

Bradley Roby corners the market on big plays with Broncos

By Troy Renck

Denver Post

May 21, 2016

The 24-year-old with an easy smile steps through the door and heads to a corner in the hallway. The team's quarterback talks to a reporter across the room, but Bradley Roby doesn't mind. He is comfortable sharing the spotlight. In his first two seasons, despite not starting, he has earned a reputation as a playmaker.

The interview on this spring afternoon symbolizes his career. It's going by as fast and casually as possible. Roby possesses the ability to dim the spotlight, to slow his pulse when the hearts of Broncos' fans are in their throats.

Flip the pages in last season's championship scrapbook, and the cornerback's fingerprints cover some of the biggest moments. At Kansas City, with overtime a growing certainty, Roby scooped up a fumble by the Chiefs' Jamaal Charles, head faked quarterback Alex Smith and jogged into the end zone for a gamewinning touchdown. Against Pittsburgh, with Denver's championship dreams flickering, Roby wrestled free from a block by receiver Darrius Heyward-Bey, poked the football loose from running back Fitzpatrick Toussaint, then DeMarcus Ware pounced on it. A week later, the Patriots needing only a twopoint conversion to send the AFC championship game into overtime, Roby left his man as Aqib Talib deflected the football intended for receiver Julian Edelman into Roby's hands.

After Roby was drafted in 2014, other players in his class have logged more snaps and earned more awards, but few have delivered so regularly when it mattered most.

"I have accepted that's the type of player I am. For real. I have to make plays, and I make plays when it counts," Roby said. "I have always done it. I can't say why. A lot of people get nervous. I like the pressure. It's God. He looks out for me. I have to return the favor and shout him out."

This is nothing new for Roby. Talk to his mom, Betty, and she can remember her son coming through in huge moments for years. Broncos legend Steve Atwater, whose son played with Roby, witnessed it in high school. Roby profiles as a regular for many teams. But with the Broncos featuring arguably the game's best cornerback tandem in Talib and Chris Harris, Roby sees time in subpackages. Broncos defensive coordinator Wade Phillips, though, doesn't see him as a reserve.

"We lost two guys in free agency (linebacker Danny Trevathan and defensive end Malik Jackson), two out of 11, really 12 if you count Roby since he started most of the season," Phillips said. "In our dime defense we really lost one guy (Jackson)."

Roby makes plays regardless of how much he plays. In two seasons, counting the postseason, he has intercepted four passes, forced four fumbles, recovered three fumbles and made six tackles for a loss. "I want to be a turnover machine," Roby said. "I want to affect the game as much as possible, and help us win. And turnovers are often the biggest thing in any game."

Roby doesn't see himself as a finished product. Critical self-evaluation has helped steer him as a

professional. When receiver Demaryius Thomas wore him out in his rookie training camp, Roby stayed after practice and worked on his technique with assistant coach and hall of famer Rod Woodson. "He wanted to get better. He wasn't happy and was willing to put in the time to improve," Woodson said.

Roby gave himself a 'C' grade as a rookie. Last season he saw progress as he continues to hone his technique — he needs to stay lower in his stance — and apply film study to Sundays. "I was a 'B.' My fundamentals were better. I got more interceptions and was better with route recognition," Roby said. "But I am still not where I need to be."

Roby enjoyed the Super Bowl championship spoils for a few weeks, appearing on ESPN and the NFL Network and buying new bling for the occasion. He returned to the grind, working out in Miami with LeBron James' longtime personal trainer David Alexander. Roby's body is fit, if not slightly different. He planned to fly to New York this weekend to visit his tattoo artist to receive ink of a bull on his right ribcage. Strength, determination and perseverance define the animal.

"I am getting the bull for (my astrological sign) Taurus," he said. "It just fits me very well. I heard it hurts most where I am getting it on my body. But I can tolerate pain to get the results."

Bradley Roby is not known as 'Big Play Bradley' – Yet

By David Meeks

NBC 11 Alive Atlanta

February 5, 2016

He hasn't been in the league long enough to be nicknamed "Big Play Bradley." Yet.

But it was backup cornerback Bradley Roby who knocked the ball loose from Pittsburgh running back Fitzgerald Toussaint to thwart a Steelers fourth-quarter drive and help the Denver Broncos advance in the divisional round of the playoffs.

A week later, there was Roby intercepting Tom Brady's two-point try with 12 seconds to play in the AFC title game, preserving a 20-18 victory. That sent the Broncos onward to meet the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50 and gave quarterback Peyton Manning another chance – perhaps his final one – to win a second ring.

Sure, big plays were expected from Roby, a first-round draft pick out of Ohio State in 2014. But coming up with a season-saver in back-to-back playoff games? That will raise your profile.

"To be honest, all I'm trying to do is take advantage of the opportunities," Roby told the USA TODAY NETWORK. "With the year that we've had and the team that we have, you just have to give it your all. This postseason I have dedicated myself to studying, preparing, doing all the stuff right, being on time – being early – little things like that are starting to, I feel, bleed over into what's happening on the field.

"I expect myself to make big plays."

Roby said before the season he had challenged himself to keep improving his technique and spend more time studying film. The work has paid off, and it's been noticed by teammates such as Aqib Talib and T.J. Ward.

"Roby came a long way, man, he's playing good football," Talib said. "He can't put that iPad down, that's a good thing. The guy can't stop watching film and that's made a big difference in his game. Made a lot of big plays. And big plays in the postseason – that's where you make your name."

Ward said he's seen Roby's development take off between his rookie campaign and this season. The major difference is maturity, Ward said.

"He's matured a lot these last two years," Ward said. "He's been making plays for us all season. He's a young dude, he's still learning, but he is going to be a real special player."

Roby, who looks up to the many talented veteran Broncos defenders, said it was nice to hear his efforts had drawn their praise.

"It's great to have the respect of the guys you go to work with. To hear your teammates say that, it's always great to have them respect how you work, you know, your work ethic. It's a great compliment and I really appreciate it."

Far from being nervous on about being on the big stage Sunday – "Man, it's going to be exciting," he says – Roby is focused on stopping the Carolina attack. He said parts of it look familiar.

“It’s a great attack. Kind of reminds me of our offense at Ohio State, a little zone read,” he said. “But it doesn’t matter what the attack is, it’s a team game and I need to focus on my job.”

Much of the pregame analysis has focused on the Carolina offense versus the Denver defense, the argument being that the Broncos defense may have to carry its inconsistent offense. Roby doesn’t see it that way.

“You never want the defense to carry anybody because to win, you need to be operating on all cylinders,” Roby said. “We want to go out there and be the best. You know they have a great defense as well, so we have to go out and show what we can do.

“All I’ve heard was people picking us to lose. It only gives us motivation. Why are all these people talking about what we can’t do? The more they say it, the more it pushes us to go out there and perform our best.”

Bradley Roby's value in nickel on rise

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

January 24, 2016

Even though it's not listed that way on the Broncos' depth chart, cornerback Bradley Roby is a starter. In the minds of the Denver coaches, teammates and himself.

The Broncos play more than half their defensive snaps in a nickel package, where Roby resides as an outside cornerback. In a secondary full of veterans with enough personality to overfill a room, Roby, 23, is the laid-back youngster.

"He's a top-notch draft choice, but yet he's got two all-pro players ahead of him," coach Gary Kubiak said. "That could bother a lot of guys, but I see it as driving Bradley to be a great player."

Roby usually is the last player on the field after practice, because he is getting extra reps with defensive backs coach Joe Woods.

Roby admittedly didn't play as well as he wanted to early in the season. His production was valuable to the team, but he likes to measure himself against cornerbacks Chris Harris and Aqib Talib because they have a knack for making plays.

Roby said he had to get better with technique and playing down-and-distance situational football better.

The improvements have begun to seep into his performance.

In last week's AFC divisional playoff game against Pittsburgh, Roby was thrust into full-time action when Harris had to remove himself from the Broncos' base coverage because of a bruised left shoulder.

Roby made a season-changing play when he punched the ball away from Steelers running back Fitzgerald Toussaint midway through the fourth quarter, creating a fumble recovered by outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware. That takeaway set up the Broncos' go-ahead touchdown in their 23-16 victory over Pittsburgh.

"He's gained confidence as the year has gone along," defensive coordinator Wade Phillips said of Roby. "He certainly made some big plays."

The stage gets even bigger in the AFC championship game, with Denver facing Patriots quarterback Tom Brady. Roby is likely to have coverage at various times on Danny Amendola and Brandon LaFell. And, if Harris' shoulder injury re-emerges, Roby could be lined up across Julian Edelman.

But just because the stakes have increased doesn't mean Roby will be consumed by the situation.

"It's been a childhood dream of mine to get the Super Bowl. I know what the atmosphere is going to be," Roby said. "It's going to be a huge game. Nobody has to tell me that."

The veterans don't have to tell him about the importance of Sunday's game, but they have told him about Brady.

Harris was in Roby's spot a few years ago. The kid in a group of veterans in the secondary. He remembers how Brady would often give him long stares presnap or send more motion to his side before the play.

"Brady is always going to test the young cats," Harris said. "He's always going to see what they're doing."

The bull's-eye is firmly on Roby's chest.

The Puncher's Chance

By Robert Klemko

MMQB.com

January 22, 2016

If the Broncos win the Super Bowl, there's a good chance Bradley Roby's punch will go down as the defensive play of the year in the NFL. You've seen the replay by now: The Steelers are driving, up 13-12 with 10 minutes left, when Toussaint took a handoff to the left sideline where Roby, the corner, was being blocked and held by Darrius Heyward-Bey. Roby shot a left jab at the swinging football with the precision of a dentist extracting a tooth. The Broncos drove the length of the field, scored and added a 2-point conversion to go up seven.

Three days later, Peyton Manning was still talking about it.

"I was blessed to be in that position," Roby told The MMQB on Wednesday afternoon. "Everyone keeps talking about it. This morning, Peyton said to me, 'That play was phenomenal. It saved everything.'

"I said, it was really lucky."

Said Manning: "We'll take it anyway we can, right?"

This Broncos win was different than the rest. Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, playing without all-pro wide receiver Antonio Brown (concussion), put up just the second 300-yard passing performance against Denver's No. 1 ranked defense all season. It was an unwelcome aberration considering the next opponent: Tom Brady, Rob Gronkowski and a recently healthy Julian Edelman, who had 10 catches against the Chiefs in his first game back from a foot injury. With those three on the field, the Patriots are 9-0 with 24 touchdowns to just two interceptions.

Compound that with the prospect of Denver's top corner, Chris Harris, dealing with a shoulder injury, and you have a recipe for another 300-yard performance against a Broncos team that can't afford it.

Enter Roby, the 31st pick in the 2014 draft. Standing 5-11, 195 pounds, Roby has emerged as a reliable third corner in a league that has put a premium on the job in the past decade.

"You're in sub personnel groups so much more than you're in base," says Broncos defensive backs coach Joe Woods, "so really having a third corner is essential.

"The biggest thing with Rob' is experience, because he has all the athletic tools. Right now, he's hitting his peak. All the guys in the room can see that."

Against Pittsburgh, with Harris obviously ailing from a shoulder injury suffered in the regular-season finale, it was Roby who took his place when just two corners were on the field. When everyone is healthy, Roby enters the game in sub or nickel packages and Harris slides in to play the slot, his expertise. Denver is expected to trot out that same lineup as Roby's effectiveness is monitored. If he struggles, Roby is likely to take up the slot role after spending several games there this season.

It's been a whirlwind season for Roby, Denver's second-rated corner after Harris by Pro Football Focus. Roby says he's gone from failing to apply film study in game-time decisions to becoming a student of the game.

“There were things on the field at the beginning of the season I wasn’t even looking at, things like studying splits and understanding down and distance tendencies,” Roby says. “I didn’t play the right technique, but now I feel like I prepare better for games.”

The numbers back him up: Opponents have a 84.2 passer rating with two touchdowns and an interception this season when targeting Roby. Last year, in a limited role, he allowed seven touchdowns and a 96.9 rating. That Roby is in this position, having been gradually assimilated into a championship-caliber defense, is both a function of Denver’s perennial success with Manning and some gutsy draft strategy on the part of Broncos GM John Elway.

A couple weeks before the 2014 draft, Roby was cited in Ohio for operating a vehicle while under the influence, having fallen asleep in a parked car that was reported to have been driving dangerously that same April evening. Roby pled guilty to a lesser charge, but the damage to his draft stock was done.

Devastated at the time at not being the top corner, the Ohio State standout was drafted late in the first round by the Broncos.

“A lot of things happened to me towards the end of my college career that didn’t really sum up who I am, and it was at the point when they’re really judging you for who you are,” Roby says. “But I always tell people now it was a blessing because obviously I needed to be around guys like this, on a team like this.

“So many guys leave here and tell me you just don’t know how good it is there. This place sucks. The coaches stunk. Everyone is fighting each other. Real fights! But that’s not here. It’s a brotherhood. If I didn’t do that, I probably would’ve went higher, to not as good of a team. I might have been the top corner, looked on early to make plays, and I probably wasn’t ready for that last year. Instead I’m in a room with Aqib Talib and Chris Harris and T.J. Ward, learning from the best.”

Just how much Roby has learned will be on full display Sunday night.

* * *

The most intriguing matchups of the weekend

Broncos CB Chris Harris vs. Patriots WR Julian Edelman

Let’s say Harris plays this entire game with his injured shoulder. (He told the Denver Post he “played with one arm the whole game” last weekend vs. the Steelers). Harris likely will be slotted across from Edelman, whose return after a half-season on the shelf from a foot injury was a triumphant one against Kansas City in the divisional playoffs. His 10 catches for 100 yards came on an astounding 16 targets, most for him since Week 2. Six of those 10 catches came over the middle, with Edelman benefiting from rub routes and/or holes in a zone defense as Kansas City seemed content to rush four defenders and let Brady pick them apart. That was working for the Chiefs when Edelman was finding his rhythm and dropping footballs early, but not once he and Brady rediscovered their groove. If anybody on the Broncos roster is capable of keeping that from happening again, it’s Harris, who played a team-high 97% of Denver’s defensive snaps this season. He’s the rare No. 1 corner who lives in the slot in nickel and dime situations, in part because Aqib Talib and Bradley Roby can struggle there, and in larger part because Harris is so damn good at it. But how good can he be, with open field to his left and right, with just one arm?

