



Denver Broncos Postgame Quotes & Notes

Denver Broncos vs. Indianapolis Colts • INVESCO Field at Mile High • Sunday, Jan. 2, 2005

DENVER BRONCOS HEAD COACH MIKE SHANAHAN

General opening comments

"As I told our football team, we weren't in control of who they were going to play on offense, defense, or special teams. We knew that they would keep a couple starters out and try to protect themselves for next week. Anytime you have a 45-man roster in the National Football League, there's only about three or four guys you can keep out, and the rest of those guys, obviously, are very capable. I was really pleased with our team, the way we came out and played today. I thought they fought exceptionally hard. The bottom line is we had to find a way to win and we did do that."

On the challenge of playing the same team two weeks in a row

"Last year we played a very good game there (in the regular season). We came back (two weeks later in the first round of the playoffs) and they dominated the football game. What we're going to have to do is we're going to have to move the football. Last time we played them, we didn't move the football very well and if you don't move the football and don't put some points on the scoreboard against an excellent offensive team, and you get behind, you're in for a long day and that's what happened a year ago. So hopefully we can play a lot better defensively than we did a year ago. We know we've got a great challenge ahead because they're an excellent football team both in the running game and the passing game. So it's a great challenge for us. They're a very well coached team and a very disciplined team. We did the things we've had to do a couple weeks in a row. We've had very few penalties and one turnover in the last couple weeks. When you do those type of things where you can have some balance in the running game and in the passing game, you have a chance to put some points on the scoreboard and not put your defense in bad field position."

On what he can take from the Colts' offense and defense this game for next week's game

"First of all, in the National Football League, these players are pro players. If you show your hand each week and you don't have a different type of game plan, the defense is going to recognize what you're doing, and you'll be in for a long day. So that's the nature of the National Football League. They didn't have to show their hand today, but we went in with a certain game plan where we had to win and obviously we'll change some things up and they will too. The bottom line is we've got an opportunity. Obviously it's a great challenge for us to go into their backyard against a defense that has created a lot of turnovers this season and an offense that has not made a lot of mistakes and scored a lot of points. So it's a great challenge for us and we're looking forward to being in the playoffs and having an opportunity to win."

On how he feels about Jake Plummer going into this year's playoff game as opposed to last year

"I think Jake feels much more comfortable with the system and much more comfortable with the people around him. Obviously, I feel more comfortable with Jake, just having him in there with a couple years under his belt. This is an opportunity for us. We're all judged on what you do in the playoffs and hopefully we'll play accordingly."

On if he held out a bit on the game plan today because of the possibility of playing the Colts again

"There's always a lot you hold out just because you don't get to it during the game. Sometimes you need it and other times you don't. Some of those things we didn't have to do because in the fourth quarter the game was kind of out of control. Both teams played a little more conservative than they normally would. There's some of the game plan that you don't necessarily show, but that's really minimal. Both teams are going to try to put their 'A-game' together. We know what's at stake and we'll see who gets it done."

On how Jake Plummer has responded in the last couple weeks

"It's not just Jake, it's our whole team. I think we had two penalties a week ago and I think we had two penalties today, so the focus was there. I don't believe we had a turnover today and, you know, you can't turn the football over against good football teams, especially against teams that score like Indy. A lot of respect for Peyton Manning to have a 121 passing efficiency for the year is just incredible. I don't think people realize what a feat that is. I can't even imagine those type of statistics for the year. It's something that this guy has played very good throughout the whole season. We know it's a big game for them and a big game for us and we'll get a chance to show what we're made of."

On his assessment of Trevor Pryce's return to the field and the seriousness of his re-injury

"I was just a little skeptical because he looked good during the week. It's always tough for a guy to come back and play at a certain level when he hasn't played for 14 or 15 games. I don't think it's anything serious. I think it's just a little sore, being out there and playing football full speed for the same time. I think it will help him if he's ready to go for next week. I



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talked to him a little bit down on the sideline in the fourth quarter. He thought it was just a little sore, a little scar tissue, nothing serious. I'm sure he was just a little bit tired."

