kansas City, no question."

There is room to grow, to be sure. The Broncos have prioritized special-teams play. They have practiced it, expended plenty of time and effort and yet have reaped few rewards since they decided Trindon Holliday's fumbles outweighed his touchdown potential after the 2013 season.

Omar Bolden looked to be a solution in the return game -- he had a 77-yard kickoff return in 2014 to go with 83-yard punt return for a touchdown in 2015 -- but Bolden battled injuries. So, in the last three seasons, the Broncos' return game has largely been a play-it-safe, just-catch-the-ball affair.

The Broncos haven't had their primary punt returner bring one back longer than 22 yards since 2013. Bolden only returned five punts in 2015, when he scored his touchdown.

"Brock is an awesome dude," Dixon said. "He's super hands-on."

The Broncos are also replacing special-teams captain Kayvon Webster, who signed with the Los Angeles Rams in free agency. But the Broncos selected two potential returners in the draft this past April -- wide receivers Carlos Henderson and Isaiah McKenzie -- and believe they have the team speed up and down the roster to give Olivo a quality stating point.

Olivo hung a large chart in the team meeting room that will ultimately tell the tale. It's a points system Olivo will use to rank each of the Broncos' special-teams players as well as where their units rank in the league each week of the season.

"We put that week's point leader's picture front and center so everyone could see it," Olivo said. "At the end of the year, we tally up the points and name a points leader ... it creates interest and competition. The guys are fired up. They can't wait to get in on Monday to see how many points they made, or what place they're in amongst the team. It's a great way to create interest and competition. ... It creates that brotherhood. Special teams is kind of a niche, and so we do everything we can to make it feel as special as it is."

Brock Olivo will bring “K.I.L.L. it” mentality to Broncos special teams

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

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At first glance, it's hard to determine if Broncos new special teams coordinator Brock Olivo is hopped up on Red Bull or naturally exudes energy in an attention-grabbing way. Olivo said he's always had that enthusiasm and hopes the way he coaches will rub off on his players.

Olivo, 40, said he's ready to excel with the Broncos as a first-time coordinator. Broncos head coach Vance Joseph grilled him during a six-hour interview to determine if he was the right fit to end an exhaustive search to find the right special teams coordinator.

The key, Olivo says, is to focus on how players learn rather than how coaches teach. He has a favorite acronym: “K.I.L.L. it.” It's startling at first, but fits perfectly with his high-energy approach and projected coaching style. It stands for “Keep It Likeable and Learnable.”

“We're not just going to say you have X, you have O. We're going to make sure they understand why they've got X and why they have O,” Olivo said. “We're going to be simple. We're going to play fast. We're going to play hard. We're going to turn our guys loose.”

Olivo has three years of NFL coaching experience working under Kansas City Chiefs special teams coach Dave Toub, who interviewed for the Broncos head coaching job last month. He hopes to transform the Broncos special teams in a similar manner that Toub did in Kansas City.

“There's a big difference between teaching and learning and Dave Toub gets that,” Olivo said. “That's what we're going to implement here.”

Olivo, who also has an additional six years of coaching experience in Italy, the United Football League and Coastal Carolina, said he, Joseph and director of analytics Mitch Tanney will work on game and clock management before the season to ensure they're all working on one accord.

Late addition. Denver retained seven of its 15 offensive and defensive coaches in addition to keeping the strength and conditioning staff led by Luke Richesson.

“Luke is one of the best in the business,” Joseph said. “This team has been healthy in the last two or three years. It's Luke's program.”

They made one addition Tuesday, hiring Cedric Smith as an assistant strength and conditioning coach.

Philip Rauscher, a former Broncos coaching intern, will be an assistant to the head coach. His primary role last season was to study tendencies.

Brock Olivo heads to the Broncos as special teams coach, filling out Vance Joseph's new staff

By Nick Groke
Denver Post
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The Broncos' drawn-out process for finding a special teams coordinator is at an end after they decided to poach a coach from Kansas City.

Denver is expected to hire Brock Olivo, the assistant special teams coach with the Chiefs, to replace the departed Joe DeCamillis, according to an NFL source. Olivo fills the Broncos' final coordinator job under new head coach Vance Joseph. Mike McCoy was hired as offensive coordinator last week and Joe Woods was promoted to defensive coordinator earlier this week.

Olivo, 40, has been an assistant special teams coach at Kansas City the past three seasons under coordinator Dave Toub. The Broncos interviewed Toub on their short list of head coaching candidates before deciding on Joseph. Now they are about to get his assistant.

"Working with the best special-teams coach in the league is like an aspiring physicist getting to work with Einstein," Olivo told the Kansas City Star in 2014.

A special teams coach with the Detroit Lions for four seasons between 1998-2001, Olivo went on to play football in Italy before returning to the United States. He also ran a failed bid for the U.S. House of Representatives as a Republican from Missouri in 2008. His coaching career started as an assistant at Coastal Carolina in 2012.

DeCamillis left the Broncos soon after Joseph was hired, taking the special teams coordinator job at Jacksonville. He had been with Denver for two seasons.

Joseph and Denver general manager John Elway moved quickly to fill out a coaching staff after coach Gary Kubiak suddenly retired the day after the end of the season. Joseph was hired from a short list of candidates that included Atlanta offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan. Olivo rounds out the top of Joseph's staff.

Olivo is the latest former coach of an AFC West team last season to join the Broncos. McCoy came from the San Diego Chargers and quarterbacks coach Bill Musgrave from the Oakland Raiders. Marcus Robertson, the Broncos new' defensive backs coach, and Johnnie Lynn, his pending assistant, also came from the Raiders.