Bradley Roby ready for opportunity to stand out for Broncos

By James Palmer

NFL.com

January 22, 2016

The showdown of Broncos All-Pro cornerback Chris Harris vs. Patriots receiver Julian Edelman could decide who goes to the Super Bowl from the AFC.

The focus all week has been on Harris' injured left shoulder and how it could effect his ability to get his hands on Edelman at the line of scrimmage. Jamming receivers has been a strength for Harris, who's one of the best slot corners in the NFL, and is key for any corner trying to throw off the quick release and timing between Edelman and Tom Brady that has created one of the best pitch-and-catch connections in the NFL.

Even at less than full strength, Harris will play Sunday. But how much could be determined as the game goes on. In the Divisional Round against Pittsburgh, Harris only played 75 percent of defensive snaps. A huge step back from his team-leading average of 96.9 percent for the season.

Harris admitted after the game to NFL Network that he expects Broncos' second-year corner Bradley Roby will need to have an increased role against the Patriots because of his injury.

Roby isn't a starter, but plays enough to be considered one by coach Gary Kubiak. He himself is limited with a sore hip but is still probable. What he does on the big stage in an increased role could prove pivotal in helping the Broncos reach their eighth Super Bowl. It's also a spotlight Roby has been waiting to shine in.

"I'm not going to lie, I've always made big plays when the game is on the line," Roby said Thursday. "Even when I was in little league, high school. But then I played offense, so now it's different. They just come at me and I make plays."

In Week 2, Roby had a scoop-and-score with just seconds remaining to beat the Chiefs on the road. Last week he forced the game-changing turnover when he used an unorthodox punch while being blocked to jar the ball loose from Steelers running back Fitzgerald Toussaint, a turnover that led to the game's deciding touchdown.

"I always make plays like that," Roby said. "Weird, crazy plays like that. I don't know why. It just happens and I see myself as a playmaker."

This season Roby has consistently been the last defensive player to walk off the practice field. He's made a habit of working on footwork or hand placement with a Broncos staff member behind the line of cameras shooting Kubiak's daily news conferences.

"He's a top-notch draft choice, but yet he's got two All-Pro players ahead of him," Kubiak said Thursday. "That could bother a lot of guys, but me being one year with Bradley, I see it as driving Bradley to be a great player."

Roby has always had an appetite for success that, at times, has caused him to get so upset with mistakes that he would cry on the phone while speaking to his mother or friends about it.

"I would always get emotional," Roby said sitting at his locker. "Anytime I'm playing football I want to be the best, so I thought I could never mess up. I had to realize it's a game, man. You have to just beat them that's it."

There's been much more success for Roby in his second year of the NFL -- his first under defensive coordinator Wade Phillips. Last season, he was in the slot a lot compared to hardly at all this year and it shows. Roby has allowed a passer rating of 71.9 while lining up on the outside with 10 passes defensed.

The Broncos don't shadow receivers and play straight up man. They know how important their technique during the first few steps of coverage will be Sunday against Brady's quick release. If Harris' snap count is limited, Roby has a chance to stand out and impact this game in a positive or negative way.

Bradley Roby rides to the rescue of Broncos defense

By Cameron Wolfe

Denver Post

January 18, 2016

It is how the season has gone for the Broncos. There is never an easy win but often a late, dramatic play by the defense.

Sunday, it was cornerback Bradley Roby who made the big play. In the midst of an up-and-down day, he forced the game-changing fumble, poking the ball away from Pittsburgh Steelers running back Fitzgerald Toussaint.

Pittsburgh led 13-12 and was driving toward what could have been a devastating score in the fourth quarter. On a second-and-4 from the Broncos' 34-yard line, Toussaint took the handoff and ran left toward the first-down marker.

Roby was the lone cornerback on that side, but he was engulfed in a block by 6-foot-2, 210-pound wide receiver Darrius Heyward-Bey. Roby was able to free one hand, size up Toussaint and make his move.

"I saw him kind of holding it out. I just punched it and it connected," Roby said. "Perfect timing."

And out the ball came, fluttering to the ground free for the taking. Broncos outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware jumped on it.

The turnover sparked the offense, which pieced together its lone touchdown drive on the ensuing possession.

Ware said he read pass instead of run on the play, which allowed Toussaint to get past him, but he hustled back to the play.

"I know I messed up, and I needed to do a spin move to get the ball and save the day," Ware said.

Of course, Ware had one more big play left to make. His fourth-down sack with the Broncos ahead 20-13 halted a Steelers comeback effort.

The Steelers were without their star receiver, Antonio Brown, plus leading rusher DeAngelo Williams. Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger was nursing a shoulder injury, though he didn't show much signs of being hurt. The Broncos weren't surprised.

"I've never seen Ben come into a game where he was supposed to be hurt and look hurt," safety T.J. Ward said.

On the first play of the game, Roethlisberger tested the Broncos deep. Incomplete, but a message was sent.

Denver's defense uncharacteristically was gouged by several big plays. It appeared to be miscommunication on some plays, combined with poor tackling.

"Really, it wasn't even communication issues," cornerback Chris Harris said. "Guys weren't doing their job today. We know we can't do that next week or (Patriots quarterback) Tom Brady will make us pay."

One of the biggest gaffes, a 58-yard catch-and-run play by Heyward-Bey, left Roby with a sly smile after the game. He promised the deep third wasn't his responsibility, but he didn't want to cast the blame on a teammate.

Ward said he felt some guys were doing too much freelancing, and that led to breakdowns. Denver now has a week to fix those problems and possibly get a little healthier.

Roby was thrust into a full-time role early in the game once Harris began to be bothered by the deep bone bruise in his shoulder. Harris suffered the injury in the regular-season finale against San Diego, and it forced him to relinquish his role as the Broncos' ironman, allowing Roby to take many snaps.

It's nearly impossible to replace a player of Harris' caliber, but Roby assumed the role well. He's always considered himself a starter.

It has been the defensive mantra all season: A play doesn't have a name on it, so it's anybody's to make.

"I've never been a part of a team that handles adversity so well," outside linebacker Von Miller said.

The Broncos have had plenty of it, from being coined the worst of the undefeateds early in the season to quarterback Peyton Manning's injury and the ensuing quarterback controversy.

Lately, it's been defensive injuries. Harris, maybe the Broncos' most irreplaceable player, clearly wasn't himself Sunday. He hid the significance of his shoulder injury throughout last week, but it became apparent with every pass his way.

"It affected my whole game. It was so hard to play," Harris said. "I preach on getting hands every time on somebody. It's hard playing my game, and part of my game is taken away. I have to figure out a way."

Harris came in on obvious pass downs as a nickel cornerback, while Roby stayed as the outside cornerback opposite Aqib Talib for the majority of the game.

Through My Eyes: Bradley Roby embraces opportunity

By Bradley Roby

DenverBroncos.com

January 15, 2016

Every day since the Broncos drafted me in 2014 my knowledge of everything from the game to things off the field has improved. I understand what's going on better. I know how to attack. I feel more confident in myself. I know I still haven't reached my full potential, but I'm getting there.

Every game, every snap and every mistake I make helps make me a better player. But what's helped the most is working with Pro Bowlers every day. From the locker room to the field, learning from some of the best has been huge for me.

Being a young guy, to get put into a room with Pro Bowlers that rely on you and need you to hold your own can only make you better.

There's a saying that goes: "You're only as good as the people you hang out with." In this case, it's the same way. I'm playing with Pro Bowl guys, which is making me take my game to that next level. It's been a blessing and I try to take advantage of it as much as possible.

This season, I've had more opportunities on the field to gain experience and prove myself. I always take advantage of any opportunity that I get. I want to stay ready, because you never know when you're going to get that chance. You mentally prepare yourself for it. You've just got to go out there and trust yourself.

Against the Steelers a month ago, we made some mistakes that led to us giving up the lead in the second half. The majority of our mistakes were simple technique issues and tackling. But we learned a lot from that game. In a way, it was actually beneficial and I believe we became a better team after that loss. I would rather learn from those mistakes in the regular season than in the playoffs.

Now this time around, we're able to go back and look at what happened. We look at how they attacked us, how we adjusted and especially how we didn't adjust. You always want to learn from your mistakes because if you don't, then you will keep making the same ones.

I definitely learned from the mistakes that I made against the Steelers. I feel like it was partially my fault that we lost the game, because I didn't do my job good enough in the second half.

But considering all this, I don't want anyone to think that we're out for revenge. Our minds have always been focused on winning the Super Bowl. There's no doubt that I'm looking forward to this game. I'm going to bring everything that I have.

Last season, we didn't make it past our first game in the Playoffs. We didn't come out and play the game we should have played.

But the difference between this year and last is night and day. This year we're more focused. We're more focused on a central goal. Everybody is on the same wavelength.

Being on the same page makes it fun, and it's the playoffs; if you lose it's over. There's really nothing that you need to get you more excited or to do anything else because the game is enough. But me personally, I'm definitely going to be on a mission.

There's no denying that there can be pressure in the postseason, but I'm excited about it too because at the end of the day, football is football.

It's a playoff game against great opponents. But, you've got to think one week at a time. That's what we've done the whole season. The one goal is to beat Pittsburgh and that's what we're focused on. We're not thinking ahead of anything. We're just taking this one week at a time.

Roby set for even bigger role in Chiefs-Broncos rematch

By Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press
November 14, 2015

Bradley Roby is expecting a lot more action in Denver's rematch with Kansas City, although it'll be hard for the second-year cornerback to top what he did when the Broncos beat the Chiefs back in September.

Roby's scoop-and-score of Jamaal Charles' fumble with 27 seconds left capped a two-TD spurt in the final minute and gave the Broncos a stunning 31-24 win.

It propelled Denver to a 7-1 mark at the halfway point and sent the Chiefs (3-5) on a five-week freefall they finally halted with back-to-back wins over Pittsburgh and Detroit.

"I actually haven't gone back and watched it yet, but I don't even worry about that play," Roby said. "I really didn't do much anyway."

True, he had no tackles in 31 snaps. But after Peyton Manning capped an 80-yard drive with a 19-yard touchdown toss to Emmanuel Sanders with 36 seconds left to tie it, Alex Smith handed off to Charles, who held the ball loosely. Linebacker Brandon Marshall poked the ball free and Roby scooped it up and trotted 21 yards into the end zone.

Roby will start against the Chiefs on Sunday in place of Pro Bowl cornerback Aqib Talib, who was suspended for poking Colts tight end Dwayne Allen in the eye last week.

"I ended the game as the bad guy the first time around," Roby said. "So, I'm sure they'll try to get me back."

The Broncos also will be without pass rusher DeMarcus Ware, who aggravated a bad back last week. He'll be replaced by Shaq Barrett, and first-round draft pick Shane Ray could be back from a sprained right knee that's sidelined him for a month.

Behind Roby, Kayvon Webster will get more playing time in Talib's absence.

"Yeah, it's definitely going to test our depth but I think that our depth has been tested before. Shaq has stepped in before. Roby, Kayvon, those guys are proven guys," Marshall said.

Talib is a big part of the reason Denver owns the NFL's top defense, so he'll definitely be missed.

"Oh it's huge," Marshall said. "The guy's playing at an All-Pro level. He's one of the best corners in the league. He's a smart player, he's a leader on the defense. ... Roby, Kayvon, those guys are going to have to step up, just like Shaq's going to have to step up."

Chiefs coach Andy Reid isn't breathing a sigh of relief over the loss of two of Denver's Pro Bowlers.

"They still have a pretty good defense," he said. "I don't know who's going to be there and who's not. I know that the corner is down, but they have a lot of good players there."

Other things to keep an eye on, so to speak, when the Broncos go for their eighth straight win over Kansas City:

MANNING'S MARKS: Manning was all set for a dramatic finish in Indy last weekend but he never got back into the game after throwing his second interception — and league-leading 13th overall — with six minutes to go.

So he left his old stomping grounds stuck at 71,836 career passing yards, two shy of Brett Favre's NFL career record, and still tied with Favre with 186 regular-season wins for a quarterback.

DIRTY DENVER?: The Broncos lead the league in several defensive categories, but here's one they're not proud of: an NFL-high 16 personal fouls — plus one on special teams for interfering with a fair catch.

A penchant for penalties has been a season-long problem for Denver and it finally cost the Broncos more than a flag or a fine last week. They've also been flagged more than a few times when they didn't feel they crossed the line.

"I told the players that you're not going to get the benefit of the doubt sometimes ... because you start to get reputations in this league," coach Gary Kubiak said. "It's something that we have to change. I know one thing, I don't want to lose the way that we're playing defense ... but I do definitely want to correct and cut down on the penalties."

WEST BEST: Charles is out for the year with a torn ACL, but second-year running back Charcandrick West is filling in nicely. He leads the AFC over the last three weeks with a 103.5-yard average. West credits Charles: "He's the main reason I'm having the little success that I'm having right now," West said.

DENVER DOMINATES: The Broncos have won seven straight over the Chiefs since a 7-3 loss in 2011. Another Denver win would tie the Broncos' best winning streak in the series, set between 1976-79.

"I don't know if there's room for any extra" motivation, Smith said. "It's always been huge, it's a division game and these division games are huge with where we're at. We kind of dug ourselves a hole; it's even bigger for us."

HOME SWEET HOME: The Broncos have won 11 consecutive regular-season games at home. That's the longest active streak in the AFC. Only Green Bay's 12-game home winning streak is longer.

Bradley Roby assumes starting job in Aqib Talib's absence

By Nicki Jhabvala
Denver Post
November 12, 2015

Bradley Roby isn't a name the Kansas City Chiefs could forget anytime soon, even if they wanted to.

The image of the second-year cornerback racing into the end zone with a fumble recovery and a game-winning, 21-yard return in the final seconds at Arrowhead Stadium this season might forever be entrenched in their minds.

On Sunday, the image of Roby staring back at Chiefs quarterback Alex Smith from the defensive backfield will be a game-long fixture. With starting left cornerback Aqib Talib suspended one game for poking the Indianapolis Colts' Dwayne Allen in the right eye, Roby will assume Talib's starting role. Kayvon Webster, a third-year player, is likely to take over Roby's usual job as the nickel cornerback.

The depth of the Broncos' defense will be severely tested. The loss of Talib, their leader in interceptions (three) and the league's leader in interception return yards (123), is one that would cripple most defenses. The probable additional loss of outside linebacker DeMarcus Ware, who aggravated a back injury Sunday, would be another blow.

