



Denver Broncos Postgame Quotes & Notes

Denver Broncos vs. Miami Dolphins • INVESCO Field at Mile High • Sunday, Dec. 12, 2004

DENVER BRONCOS HEAD COACH MIKE SHANAHAN

On winning challenged Miami interception

"I wasn't sure I wanted the reversal at that time. We had (Miami) pinned back inside the ten-yard line. I talked to Jason (Elam) and we thought the wind was going too strong to try (a field goal) from that distance (51 yards). So we had to make up our minds if we wanted to punt it again or go for it, and it turned out to be the right decision even though we didn't convert on the points.

"I threw the flag."

On rookie RB Tatum Bell

"Tatum has been having a few good weeks of practice. We think he has a big upside, and we think (Bell and Reuben Droughns) compliment each other. When Reuben had a couple fumbles early, we decided to go in that direction. Obviously (Tatum) did a great job. He has some big-play capability, and it was unfortunate that he had a third-degree separation in his shoulder and he couldn't play anymore."

On severity of Bell's left shoulder injury

"I really don't know, but a third-degree separation isn't good. That's as high as it goes."

On if there was a wind change on Jason Elam's game winning field goal

"When it was at the 34 (yard line) and really the wind had died down, I said, 'how do you feel now?' When we went for it (on fourth down) from the 34, I felt like there wasn't much of a chance. The second time it just seemed like the wind stopped, almost stopped. Even though there was a little bit of a wind, it was from the 32-yard line. I looked at (Elam) and he said, 'Hey I'm ready to go.' The first time I said, 'Hey you have to be honest with me,' and he said, 'I'd go for it or punt.'

On when the shoulder injury to Tatum Bell occurred

"It was the last play he was in there, whatever play that was. I thought it was a running play. I'm not sure when he did separate it, but I would guess it was on that inside running play."

On (pinched nerve) neck injury to RB Reuben Droughns

"I think he is alright. He wasn't back in there and I think he is fine."

On play of Droughns after early fumbles

"It's tough. He had a couple fumbles early, and (Miami) did a great job of stripping the ball. The (defenders) would hold you up and those guys would grab (at the ball). They got a couple (fumbles) from him early and he was able to hold on to (the ball) the rest of the game. I was proud of the way he came back and fought."

On punting situation

"Punting situation didn't look too bad. The kickoff situation didn't look too good. I think I could compete with that today. I was proud of him on that last kickoff. I think (Jason Baker) was 0-for-whatever, and all of a sudden against the wind he had a good kick, down to the five-yard line. Maybe from now on that is exactly the way he is going to kick."

On winning ugly

"We fought. Tatum went down, when it looked like walk into the endzone. Then we had a chance, and we had a little dropped pass there. You just have to keep on fighting. Sometimes things just don't work out, and you have to find a way to get it done. That's what I was proud of. We had some opportunities early and we turned the football over. Very seldom do you win when you are minus two in turnover ratio. If we can clean things up a little bit, then we'll have a chance to separate ourselves from the opponent. If we keep on turning the football over, then we will have those dogfights. Anytime you double a team in yardage and first downs, and all those type of things, you want to be able to, obviously, score a few more points. Unfortunately we didn't. For us to do the things we want to be able to do, we need to clean ourselves up a little bit."

On impact of Bell's injury on team

"Anytime you lose a guy that has the ability to make a big play, it's always a setback."



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On status of RG Dan Neil

"We feel like Dan, even though he practiced Wednesday and Friday, he wanted to go. You just could see that he wasn't practicing at the level that he normally practices at. He is such a warrior. He is going to play with all types of pain. We just felt it was best to give him some time off. If Cooper Carlisle would have gone down, we would have put Dan back in. But we just didn't feel good, because his quickness and his speed, and those types of things, just didn't look very good in practice."

On second guessing deactivating RB Garrison Hearst

"Well, Cecil Sapp was going to go in. we had Cecil ready, so it wasn't like we didn't have another back. Normally, you take a look at percentages and that third running back has a chance to go in. I think Cecil would have done a good job; he has done a good job in practice. He gives us more in the special teams' area. If you knew your two backs were going to go down, you'd like Garrison over Cecil Sapp."

