

After gaining experience last year, Calvin Anderson ready to compete for Broncos' right tackle job

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As he was a year ago, Calvin Anderson is in a right tackle competition. Unlike last offseason, he may actually get a legitimate chance to win.

Once the Ja'Wuan James Error ended last June following his torn Achilles, the Broncos sprang into action, signing veteran Bobby Massie. Although then-coach Vic Fangio didn't make it official until the week of the opener, it was assumed Massie would get the nod over Anderson.

This time around, though, first-year coach Nathaniel Hackett and his staff have pledged a wide-open contest between Anderson, Billy Turner and Tom Compton.

"I think it's as fair as you can get it," Anderson said Wednesday.

And last year?

"It was tough because I obviously came in wanting to start at right tackle and what it taught me is you want to present your best self regardless of the circumstances," he said.

The circumstance is Massie was the proven veteran. The circumstances are different this year. Yes, Turner played the past three years for Hackett in Green Bay and yes, Compton played last year for San Francisco when Broncos offensive line coach Butch Barry was on the 49ers' staff. But the mantra of "We'll play the best guy," leaves the door open for Anderson.

During Tuesday's fourth organized team activity workout, Anderson worked as the first-team right tackle because Turner is still recovering from offseason knee surgery. Compton worked at left tackle in place of an absent Garrett Bolles.

Anderson expects to get some left tackle reps through training camp, but every day at right tackle is a benefit.

"The way I approach every season is the same: Better my craft and more specifically, staying ready to play both (tackle spots)," he said. "My mentality has been the same, but I've tried to raise my level and I know it's evident in my product on the field."

Anderson, 26, was undrafted in 2019 after playing for Rice and Texas and signed with New England, a stay that lasted only 11 days. He attended training camp with the New York Jets and spent the first month of the regular season on the team's practice squad before the Broncos signed him.

Anderson saw no action in '19 and two starts (132 snaps) in '20. Last year, after losing the competition to Massie, he started three games at left tackle when Bolles was sidelined with an ankle injury. A knee/ankle injury against the Los Angeles Chargers in Week 12 sent Anderson to injured reserve.

Over 172 snaps, Anderson was booked with three “bad” run blocks and 5 1/2 pass protection disruptions (two sacks) per The Denver Post’s game charting.

The Broncos didn’t re-sign Massie but added Turner and Compton in the offseason because of their backgrounds in the zone blocking system. The competition won’t kick into gear until the pads go on during training camp. Anderson understands the objective.

“For me, I want to make it undeniable,” he said of winning the competition. “I had to do that to get into the league and I know I have to do it and want to do it if I want to be a starter. That’s been my goal for a long time.”

Footnotes. The Broncos held their fifth OTA on Wednesday (closed to the media). ... Receiver Tim Patrick on the offense: “We’ve got to (put in extra work) on our own because we don’t want to be one of those teams to make excuses — new coach, new quarterback, new offense. We don’t want to (wait) to get going until the end of the year. We want to come out of the gate firing on all cylinders because it’s Super Bowl or bust this year.” ... Anderson said he missed two weeks of workouts because of a broken nose that required surgery.