Earlier injury tests were passed, though. The Broncos played, and won, without Ware at Cleveland. They played, and won, without safety T.J. Ward in the season opener. And they played, and won, without defensive end Derek Wolfe for the first four games of the season. The latter two returned from early-season suspensions to earn AFC player-of-the-week honors.

Broncos coach Gary Kubiak is hoping for another passing grade as Talib sits.

"He's operated as a starter," Kubiak said of Roby. "We've played a lot of what we call 'single.' We've been with three corners on the field a great deal because of the way our division is or the people that we've been playing. This week, I don't expect to be any different, so that moves Kayvon up. Roby's played really well. He's a second-year guy with a lot of expectations, and I think he's turned into a really fine pro."

Roby, the Broncos' 2014 first-round pick, set the bar high with his rookie performance. Despite registering 64 tackles and 13 passes defended — both tied for the second among rookie cornerbacks that season — he said his performance merited only a C-minus grade.

His coaches felt otherwise.

New defensive coordinator Wade Phillips devised ways to keep him on the field more this season, using him in three-cornerback, one-safety packages, as well as at safety occasionally.

Only 24 regular-season games into his NFL career, Roby has offered a reliable third cornerback option alongside Chris Harris and Talib, who average six seasons of NFL experience.

Roby has been used on 312 defensive snaps this season, playing primarily as a nickel cornerback to record 18 tackles (13 solo) four pass breakups, one interception and that fumble recovery and return at Kansas City. That 21-yard fumble return was followed by an interception of Detroit's Matthew Stafford in Week 3, which was followed by five tackles and a forced fumble against Minnesota in Week 4.

Webster has dealt with myriad injuries in his two-plus seasons in Denver, most recently to his ankle, which kept him out of Week 3. Playing behind the other three cornerbacks, Webster's snaps have been limited to 20 on defense, and he has recorded one tackle and one pass breakup.

Although he is expected to be used at nickel, his limited play makes him the biggest question mark Sunday.

The Broncos' depth has allowed them to create seamless transitions in the wake of injuries and suspensions. A sobering loss at Indianapolis and the prospect of playing a divisional opponent coming off a bye offers both challenge and opportunity for Roby and Webster.

Roby knows this time against the Chiefs he might have a target on his back.

"I actually haven't watched the Kansas City film," he said. "I don't really worry about that play. That was in the past. I'm sure that they'll try to have some stuff ready for me since I'm starting now and kind of ended the game as the bad guy the first time around."

Broncos' Roby, filling in for Talib, already operates like 'a starter'

By Jeff Legwold
ESPN.com
November 12, 2015

When the Denver Broncos' defensive staff was put into place earlier this year, one of the items on their to-do list was to find ways for cornerback Bradley Roby to play more.

Roby, the Broncos' first-round draft pick in 2014, had played 75 percent of the team's snaps as a rookie with the old staff calling the shots. And many of those snaps came in the Broncos' nickel and dime packages or when they wheeled out a seven-defensive back look.

"You want to be in there, as much as they want you to be," Roby said. "But I felt like I could keep working on things, be better."

Eight games into this season, Roby has actually played less, but it feels like more because of the impact he's had. Roby has played 56 percent of the snaps, with 49 plays against the Lions and Packers the most in any game.

But that will change Sunday against the Chiefs. Thanks to Aqib Talib's one-game suspension, it will be Roby in Talib's spot in the Broncos' starting defense.

"I have great confidence in him," said Broncos coach Gary Kubiak. "Roby's played really well. He's a second-year guy with a lot of expectations and I think he's turned into a really fine pro. He's doing a good job."

But Roby has been in the starting defense plenty this season, and perhaps that's why his work thus far has that less-is-more feel to it. The Broncos decided quickly this past offseason that one of the ways to get Roby in the lineup on more early downs was to play him in the base defense.

However, with Pro Bowl cornerbacks in Talib and Chris Harris Jr., there was really no room in the lineup. So the Broncos tinkered with the idea of Roby at safety, something they call "single," as in using just one true safety -- usually T.J. Ward -- in their base 3-4 defense.

It allows the Broncos to defend the run with their base front, and it gives them three cornerbacks in coverage. And it's been at least part of the reason the Broncos are ranked No. 1 in the league in total defense, scoring defense, sacks and pass defense.

"He's really operated as a starter," Kubiak said. "We've been with three corners on the field a great deal because of the way our division is or the people that we've been playing. This week, I don't expect to be any different."

For their part the Chiefs have largely been a two-man affair in the passing game. Wide receiver Jeremy Maclin and tight end Travis Kelce are the only two players who have been targeted more than 26 times - Maclin 61 times, Kelce 55.

And in these teams' Week 2 meeting earlier this season -- a 31-24 Broncos win, decided when Roby returned a fumble 21 yards for a touchdown with 27 seconds left in the game -- the Broncos spent almost as much time with five or six defensive backs in the formation (29 snaps, including penalties) as they did in their base defense (32 snaps). That means besides Roby, Kayvon Webster will see plenty of playing time, and rookie cornerback Lorenzo Doss could get some work on defense for the first time this season.

"A lot of guys got a bump up and we have to respond," Kubiak said.

"Obviously it's a blessing for me," Roby said. "You can't get put in a better situation as a cornerback than I got put in. It's a blessing. Everything happens for a reason, so I'm happy that it happened and I'm just taking advantage of it. ... I've said I want to be a guy they can trust and that they believe can make plays to help us win games. That's what I want to do.

Bradley Roby in a pursuit for respect, greatness with Broncos

By Cameron Wolfe
Denver Post
September 22, 2015

It was a simple handoff to Jamaal Charles in a game headed for overtime. Bradley Roby was surprised Kansas City didn't take a knee. But once the ball was hiked, he had one job — don't let them in the end zone.

He's running towards Charles and there it is - a free ball. Roby calls it luck, but there's something to be said for being in the right position. The biggest play of the game was capped off by his scoop and score game-winning touchdown.

"The coaches are always talking to me about finishing plays. It showed up there. I saw the ball, and the only thing I was thinking was score," Roby said.

He marked 2015 as his breakout year. The Broncos 2014 first-round No. 31 draft pick appeared to have a solid season.

Roby intercepted two passes, forced two fumbles, recovered two fumbles and sacked a quarterback during his rookie year. In his first NFL game, he blanketed receiver Reggie Wayne and deflected a fourth-down pass to seal a Broncos victory over the Colts.

Still, he termed his season as "OK." Roby felt teams weren't scared to throw the ball at him, which is a sign of weakness for a cornerback.

"I want to get my respect. Of course Chris (Harris) and Aqib (Talib) are great corners, but I want them to put me in the conversation too," Roby said.

He's now made a game-changing play in two consecutive games, depending on if you think he tipped a pass by Baltimore's Joe Flacco to Steve Smith in the end zone on Sept. 13.

"He's improved a lot from last year. I give him an A for the first two games," Harris said.

Roby started working on technique adjustments in the offseason. With a year of experience, he's no longer a fish trying to survive on land.

"You can't just jump every out because you want to be Deion (Sanders) and you want picks. You're going to get beat like that. Greatness is doing all the little things right all the time," Roby said.

He'll likely face one or both of Detroit's Pro Bowl receivers, Calvin Johnson and Golden Tate, Sunday. Yet, he says he's not worried.

Roby said he faces his toughest competition in practice every day in receiver Demaryius Thomas.

The two have had a silent battle going on since training camp, but Roby often finds himself on the losing end.

"I'll always be right there with him, and he always makes something happen. I'll be in perfect position, and then he'll beat me on a back-shoulder, one-handed grab, something crazy," Roby said, shaking his head.

Thomas laughed when asked about his success against Roby. His 6-foot-3, 229 pound frame often wins out, but he said that Roby's transition from year one to year two has been significant.

"I think it's his confidence. He always had the talent, speed. Now, you can put him out man to man and he has no worries about holding his own," Thomas said.

Roby's draft stock fell because of concerns about his character after a bar fight in 2013 and a citation for operating a vehicle under the influence two weeks before the 2014 draft.

Charges regarding the altercation were dismissed and the other was reduced. Roby seems to have been on good behavior in Denver. He says he has no resentment towards teams that passed on him in the draft.

"Maybe they'll get it right next time. The next guy that comes around with a situation, you'll look into it before you characterize him and say all the bad things about him," Roby said.

He knows the names of the four cornerbacks drafted ahead of him, yet he doesn't compare their stats or film with his own.

Roby maintains he was the best cornerback in the class, but he says he wants to play on the same level as Darrelle Revis, Richard Sherman Aqib and Harris.

"That's where I'm trying to get," Roby said. "You should strive to be compared to someone that's better than you."

Bradley Roby ready for more playing time, if opposing offenses will cooperate

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

September 21, 2015

The Denver Broncos have tried to get cornerback Bradley Roby on the field more this season, but so far opposing offenses haven't really been on board with that idea.

Roby, who scooped up a fumble and scored to give the Broncos a win last Thursday night in Kansas City, has played 52.5 percent of the Broncos' defensive snaps this season. And that is actually a rather sharp reduction in Roby's activity from the 2014 season, when he had played 75 percent of the team's defensive snaps. But last season, often trailing against the Broncos' high-flying offense, opposing offenses most often lined up against the Broncos' nickel package (five defensive backs) rather than the Broncos' base defense.

"I just want to be a part of a defense that makes plays to win games," Roby said. "That's always kind of been my goal here, I want to be a player they trust and I want to be a player that makes plays that help us win games. That's it."

Roby's fumble recovery -- after linebacker Brandon Marshall knocked the ball free from Chiefs' running back Jamaal Charles -- certainly did that. Overall, though, the Baltimore Ravens and the Chiefs, in an effort to slow down the Broncos' pass rush, have largely elected to stay a little bigger on offense and try their luck against the Broncos' base defense.

And that leaves Roby largely out of the mix. However, defensive coordinator Wade Phillips has played Roby at safety in the base defense for a handful of snaps in the Broncos' first two games, including on back-to-back plays late in the first quarter Thursday night.

Phillips and Broncos coach Gary Kubiak still have plans for Roby, though, especially after a long look in the offseason program and in training camp. With Chris Harris Jr. having been held out of some practices, Roby spent plenty of time in the offseason working with the starters.

"Bradley worked as a starter for most of the offseason," Kubiak said. " ... He's reaping the rewards of his work."

Things could change this week and beyond, however. Two of the Broncos' next three opponents -- Sunday against the Lions and Oct. 11 against the Oakland Raiders -- are among the league's top seven in pass attempts after the first two weeks of the season. The Raiders are tied for third at 44.5 attempts per game while the Lions are seventh at 41.5 pass attempts per game.

The Lions also attempted 53 passes in their loss to the Vikings this past weekend. And an offense that looks to heave it around a little more in the face of the Broncos' pass rush is one Roby would face more as well. So, the opportunities for Roby could increase, especially if the Broncos' own offense can carve out some leads as well. In the win over the Chiefs, Roby's touchdown in the closing seconds was the first time the Broncos had a lead in the game.

"I'll go in when they want me to," Roby said. "I'm ready, I keep myself ready."

Broncos cornerback Bradley Roby wants to rise above 2014's 'C-minus'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

June 2, 2015

Earlier this offseason, Denver Broncos cornerback Bradley Roby was asked to grade his rookie year in 2014 -- a year in which he balanced the usual growing pains with timely plays and played 75 percent of the defensive snaps.

And Roby, in his usual understated tones offered "C-minus."

That's pretty much life in a secondary where the starting cornerbacks -- Chris Harris Jr. and Aqib Talib -- were each named to the Pro Bowl last season. With even more expectations for Roby, there is no question his co-workers fully intend to keep the heat on.

Tuesday, Harris was asked if Roby gave himself the proper grade or if Roby was just being a little too hard on himself. And though the Broncos are almost two months into their offseason program, Harris sort of officially welcomed Roby into the kid's second year.

"Nah, I'd say C-minus was pretty good," Harris said with a smile. "He was really up and down a lot. He went through a streak ... like five touchdowns he gave up in a row. Whenever you have that, I mean that's definitely, that's C-minus."

Don't get Harris wrong, he loves Roby's potential -- "he still fought through it, he still fought through it and made some plays" -- he loves what Roby will give the new defense. As do Roby's coaches and defensive teammates across the board.

It's just they want a player, whose maturity was questioned at times before the 2014 draft, to maintain, and then build on what he did last year.

The Broncos, with the prospect of plenty of pressure packages in Wade Phillips' defense to harass opposing quarterbacks, want plenty of depth at cornerback with guys who can hold up in man coverage and they want Roby on the field more as well. Roby, who knocked away a pass from Indianapolis Colts wide receiver Reggie Wayne in the closing minutes of the 2014 season opener --- Roby's first regular-season game -- was targeted by his share of quarterbacks as well.

But Phillips and coach Gary Kubiak have each said they want to get Roby on the field more and are willing to line him up at safety in some base defense packages on early downs if they have to. Roby said again on Tuesday he sees himself as a cornerback, but is willing to line up where he's asked to if it means some additional playing time.

Roby added he hasn't yet seen, thus far in the team's OTA practices, any of the packages that would include him at safety, but feels he comes into these offseason practices with a better understanding overall of what he needs to do.

"Knowing where your help is, knowing where you should play the receiver," Roby said. "Last year I was just kind of out there, trying to stop the receiver, trying to stop all of the routes. And you really can't do that, you can't stop all the routes. You really have to know where your help is. ... I feel like in college a lot of guys just go out there and just play and not really understand the game."

Roby given a C-minus despite A-list accomplishment

By Mike Klis

9 News Sports

June 2, 2015

Bradley Roby doesn't know this, and his teammate Chris Harris Jr. really doesn't know this, but there is one statistic that suggests Roby was a straight-A student as the Denver Broncos rookie cornerback last year.

Roby was asked earlier this offseason what grade he would give his rookie season as the Broncos' No. 3 cornerback. The humble Roby said a C-minus.

Harris, who had an A++ plus season as graded by Pro Football Focus and a Broncos management that gave him a five-year, \$42.5 million contract extension, was asked Tuesday what he thought about Roby giving himself a C-minus.