On Droughns returning kickoffs

"We had our best guy back there, for obvious reasons. We though Reuben has some natural ability doing that. He didn't have any big breakouts there, but we thought he gave us the best chance to get it done."

On beating Miami

"It was nice to get that win."

On severity of injury to CB Willie Middlebrooks

"I really don't. It was bad enough to get back in. hopefully he can rebound, because not only does he help us in nickel and dime, but he also helps us in special teams."

On depth of secondary after injuries

"I think Roc (Alexander) is fine. I don't think he is banged up. If he is, I don't know about it. Anytime you lose your depth back there, it stretches you. Let's not guess until we know for sure."

On P Jason Baker holding on field goal and PAT attempts

"I just left it up to Jason, and Jason felt really good about it. Danny Kanell did it during the week and Jason said, '(Baker) is good.' We gave him that chance, and obviously he did a good job holding."

On play of QB Jake Plummer

"The first (interception), that could happen to anybody. It was a three-step drop and it hits the (defensive lineman's) hands. The next one, you just say, 'Hey, you can do that. You can't make that play when you are going into the endzone. You are too smart for that. You can't do it all.' The next time when we had a third-down situation I was really pleased when he threw the football away. We just have to keep on stressing it, and he is the first one to tell you that's something you can't do. You can't give the game away in those situations. We won't always put you in a perfect play, but if it's not there you have to throw it away. He tried to make something happen and, obviously, it could have cost us. He knew right away he made the wrong mistake, and we used a couple adjectives to him from the press box and the sidelines. He came back and handled it well."

On rumors and controversy in the past week

"To be honest with you, you go back and I think you are more critical of yourself, and you understand the heat that is going to come with the expectations. Anytime you don't reach those expectations, you are tough on yourself. It's just the nature of this game. I don't hear everything, and that makes it a little bit easier on me. I get to focus on the game. Once you start listening to those types of things, you are usually on your way out. You have to believe in yourself and focus on the job at hand, and try to take care of business."



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DENVER BRONCOS PLAYERS

CB CHAMP BAILEY

On Applying Pressure: "We knew we had a good team coming in here and that they had a lot of talented players. But we wanted to give them all that they could handle, and we did a great job of that."

On Stepping Up the Defense when Offense is Slow: "One thing we have to know, when we are in a situation like that, when the offense is struggling, is that we can't control what they [offense] do. We just have to respond, and go out and make something happen. We did that for the most part, but early on in the game we have to get better."

On LB Al Wilson's Interception: "I'll tell you what, for the first play of the second half, that's the best way to start off. That's what you want to get the momentum rolling. That's what gets the fire going, and that's when you start to put up points."

RB TATUM BELL

General: "I always wait to get my chance, and when I do, I want to make the most of it. I just tried to be as productive as I could be with my runs, pass protections, and routes. I dropped a couple balls today, but now I have to bounce back. We needed this wind badly. It's a confidence booster, and this will help us reach our goal of going to the playoffs."

On his Dropped Touchdown: "That hurt. We had been repping that play all week in practice, and once we got in the game I just dropped the ball. There's no excuse, there's just a lack of concentration."

On his Shoulder Injury: "I don't think that it's that serious. If I needed to go back [in], I could have gone back. It's just one of those things that happened. I'm not injury prone, but I just seemed to get these little nicks and bruises every other week or something. I just need to get treatment, keep lifting weights, and keep my body healthy."

CB KELLY HERNDON

On Miami: "If you watch Miami on film like we did, you know they've had some bad breaks. They've got some great skill, I knew it was going to be a fight until the end, but we needed to come out with a plan. You always want to get on the field and get the ball back to the offense."

WR ROD SMITH

On RB Reuben Droughns: "You just tell him, 'Hey, you're still our guy.' No matter what, if somebody's got the hot hand, they're going to play. If you are our guy, then you got to come here and finish it. In this business, you can't sit around and think your opportunities are over because you never know what is going to happen. With injuries and stuff like that you always have to stay upbeat and work, because it's all about work."