On the performance of Cecil Sapp and Charlie Adams

"I had a good feel for Cecil anyhow. He's just a natural runner and has a good feel for the game. One of the reasons we put him in there at the end of the game is to see what he could do at the tailback position. Anytime a guy has had the success that he's had over at CSU (Colorado State University) running the football, you know he's got a natural feel both as a halfback and a fullback and I was pleased to see what he did on kickoff return. Charlie Adams was an excellent punt returner in college. Obviously he wasn't active for the whole year, and he showed some running skills back there as well. I'm not going to show my hand for next week, but obviously two guys who helped themselves today."

On if he wanted Jake Plummer to throw the deep ball on the touchdown pass to Ashley Lelie

"That was the call. Third-and-1, we had a certain tendency that we were going with the deep ball. It's called a stutter-go. It was a situation where we would've went for it on fourth down anyhow so we thought we had a free down. So, it made it a little bit easier to call, and a great throw and a great catch."

On if he could put Indianapolis' offensive numbers in historical perspective

"I think I just pointed out that with passing efficiency, I don't think people realize what a feat that is. I was with Steve Young when he had a 112 (passer rating) and I just couldn't imagine anybody breaking that record. And so, for Peyton (Manning) to shatter that record, just speaks volumes of what he's been able to accomplish this year. And defensively, they've had a bunch of turnovers. So, they're playing at a very high level and we know that. We know we've got to minimize our mistakes to have an opportunity to win."

On if Reggie Wayne's long touchdown while covered by Roc Alexander lessened his confidence in the secondary

"If we didn't have the depth that we had at the start of the season, we wouldn't have been able to compete today. We lost three defensive backs and anytime you lose a second team guy in Lenny Walls and Willie Middlebrooks and you lose your third-round draft choice, you're not going to have as much depth. But I think a guy like Roc has really stepped up and has really played well. Reggie Wayne is going to make some big-time plays. Roc was right there and a great receiver made a great play. So, it is going to be a challenge for us with all the weapons they have and a couple young guys. But I've got a good feel about this football team that even some of the young guys will step up and play at a high level."

On how much time will be spent reviewing film from this game for next week

"Remember, like I said, there's 45 guys on the team and there's some special teams players. So, there's a lot of starters that have to play. You have no choice. This is not like college football where there is 85 guys that dress out and you can actually play your third or fourth team. But it's like anything in the NFL, there's a sense of urgency. Regardless of how you approach a game, players know when they have to win and they don't have to win and we understand that. Now it goes back to the playoffs. It's a different mindset for both football teams and we're going to have to play a very good game."

DENVER BRONCOS PLAYERS

DE TREVOR PRYCE

General: "I'm hoping we did not show them too much, because they did not show us much. It was one of those things – what are we going to see from them next week? If we aren't going to get this effort, what are we going to get. We didn't throw the ball too much and they didn't throw too much, so it was a chess match out there."

On his Back: "I think I tweaked my back a little bit. Not like I did last time though...they say it might be a little scar tissue thing. Practice is definitely different than a game. I got thrown on the ground by a rookie today and that ticked me off. But it happens. I think [I'll play next week], but just because every time I do something twice it's gotten better and better. The first time I ran [after surgery] I got better the next day. The first time I pushed sleds I got better. So, I'm hoping this is the first game and I'll get better next week."

LB D.J. WILLIAMS

On Possible Rookie of the Year Honors: "I've never really thought that much about it. It's not something I think of too much. If I got it, it would be a great honor, but it's just been great coming in here early and helping the team win."

General: "We were coming in here today preparing for the game to face the starters all day. It really didn't matter who we played. We were focused on winning. We were going up against the Colts and we needed to beat the Colts."



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TE JEB PUTZIER

On Playing Indianapolis Next Week: "Our backs will be against the wall again, and let's face it, a lot of people are counting us out. But now that we have been in that situation, hopefully it will help us so we can build on that again. If we go in there and play good football, the game will unravel as it should. I'm going to go into Indy and play my game, let the defense play there's, and we'll see what happens. It's so loud [in the RCA Dome], and you can't hear anything. They have a lot of speed on that turf as well. So, we are going to have to play one of our best games to beat them."