"I'd say C- is pretty good for him," Harris said. "He was really up and down a lot. He went through a streak like five or six touchdowns where he gave up that in a row. Whenever you have that, that's definitely C-minus. He knows that. He knows what he has to get better at. It's that consistency all through the year at cornerback, and that's tough to do. It's tough to be good great every game."

That's one tough curve Harris grades on.

It may also be wrong.

Here's another way to grade at Roby's work last year: He was one of just six players in NFL history – and one of only two cornerbacks – who had multiple interceptions, multiple fumble recoveries, multiple forced fumbles and a sack in his rookie season.

To specify, Roby had two interceptions, two forced fumbles, two fumble recoveries and a sack in 2014. That's making an uncommon impact on a defense.

The other five rookies who pulled the trick: San Diego defensive end Leslie O'Neal (1986), Detroit strong safety Bennie Blades (1988), Miami middle linebacker Zach Thomas (1996), Dallas safety Roy Williams (2002) and Carolina cornerback Richard Marshall (2006).

OK, so it's an esoteric list sculpted for Roby's sake. But any list that includes O'Neal, Thomas and Williams, who combined for 19 Pro Bowls, is an A list.

For his part, Roby didn't disagree with Harris. There were times when quarterbacks understandably threw to receivers who were working against Roby rather than those covered by Harris and the Broncos' other starting cornerback, Aqib Talib.

Roby has set goals for his second season.

"To give up fewer touchdowns than I did last year and make a few more interceptions, a high number, but I'm not going to say it just yet," he said. (Pro Football Focus said he surrendered six TD passes, a

number Roby disputes by one or two.) "I don't want it to be like I'm selfish, but I have something in mind that I want to do. I have personal goals about that. I just to make enough plays for us to win.

"I want to make the best plays when it all counts. When it's the fourth quarter and everything is on the line, Talib's got his guy covered, Chris has got his guy covered, and when they come to me, I want them to lose."

What Roby learned during his rookie season is that playing cornerback is about more than just covering his guy. He did that well enough at Ohio State to become the Broncos' first-round draft pick.

But to take that next step, Roby says you must understand everything about the opposing offense, not just the man in front of him.

"The difference between college and the NFL is the quarterback," Roby said. "The quarterback is going to put the ball where you can't get it. He's throwing it to a spot and to a receiver, and it's about timing. We're working on understanding all of those types of things to throw off their timing and disrupt their routes. That's really when you become productive. That's really what I'm focusing on.

"I'm just learning the whole concept of offense in general. I feel like in college, a lot of guys just go out there and just try to play and not really understand the game. In the NFL, it's a mental game. Once you start understanding the game mentally and paying attention to the splits, route concepts and offensive coordinators favorite things to do in certain situations, that's really when you become a great player."

Sounds much smarter than a C-minus student of the game.

Cornerback Bradley Roby shines in rookie year with Broncos

By Pat Graham
Associated Press
January 9, 2015

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Bradley Roby could have been preparing for the national title game right now.

Instead, the Denver Broncos rookie cornerback is bracing to be picked on by Andrew Luck in an AFC divisional game against Indianapolis on Sunday.

It just may be a memorable weekend for Roby, whose Ohio State Buckeyes face Oregon on Monday night in the national championship game in Arlington, Texas.

He's hoping to be there cheering on his school from the sideline — after taking care of business against the Colts.

"Hopefully two wins," said Roby, who left Ohio State a year early and was picked by Denver with the 31st selection. "I'm going to try to make it out there."

This has been quite a rookie season for Roby as the third cornerback in a high-powered secondary. He had two interceptions and 13 pass breakups.

Roby is expecting to be challenged quite often by Luck on Sunday with Pro Bowl cornerbacks Chris Harris Jr. and Aqib Talib on either side of him. Harris and Talib allowed just 46 receptions for 356 yards all season, according to Pro Football Focus.

When asked about Talib and Harris, Luck said, "Very good. Studs. Both high quality players."

Translation: Get ready Roby, because the action is coming your way.

"We need him to play huge," said Harris, an undrafted player out of Kansas.

"Usually, in the playoffs, they find the best matchup and most of the time when you have me and Talib, they're going to find the rookie. We expect him to play at a high level."

Roby was up for the task in the season opener, when the Broncos held off the Colts 31-24. On fourth-and-6 from the Denver 39 and 1:57 remaining, Roby batted down a pass intended for Reggie Wayne to preserve the win.

That gave him confidence he carried throughout his first season. But he's a tough grader and gave himself a "C" for the year.

"It was OK," said Roby, who intercepted passes from Tom Brady and Derek Carr. "Just because I know I can play a lot better than I did throughout the whole year. I learned a lot through the year."

Harris said Roby was the kind of sponge he was when he first entered the league and leaned on Champ Bailey for advice.

"I thought he had a great rookie season," Harris said. "I don't know if they come out with all-rookie teams. But with the season he had, the responsibilities he had this season, he definitely should get some type of rookie nomination."

Defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio certainly isn't shy about relying on the rookie. Roby frequently lines up on slot receivers and keeps an eye on tailbacks out of the backfield. He could spend some time tailing Indy running back Daniel Herron, his former teammate at Ohio State.

"It's a big role for a young player to come in and embrace," Del Rio said. "He's been involved from the beginning and throughout the whole season. He's had a good year, and having that kind of depth is imperative nowadays in today's NFL."

Roby slid down the draft board last spring after some run-ins with the law, and he was the fifth cornerback selected.

"It's definitely a chip on my shoulder. I go out there and want to prove that I should have been" drafted higher, he said. "But at the same time, I think I was put here for a reason. I feel like the things that happened to me happened for a reason for me to be here."

"I really feel like all the teams that I wanted to get drafted to, if I was there right now, I think I'd be miserable. I think I'm in a perfect position right now learning from Pro Bowl guys, in a championship organization. So I can't thank the man upstairs enough for putting me here."

Broncos believe Bradley Roby should be in mix for rookie award

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

December 31, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- Given that he's played just over 75 percent of the snaps on the league's No. 3 defense, Denver Broncos cornerback Bradley Roby has done enough to earn plenty of consideration for the NFL's Defensive Rookie of the Year award.

Roby is the Broncos' third-leading tackler with 64 tackles, has three interceptions and forced two fumbles. But at least one person who is fairly close to the situation believes that isn't enough to take home the trophy as the league's best first-year defensive player -- Roby.

"I don't think I have," Roby said. "That was definitely a goal of mind going in ... There have been a lot of good rookies this year: (Baltimore Ravens linebacker) C.J. Mosley, (St. Louis Rams defensive tackle) Aaron Donald, those are the guys I know have been doing their thing this year. I've been playing well, but I don't think I've been playing better than those guys at their respective positions."

So, while Roby may believe players such as Mosley and Donald are in front of him for the Defensive Rookie of the Year honors, it doesn't change the fact that opposing quarterbacks haven't tested the first-round pick as much as they did in the beginning of the season.

Asked Tuesday if Roby deserved to be in the discussion as the league's best defensive rookie, Broncos head coach John Fox said;

"I think he's had that kind of season. What's been remarkable to me is he really wants to be a great player. He's got the mindset; he's a very smart young guy that works hard at it. And he really truly tries to get better every day, and in turn, that helps your performance every week. So I've been very impressed by the young man and I think he's had a tremendous year. Some of that voting stuff, I don't control that. But I think his name ought to be in the mention."

Roby has played, for the most part, in the Broncos' five- and six-defensive back packages this season, as he moves into one of the outside positions while Chris Harris Jr. goes into the slot. But Roby has started two games as well, including

when Talib did not play Nov. 30 against the Kansas City Chiefs because of a hamstring injury.

"If they throw it, I try to make a play on it, and if they make a catch, get them to the ground," Roby said. "Recently I haven't been targeted as much, but that is because as a defense we're playing a lot better."

In the end it's been good fortune for everyone, as usually a cornerback of Roby's college performance, size and speed would not have been available to the Broncos with the No. 31 pick.

But questions about Roby's maturity pushed him down the board. Early in the season Roby said he considered it a slight, but has come to appreciate coming to a team that just won its fourth consecutive AFC West title.

"I think I was put here for a reason," Roby said. "I feel like the things that happened to me happened for a reason for me to be here. I really feel like all of the teams that I wanted to get drafted to, if I was there right now, I think I'd be miserable ... I'm in a perfect position to learn from Pro Bowl guys in a championship organization."

Steve Atwater made Bradley Roby "feel like part of the family"

By Patrick Saunders
The Denver Post
December 17, 2014

Steve Atwater chuckles at the memory.

The Broncos' legendary safety was sitting in the stands watching Peachtree Ridge High School play football. The powerhouse Class 5A team from Suwanee, Ga., included Atwater's son, Steve Jr., as well as a swift, hard-hitting, play-making cornerback/wide receiver named Bradley Roby, who would go on to become the Broncos' first-round draft choice in 2014.

"Bradley's mom, Betty, came to every game. She sat right near us," Atwater recalled. "She's very proud of her son, and man, she would talk some noise. She'd be sitting in the stands shouting '4-2-8! 4-2-8!' "

It took Atwater a while before he figured out what Mary Roby was shouting about.

"It was because Bradley ran a 4.28 40-yard dash — in high school, if you can imagine that," Atwater said. "Betty is very proud of her son. Whenever my wife (Letha) talks to Betty, I always tell her, 'Say hello to 4-2-8!' "

During his senior season, Roby was a fixture in the Atwater home.

"That's my best friend, Lil' Steve," Roby said. "His dad, Mr. Steve, had a great family atmosphere. He had four kids and a big ol' mansion. I always loved to go over there. They made me feel like part of the family, and Mr. Steve would always welcome me. (Letha) would always cook for us.

"You have to understand having a single mom is how I grew up. It was nice to see that visual. A lot of times where I am from, with my friends, it was just us and our moms. We don't get to see that family structure. It was always refreshing to go over there and spend time."

Roby's mom, with assistance from the Atwaters, helped lay the groundwork for his future.

The Broncos have seen Roby, the 31st overall pick from Ohio State, develop into an impact rookie cornerback for a revamped defense that's helped the 11-3 Broncos clinch their fourth consecutive AFC West title. Roby has become Denver's No. 1 nickel back, and his 60 tackles (59 solo) rank third on the team. He has two

interceptions, two fumble recoveries and a sack, making him the first Broncos rookie in 25 years to accomplish that.

"He's been playing well. Things are starting to slow down a little bit for him," said Broncos star cornerback Chris Harris Jr. "He's doing his job. You are going to have ups and downs as a rookie, but the thing about Bradley is that he is able to forget about the bad plays and just bounce back. That's tough for some rookies, because once they get in the hole, they can't crawl back out of it. But man, Bradley just pulls himself up and makes the next play."

Roby got schooled early in training camp, with wide receiver Demaryius Thomas doing the teaching by catching long passes while Roby tried to get his bearings. But even as Roby was getting burned, he impressed.

"He has the courage to make tackles," said Hall of Fame cornerback Rod Woodson, who was a coaching intern with the Broncos during training camp. "He's a hard worker who was willing to put in time to get better."

Those basic skills were there long before Roby wore Ohio State scarlet and gray or Broncos orange and blue.

"When he was in high school, we knew that if he stayed healthy he'd have a good chance of playing in the NFL," Atwater said. "I don't throw that around lightly. But he was just so explosive, and he came up with big play after big play."

Roby had six interceptions, along with 29 receptions for 526 yards as a senior, scoring 11 touchdowns.

Steve Atwater Jr., who went to Peachtree Ridge for his senior year of high school before attending Georgetown University, where he played football, remembers the moment he first glimpsed Roby's athletic prowess.

"When I first met him, it was right before P.E. class," Atwater Jr. recalled. "He was wearing jeans and a T-shirt, and he walks over, grabs a basketball and just dunks the mess out of the ball. I was like, 'Wow! This dude is explosive!' "

The two remain close, texting almost every day. And "Mr. Steve" chimes in once in a while, too.

"I'll ask him stuff, little things, to help my game," Roby said. "He always lets me know he's there for me."

Rookie defensive backs

Nine defensive backs were selected in the first round of the 2014 draft. A look at how they've fared:

CB Justin Gilbert

Browns (First round, eighth overall)

Playing time has been sporadic and his performance uneven. The Browns have seen more promise from undrafted corner K'Waun Williams.

CB Kyle Fuller

Bears (14th overall)

Came out of gate fast with two interceptions in first two games, but QBs have picked on him of late. Shows big-play potential but is raw.

S Calvin Pryor

Jets (18th)

A natural run stopper at strong safety, Pryor has been forced to play free safety in the Jets' struggling secondary. The rookie was benched midway through the season after struggling with his tackling and showing up late for meetings.

S Ha Ha Clinton Dix

Packers (21st)

Began season as a nickel back but now he's a starter at safety. He's given up some big plays and whiffed on some tackles, but he's earned a reputation for big hits.

CB Darqueze Dennard

Bengals (24th)

In August, Cincinnati coach Marvin Lewis called Dennard "the best rookie corner I've seen." That was premature, as the corner has played only 58 snaps.

CB Jason Verrett

Chargers (25th)

Was having an outstanding rookie season until he tore the labrum in his shoulder in late October and was lost for the season.

S Deone Bucannon

Cardinals (27th)

Has been used as a hybrid safety-linebacker, or as the Cardinals call it, a "dollar linebacker." He's proving to be a punishing tackler.

S/CB Jimmie Ward

49ers: (30th)

Earned time as San Francisco's nickel cornerback before going on injured reserve with a foot injury after Week 10.

CB Bradley Roby

Broncos (31st)

A hard-hitting, fast and physical player who's getting time as a nickel back. He's the first rookie in 25 years to record two interceptions, two fumble recoveries and a sack in the same season.

Take 5 with Bradley Roby: Ohio State's going to win it all, and dreams of a pick six

By Troy E. Renck
The Denver Post
December 11, 2014

Bradley Roby's journey to the Broncos began in high school. He starred at Peachtree Ridge in Suwanee, Ga. As a punt returner, wide receiver and cornerback, he helped his team reach the 2009 state quarterfinals. He redshirted as a freshman at Ohio State, and focusing on cornerback for the first time, his career took off. He started the next 37 games. A first-team All-Big Ten performance as a junior placed him firmly on the Broncos' radar. Impressed with his athleticism and football IQ, the Broncos drafted Roby in the first round with the 31st overall pick. He is the first rookie cornerback in the last 25-plus years to record multiple interceptions, forced fumbles, and fumble recoveries with at least one sack. He answers questions each Thursday. Here's the fifth installment:

You said Ohio State would get into the playoff. Do you think they will win the national championship?