General: "When you play the No. 2 defense in the league, you're not going to blow them out. I knew that going in, that we weren't going to blow them out. It was a matter of just grinding them out, and grinding them out. We still had some unfortunately situations happen, we could have taken the game away earlier, but somehow, somewhere we found a way to keep in it and win it. But when you have a team on the ropes like that, you've got to find a way to put them away because that's all they need are opportunities. Honestly, this is a good win, it's decent, but it's not going to get it done in the future. We've got to be a lot cleaner, a lot better, and a lot more assertive in everything we do to finish this season out right."

K JASON ELAM

On Denver's Fourth-Down Conversion: "I told Coach Shanahan that I could probably get it there, but he doesn't like hearing that kind of stuff. He said, 'You've got to tell me, what would you do?'. I



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said 'Well, I'd kick it if we were going that way, and I'd probably go for it if we were going this way', so he said, 'Okay, let's go for it.'"

On his Game-Winning Kick: "It was a couple yards shorter [than the fourth-down conversion attempt would have been]. It was 52 yards. There were only a couple minutes left, so we said, 'Let's go get the win here, let's go do it.' With Mike it's either a yes or a no, it's not an in-between. So I just ran on the field, and he said, 'Okay.' If you look like you're confident, he's usually going to let you try it. I knew I hit it good, but I don't like to celebrate until it goes through. I'm very happy, because we really needed this game. At least it'll be a fun week, because it hasn't been a very fun couple of weeks."

QB JAKE PLUMMER

General: "It was a struggle a little bit. I had a couple bad plays, but as a team we stuck together and it was a team victory. We needed it bad, and I made it hard on us with the interception down there, but we have a great kicker in Jason Elam who made a 16th career game-winning field goal. So, hats off to him and our defense."

On his Inappropriate Gesture: "I apologize for that to our fans, it was not directed towards our fans. One guy got in my head a little bit. I shouldn't be that way, but I'm an emotional guy. You guys watch the way I play, I play with a lot of passion. But I apologize to [Owner] Mr. [Pat] Bowlen, to our fans, to the entire staff, and our team. I would never direct that to our fans; we have the greatest fans in the league. There was a guy that I heard – specifically things said – and it kind of got in my dome. I can't be like that, but I'm an emotional guy, and I think if you ask my teammates, they'll say that's why they like to play with me. I play with a lot of passion and sometimes it gets the best of me. I apologize to all of you, everybody, and my teammates. I'm not going to lie and say I didn't do it, but it was directed towards one person and not to our fans by any means. I've never done it before, but it was just one of those things. I got caught up in the emotion of the game and my emotions got the best of me. At times that happens, and I'm man enough to accept that and get ready to move on and keep pushing."

On Reuben Droughns: "Hats off to Reuben for coming back. We had [TB] Tatum [Bell] out there, and the kid ran unbelievably. Tatum ran with a lot of fire. That guy was running over dudes. He had a great game and then he gets hurt, and Reuben got a little stinger in his shoulder there at the end of the game, but came out and got a big first down for us to close the game off. Hats off to Reuben, he made a big run for us. But that's the type of guys we have, they go through adversity and fight through it and wait for their opportunities."

General: "It's been a tough year, but we've been fighting through it. You can't sit here and complain about bounces not going your way; you've got to create those bounces that go your way. There have been some crazy things. How many times is Tatum going to miss a ball wide open in the end zone. That kid's got great talent and he's not going to do that. It's the type of thing where we just have to keep pushing, and as a team, we rallied. It shows you the type of character we have. It was a must-win for us, and they are like that from here on out. So, you are going to see us laying it all out on the



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field. We are going to play through the ups and downs. There is another game and we are going to try to come out ahead.”

DOLPHINS INTERIM HEAD COACH JIM BATES

General opening comments

“This was a tough loss. We knew it was going to be a tough football game. Denver is a good team they came in losing two in a row and we knew the pressure was on them to keep their playoff hopes alive. Our guys played well and made some plays out there and had a chance to win the game. We had too many drops in key situations. We have to make the easy catch and the hard catch. When it comes down to third downs late in the game, we have to make plays.

On Quarterback A.J.Feeley

“He did a good job of (taking a sack) and not trying to throw the ball recklessly. He played a decent game other than the interception at the beginning of the third quarter. We take away the drops and it’s a productive day.

On the running game

“We didn’t run it as well as we would have liked to.”