On Jake Plummer Against Indy Next Week: "He's going to have to feel better going into this one because he's had a good couple weeks. I think he has confidence now. As long as he's calm and we don't make mistakes, and we stay on schedule, he's very tough to beat."

S JOHN LYNCH

On his Big Hit in the Second Quarter: "You never try to hurt somebody, you always try to play clean, but you do want them to remember [big hits]. I just broke on the ball, tried to make a play on the ball and dislodge it. That's what football is all about. If they are going to come in there, then they are going to play. But I always try to play clean."

General: "We had to win, there was no question that this was a big one. There are other teams that did not get that done today, but we did."

LB AL WILSON

General: "We had to do what we needed to do and now it's playoff time. We had to come out and play well to have an opportunity to get into the playoffs. I think we have a good feel for what they like to do on offense. I know this team is going to be ready to play [next week]. It's going to be exciting, a good old AFC fight vying out to be the best. We've learned a lot [since the lost to Indy last year]. We have a whole year of football under our belts. We know what it takes to win there. We just need to come out and execute on both sides of the ball."

WR ROD SMITH

On Denver's Game Play for Next Week: "I'm sure they [Denver coaches] are going to have something really good for us to put out there. Of course they [Indy] are going to study the crap out of that tape and see what we like to do everywhere. They are going to change some things and so will we. It's going to be a battle, and I don't expect it to be anything like last year. It was hard to end the season the way we did last year. I called that 'the scene of the crime' because they stole our season from us there, and they did it in a big way. We have to go out there and get the chance to avenge some thing that were really bad for us. "

CB KELLY HERNDON

On a Second Chance at Indy: "You definitely learn from an experience like that. The more games you play, the more you learn, and the smarter you get. We know what we are getting into, so we have to prepare for that. We know we have to go out there and give them our all. They will be a different team next week, but we will a different team, too."

DENVER BRONCO QB JAKE PLUMMER

On the Passing Yards Record and Getting into the Playoffs: "I've never been about stats. I'm happy we got into the playoffs. This is the start of a new season, a chance to go to Indy. We all know what happened last year, and we don't want that to happen again. Records are great, but they are a reflection of the guys around me. We are just happy with this win, and a chance to start a new season. [The playoffs] define a team and a quarterback, being able to get in there. What you do in the playoffs is a definition of a great quarterback, a great team, and everybody. Getting to the playoffs is what you set your sights on early in the year. We went through a lot of ups and downs this season. We are excited now, but not content and overly-happy."

"It's a good season and that's all I care about. If I threw for 5,000 yards, I'd be just as happy about making the playoffs. Like I said, it's a reflection around me: guys making big plays. The way we run the ball, there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to throw for big yardage."

On Facing Indy QB Peyton Manning: "I'm not playing against Peyton. The guy's pretty amazing, but I can't worry about what he does. If he throws four TD's, I can't say, 'Oh, I need to go throw four now.' If we have five rushing touchdowns, then I will be content."



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INDIANAPOLIS COLTS HEAD COACH TONY DUNGY

General opening comments:

“That was a tough game for us. We didn’t play as well as we would have liked to. We have some disappointed guys. It’s been a long time since we had to come back into the locker room with a loss. All in all there were some good things. Offensively, Jim (Sorgi) did some really good things out there and we were able to move the ball a little bit. Defensively, we just didn’t give ourselves a chance. They executed well and played well. We had some defensive lapses and you can’t do that against them. They are an excellent offensive team. We have to play better next week, especially on defense and hopefully we will. I just got the word that we’re playing on Sunday so that’s good for us. We’ll get a chance to regroup, look at the tape and hopefully history will repeat itself and we’ll play better the second time around.”

On playing Quarterback Peyton Manning and Running Back Edgerrin James for only one series:

“We were looking at the early games and wanted to see how those went and that was going to determine how much we played our starters and how much we were actually going to do. The way those games turned out we knew there was a possibility we could play Denver again. We wanted to see Jim (Sorgi) with the first group. He went in there and did a good job. I was trying to do a lot of things for us and get some guys some work. If we were going to have Peyton (Manning) and our whole group out there then we wanted to use everything that we had. We weren’t going to do that if we were going to have to play these guys again. Then the plan became to get Jim (Sorgi) some work and we can benefit from him playing with the first unit. Some of it worked out.”