– Julie

Roby: They have the talent to win. Whoever wins that game is going to win the national championship. I really think they will win, man. Cardale (Jones) can throw. As long as they play to his strengths, they will be good. And you know (coach) Urban (Meyer) will have a good game plan. It's going to be a good game. When they beat Alabama, they will beat whoever is next. I knew Cardale could be good because he had a very strong arm when I faced him in practice. I think he has the best arm out of the three (quarterbacks), just being honest. Strength wise. He needs to work on his accuracy. But it was good last Saturday. He had a cannon. They called him "12-Gauge." He's a big guy, 6-foot-5, 240.

You have had fumble recoveries and interceptions this season. Which do you like best?

– Jerry

Roby: A pick. A pick all day everyday. That's what counts for a DB. All other plays matter, too. But when they look at DBs, they want to know how many picks you have. I need a touchdown, a pick six. That's the only thing I haven't done yet. I feel

like I have had opportunities, and I let them get away. I definitely think I could make that happen pretty soon.

What is it like being the only rookie in an experienced secondary and defense?

– Kyle

Roby: Just being a young guy on defense, I don't want to let anyone down. That's why it hurts even more if I give up a play. I know they expect it could happen because I am new. But I don't want to be looked at as a weak link. It's my first year I am working to make no mistakes. I am continuing to work to get better.

Do you have any routine or superstitions leading up to game day?

– Luke

Roby: I always try to eat sushi on Saturdays when we have home games, and Fridays if it's a road game. I go to Wasabi and I always get the Playboy Roll (shrimp tempura and spicy tuna roll topped with salmon and avocado). They already know what I want when I call. When I trained in the L.A. for the combine, I started eating a lot of great sushi.

How important is family during the holidays, and did you have a favorite Christmas gift growing up?

– Ann

Roby: It's really important. All you can do is send gifts from afar. I don't get into holidays too crazy, like I did when I was younger and got gifts. I loved that. I feel like you should love family and appreciate them when you have a chance to see them. My favorite gift, when I was younger, I loved (video) games. I tried to get all the Maddens, the NCAAs, and Grand Theft Auto. That was my game right there. My mom wouldn't want to buy it. I would beg her for it all month. She didn't like the game (because of the rating), but when Christmas would come she would get it for me. I'd be so happy.

Take 5 With Bradley Roby: Broncos' rookie talks movies, greatest catch, Kanye West

By Troy E. Renck

The Denver Post

November 27, 2014

Bradley Roby's journey to the Broncos began in high school. He starred at Peachtree Ridge in Suwanee, Ga. As a punt returner, wide receiver and cornerback, he helped his team reach the 2009 state quarterfinals. He redshirted as a freshman at Ohio State, and focusing on cornerback for the first time, his career took off. He started the next 37 games. A first-team All-Big Ten performance as a junior placed him firmly on the Broncos' radar. Impressed with his athleticism and football IQ, the Broncos drafted Roby in the first round with the 31st overall pick. He has excelled in nickel coverage with the Broncos this season, producing interceptions in back-to-back games against the Patriots and Raiders. He answers questions each Thursday during the remainder of the season, and says he's open to "anything, not just football-related stuff." Here's the fourth installment:

What type of movies do you like? What are some of your favorites?

– Diana

Roby: I like all types of movies. I can't just settle on one. Here's the top three that come to mind. "Troy" with Brad Pitt. "Next Friday." Really all the "Fridays." And I liked "Inception" a lot. I like movies that make you think. There was a cool twist at the end. I don't know if those are my top three of all time, but those are the ones off the top of my head.

Everyone is talking about Odell Beckham Jr.'s catch. What is the best catch you have ever made?

– Keith

Roby: It was in high school when I was playing receiver. We were in the state playoffs. I was on a fade route. I was running and the ball was behind me. I really should have just opened up and caught it off to my side. But I leaned back to find the ball and then dove and caught it over my shoulder. That was definitely the best catch I ever had. The best I've seen? Probably Antonio Cromartie's one-handed interception (against Peyton Manning when he was with the Colts). I was happy for Odell and that catch he made. I met him at the draft. That was an unbelievable catch, and it was a touchdown, which makes it even better.

If you could have dinner with famous people, who would it be?

– *Isaac*

Roby: Kanye West, Tupac, Bruce Lee, LeBron James, Kobe Bryant and Bob Marley. Those are the guys I'd like to have a conversation with around the table. Just to talk to them. I like all their personalities. I look up to all those guys for different reasons. They are tough competitors. I feel like I am. I like the self confidence of Kanye, Tupac and Marley. They speak from their heart and have a message. I just started watching stuff on Bruce Lee last year on YouTube. He's a great dude. A global icon. I like his "Be Water My Friend" inspirational saying. (Lee's quote: "You must be shapeless, formless, like water. When you pour water in a cup, it becomes the cup. When you pour water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle. When you pour water in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can drip and it can crash. Become like water my friend.")

How did you end up with No. 29 with the Broncos? I heard there was a story behind it.

– *Brandon*

Roby: I had to take a number in the 20s. I might change my number someday. If I can make 29 stick, I'll keep it. It's all about whether you make plays or not. I am not going to have a necklace with No. 29. It's not like that. I want to make it mine. The number 24 was available. I remember asking (general manager John) Elway when I first got here if I could have 24. He was like, "I will have to think about that." I realized right then I needed to prove myself first. And now that I have been here, met Champ, gone to his retirement ceremony and seen first-hand how much he meant to this organization, I would never wear it. I knew he was great. I just wanted a number other than 29. What Champ did here, nobody will ever match. His number will be retired here.

Who is the fastest guy on the team?

– *Brian*

Roby: We have a lot of fast guys. I can't even say. I would be close, but I feel like I am getting slower. Maybe my legs are just tired. I ran a 4.38 40 (leading up to the draft) so I would be up there. Emmanuel (Sanders) might be the guy. Kayvon (Webster). Omar (Bolden). Bubba (Caldwell). The only way we'd find out is if we'd race, and that would probably never happen.

Take Five With Bradley Roby: Steve Atwater among rookie's mentors

By Troy E. Renck
The Denver Post
November 20, 2014

Bradley Roby's journey to the Broncos began in high school. He starred at Peachtree Ridge in Suwanee, Ga. As a punt returner, wide receiver and cornerback, he helped his team reach the 2009 state quarterfinals. He redshirted as a freshman at Ohio State, and focusing on cornerback for the first time, his career took off. He started the next 37 games. A first-team All-Big Ten performance as a junior placed him firmly on the Broncos' radar. Impressed with his athleticism and football IQ, the Broncos drafted Roby in the first round with the 31st overall pick. He has excelled in nickel coverage with the Broncos this season and produced interceptions in back-to-back games against the Patriots and Raiders. He will answer questions from fans each Thursday during the remainder of the season, and says he's open to "anything, not just football-related stuff." Here's the second installment:

Do you know Steve Atwater's son? I heard you might of played high school ball with him

– *Nick*

Roby: That's my best friend, Lil' Steve. Going into my senior year he transferred to my high school. He was a private school guy, and it was his first year of public school. Me and my friends brought him in and taught him a whole new lifestyle. That's my best friend. He's going to school to become a lawyer. I text him almost every day. He played on my high school teams. Mr. Steve had a great family atmosphere. He had four kids, and a big ol' mansion. I always loved to go over there. They made me feel like part of the family and Mr. Steve would always welcome me. (His wife) would always cook for us. You have to understand having a single mom is how I grew up. It was nice to see that visual. A lot of times where I am from, with my friends, it was us and our moms. We don't get to see that family structure. It was always refreshing to go over there and spend time. It was like watching a TV show. It was like the Cosby Show. I talked football with him all the time. I would ask him how the league was. He texts me now and said he was proud I was doing well.

Who is your favorite mascot in sports?

– *Casen*

Roby: Going to baseball games and seeing those guys doing those races, that's hilarious. My favorite is the presidents at the (Washington) Nationals game. They are running around, tripping and falling, it's just hilarious. As far as schools go, I kind of like the Duke Blue Devil, that look. I like that. It's cool.

Do you think that Ohio State will make the Final Four college football playoff?

– Joe

Roby: Of course, because last year didn't end the way it should have, and this year is redemption. I am little worried about the new system. It's kind of weird to have a small group of people on a committee controlling it. But I feel like Mississippi State is going to lose again. They have a rivalry game with Ole Miss, that's a tough game for them. If Ohio State can win out, win convincing in the Big Ten championship game I believe they will jump into the top four because of who they are. Somehow they will slip in there.

As a cornerback you are put in one-on-one matchups. How do you recover when you get beat on a big play?

– Bill

Roby: That's one of the toughest things. At corner, you have a lot of pride. You want to hold down your side. If you give up a touchdown, you feel like, "It's all on me. It (stinks)." A defensive lineman misses a gap or a sack, it will be yards but not usually a touchdown. At corner, you make a mistake it could be a touchdown. And it hurts each time. The way you bounce back is critical. It shows your true character. And it puts more value on corners who don't get beat much, and when they do, they come back and make a play. I am a guy who is always hard on myself if I get beat. You have to learn to adjust, and move on to the next play.

Do you have a favorite stadium you have been to or played in during your football career?

– Debbie

Roby: Wisconsin. Every time we went there, the stadium was crazy. It was the loudest I had ever heard a stadium. They had a kickoff return first play, it got so loud, a night game. I was redshirting, just watching from the sideline and I remember thinking, "This college league is real." When I played there a couple of years later, it was a night game. It was a crazy experience. And of course night games at Ohio State were special. Noon starts were sellouts, but night games, the fans had all day to get ready for the game. And as a player, you had the anxiety going. All those night games were big games. I loved them. There was nothing like a Ohio State night game. The energy was crazy, the crowd was all hyped. It's crazy when you look up at 100,000 people. It doesn't seem real. It seems fake. Once you

are playing you aren't thinking about it. I went back there during the bye week and watched them play Cincinnati. We were blowing them out so it wasn't as crazy. But looking around at all those people, you realize how cool it was to get to play in that stadium for three years.

Take 5 With Bradley Roby: A part at Diddy's changed everything

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

Bradley Roby's journey to the Broncos began in high school. He starred at Peachtree Ridge in Suwanee, Ga. As a punt returner, wide receiver and cornerback, he helped his team reach the 2009 state quarterfinals. He redshirted as a freshman at Ohio State, and focusing on cornerback for the first time, his career took off. He started the next 37 games. A first-team All-Big Ten performance as a junior placed him firmly on the Broncos' radar. Impressed with his athleticism and football IQ, the Broncos drafted Roby in the first round with the 31st overall pick. He has excelled in nickel coverage with the Broncos this season, producing interceptions in back-to-back games against the Patriots and Raiders. He will answer questions from fans each Thursday during the remainder of the season, and says he's open to "anything, not just football-related stuff." Here's the second installment:

What did you think watching the Super Bowl? Did you think you might end up with the Broncos?

– ScoopDogg7

Roby: "I was at a little party at P. Diddy's in Los Angeles. I was friends with his son Justin (Combs, a receiver at UCLA). We worked out at the same gym in L.A. when I was training for the combine. Somebody did comment during the game that "(Dang), they do need a DB." Denver obviously wasn't playing that great, and I was like, 'Yeah, I would like to go play with Champ (Bailey).' I just didn't think I would last that far in the draft. I thought there was no way I be available to them, even though I thought I could help them. It's just crazy that I ended up here and how it has all worked out."

What was your favorite subject in high school and college?

– David

Roby: "In high school, I loved gym class. It was a time to hang out with my friends and play basketball. It was just fun. I always liked basketball, but I knew I wouldn't have the opportunity to play it in college like football. So I enjoyed just shooting and playing hoops with my friends. In college, my favorite class was public speaking. I was uncomfortable talking in front of a crowd. But we had a cool teacher who made it fun. It really helped me, and it is something that I still use today."

What would you be doing if you weren't in the NFL

– *Chris*

Roby: “If I wasn't in the NFL, man, I don't know. I believe I would have been successful in something, but it was always my dream to play in the league since I was seven, eight years old. I never considered not making it.”

Batters have walk-up songs. If you had an opportunity, what song would you want played after an interception?

– *Leah*

Roby: “Man, that's a good question. Probably Wiz Khalifa's “We Dem Boyz.” That song plays a lot during practice, so it sticks in my head. It gets me going. And if it came on after a pick, that would definitely get me hyped.

Does Peyton Manning's work ethic rub off on the rest of the team?

– *Dan*

Roby: “He's our leader. He's the offensive leader. But he's the team leader. You watch and learn from how he prepares. Everything matters to him. Sometimes we try to get after him in practice, try to get him going a little bit. He is always doing something to get better.”

Broncos Q&A: NFL summer school tough to pass

By Troy E. Renck
The Denver Post
November 9, 2014

Everything became different in August.

Bradley Roby guided his high school team to the state playoffs. He starred on an undefeated Ohio State team. And on back-to-back days in training camp, he couldn't stop wide receiver Demaryius Thomas. Welcome to the NFL, kid.

"I had great coverage on him, was in the right spot, and he just jumped over me and made the play. Peyton (Manning) threw a perfect pass," Roby said. " I realized, 'Man, this league is tough.' "

Roby responded to adversity by seeking help. The rookie cornerback stayed late after practice with Hall of Famer Rod Woodson. A shaky training camp feels like a long time ago. Roby opened up in nickel coverage against the Indianapolis Colts, spending his night locked with Reggie Wayne. The first-round pick sealed the win with a diving deflection on fourth-and-6, and has played 77 percent of the defensive snaps this season. He started a "Take 5 with Bradley Roby" blog with The Denver Post last week, answering questions submitted by fans. He sat down recently to discuss his eventful rookie season:

Q: We heard you had a great story about your favorite player growing up. True?

A: Yeah. It was Jerry Rice. I loved watching him play for the 49ers. I wanted to be like him. I wore No. 80 all the way through youth football. And when I was a kid, he was in my house. A friend of my mom's knew Rice from college. He stopped by my house, and I wasn't there. I was at a friend's place. I was upset for a long time. I still haven't met him. I hope to someday. He did autograph a ball for me that I still have. I didn't collect autographs growing up, but that ball means a lot to me.