On Denver’s running game

“Tatum Bell coming in did an excellent job. He has a lot more speed than Reuben Droughns does. Droughns is more of a power back. It was a really good one-two punch for them, to have that ability.”

On Miami’s effort

“It wasn’t a lack of effort; it wasn’t a lack of guys being into it. The sideline was alive. The energy was as good as it will ever be. We were ready to go.”

On Jason Elam’s game-winning field goal

“Give Jason Elam some credit for kicking a 50-yard field goal in to that wind.”

On the dropped passes

“It isn’t a matter of having bad hands; it’s just that at that moment, we have to make the catch. Concentration, look it in and don’t try to run before the catch.”

MIAMI DOLPHINS PLAYERS

TE RANDY McMICHAEL

On His Dropped Ball On The Final Drive: “It was one of those things when I was trying to run without the ball. It’s not the first time that’s happened and it’s not going to be the last. So, I just have to deal with it and try and get better. It was a big play in the game. Who knows what would’ve happened if I would have caught the ball. (Dropped balls) are disappointing because you know you’re a lot better player than what you’ve shown today. We made some plays today but at the same time left a lot of plays out on the field. We have to find a way to correct that.”

On A.J. Feeley’s Play: “A.J. did a good job managing the game. He didn’t have any turnovers that were game-changing plays. He did good but we didn’t do our part to help him.”

CB SAM MADISON

General: “You have to credit (Denver). You have to credit our guys as well for going out there and laying it all out on the line, every play, every down. We didn’t have some balls bounce our way. Pretty much, all the calls went their way. But we have to execute better. We didn’t really hurt ourselves with penalties although there were some crucial times that we had a penalty. But you just flip a coin and pick, those were the type of penalties we had. It wasn’t bone-head plays. It just didn’t go our way and that can happen to any team.”



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DT BRYAN ROBINSON

On Denver's Scoring Drive At The End Of The First Half: "It's deflating. You know that's not the makeup of this defense to let them drive down the field on you. Again, I talked about consistency, that's been our biggest weakness all year long. You get late in the game, the last four or five minutes, when you really need a good defense to put the nail in the coffin. And we haven't gotten that. It's like we revive teams. We give teams C.P.R., mouth-to-mouth. We do everything we can to keep them in the game. I don't want to talk about how frustrating it is because you can clearly feel the frustration and tension in here."

QB A.J. FEELEY

General: "It's always frustrating. Hat's off to all these guys in this lockerroom because they keep fighting. Every week they come in Monday or Tuesday ready to go as if we were 13-0, 14-0. It's always tough to bust your tail like this and come up short. It's really frustrating, but the best part of this team is that we are fighting through it. There are a lot of things we are doing better. It's been a slow process, but I think we're definitely making strides."

On Denver's Blitzing Defense: "They did blitz on that first touchdown for us. They came all out. We've seen that on film. They like to bring everyone up into the box. Every once in awhile they'd bring everyone and every once in awhile they'd drop out. And we did a lot of preparation for that."

DE JAY WILLIAMS

General: I believe this is something that we're going through right now, and I believe there's a reason for it. I can't sit here and explain it to you all, but I believe there's a reason we're going through this. It's trying everybody, but it's showing everybody's character. We come in here every week, everybody's in the weight room and the film room. Everybody believes in each other. We just get out there and something seems to happen. Hopefully it doesn't happen again on Monday night [against New England]."

On Denver RB Tatum Bell: "We knew he was a little quicker, a little more agile than Reuben Droughns. The scheme is good – both backs work well in this scheme. All they have to do is make one cut and they're gone."

On Denver's Offense Line: "I don't think I got cut [-blocked] today. You need to ask the tackles because they said they came at their legs on every play."

WR MARTY BOOKER

On the Team's Dropped Balls: "He [A.J. Feeley] stayed in it. I know I had a couple [of dropped balls] myself that should have been caught. Sometimes you're going and dropped balls, but that takes so much pride in catching balls that it hurts to go out there and drop balls. I know there was one in a key situation on a third down where I beat my guy and I just lost focus on it. It's tough, but he [Feeley] stayed with it mentally. You have to have a short memory in this game. Anytime you drop a ball, you have to put it in the back of your mind and try and make a play on the next play. It's all a matter of bouncing back."