On Indianapolis possibly having an advantage over Denver next week since Denver had to show more:

“I don’t think there’s any advantage. We’ve played these guys a lot now over the last couple of years. They beat us some and we’ve beaten them. When we’ve played well we’ve won and they’ve won the games they’ve played well. I think our task is to come out and play as well as we can this week and if we do then we’ll feel good about it.”

On any injuries during the game:

“Dallas Clark obviously got shaken up on the one hit (by John Lynch). Brandon Stokely got his foot stepped on and right now the X-rays are negative. That looks like that will be okay. Troy Walters got shaken up on the hit on the ball he caught over the middle. I hope they’ll all play on Sunday, we should know more on Tuesday.”

On not carrying any momentum into next weekend:

“It’s disappointing not to win the game. We wanted to get 13 wins and to play a little bit better. Our team will be excited and our fans will be excited. We’ll be fine next week.”



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INDIANAPOLIS COLTS PLAYERS

DT MONTAE REAGOR

On the Significance of this Game: "I'm not going to say [it didn't mean anything], they won, we lost. It meant something. We wanted to come in here and win, but they made a few more plays than we did. We played hard, we played fast, those guys just out-executed us."

On Playing the First Playoff Game at Home: "We'll see when we get there. We know it's going to be fun and exciting and a high energy atmosphere."

TE MARCUS POLLARD

General: "I just know we have to come out next week and play, and not like we played tonight. We have to get the run game going, have to protect the quarterback better. We have to play a lot better than we did tonight. Whether we got their best shot tonight will be determined. We just have to come out and do our thing."

On Resting the Starters: "I definitely have to take my hat off to [Coach] Tony [Dungy] for giving the starters a rest. I needed some rest and hopefully we got some guys healthy. If we go out and perform next week then it'll pay off. If we go out and lost next week, then we should have played. It's a two-sided coin. We just have to go out there next week and win."

On Facing Denver in Back-to-Back Weeks: "I think it would be easier to face the same team again. You get your second look at them. Things they did tonight, they're probably going to come out and do again next week. The team that executes is going to win."

P HUNTER SMITH

On Punting Eight Times Tonight: "It definitely doesn't feel natural. It's hard to prepare for a day like this because you don't know how to pace yourself. I don't have to punt very often with this offense. But it was a good day for our punt team. We needed to continue to improve, and I think we've done that."

RB DOMINIC RHODES

On the Colts Offense: "We were just real vanilla out there. They threw a lot of blitzes at us. We were vanilla and there wasn't much we could have done about it. We didn't run all that much, we threw it a lot....just real vanilla. But, that was our game plan. We were just going to run our regular offense and not do much extra. That's what we did, just ran the same plays over and over."

On the Denver Defense Blitzing: "They opened the gate on us. Hopefully, they didn't throw everything at us, because if they did, I think it's going to be trouble for them. We will protect better and pick up the blitz better. I hope they did throw everything at us.."

QB Jim Sorgi

On what the game did for him: "I feel like if I have to come in again for any significant playing that I could do as good of a job as I did in the first half today. The second half wasn't quite up to par as I wanted it to be. Hopefully I'll be more comfortable the next time I play and the more playing time I get."

On the team not using the full playbook for the game: "We didn't want to give away any of our secrets or any of our audibles. We shortened the game plan down a little bit so we could just go out there and play. It helped me a lot throughout the week."

On being nervous: "At first I was nervous. As the game went on I felt more comfortable. I had some nerves last night, I'll tell you that much."

QB Peyton Manning

On not playing: "It's not something you want to get too used too. I'd rather be out there playing. Coach Dungy said not playing was a possibility depending on what happened in the Jets and Buffalo games."

On getting back into the flow: "It's not very hard to do at all. You've got a playoff game, you're at home and playing an excellent team. Everything's on the line and we'll be excited about it."

On Jim Sorgi's performance: "I thought he did well. I was proud of him. He hung in there playing against an excellent defense."