Q: A first interception in the NFL is a big deal. You picked off Patriots star Tom Brady last week. Did you get the ball or think differently about it because of the loss?

A: I wanted the ball. It's disappointing we didn't win the game, but I did want the ball from my first interception. I haven't given up on it. I have a friend with the Patriots. I am hoping he can hook me up. I sent him a FedEx box. All he has to do now is place the ball in there and send it back. I want proof that it happened, you

know, to show my kids someday. I don't want them to have to Google it. The evidence would be right there with the ball.

Q: You starred at as a receiver and punt returner in high school. How, and when, did you decide you wanted to play just cornerback?

A: When I was getting recruited, I wanted to go to Ohio State. I was going there specifically to play corner. I knew it would be a good fit because of all the guys they had sent to the pros, and I would be on national TV all the time. That's also why I redshirted as a freshman. I wanted to learn the position rather than play special teams. Focusing on it really helped. It was a great experience there. My favorite moment was going 12-0 my sophomore year. We really thought we would have given Alabama a better game than Notre Dame did. It was tough to watch. But being around those guys, it was a great group, and that's why I wanted to come back for my junior season.

Q: You have a distinctive look. When was the last time you had short hair? And why did you grow it out?

A: It was during my senior year of high school that I decided to let it grow. Growing up, my mom always wanted me to have short hair. She would cut it if she thought it was too long. But as I got older, it was my decision. A lot of guys in the South at that time had dreadlocks, and I liked the look. I get them tightened by a stylist about every three weeks or so. Even though it's long, I want it to look good, look professional. I have never been pulled down by the hair on the field. I don't worry about it playing defense. I figure I will be able to outrun the guy.

Q: It's early in your career, but who is the toughest receiver you have faced so far?

A: Man, there have been some great players. Reggie Wayne, that first game was difficult. Anquan Boldin with the 49ers. He's tough and physical. And every day in practice, I am going against Emmanuel Sanders or Wes Welker. Emmanuel can really run, and Wes is sharp in his routes. It's a challenge every day around here. I can't pick just one yet.

Q: A lot of your teammates chill out by watching movies. Others play video games. Are you an Xbox or a PlayStation guy?

A: I would have to say Play- Station. I have Xbox, and play it, but I really like the graphics on PlayStation. I play FIFA soccer. And I like NBA2K14. I heard some fans want my user name. I need to set one up to start playing against them. The fans have been great here. They remind me a lot of the fans at Ohio State. They already recognize me, and I didn't expect that.

Bradley Roby file

--Grew up huge fan of Jerry Rice. Wore No. 80 in youth football. Still has autographed football from Rice.

--Starred at Peachtree Ridge High School in Suwanee, Ga. Focused on cornerback at Ohio State.

--Started 13 games as a redshirt freshman, first of 37 starts, for the Buckeyes.

--Finished as Jim Thorpe finalist as nation's top defensive back as a sophomore on 12-0 team.

--Recorded a career-high 10 tackles last November against Indiana.

--Drafted by Broncos in the first round as the 31st pick.

--Is the only rookie cornerback with a sack and an interception this season.

Paige: C.J. Anderson, Bradley Roby come up big for Broncos in win over Raiders

By Woody Paige
The Denver Post
November 9, 2014

OAKLAND, Calif. — In less than a minute, two yearlings grew into full-fledged Broncos.

Bradley Roby, 21, and Contrell Javon Anderson, 22, saved what had begun as a dismal day by the Bay.

With halftime approaching and the discombobulated Broncos trailing the wretched Raiders 10-7 — "Just win once, baby" — the rookie Roby pulled off an acrobatic interception at the Denver 47-yard line. Seconds later, Anderson, an afterthought on a pass play, made a tough catch and broke out of five tackles and zigged, zagged and zipped for 51 yards and a touchdown that would transform a tense state of affairs into a stampede.

Wild, wild horses, the Rolling Stones sang.

"That's what I play for, to make the big plays and help us win," Roby said.

The initial guy, C.J., said: "I feel blessed. This is what I've prepared hard for. We all want to be like Peyton (Manning) and Wes (Welker) some day."

This day.

The first-round cornerback of 2014 and the free agent running back from 2013 — neither 18 hands high — are now joined at the tip and standing tall.

Manning called Anderson's reception and run "as fine a play as I've seen so far this season ... It could have easily been a catch for minus-2 yards or something. The next thing you know he breaks the tackle. I don't know how many guys he made miss. Truly an incredible effort play."

And Roby's effort on the interception was equally remarkable. The pass from Oakland's young quarterback was a Carr wreck. Derek's ball fluttered and flapped. "I don't know if it was tipped or wobbly, but I mistimed my jump and had to try to stay in the air long enough and reach back past my shoulder. That's a pick I've got to make," Roby said.

Great hang time, I said.

"Yeah, I like that description. I'm athletic. You have to be an athlete to play in the secondary."

But cornerbacks would be wide receivers if they could catch the ball better. "Wide receivers would be cornerbacks if they could defend and tackle," Roby replied. "We must be better than receivers."

Up until Roby's interception, the Broncos looked as sorry as the Raiders, who haven't won in their past 15 games. The Broncos were in hangover mode after the loss at New England.

Roby was beat by his friend and former teammate Brice Butler for a touchdown early in the second quarter, and the Broncos were behind 10-6. Uh-oh.

But Roby made his third big play of the season. He deflected the pass on the Colts' final play in the season opener. He intercepted a pass by Tom Brady a week ago. "The Broncos showed so much faith by drafting me, and I'm doing everything I can to prove they made the right decision," he said.

Anderson wasn't drafted by anybody last year. He impressed everybody in Denver, though, in the exhibitions before getting hurt. This year he had virtually fallen off the radar. He was fourth on the depth chart until injuries to others gave him a chance.

"I practice every day as if I'm going to get a chance. I thought I might play some on third down in this game," he said.

For that reason he bought 40 tickets for family and friends in his town of Vallejo, Calif., 25 miles up I-80. The folks from back home were in for a shock.

Anderson was inserted early and often and finished with 13 carries for 90 yards and seven catches for 73 yards, including that touchdown you normally only see in high school highlights.

"I don't have the speed of Ronnie (Hillman) or the size of the other guys, but I make the best of what I've got," he said.

He runs hard and fast, like a bronco.

On the reception he thought because the linebackers had deepened, Manning might check down to him, but he hadn't finished his route when the ball was on him like a mortgage payment. "You're not allowed to miss that one. I couldn't hear the crowd. I wasn't thinking about anything except just keep running and hang on."

"C.J. was sensational," Roby said.

At the other end of the locker room Anderson said his touchdown "wouldn't have happened if Bradley hadn't made such a great interception." Reciprocal admiration from two bright, clever, gifted players.

The Broncos' future was present Sunday.

C.J. and Bradley, Anderson and Roby, are grown-up Broncos now.

Bradley Roby, C.J. Anderson help Broncos do a 180

By Andrew Mason
denverbroncos.com
November 10, 2014

OAKLAND -- As the first half neared completion at O.co Coliseum Sunday, the Broncos languished. The offense, stuck in neutral, lumbered under the weight of execution errors. The defense held the Raiders down, only hamstrung by the short fields that set up two scores.

It felt similar to the situation in which the Broncos found themselves seven days earlier in New England. But this time, they abruptly reversed course, thanks to a rookie nickelback and a second-year runner who had just eight carries in the previous six games.

Together, Bradley Roby's interception and C.J. Anderson's defender-dodging, cross-field odyssey through the Oakland defense shattered any notions of an upset for the ages, igniting a 35-0 explosion that restored the Broncos to their usual form in what ended up being a 41-17 romp.

Others had more big plays. Tight end Julius Thomas scored twice; so did wide receiver Emmanuel Sanders. Quarterback Peyton Manning threw five touchdown passes, and seized the league lead with 29 for the season.

But none had the profound impact of what Roby and Anderson accomplished in a 53-second span. On a team with talent in spots it continues to discover, they pointed the Broncos to a win that restored order after the previous week's thrashing and the edgy, intense week that followed.

"You need guys to step up and make plays," said wide receiver Wes Welker. "C.J. made a lot of good plays for us out there. And it's what we needed to really get us going."

Until that moment, the Broncos' dominance only showed up on the statistical sheet. Denver had an 11-4 advantage in first downs, a 168-76 edge in yardage gained and averaged 1.86 more yards on every snap. But Oakland intercepted two passes, which led to 10 points, which extended the issues of the previous week, in which New England racked up 24 of 43 points on special teams or short fields set up by takeaways.

It had been nearly five full, frustrating quarters.

And the Broncos had endured enough. Enough chatter about what the team lost at New England. Enough self-doubt. Enough reflection, both from themselves and via a speech from Executive Vice President and General Manager John Elway.

"He challenged the whole team," said cornerback Chris Harris Jr. "He challenged us to play better and come out and execute better. He knows we didn't execute to our standards, so we wanted to come out and make [the Raiders] pay."

Finally, with Roby's interception, they did it. Pressure from both edges forced Oakland quarterback Derek Carr into an errant throw that sailed behind intended target Mychal Rivera and into Roby's waiting hands.

"Sometimes the offense needs that. We've got to get a turnover to get them going," Roby said. "Sometimes they need to get jump-started."

And no spark plug fired as explosively as Anderson. Three plays after Roby's interception, Anderson caught a swing pass from Manning in the left flat, four yards behind the line of scrimmage.

He did not expect the football.

"[Manning] obviously was in trouble, because I didn't even get a chance to finish my route," Anderson said. "Next thing you know he threw it and I caught it."

But it looked like other third-down passes destined to fall short of the line to gain.

"It easily could have been, maybe a catch for minus-two yards," said Manning.

Oakland linebacker Miles Burris had missile lock on Anderson, but missed, only grabbing the running back's waist as he scooted by.

That got Anderson back to the line of scrimmage. Still eight yards to go, and now, rookie sensation Khalil Mack bore down upon Anderson, having escaped from a duel with left tackle Ryan Clady. But Anderson threw his right arm at the 252-pound Mack, and kept him at bay.

He accelerated toward the sideline, trying to avoid Oakland safety Charles Woodson, a childhood idol he watched when attending Raiders games at the Coliseum while growing up. Woodson's lunge only got Anderson's midsection as he sprinted forward.

Three Raiders linchpins, all left grasping. But Anderson was focused ahead, not on the rabble of silver and black left in his wake.

"When I broke two tackles, I said, 'I've got a chance for the first down,'" Anderson said. "But when I saw (Demaryius Thomas) and Wes (Welker) screaming down the field, I was like, 'You know I can cut back.'"

And how.

At the Oakland 32, Anderson cut. Yet another Raiders defender sprawled. He took a 45-degree angle toward the center of the field, then added another 15 degrees to avoid to Raiders. Thomas got out in front with a block at the Oakland 7. Welker became his escort.

He crossed the goal line with the 51-yard touchdown, standing 68 yards on a diagonal angle from where he began. He traversed far more yardage than that.

"That was as fine a play as I've seen so far this season, I have to tell you," said Manning.

And it was the fuel that powered the Broncos. The rest of the game offered little doubt over whether the Broncos would win; only the degree of the defeat was in questions. The "self-inflicted wounds" of last week and Sunday in Oakland, as Manning described them, healed.

The challenge of adversity was met. More will meet the Broncos, of course, and some of it will be of their own creation; that is inevitable, even for the best of teams.

But the Broncos have so many players capable of grabbing a game by the throat and turning it around, as Anderson and Roby did. Neither is officially a starter. But together, both jump-started a stalled team and guided it back to the road after a nearly-two-game detour.

Take 5 with Bradley Roby: Broncos' rookie CB answers questions about college, food and NFL

By Troy E. Renck
The Denver Post
November 6, 2014

Bradley Roby's journey to the Broncos began in high school. He starred at Peachtree Ridge in Suwanee, Ga. As a punt returner, wide receiver and cornerback, he helped his team reach the 2009 state quarterfinals. He redshirted as a freshman at Ohio State, and focusing on cornerback for the first time, his career took off. He started the next 37 games. A first-team All-Big Ten performance as a junior placed him firmly on the Broncos' radar. Impressed with his athleticism and football IQ, the Broncos drafted Roby in the first round with the 31st overall pick. He has excelled in nickel coverage with the Broncos this season, making big plays against the Colts and Cardinals. He will answer questions from fans each Thursday during the remainder of the season, and says he's open to "anything, not just football-related stuff." Here's the first installment:

How do you compare Broncos fans to Ohio State fans?

– Pam

Roby: "They are very similar. Both are passionate about their team. I have people that already recognize me in Denver. That surprised me. But they love their team."

How and when did you decide you wanted to play cornerback?

– Jonah

Roby: "When I was getting recruited, I wanted to go to Ohio State. I was going to there specifically to play cornerback. I knew it would be a good fit because of all the guys that they had sent to the pros, and I would be on national TV all the time. That's also why I redshirted as a freshman. I wanted to learn the position rather than play special teams. Focusing on it really helped. It was a great experience there. My favorite moment was going 12-0 my sophomore year. We really thought we could have given Alabama a better game than Notre Dame did. It was tough to watch. But being around those guys, it was a great group, and why I wanted to come back for my junior season."

When was the last time you had short hair and why did you grow it out?

– Braden

Roby: "It was during my senior year of high school that I decided to let it grow long. Growing up, my mom always wanted me to have short hair. And she would cut it if she thought it was too long. But as I got older, it was my decision. A lot of guys in the south at that time had dreadlocks, and I liked the look. I get them tightened by a stylist about every three weeks or so. Even though it's long, I want it to look good, look professional. I never have been pulled down by hair on the field. I don't worry about it playing defense. I figure I will be able to outrun the guy."

Playstation or XBox? Username?

– Kelyn

Roby: "I would have to say PlayStation. I have Xbox, and play it, but I really like the graphics on PlayStation. I play FIFA soccer. And I like NBA2K14. I will be going to the Nuggets game to see LeBron (James) and the Cavaliers. He spoke to our team at Ohio State before we played Wisconsin. I need to get a username set up."

What was your welcome to the NFL moment? And do you have a favorite restaurant in the Denver area?

– Jason

Roby: "It came during training camp going against Demaryius Thomas on back-to-back days. I had great coverage on him was in the right spot and he just jumped over me and made the play. Peyton (Manning) threw a perfect pass. I realized, 'Man, this league is tough.' As far as restaurants, I like going to Del Frisco's. It's a great steakhouse. And I like the cajun grill place over at the Park Meadows Mall."