POSTGAME NOTES

- **SERIES STUFF.** Miami now leads the series by a 9-4-1 count (9-3-1 regular season), as Denver defeated the Dolphins for the first time in the regular season since a 21-14 win in Denver in 1968... Denver took a 4-3-1 lead in Denver in the series with the win today (3-3-1 regular season)... Today marked the seventh time in 14 games in the series the outcome was decided by seven points or less.
- **Score Reversal.** The last time Denver played in back-to-back games with the final score reversed was in 1985; on Oct. 27, Denver won 30-10 at Kansas City, and on Nov. 3, the Broncos lost 30-10 at San Diego. Last week (Dec. 5), Denver lost 20-17 at San Diego and won 20-17 today. The last and only time it happened in the L-W order was in 1984: on Dec. 2, Denver lost 16-13 at Kansas City and on Dec. 9 it beat San Diego 16-13 in Denver. These are the only three times Denver has been in game with the score reversed back-to-back in its history.
- **Bronco Injuries:** CB Willie Middlebrooks (lower right leg/MRI Monday); RB Tatum Bell (separated left shoulder)
- **Denver Defense (61-214).** Today marked the sixth time this year that Denver held the opponent to 227 or fewer yards in a game (the seventh sub-300 yard effort). San Diego had 208 yards last week, meaning Denver



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has allowed 422 yards over the last two games, the seventh time this year Denver has allowed under 500 yards in back-to-back games, and the third time the Broncos have allowed 425 or fewer. In weeks 2-3, Jacksonville (176) and San Diego (214) combined for 390, and in weeks 5-6, Carolina (227) and Oakland (145) combined for 372.

- **By Quarter.** Denver outgained Miami in each quarter Sunday: 72-53 in the first, 164-80 in the second, 63-53 in the third and 116-28 in the fourth. In the **second half**, Denver held Miami to just 81 total yards (64 pass/17 rush) and to just four first downs (all passing).
- **Tatum Bell (17-123, 2 TD).** Coming into the game, the rookie had 21 carries for 88 yards and a TD, as he enjoyed his first 100-yard game as a pro. He is the 10th player under Mike Shanahan to record a 100-yard game (ninth regular season). Quentin Griffin was the last Bronco rookie to do it (28-136, 0 TD) at Indianapolis last December, with Clinton Portis accomplishing it seven times as a rookie in 2002. He had Denver's 28th 100-yard rushing game in December in its history, only the 14th different player to do it and only the sixth rookie (joining Bobby Humphrey, Olandis Gary, Mike Anderson, Portis and Griffin).
- **3 Hundreds.** Bell, Griffin and Reuben Droughns all have 100-yard games this season, only the second time three different players have done it in a season for Denver. The other occasion was in 1995, when **Terrell Davis** (3 times), **Glyn Milburn** and **Aaron Craver** did it.
- **PK Jason Elam.** He made his 16th game winning or tying field goal in the fourth quarter, his second this year, as the other occurred at Tampa Bay.
- **WR Rod Smith (8-97, 0 TD).** He passed Terance Mathis (689) for 21st place on the NFL's all-time receptions list as Smith now has 694. Gary Clark holds down No. 20 with 699.
- **RB Reuben Droughns (18-62, 0 TD).** He had enough yards to propel him over 1,000 for the season (1,046), the ninth time in the last 10 years Denver has had a 1,000 yard runner (the fifth different player to do so), and the 16th 1,000-yard rushing season in franchise history. Twelve of those have occurred in the last 16 seasons (1989-2004). **Today's chart: the list of 1,000-yard rushing seasons by a Bronco:**
Terrell Davis 4, Otis Armstrong 2, Bobby Humphrey 2, Clinton Portis 2, Mike Anderson 1, **Reuben Droughns 1**, Olandis Gary 1, Gaston Green 1, Floyd Little 1, Sammy Winder 1. **Trivia:** who had the second most rushing yards in a season where Denver had a 1,000-yard runner? A: Bobby Anderson, 533 in 1971. Griffin is second this year with 311, followed by Bell (211) and Jake Plummer (133).