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POSTGAME NOTES

- **NFL General.** The AFC finished +24 versus the NFC in 2004, an all-time best for either conference.
 - **Denver** earned its 16th all-time playoff appearance with today's 33-14 win over Indianapolis; all have been since the 1977 season. It is also Denver's 16th 10-win season, again all since 1977 (not every 10 win season has earned a playoff berth; two 9-7 seasons did).
 - **Series Stuff.** Denver now leads the all-time series by 11-4 (regular season), 11-5 (including postseason), and 6-3 since the Colts moved to Indianapolis. This was the second most points (33) Denver has scored against the Colt franchise, topped only by a 35-13 win in Denver in 1993.
 - This was **Denver's** first-ever regular season win in the month of January, as the Broncos came in 0-1 at home and 0-3 on the road in improving to 1-4 for the month.
 - **Today's List.** With Denver finishing 10-6, it marked Denver's 15th 10-win season since the advent of the 16-game schedule in 1978; that is the second most in the NFL (and the most in the AFC) over these 27 seasons. The list of 10-plus win seasons by team: 1. San Francisco 19; **2. Denver 15**; 3. Philadelphia 14; 4. Dallas 13; 5. Los Angeles/St. Louis Rams and Miami 12; 7. Pittsburgh 11; 8. Buffalo and Houston/Tennessee 10; 10. Four tied with 9.
 - **Denver** is now **349-317-10** for 45 regular seasons, matching its best 32 games over .500; however, the franchise was once 73 games under .500 (73-146-9, one game into 1976), and is 276-171-1 since that time, posting only four seasons under .500 in these 29 seasons.
 - **Today's List II.** This is only the fourth time in Bronco history that the team has posted a winning record with a negative turnover margin, and for the third straight season. Denver was 10-6 in 1979 (-3 on turnovers), 9-7 in 2002 (-5), 10-6 in 2003 (-4) and 10-6 in 2004 (-9). Ironically, only the 2002 team did not make the playoffs.
 - Denver has now scored in **198** straight games (topping CU's 197 up the road); that's 12 straight seasons without being shutout, dating to a 24-0 loss at the L.A. Raiders on Nov. 22, 1992.
 - **WR Ashley Lelie.** His 38-yard touchdown catch in the first quarter was his seventh of the season of 30-plus yards; that's the most in the NFL for 2004.
 - **PK Jason Elam.** He has scored in 188 consecutive games, and with his 4-4 effort on field goals finishes the year 29-of-34; that ties his own mark for the fourth most in a season by a Bronco (he owns the top six season marks), and his **85.3** percentage is third best for a season in Bronco annals (he owns the top four marks). He was **15-of-16** at INVESCO Field, his only miss coming when the Raiders blocked a 43-yard attempt.
 - Elam's 129 points are the fourth most overall and the second most by kicking for a single-season, trailing Terrell Davis (138 in 1998), Gene Mingo (137 in 1962) and Elam's own 132 in 1995.
 - **Throws & Sacks.** Jake Plummer was the only player to throw a pass for Denver in 2004, the first time in 45 seasons no other player threw at least one. Plummer was sacked just **15** times, or seven below the franchise low allowed, 22 in 1971 (only four of the sacks came on first down plays)
 - **QB Jake Plummer.** He finished the year 303-of-521 for 4,089 yards (27 TD/20 INT); the **4,089** yards set a single-season record for the Broncos, topping 4,030 by John Elway in 1993; it was just the second 4,000-yard season in Bronco history, and Plummer has the only entry in the Bronco single-season list in the top 11 other than Elway, as No. 7 now owns the second through 11th top season marks. The **27** TD passes tied the franchise single-season best by Elway in 1997. The **303** completions are the fifth most, with the **521** attempts the fourth most.
 - **Denver had two 1,000-yard** receivers for the sixth time in its history (the first time since 2000), as Rod Smith had 1,144 and Ashley Lelie 1,084.
 - **Denver Team.** The Broncos amassed **6,332** yards of total offense, second only to the 6,554 by the 2000 team.
 - Denver held Indianapolis to just **8** first downs, a Colts season low and matching Denver's defensive best (Denver allowed 9 or fewer three times this year).
 - **Today's Miscellaneous Statistic:** Denver averaged just 4.0 yards to go for its 14 third down tries.
-