

'There's still a lot of juice there': S Kareem Jackson focused on making run at title after return to Denver

By Aric DiLalla
DenverBroncos.com
April 27, 2022

Kareem Jackson wanted to finish the job.

After three seasons in Denver in which the team compiled a 19-30 record and missed the playoffs each year, Jackson was determined to help the Broncos return to their previous heights.

And as he decided where to play after becoming an unrestricted free agent this offseason, that served as a determining factor in his decision to come back to Denver.

"I had a couple different opportunities, so obviously coming back here made the most sense for me in the point right now of my career," Jackson said Tuesday. "With everything that's going on here with [adding] Russell [Wilson], the new coaching staff and just the energy around here — for me, it was kind of an easy decision."

Jackson added that after the "highs and lows" of the previous three years, he believed the team was ready to take a step forward.

"[I] just wanted to finish things and possibly make a run for a Super Bowl," Jackson said.

Jackson's return, of course, is more than just a reunion tour. The 34-year-old is entering his 13th season, and Defensive Coordinator Ejiro Evero sees remaining talent — and a strong benefit to the Broncos' defense with him back in the fold.

"First of all, let's not be mistaken: He can still run," Evero said. "There's still a lot of juice there, and there's still a lot of play-making ability there. Just all the intangibles as well, just being able to be a locker room presence, being able to be a veteran presence. To be a guy that's in charge of the communication and all that stuff, it's invaluable. So happy to have him."

Jackson agrees with his coach's assessment, but he said he knows the reality in the NFL. Players over 30 years old can be ignored in favor of younger players, regardless of the tape. Jackson, though, said he'll use that as fuel for the coming season.

"It's like when you turn 30, they act as if you can't do anything anymore," Jackson said. "I feel like they're not paying attention to the tape. For me, my tape speaks for itself. I come out here every day, and I still compete at a high level. I can still do it all. There's no restrictions in my game. That's definitely frustrating. It's definitely unfortunate in our league, but that's the way it goes. I understand how it goes. For me, it definitely creates a bigger chip on my shoulder, and for me, it's all about coming out here and showing and proving [it]."

That, of course, means that Jackson envisions himself as the starter for the fourth consecutive season alongside Justin Simmons. Asked by a reporter whether he plans to be an every-down safety, Jackson's reply was succinct.

"Why wouldn't I be?"

With Jackson's hard-hitting style and ability to force turnovers, the safety has quite the point. And in Denver, as the Broncos look to achieve long-awaited success, he'll look to prove it.