

Mike Purcell, Broncos and NFL Foundation commit \$20,000 to Sun Valley Youth Center

By Staff

DenverBroncos.com

July 8, 2022

Denver Broncos defensive lineman Mike Purcell, the team and the NFL Foundation have committed \$20,000 to the Sun Valley Youth Center to support youth mentorship and access to after-school sports and programming.

“The opportunities that Sun Valley Youth Center provides as far as after-school programs – it really hits home for me,” Purcell said. “To be able to provide and use this platform I have to help give back to my hometown and give back to those who may not have the same opportunities as I have is really special.”

The Sun Valley Youth Center (SVYC) empowers youth, families and community to reach their greatest potential. It is SVYC’s belief that every young person, ages 5-21, living in the Sun Valley neighborhood, which is walking distance from Empower Field at Mile High, deserves equal opportunities for growth and success. All youth served by SVYC are eligible for free and reduced lunch, a national indicator of poverty.

The donation made by Purcell, the Denver Broncos Social Justice Fund and the NFL Foundation’s Player Matching Social Justice Grant Program will support youth access to mentorship, after-school sports and after-school programming at the Sun Valley Youth Center.

“The Sun Valley Youth Center is so excited to partner with Michael Purcell,” Kris Rollerson, Executive Director of the Sun Valley Youth Center said. “The youth living in the Sun Valley community can see Empower Field at Mile High from their homes, but only few have had the chance to enter the stadium. We are thankful for the opportunity and are excited for the upcoming season in both youth and Broncos sports!”

A Denver native, Purcell is a seventh-year veteran who has appeared in 57 career games (31 starts). He’s totaled 138 tackles (84 solo), two sacks (14 yds.), one pass defensed, one fumble recovery and one forced fumble during his career.

Having seen dark days, Mike Purcell wants to help Broncos to good times

By Andrew Mason

104.3 The Fan

June 8, 2022

Mike Purcell has a different and deeper knowledge of Broncos Country than most players who don the orange and blue.

It's not that the guys don't eventually figure out what being a Bronco means. But Purcell is Colorado through and through. He's a native: born and raised in Highlands Ranch. He's one of four Highlands Ranch Falcons to make it to the NFL. But he's the only one to become a Bronco.

The veteran nose tackle was 6 years of age when the Broncos won Super Bowl XXXII. His high school years came during the age of Jake Plummer and Jay Cutler. What longtime fans know, he gets.

He experienced the highs and lows of the orange and blue. And he knows how the last six seasons — including five consecutive sub-.500 records — have pained the team's supporters.

So, what would it mean to be a part of ending the club's longest streak of losing seasons since the Nixon Administration?

"Oh, man, it'd be amazing," Purcell said. "It's been a dream come true just being able to play here, obviously.

"So, to be able to get back onto a team and get this team back to where it was when I was growing up — the back-to-back Super Bowls and everything — it'd would be amazing."

Purcell joined the Broncos in the 2019 offseason after spending that spring playing with the Salt Lake Stallions of the short-lived Alliance of American Football. When he arrived, the Broncos were on their fifth post-Peyton Manning starting quarterback: Joe Flacco. What Purcell didn't know was that there were six more passers to go.

Then, the Broncos traded for Russell Wilson. The carousel stopped. A true on-field leader arrived.

"The energy definitely has changed," Purcell said. "And I know we've said that in years past. But in the end, it's different."

What role Purcell plays in that will soon be determined. The offseason signing of D.J. Jones gave the Broncos another option at nose tackle beyond Purcell, whose last two seasons have been derailed by injuries.

Between a Lisfranc injury in 2020 and a broken thumb last year, Purcell missed 14 of 33 possible games. But he says he's "100 percent" now.

"I feel great," Purcell said. "Feeling a lot like myself, back to what I used to be — obviously I've battled some injuries, the Lisfranc and my right thumb last year.

"... But in the end, there's no excuses, but it felt good, and now I feel great, feel like I'm back to myself."

Jones was not on the practice field for Monday's OTA, which was open to media. That thrust Purcell into work against the Russell Wilson-led offense, and he fared well. He blew up multiple run plays with penetration and earned Nathaniel Hackett's praise for "a couple really good plays."

But Purcell's persistence — both as a Bronco and in his career — had already earned Hackett's respect.

"First and foremost, as a veteran, the guy is unbelievable," Hackett said during the second week of Phase 3 of OTAs. "Just as a man, he's played a long time in this league. He's fought through a lot; he's been very productive and he's a very big human being in the middle.

"When he gets a chance to go one-on-one with the center and someone is trying to get after him, he gets a lot of push through the middle, which is awesome."

And Purcell even surprised Hackett with his work against outside zone.

"I didn't know that he could move that fast on an outside zone play that we ran over there to the left," Hackett said May 31. "He's doing a great job and he brings so much just from his leadership, his experience and his strength in stopping us in the middle."

Given Purcell's path, it is no surprise that he should surprise yet another coach. At age 31, he's on his seventh NFL team and eighth in pro football. He's a survivor — both of the business of the game and of the Broncos' continued struggles.

Now, he just wants to contribute to the good times for his hometown team.

"We can talk the talk all we want," he said, "but now we've got to show it."