Bradley Roby finding groove as effective rookie

By Ben Swanson
DenverBroncos.com
October 16, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. — Bradley Roby wasn't very fond of the early bye week in Week 4. Though he had a good start—he was nominated for the NFL's Rookie of the Week award after a Week 1 performance in which he had seven tackles and three passes defensed, including a clutch play to stop the Colts on their final drive—Roby didn't want to interrupt his learning process.

"I'm still getting my footing, getting used to the NFL and stuff like that, just getting in stride with everything," he said at the time. "I think for me it's not messing up my progression, but I just got to continue to work, mentally, through the bye week and let my body heal a little bit."

Fast-forward to Week 6: Roby is back up for consideration in the polls for Rookie of the Week. He had three tackles and two passes defensed, as well as a sack. It was just another solid outing for a rookie cornerback who's looked like he has more experience in the NFL than the 'R' in his bio.

It certainly seems like the bye week hasn't slowed him down in the slightest. In fact, he hasn't looked slow whatsoever. He certainly didn't look slow to Geno Smith, who was sacked by Roby flying in from the edge on a blitz.

In comparison to his status at the season's start, Roby says he's more comfortable in the defense. His turntable needle has found the groove in the vinyl of his developmental path. "I'm kind of in a rhythm on how to prepare each week, how to prepare for different receivers and things like that," he said. "I think I'm a lot better. I think I have a ways to go. I'm still working on it. From the first game, though, I'm way ahead where I was. Each week I just try to get better."

Roby's play as a rookie has been outstanding given his short time in the NFL so far, and it's drawn attention from the Rookie of the Week award nominations to his coaches and teammates.

"He's a very talented guy, but what usually separates guys is how they prepare, the exactness in this league that you have to play at in pass defense, especially the corner position," Head Coach John Fox said. "I think he's really stood out there. [Secondary Coach] Cory [Undlin] and [Assistant Secondary/Safeties Coach] Sam [Garnes] have done a good job with him. He's very willing, he's a sponge to learn

and he's a smart guy, football-wise. He understands concepts, and he's not afraid to work. So I think you'll continue to see that."

As the third cornerback, Roby often comes in during nickel situations to cover the slot receiver, and has shown a pretty complete, savvy game. His coverage has been a valuable addition in the slot and has taken on challenging receivers. He's also been a pretty solid tackler, wrapping up opponents without making many mistakes.

"At the end of the day, if you want it more than him, you'll come out on top. If you run at him harder than he's running at you, you're going to win. Who's going to back down?" Roby said. "I just want to do my job. If a guy comes in my area, I want to get him down. I'm not going to take pride in missing tackles, I don't want to be known for that. I just like to play football, so it comes with it."

It's not hard to see why his play has earned the respect of his colleagues in the secondary. T.J. Ward called him a "young, hungry guy."

"I think he's doing a great job in there," Chris Harris Jr. said. "It's definitely a complex position and he's doing well. He's kind of learning on the fly and to play that position you've got to learn a lot. You've got a lot of responsibility and he's doing a great job. He's improving each week so that's something that you want and that's all you can ask for from any rookie is to get better each week."

"I definitely feel a tie with the other guys, communication-wise," Roby said. "I think we're kind of slowly getting all on the same page. Take it week to week to get better."

With 23 total tackles, six passes defensed and a sack, Roby's showing his impact in a limited role in the secondary's depth, as well as weekly improvement that comes with added experience. And on top of that, his future is looking brighter and brighter with a well-rounded defensive skill set and level of preparation that could pay off for years to come.

Broncos rookie cornerback Bradley Roby makes key play in opening win

By Troy E. Renck
The Denver Post
September 9, 2014

Bradley Roby wanted to talk Monday. He couldn't. He had somewhere to be, and was already seven minutes late. With apologies, he had to run.

It was fitting. He has been racing the past six weeks, accelerating from an easy practice mark for Peyton Manning to a critical contributor in the Broncos' 31-24 victory over the Indianapolis Colts on Sunday night.

A pass proved the clincher, but it was not a Manning completion. Rather, it was Roby's deflection of Colts quarterback Andrew Luck's pass that restored oxygen to gasping Broncos fans.

"It was tight at the very end," Roby said Sunday night. "We said: 'We've got to make a play to win the game. We can't rely on the offense. It's on us.' Defense wins the game. We went back out there and did what we needed to do."

The Colts, predictably, picked on the Broncos' No. 1 pick in his debut. Roby held his own, employed for 63 plays, lined up opposite of Colts star receiver Reggie Wayne on several occasions.

"(Roby) doesn't back down from anyone he's guarding," safety T.J. Ward said Monday as players dispersed from positional meetings. "I think it's from the reps he got in camp with the 'ones' and guarding (Demaryius Thomas). It showed."

Humility found Roby last month. Manning and Thomas connected on scoring plays, even when the former Ohio State standout blanketed the all-pro. His response to adversity set up his breakthrough performance.

Roby began staying after practice, working with Hall of Famer Rod Woodson, an assistant coach. Roby learned the cold reality of the NFL: Athleticism goes only so far in when everyone oozes talent. A bright student in the film room, Roby improved his technique.

"You can see him getting more and more comfortable in the scheme, in the fundamentals, where he fits in coverage as far as leverage," Broncos coach John Fox said. "It's a tribute to him how he's gone about his preparation."

Progress showed in drills. But the question lingered on whether it would translate in prime time. The Broncos needed Roby to play well, leaning on him more than expected with Kayvon Webster inactive after missing practice time.

"(Roby's) playing the nickel from (the start of the season). That's tough to do," said cornerback Chris Harris, limited to 41 plays in his return from left knee surgery. "We're looking for Roby to shut down the inside. I think he did a good job. He's done a great job catching on."

Luck wasn't going to take the Broncos word for it. He attacked Roby but couldn't exploit him. Roby's best defense came in critical moments. In the first drive of the third quarter, Luck marched the Colts down the field. At the 3-yard line, the quarterback connected on a slant to Hakeem Nicks. Roby denied the receiver with a forceful hit, lowering his legs and halting Nicks' momentum at the 1. The Broncos suffocated Luck on a misguided sneak on fourth down, halting the drive.

"He made a really big play, a really big stop," Fox said.

With the Broncos white-knuckling a seven-point lead with 1:57 remaining, Roby was needed again.

On fourth down, Luck fired to Wayne, who beat Roby off the line, and Roby admitted, "I figured they would go after me."

The rookie recovered and broke up the pass with a dive and a stretch of his right arm. He signaled incomplete. His grade was anything but.

"Whoever is out there, we trust completely," Ward said. "I think this game not only solidified it for him, but everyone else. He's very capable, and we expect him to make plays."

Roby: "I'll be ready"

By Lauren Giudice

DenverBroncos.com

August 22, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. - No one can benefit more from joint practices than rookies. Bradley Roby, the Broncos' first round pick, took advantage of practicing with the Houston Texans this week.

Every day during training camp, Roby is tasked with the challenge of covering the likes of Demaryius Thomas with Peyton Manning under center. But the past three days have allowed him to see how other dynamic NFL players operate.

He took on Arian Foster during 1-on-1s and though Roby readily admits that Foster beat him and he "misplayed the ball," he is excited that the Texans joined the Broncos the past three days.

"It's just about learning: making mistakes and learning from them and getting better," Roby said.

He said Wednesday's practice helped him with defending the fade route and this week's practices gave him more reps working in the nickel package.

Wednesday, Roby made a great play during 1-on-1s in the end zone as he and Texans wide receiver Lacoitan Bester battled for a lofted pass. Both jumped up, reaching for the ball, but Roby prevented the catch by aggressively knocking it away.

Camp hasn't always been easy for Roby. Facing Peyton Manning and his versatile array of weapons is a daunting task, especially for a 22-year-old fresh out of college.

But he's doing the right things to get ready.

"I think I'm still learning," Roby said. "Like I said, I'm learning the position and nickel so I can play inside and outside. I think once the season starts and I start getting a few games under my belt, it'll slow down a lot. I catch on kind of fast. I'm getting everything down, learning as much as I can and when the season comes, I'll be ready."

It's been a big week for Roby. When Kayvon Webster twisted his ankle on Saturday preceding the Broncos' matchup against the 49ers in San Francisco, Roby was thrust into the starting role. He and the rest of the defense held the 49ers to a shutout during the debut of Levi's Stadium.

While Roby has been learning from the Texans and his teammates, he is also benefitting from the presence of former Steelers and Raiders cornerback Rod Woodson. The 11-time Pro Bowler is working with the Broncos this offseason as part of the Bill Walsh Minority Coaching Fellowship Program.

Woodson, who recorded 71 interceptions in his career, can be found working after practice with Roby. Roby said he wants to "use him for what he was worth" because Woodson knows what it's like to be a rookie and first round selection.

"He has a lot of experience," Roby said of Woodson. "He's one of the greatest DBs ever, and he just gave me a lot of small things to look at -- different viewpoints to look at things. It helped me a lot."

"I wrote them all down -- I tried to remember everything I could, and then write it down, and I'll look back at those books and look at all the advice he gave me, and try to implement it slowly."

With Chris Harris Jr. and Webster sitting above him on the depth chart, Roby still has time to develop. But racking up first-team reps, facing one of the best offenses in the NFL during practice, receiving guidance from a Hall of Famer and practicing with another team have all been influential factors in preparing him for the season that is quickly approaching.

Broncos' Bradley Roby a hit as emcee, hopes to be same as cornerback

By Mike Klis
The Denver Post
August 12, 2014

Never mind the pressures of living up to the expectations of being a No. 1 draft pick. Never mind the difficulty of trying to make it in the NFL as a rookie cornerback.

Bradley Roby was handed the responsibility Saturday night of serving as master of ceremonies for the Broncos' annual rookie show. You know, with VIPs such as Peyton Manning and DeMarcus Ware sitting in the audience.

Now that's pressure.

"Roby did a great job," Broncos rookie right tackle Michael Schofield said. "Some of the vets were saying it was one of the best rookie shows ever."

The bulk of Roby's shtick was to perform impressions of people around the building. Players, coaches, people behind the scenes.

"I kidded everybody," Roby said, while adding he couldn't reveal specifics. "It was fun. It was great to hear the feedback from the team. When you make a full room of grown men laugh, it's pretty cool — especially when we were all focusing on the Seattle game. We pulled this together the last minute. It went well."

This NFL rookie business can be fun. More often, it's extremely difficult. The Broncos drafted Roby in the first round because of his physical skills. He's fast, athletic. Has good size and instincts. He tackles well.

There have been moments during the Broncos' training camp, though, when Roby has been reminded his island as an NFL cornerback is a long way from Columbus.

He was dominant at times while playing for Ohio State. He was humbled Monday when Demaryius Thomas beat him for a long reception down the left sideline.

Actually, Roby was running stride for stride with Thomas, who had run a sideline-and-go. Manning just happened to fire the pass to a 6-inch area above Roby's moving helmet. Thomas reached up and snagged it with his remarkably strong hands.

"In college, I might have picked that ball," Roby said. "But Peyton put the ball where my back was turned. He put it exactly where I didn't know where it is. Thinking about it, I should have got my hands up at the right time."

In the Broncos' No. 1 defense, Roby plays right corner in nickel situations. Aqib Talib starts at left corner. Kayvon Webster starts at right corner, but slides in to play the nickel when Roby comes in. By the start of the season, Chris Harris is expected to return from knee surgery and start at right corner. Webster, who has been playing well in his second season, appears to be the leader at the nickel position.

If so, Roby would become the Broncos' No. 4 cornerback, which would mean playing in "dime" packages. He'll play more as the season goes along. This was expected. The Broncos did not select Roby in the first round with plans of starting him on Day One.

This team is too deep, and cornerback is too difficult, to expect much more.

"He has all the physical tools that you want. He's just in the transition of coming from college football to pro football," Broncos coach John Fox said. "It's two different games. You've got more exactness in the passing game. Some of those are tough lessons. That's why we're practicing.

"He's working hard at it. He's staying positive. He's attacking it the right way."

Roby has been staying after practice lately to get in extra work with Rod Woodson, the former cornerback-safety great who is serving as a Broncos coaching assistant during camp.

"He's a Hall of Famer, and I'm a rookie coming into the league," Roby said. "I'm trying to get as much knowledge as possible. Why not learn from one of the best, if not the best, DBs to ever play? Why wouldn't I?"

Roby ready for 'dream come true'

By Jeff Legwold

ESPN.com

August 6, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- Bradley Roby was an NFL hopeful last February, plowing through his final preparations for the league's scouting combine.

He wasn't with the Denver Broncos when the team had its title dreams shattered into little pieces in Super Bowl XLVIII. He didn't even know the Broncos could be the next stop in his football life. But that doesn't mean the Broncos' first-round pick can't understand what that meant to his new team, or what the home stadium will feel like Thursday night when they open the preseason against the team that dashed their hopes six months ago -- the Seattle Seahawks.

"Yeah, definitely, I feel like that's obvious," Roby said earlier this week. "Any time something like that happens in the Super Bowl, you know that's going to happen the next year. Especially opening up that next year with the same team, you know it's going to be a little here and there. It's going to be exciting. It's going to be worth watching, so I'm just excited to be a part of it."

In some ways, the Broncos' 43-8 loss to the Seahawks is a big reason why Roby is currently in the Broncos' locker room. It's why the Broncos tried so hard to do their due diligence on Roby and some mild off-the-field concerns that pushed what many league personnel executives felt was the best cover cornerback in the draft so deep into the first round.

The Broncos were looking to get bigger and more athletic in the secondary, to find players with bigger reach to match up against the bigger receivers that now dot the landscape. Roby, with his high-end speed (4.34 in the 40-yard dash at the combine) to go with his 5-foot-11 1/4, 194-pound frame, is just what the Broncos wanted.

Thursday night, Roby will get his first real chance to show how he's progressed in the team's offseason workouts. He figures to first step on the field with the starters if they go to the nickel in the Seahawks' first 10 to 12 plays on offense. That's an important item since the nickel is essentially the Broncos' base defense now, a formation they play well over 60 percent of the time.

