

OVER THE PASS



"I was in journalism and worked on our newspaper, and I was good in history classes, but probably the best, I was good at making people feel welcome, at befriending people who were shunned by others."

— Christopher Simpleman, State Farm Insurance team member, Trinidad



"I had scholarships in band, math and English, but I enjoyed English the most. I went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in English, and I've taught it in middle school, high school and college."

— Cathe Nutter, Director of University Advising, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

TIM KELLER'S CONNECTIONS

"What were you good at in high school?"

Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News



"I'm still in high school. I'm good in theater. I like to act, and being a stage manager is fun, too. I've worked on at least ten productions. I think I'll want to stick with theater in the future."

— Elena Atiles, junior, School for the Talented and Gifted, Dallas, Texas



"Wrestling and football. I was small, and a wide receiver on the football team. We were all-district. In wrestling, I was super flyweight. I went 23-2."

— Rodney Durbin, Trinidad newcomer

DENVER FOOTBALL

NFL 2016: Broncos relying on dazzling defense again

ARNIE STAPLETON
AP Pro Football Writer

DENVER (AP) — John Elway revamped his offense in the wake of the Denver Broncos' third title, shedding both tight ends and three offensive linemen who started in the Super Bowl while bidding farewell to Peyton Manning and his longtime backup Brock Osweiler.

Now, it's Trevor Siemian and backup Paxton Lynch under center for Denver and neither has ever thrown a pass in the NFL that counted.

That defense, though.

Despite losing Malik Jackson and Danny Trevathan to free agency, Denver's dazzling defense could be even better than the one that brought home the Lombardi Trophy seven months ago with a 24-10 win over the Carolina Panthers, whom they open the season against Thursday night in Denver.

Super Bowl MVP Von Miller, who transformed himself from sports superstar to mainstream celebrity during a six-month victory tour that included four dozen TV appearances, missed the entire offseason program but showed up in fantastic shape after signing the biggest contract ever for a non-quarterback.

Others who figure to be even better in 2016 are pass rushers Shane Ray and Shaq Barrett, defensive end Derek Wolfe and cornerback Bradley Roby. Todd Davis replaces Trevathan and free agent Jared Crick replaces Jackson.

Odds makers say the Broncos, who averaged 11 wins during Manning's four-year tenure, won't even hit double figures this season as they become the first team since the 2001



AP / credits Evan Semón/CBS

Denver Bronco Von Miller was named this year's Super Bowl MVP and signed the biggest contract ever for a non-quarterback player in the NFL. Here he is seen with Brandon Marshall, another Bronco superstar with team-high of 211 tackles since moving into the starting lineup.

Ravens to try to go back-to-back after losing its top two QBs.

Roby said the rest of the country may view the Broncos as a one-hit wonder, but he's pretty sure the Broncos can sustain their dominance and carry the team to another trophy regardless of who's throwing the ball to Emmanuel Sanders and Demaryius Thomas.

"Because defense wins championships and I think people are just saying (that) because we lost two quarterbacks" so they "automatically have doubts," Roby said. "But we know that defense was a big reason why we got to the game and why we won the game. So, we are very confident that we'll be better this year."

Other factors that will determine whether the Broncos can win a sixth straight AFC West crown and defend their Super Bowl title:

BOUNCING BACK: Thomas is no longer bogged down by worries over his contract, his mother's incarceration and a new offense. Despite his 105 catches for 1,304 yards in 2015, Thomas reached the end zone just six times, dropped 18 passes and was a non-factor in the playoffs. With President Barack Obama commuting his grandmother's drug sentence this summer, Thomas has a clear head and promises to cut down on the drops.

ANDERSON'S DURABILITY: C.J. Anderson signed a four-year, \$18 million contract following his 90-yard performance in the Super Bowl. Elway told him with the payday comes higher expectations, specifically that he'll finally put together a full season. Over the last two years, Anderson has rushed for 397 yards and one TD over the first two months and 1,112 yards and 12 TDs over the final two months.

WARE'S BACK: DeMarcus Ware accepted a pay cut and a reduction of playing time but he's still one of the team's locker room leaders, especially with Manning retired. Ware is now a third-down specialist with Ray starting. The Broncos hope this will keep Ware's bad back from acting up again like it did in 2015, when it cost him five games. Refreshed, he returned for a monster playoff run with 12 QB hits, teaming with Miller to harass Ben Roethlisberger, Tom Brady and Cam Newton.

MARSHALL'S MOVE: Brandon Marshall, who collected a team-high 211 tackles since moving into the starting lineup two years ago, is sliding over to weak-side inside linebacker. That spot was vacated when Trevathan bolted to the Bears. Marshall, who was cut three times by the Jaguars before landing on Denver's practice squad in 2013, signed a four-year, \$32 million deal this summer.

FIRST-RATE SECONDARY: The Broncos again sport the league's deepest secondary in Chris Harris Jr., Aqib Talib, Roby, T.J. Ward and Darian Stewart that capitalizes on the pass-rushing prowess of Miller & Co. Although Talib has shown no ill effects of a gunshot wound to his right leg after getting shot in Dallas in June, police continue to investigate. Talib, who has had firearm incidents in the past, could be facing possible punishment from the NFL.

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Wednesday, September 7th
5:30PM
@ 216 Broom
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Everyone is welcome!!

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