



DENVER BRONCOS QUOTES

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DENVER BRONCOS 2018 NFL DRAFT PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTES (4/28/18) **PRESIDENT OF FOOTBALL OPS./GM JOHN ELWAY & HEAD COACH VANCE JOSEPH**

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Opening Statement

John Elway: “Before we get started, this is obviously a big effort by everybody on the personnel side as well as our coaches. I’d really like to take this time to really thank them. [Head Coach] Vance [Joseph] and his assistant coaches, they were a tremendous help. Matt Russell, Director of Player Personnel, he did a tremendous job, my right-hand man. Brian Stark, Director of College Scouting. A.J. Durso, who’s Director of Pro Personnel. [Senior Personnel Advisor] Gary Kubiak and [Senior Personnel Advisor] Tom Heckert were huge helps. To have their advice, and to have Gary in there with the experience that he has was a tremendous help. Then, the unsung heroes, our scouts—[Southeast Area Scout] Eugene Armstrong, [College Scouting Coord./Area Scout] Dave Bratten, [Midwest Area Scout] Scott DiStefano, [Southwest Area Scout] Klein Kubiak. [Western Regional Scout] Darren Mougey, [Eastern Regional Scout] Nick Schiralli, [Midwest Area Scout] Bryan Chesin. Then also on the pro side, [Pro Scout] Jordon Dizon and [Player Personnel Assistant] Patrick Walsh. Then our personnel interns Deon Randall and Rob Paton, they do a great job. We ask them to do a lot and they really, really do a great job. Then also “Greek” (Director of Sports Medicine Steve Antonopoulos), [Head Athletic Trainer] Vince [Garcia] and the medical team, as well as [Director of Football Analytics] Mitch Tanney and [Football Analyst] Scott Flaska with our analytics, which we dove into a little this year. [Director of Team Administration] Mark Thewes and [Director of Football Administration] Mike Sullivan on the administration side, and [Director of Player Development] Ray Jackson and [Executive Assistant to Player Personnel] Pam Papsdorf for logistics and travel. We really thank them. We couldn’t do it without them. It’s a team effort. We’re really excited about how the draft ended and the way it fell for us. Obviously, it never falls perfectly for you, but we’re excited about the way it did fall. We feel like we got a lot of really good football players and also really good people. They’re quality guys that are great competitors and have a toughness to them. As far the group of guys when it comes to that side, we’re really excited about that. We’re excited about the draft and obviously the work begins now. I know there are going to be a lot of comparisons on how everybody thinks, and we’re going to get graded on how the draft turns out, but ultimately the true grade is whether we win football games or not. We’d rather win football games than [get good grades] the day after the draft and on what we did on April 28. As I said, we’re excited about the opportunity we have and the guys that we have. We’re going to turn over to Vance and the staff to be able to work with them and get the most out of them.”

Vance Joseph: “Just thanking the staff for their hard work, and obviously John and his staff. They did a great job. We had a plan for every guy that we drafted, and that’s a good feeling. You don’t want to draft guys if you don’t have a plan for them. Every guy that we drafted, we had a clear plan for. Again, John said that they’re good players but also good people. We want to add guys to our culture that can help us win and help keep our culture strong.”

On if he felt pressure coming into the draft after a 5-11 season

JE: “Being 5-11, we knew that we had to bounce back from it. That’s not what’s acceptable for this organization and we knew that. If you don’t feel pressure at all times in this job, something’s wrong. We just knew going in that we wanted good quality people that were quality football players. We were in good shape with eight picks in the first five rounds and then we ended up moving back a couple times to pick up a couple more picks. We got a lot of picks with a lot of quality guys. We feel it every time we work in this business. We do it because we’ve got to win.”

On drafting players that show maturity

JE: “It is a mature group, as you said. There are lots of seniors in the group so we’re excited about that maturity level. All of them are that way. One thing we wanted to do going into this draft was get quality football players but also quality people, and that was an emphasis—to have that maturity level. One thing that we learned last year when we’re 5-11, when you’re in a losing streak, you need that maturity and that leadership to get things turned around. These players have that ability and they have that maturity level. I’m not trying to say that we weren’t mature, but I’m just saying that you need guys that when you’re going through a tough time, they’ll be able to be mentally tough and get things turned around. That’s why we decided to go more in that direction, to say that if things got tough for a couple weeks, we’ve got to get things turned around.”

On benefiting from the Broncos’ staff coaching the 2018 Senior Bowl

VJ: “It was huge for us. Obviously coaching that game is a clear advantage going in to the draft. We drafted three guys from that Senior Bowl game. To have a chance to work with those guys for a week in meetings and on the practice field is huge. We don’t draft guys blindly. Coaching that game was huge. Taking three guys from that game proves it.”

JE: “I will say this: You don’t want to coach that for a long time. We had a great time at the Senior Bowl but we are good not coaching it for a while.”

On developing younger players verses playing guys as rookies

VJ: “I think players develop at different rates. Each player is different. You want players to come in and have the maturity to play early. Obviously, the coach has a big part of that along with fit, maturity and need. You want all of these guys to have a chance to come in and compete for a job. That is why we drafted them. In this class in my opinion, every guy on this sheet here will have a chance to compete. Again, every player develops differently. The guys from last year’s class, they have been in the league now for seven or eight months. They have a chance to come back this year and compete again and prove their work. I think as you have your draft classes, some guys can play their first year, second year or even the third year. Just being patient with certain guys, having the coaches who coach those guys up and get them better every year is the key – improvement every year.