"He's a bright guy," Broncos defensive coordinator Jack Del Rio said. "Athletically he has all of the things you like to see and now it's just a matter of getting him ready to see the multiplicity you see in this league, the looks, with all of the quarterbacks and receivers who know what to do."

As you would expect if there is a future Hall of Fame quarterback across from you in a training camp practice, Roby has felt the sting of Peyton Manning and the Broncos' high-powered offense. A double move here, a perfectly thrown fade there -- "That's going to happen, Peyton Manning is Peyton Manning" -- and Roby has seen what the learning curve looks like for him.

But Roby has also shown the ability to bounce back quickly, to get what Champ Bailey has called "corner amnesia," and line up on the next play with the confidence it takes to survive.

"These young cats have to know you have to come right back and line up," said fellow corner Chris Harris Jr. said. "Quarterbacks and receivers in this league are going to get you sometimes, you can do everything right and they're still going to make a play sometimes. But you have to come right back and [Roby] has done that. You can't lose that faith in yourself and if you get down, don't bounce back, those quarterbacks will keep coming after you."

As for Roby, he confessed to feeling jitters but is also eager to show what he can do.

"There's always going to be nerves any time you suit up for a game," he said. "I'm not going to sit here and say I'm not, but it's not going to be a big thing for me. You always get nervous, but I'm just excited to just go out there and go against somebody else and just really let it all out and show Broncos Country how I play, just familiarize myself with them. Get the crowd real hyped, playing against the Seahawks, it's going to be fun for me. Dream come true."

Rookies Bradley Roby and Cody Latimer put college rivalry aside with Broncos

By Kalyn Kahler
The Colorado Springs Gazette
July 24, 2014

ENGLEWOOD - C-minus - That's how Broncos rookies Bradley Roby and Cody Latimer graded themselves after their first NFL training camp practice Thursday at Dove Valley. Maybe it's not a coincidence the two chose the same grade - besides sharing a common college conference, the Big Ten, the top two Broncos draft picks seem to be of the same hard-working mindset. Latimer stayed after practice concluded to catch a few more passes with the wide receivers, and Roby also hung back to huddle with veteran members of the secondary. The coordination between the two rookies started immediately after they were drafted.

"We talk all the time," Latimer said. "Before camp and OTAs, we said we are going to push each other everyday. I'm going to make him better and he's going to make me better."

The status as the top two draft picks in camp comes along with high expectations, and both players are competing in position groups with opportunities to battle for a roster spot. Denver's wide receiver picture is murky with the loss of Eric Decker to free agency, and Latimer could challenge for some of Decker's targets.

Roby saw reps with the first team Thursday and could earn a role in the improved, more physical secondary.

"Me and Cody, we definitely got together and said, 'We are going to do this as rookies,'" Roby said. "The team needs us rookies coming in to make plays."

But the two haven't always been so perfectly synced. During their college careers, Roby's Buckeyes and Latimer's Hoosiers met three times. Unsurprisingly, Big Ten powerhouse Ohio State beat conference doormat Indiana all three times, winning by 28 points last season.

"We killed him," said Roby, who blocked a punt in the game to set up the Buckeye's third touchdown. "It was bad. He knows it, I don't have to say nothing about it."

Although Latimer was never part of a winning season, Indiana improved each of his three seasons, finishing last year at 5-7. Joining the Broncos, a team that has had only five losing seasons in 30 years, is a huge transition.

"It gives me the feel of what a winner actually feels like," Latimer said. "We turned it around at Indiana but here it will be a good feeling to know what a winning program is like."

Latimer got his long overdue Hoosier revenge at the end of Thursday's practice, when he caught a long touchdown pass from Brock Osweiler, beating Roby down the middle.

Although Latimer claims their old college trash-talking days are done, "Now we are on the Broncos and teammates now, we are focused on winning here and that's in the past," he now finds a more subtle way to make a slight dig at his draft-mate.

"Every day is an interview," Latimer said. "You are interviewing for a job, so you have to bring it every day. Somebody is going to look bad, it's either you or the defender."

Roby-Latimer Battles Helping Both Players

By David DeChant
DenverBroncos.com
July 25, 2014

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. -- They were picked just 25 spots apart in the 2014 NFL Draft and they're both from the Big Ten Conference.

Since joining the Broncos, cornerback Bradley Roby and wide receiver Cody Latimer have continued to be linked to each other, on and off the field.

"We talk all the time," Latimer said Thursday. "We talked before camp during OTAs, we said we're going to push each other every day."

The pair faced each other twice in college while Roby was at Ohio State and Latimer was at Indiana. Both players had their moments in those games. Latimer grabbed a combined 12 catches for 128 yards while Roby recorded three passes defended in each contest.

That constant back-and-forth battle continued on the practice field at Dove Valley during rookie camp and offseason practices.

"It's intense between us," Latimer said. "We know when we line up, we're not going to play around. We're going to go after it."

They didn't wait long on the first day of training camp to do just that. They matched up twice during one-on-one drills, with both players showing physicality off the line and out of their breaks. Latimer made a leaping catch both times, using his large frame to box out Roby, but the feisty corner was right there and kept the gains to a minimum.

While both players relish the chance to face each other, the competition represents a particularly important opportunity for Roby.

"[On] offense, you can run routes on air," Roby said. "But defense, you need that guy in front of you to work that muscle memory, that eye control. So it's good to get back out here."

Overall, Latimer had an impressive first practice -- he beat Roby deep for a touchdown during team drills -- and Roby made his share of plays, but both players gave themselves a C-minus for the day. The hope for both is to sharpen one another's skills as they develop at the highest level.

"We're going out here to compete to win a Super Bowl, to be rookies of the year," Latimer said. "We've got goals set for each other, so I'm like, 'I'm going to make you better, you're going to make me better and we're going to bring it.'"

Broncos CB Roby using offseason training for physical, personal growth

By Doug Farrar
SI.com
July 15, 2014

LOS ANGELES -- From the perspective of sheer physical talent, Ohio State's Bradley Roby was perhaps the most impressive cornerback prospect in the 2014 draft. That's saying something, considering that five cornerbacks were taken in the first round, but Roby's tape and measurables do stand out when he's playing at his best. At the scouting combine, Roby ran a 4.34 40-yard dash despite suffering a knee injury last December, and he aced the agility drills. No surprise there, as Roby showed through three seasons with the Buckeyes that he had the trail speed, short-area agility and raw technique to excel in this era of aggressive pass defense. Even at 5-11 and 194 pounds, Roby appeared to be an ideal version of the modern starting cornerback. The Broncos selected him with the No. 31 overall pick, and expect him to start in a secondary that also includes new acquisitions Aqib Talib and T.J. Ward.

Then again, there have been lapses in judgment on and off the field that have left NFL teams wondering. In April, he was arrested for driving a vehicle while impaired -- the police found him in a parked car and smelled alcohol. Last July, he was charged with disorderly conduct based on his alleged role in a bar fight -- the charges were dismissed, but in the rarefied air of the first round, these things tend to add up.

Similarly, as talented as he is, Roby will occasionally lose his bearings on the field. There was perhaps no better example than in Ohio State's 31-24 win over Wisconsin last September: Roby amassed eight tackles and an interception, but was also exposed in coverage by receiver Jared Abbrederis, who used his route awareness and quick cuts to fool Roby to the tune of 10 catches for 207 yards and a touchdown. In straight routes, especially deeper ones, Roby stuck to his receivers like glue, but he also zipped too often when he should have zagged.

It's a common problem for hyper-talented players when they leave the relative safety of the collegiate environment for the harsh glow of the NFL -- how do you clean up the rough spots in such a short time? For Roby, that process has included training in Los Angeles with Travelle Gaines' Athletic Gaines studio. Gaines has trained hundreds of college and NFL players since he started his business in 2007, and combine prep is one of his specialties. Roby's knee injury forced Gaines to take things slowly at first without losing ground.

"My biggest thing here was that Travelle wanted me to rehab my knee, because it was still bothering me when I first got here," Roby said from Gaines' studio. "I didn't do much in the first couple weeks -- I wanted to rest, and I got with his doctors, and we got my knee back right. I had a severe bone bruise and a hyperextension, and it was weird, because the way the bone bruise was, it just hurt all the time. Any type of pressure on it, and it hurt really bad. It was something that lingered, so I didn't want to start training until that fully healed. After that, it was just about getting my body back stronger, because I sat out before. Those types of things. Overall strength and speed."

As Gaines said, it's a delicate balance between intelligent rest and the kind of intensity that is required when mere weeks separate an athlete from the biggest job interview of his young life.

"The first thing you have to do is to continue to keep him on a track to peak out at the combine, while still being sensitive to his injury. You can't just have an athlete sit on the sidelines and take mental reps; you have to make sure you're still building up his core strength and his upper-body strength. Try and balance out his legs as much as you can, while teaching him as much technique as you can while building him up until he gets to full speed. Because the last thing you want to do is to have him get so far behind, and expect when he gets healthy to try to give him a crash course. You have to build confidence in the repetitions and what they're trying to do, while still managing this injury.

"Most everybody comes here beat up. Most everybody comes here with some kind of injury. That's why every single program is 100 percent customized to what these guys need -- to address their strengths, and to, of course, address their weaknesses."

Roby's most glaring issue -- and it's one he knows all too well -- is the perception that his athleticism has outpaced his maturity.

"I'm just learning more about the game," he told me when I asked him about that perception. "When I get that overall knowledge of the game up -- anything and everything. Who's my [safety] help, how I fit in the system, what I'm supposed to do on this play, this and that. That's where my game can be great. But I realize that when I wasn't thinking that way. When I wasn't thinking about Oh -- I have help here, so I should be outside, or 'I have outside help, so I should be inside... When you get away from things like that, you give up big plays because you make mistakes in areas you shouldn't if you really pay attention to all the small things."

Gaines' training has helped, as has his time so far with the Broncos, as has his own self-awareness. While he preferred to leave the off-field incidents in the past, Gaines intimated that the impulse control that causes young men to

stray from the path in the real world isn't that different from the lack of fundamentals that have a defender running the wrong way on a skinny post.

"Yeah -- the funny part about that is that it's all about maturity," Gaines said of Roby. "It shows how mature a person is when he can admit that he's made mistakes. Brad has always been, 'Hey, you know what? I messed up here and there, and I'm growing from it.' That's the thing I love about this kid. He knows when he's messed up, and he knows when he's done right. An athlete that is accountable for his actions -- that's an athlete who's going to be successful."

It's a delicate and difficult balance -- Gaines has had to kick a few players out of his offseason programs because they showed a red streak too often, or refused to put in the work required. Roby, for his part, hasn't been that type of guy. He appreciates the customized program Gaines has put together for him and the familial feeling in Gaines' new place in the San Fernando Valley. Gaines had set up shop in West Hollywood before, and the distractions could be onerous at times.

"You know he knows what he's doing just by his resume -- the people he's trained over the years. A nice facility like this -- today is the first time I've seen it -- and it's easy to have a camaraderie with him. He's just cool."

For Gaines, part of that "cool" is the ability to be more than a trainer -- he can be a mentor at times when a player needs assistance and is willing to listen. The pace during daily training sessions is blistering, and the guys who have been with Gaines for years are fiercely protective of the environment. Gaines, who went through his own issues growing up in Louisiana before he found his way, has seen enough to know -- both then and now.

"It's a lot more of a mentorship now, because I've seen Bradley Roby before. I saw him last year and the year before that, [in different players]. Before Bradley, I had [Baltimore Ravenscornerback] Jimmy Smith. It's now eight years of this for me, and I've seen every kid and every situation. I can use my experience in the past and build on the relationships, and I really want to be more of a resource for that. There are now guys I trained back in 2007 who are now two and three years retired, and I'm still here."

Roby just arrived, in a relative sense. He's learning and he's willing, and if he keeps it together here, it will pay great dividends down the road.

Roby relishes role with Broncos

By Matthew Florjancic

WKYC

July 8, 2014

BEREA, Ohio -- Former Ohio State cornerback Bradley Roby has begun to settle into his new home in the NFL with the Denver Broncos.

From seeking, and getting, advice from veteran defensive backs and lining up against future Hall of Fame quarterback Peyton Manning, Roby has embraced everything that comes with joining the Broncos.

"It's been pretty good," Roby said. "Right now, we just got done with OTAs and minicamp. I think I did very (well). I think there's a lot that I can work on, but I think I did (well) as a rookie coming in and getting those reps with the ones. I'm just trying to keep getting better every day.

"Every day, I want to attack it and be my best."

According to Roby, the veterans have taken notice of his work ethic and that is why they are trying to help him become a better player.

"All of the older guys, T.J. (Ward), Aqib (Talib), Chris Harris, Rahim (Moore), they're just helping me out," Roby said. "They know that I'm a young guy, that I was brought in to help the team, so they're just helping me. I appreciate that, and that's what they're supposed to do as veterans, so I look to them to guide me through my first year."

Roby has applied those lessons and put those tips to good use, as it helped him intercept Manning at a recent practice during organized team activities.

"I'm not going to act like I never got an interception before in my life, but it was just great," Roby said. "Everybody wants a Peyton Manning pick. My first one as a rookie in OTAs is not real, but I was just happy to just make a play. I love making plays, and if I can make it against a legendary guy like that, that's even better.

"It's crazy. Every day that I see him, I'm like, 'Wow, that's Peyton Manning. I grew up watching this dude. Now, he's my teammate.' I get to go against him every day, and I actually got my first pick against him. I don't want to put it on Front Street, but I was very happy about that. He's a living legend, and I know he's going to make me better."

It is that ability to get better on the field that gave the Broncos confidence when they selected Roby in the first round of the 2014 NFL Draft. After getting passed up by 30 other teams, Roby plans on rewarding the Broncos, who made it all the way to the Super Bowl before being decimated by the Seattle Seahawks, 43-8, in the NFL's championship game back in February.

"I really felt like I was one of the top guys," Roby said. "For certain reasons, other teams didn't think so, but the Broncos did, and I appreciate them taking that leap of faith. I feel like it's great. I feel like I'm in the best position. I really think that I'm in the best position possible, so I'm going to make the best of it.

"I know it comes with a lot of responsibility. I'm ready to do that. I feel like I'm in a perfect position. This year, they're going to have to come at me. I'm a rookie on a great defense. They're going to try to expose whatever weakness they think the defense has. That's just going to be even better for me. That's going to put me out there, but I love that pressure. I thrive, and am the best when I have the most pressure."