

# Broncos Q&A with Kyle Peko: Second-year player trying to live up to family name

By Nick Kosmider  
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Broncos nose tackle Kyle Peko watched with admiration, mostly from afar, as his older cousin Domata Peko started every game he played since 2009. The streak for Domata reached 123 games last week in Oakland, the longest stretch among active NFL defensive linemen. The streak will end on Sunday as 32-year-old Domata misses the game at Miami because of a knee injury, but his absence means an opportunity for Kyle, the 24-year-old who is in his second NFL season and has already had a roller-coaster experience in the league. Peko talked this week about his cousin's streak, how becoming a father revitalized his career and preparing for a likely opportunity against the Dolphins on Sunday:

**Q:** What do you think of your cousin's 123-game streak coming to an end?

**A:** It's crazy. It's a tough loss for the D-line. He's a big leader in our room and the whole defense as a unit. It's a tough one, but we still have to pick it up with five games to play. No fall off.

**Q:** As you prepare for an opportunity in his absence, what are the biggest things you focus on?

**A:** For me, it's just filling the shoes of Domata Peko. Just be gap sound, play my assignment and do what I've been doing all week in practice. Definitely got the nerves going, but I'm excited to show what I've got as another Peko in the league.

**Q:** You were excited when Domata was signed in March. What have you enjoyed most about sharing a locker room with him this year?

**A:** It's just being able to connect more. I was a lot younger when we were (living) closer. He got to the league and I was still in high school and then going to junior college. So I've never had a relationship like this with him. Getting that closer bond with him has been awesome.

**Q:** You had a son when you were playing at Oregon State and I understand that really changed things for you? Re-focused your career?

**A:** I almost wasn't going to be eligible my senior year. I wasn't eligible my junior year. I was kind of going down the wrong path. I found out my girlfriend was pregnant and I thought, "It's now or never." I had to change what I was doing, my habits, and go in the right direction. I got eligible, it allowed me to play and it got me here. It changed my life for the better and it's been a big blessing."

**Q:** How do you balance being a father to a young son with being a young NFL player?

**A:** It's honestly been a great motivator for me to do my best for him and my wife. It's always nice to have a long day of work and then go home to your family, and to have him be all excited. He'll say, 'Dada, Broncos!' And he names all the D-linemen now. He's 2 ½ now, so it's a good time.

**Q:** Speaking of the defensive line, it seems as if that has been an exceptionally tight group this year. Why is that?

**A:** It was new faces that came in together, and Domata kind of brought us all together as a tight unit, being the leader he is. It kind of just clicked all together as one. It's been a good time working with these guys, getting to know them and building that friendship and bond. Then we go on the field and fight for each other.

**Q:** You've had a roller-coaster ride from on and off the roster and the practice squad. How have you handled that?

**A:** You've just got to keep the faith, man. The Lord above has been blessing me with these opportunities. Practice squad or not, I'm here. I'm on the team and I have a job. I've just got to keep fighting. I could be on the couch doing nothing. I'm happy to be here and it's been a blessing, no matter the situation.

**Q:** What's one thing Domata has told you that could help you this week?

**A:** Honestly, he's nailed down on the notes. He knows tendencies like crazy. He's been on top of me like, 'Hey, if you need help, come to me.' He's been taking notes for me, saying, 'Look, this is what I saw.' It's great for me to have that."

# Ex-Oregon State star Kyle Peko 'impressive' in Denver Broncos training camp

By Geoffrey Arnold  
The Oregonian  
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Kyle Peko is tied with another player as the shortest defensive lineman on the Denver Broncos roster.

The former Oregon State defensive tackle rose to the occasion by batting down a pass during practice Monday and according to one report, has been "one of the most disruptive defensive linemen" during the first four days of camp.

The 6-foot-1, 305-pound Peko who signed with the defending Super Bowl champions as an undrafted free agent and is trying to win a roster spot. Denver defensive coordinator Wade Phillips has noticed Peko's performances.

"Peko's been impressive. We've always stressed that as being able to get your hands up if you're not able to get there quite in time. It just shows because he's not a tall guy," Phillips told reporters Tuesday. "That's when I thought, 'Well gee, anybody can do it if they just work at it,' so he did a good job today."

Peko's ability to create a push up the middle is valuable because that type of pressure can disrupts the timing and sight lines for quarterbacks on passing plays and gives linebackers a chance to fill gaps and make tackles on run plays.

Peko's chances of earning a roster spot increased after the Broncos placed nose tackle Phil Taylor on injured reserve Sunday. The Broncos could bring six-year veteran back, but that move seems unlikely and Sylvester Williams moves up in the rotation. Peko is competing against Darius Kilgo for the primary backup spot.

"He looks like a good player. It is going to be interesting to see how he plays during the preseason," Denver coach Gary Kubiak told reporters. "That's been our nick spot. There and tight end have really been missing some guys and are short on numbers. We'll see. He's obviously stood out."

When the head coach is talking about an undrafted free agent, that's a very good development for Peko.

Green has 35 receptions in his previous five seasons combined to go with two career touchdown catches. And while Green has annually expressed his optimism at training camp, Heuerman looks like he could be the top receiving option at the position.

"I just am trying to stay consistent," Heuerman said. "That's my No. 1 goal is to be consistent in how I do things, in my assignments."

Heuerman's defensive teammates say he's been tough to cover at times, even as he essentially goes through what is his rookie training camp.

He's a big guy," said Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall. "He can kind of shield the ball, runs well, gets to the ball. I think they'll get him the ball a lot on offense. I would, that's a tough match-up."