On not drafting a quarterback

JE: “We were looking at the board and there were a couple of quarterbacks over there. I thought that we had other players that we wanted in the direction that we wanted to go. With Paxton, we still think he is young. We are not kicking him to the curb. He can still develop. When we drafted him two years ago, as I said, we knew it was going to take some time. Paxton is going to compete with [QB] Chad [Kelly] for that backup spot. We are not going to bring another one in for OTAs. We will take a peek at that. It will be those two and [QB] Case [Keenum]. We are going to OTAs with those guys and go from there.”

On selecting WR DaeSean Hamilton

VJ: “Well with Hamilton, he’s a lot like Courtland. They’re big guys that have played all three positions. We didn’t narrow these guys down just being a slot guy. We have receivers that fit a certain skillset that we wanted. We wanted big, fast guys with great ball skills, and he fits in that profile. Being a slot guy doesn’t mean you’re 5’9. That’s all by concept and that’s by design. He can play everywhere. At the Senior Bowl, he was our best receiver. So, having that guy for a full week and to watch his maturity as a player was huge for us.”

On what impressed the Broncos about OL Sam Jones

JE: "We just liked the way he played the game. I think that he's got good size, he's aggressive and Sean Kugler liked him, the Offensive Line Coach, really liked him. We liked the way he went about his business. Obviously, he has a lot to learn, as all these guys do, but we felt that Sam had some upside. We liked the way that he played the game. We were excited to go that way"

On signing college free agents

JE: "We have to sell them. We have around seven or eight slots, so we're working on that. As soon as the draft is over, we'll work on that and try to fill the slots. You go through and it's a sales process. It's how they feel about their chances when they do come in here. It is important to us because as you said, we found a lot of CFAs over the past several of years. It doesn't end when the draft is over. We still continue to work and try to find the best football players that didn't get drafted."

On past success of college free agents making the team

JE: "You bet that helps. They'll look at each position and the agents look at the positions and feel like they have a good chance. The track record that we've had and the opportunity that we do give to CFA is the doesn't matter if you're drafted or if you're CFA. Everybody's going to come in to camp and compete, and have an opportunity to make this football team."

On Gary Kubiak's role in the draft process

JE: "Gary, he's got great experience. He's been coaching in the NFL for a long time, played with me and even coached for a long long time. Any time you can have another voice like Gary's that has that experience that thinks a lot like we do, he just has this feel and he's really good at that. He's always great to have in there and his evaluation skills are very good. He's a great voice to have."

On if he knew LB Keishawn Bierria's mother is battling cancers

JE: "I was not aware of that. No"

On if Bierria mentioned his mother's illness during the pre-draft evaluation

VJ: "No."

On how much it helped to have draft picks higher in each than usual

JE: "There's a difference between picking first in a round. They're still fifth-round draft picks but there are 31 different positions between that. So being at the top of the round, there are a lot more opportunities for you there. Plus, there are a lot more opportunities because a lot of people want to come up. There's always more opportunity to add picks on as time goes. There's no question that it helps drafting at the top. The bottom line is, we feel like the opportunities we got to get these guys, we got. I'm not sure if we're drafting later if we'd have had these guys, so there's no question it's an advantage. Again, not a position we want to be in from here on out."

On if the team entered the draft expecting to add more draft picks

JE: "We had eight [picks] in the first five [rounds], we knew that. We knew we'd probably have some opportunity back in the fifth to back up and get some picks, since people would be coming up a little bit. It's hard to make those decisions—do you stick and take it or move back, take the picks and increase your odds. The two times that we did go back, we felt it was best and in our interest to move back and take the optional picks. Picking up Bierria as well as Williams, those are the guys we were able to pick up and so we're excited about having those guys. So you may miss a guy that you kind of wanted in the fifth, but we still had those options to pick up more players at the end."

On what defensive meeting room Chubb will be in

VJ: "He's going to be in the outside linebackers room. That's obviously right now being split between [LB Coach] Reggie [Herring] and [DL Coach] Bill [Kollar]. He's a SAM backer at the moment."

On LB Josie Jewell's fit

VJ: "He's going to be a MIKE backer for us. This guy is a great football player. He's a tackling machine and was a three-time captain at Iowa. He's got great instincts and great size for the position. He's a natural strong-side linebacker for us."

On selecting a high number of college captains

JE: “As far as whether they were a captain or not, they’re solid people. There’s no question, we pay attention to that all the time. It just so happened that the guys who were falling close to us were high-quality guys. We always try to go high-character, but we were fortunate with all these guys. This is a special group.”

On how players acquired through trade change the draft board

JE: “I think you take kind of a leap of faith when you trade for them that you believe they’re pretty good players—with [S Su’a] Cravens as well as [T Jared] Veldheer. We have a good feel for what they were. Obviously, it kind of changes your need-board, so I think we were able to fill out where we were thin. We were thin at inside linebacker and I feel like we really got two good players at inside linebacker as well as wide receiver and running back. Where we were thin, we were able to fill out and also get really good football players. We were able to add a lot of good solid depth and a lot of good competition.”