

Special points of interest:

- Broncos win four of final seven games
- Game MVP Tracy Porter has three interceptions for 119 yards
- Broncos hold the Seahawks to 65 yards on the ground
- Denver takes the ball away from the Seahawks five times

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BRONCOS EDGE SEAHAWKS, 10-7 Tracy Porter Picks Three

December 19th, 2010: The Denver Broncos finished their 2010 season in winning style, going on the road and downing the Seahawks in Seattle 10-7 behind an excellent defensive effort, taking the ball away from the Seahawks five times. The Broncos held the Seahawks to 232 yards in the game and intercepted four Tavaris Jackson passes to hold the Seahawks off.

This wasn't a pretty game. But an ugly win counts as a win just the same, and the Broncos haven't had many wins of any degree of pulchritude, so they are not about to throw this one back. The Broncos end up 4-12, winning four of their final seven after an 0-9 start, and the Seahawks finish at 7-9, losing their final four games to drop out of the playoff race.

Neither team exactly lit up the

scoreboard, and the Broncos blew chance after chance to put points on the board, getting in the red zone five times but only scoring ten points.

In the first quarter, the Broncos took over at the Seahawk 43 after a short punt by Brian Moorman, but Mason Crosby missed a 40-yard field goal. In the second quarter, the Broncos drove from their own 38 to the Seahawk three, but Josh Freeman's pass to Brandon Pettigrew across the back of the end zone was picked off nine yards deep by DT Amobi Okoye, whose drop into coverage apparently caught the rookie QB by surprise.

Then, after Porter picked off Jackson on the very next play, setting up the Broncos at the Seahawk seven, Denver was again unable to capitalize, and



Broncos face off against Seattle

Crosby's 20-yard field goal attempt from the three was wide right with 4:12 left in the half.

But the Broncos finally got on the board with a Crosby 32-yard field goal on the last play of the half, ending a fine nine-play 59-yard drive with six runs for 34 yards. Freeman was 2 of 3 on the march, with the incomplete a intentional spike to stop the clock with two seconds left in the half at the Seahawk 15 to set up the Crosby field goal.

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Game and Season Notes

Both Bronco second year cornerbacks played very well. Tracy Porter had three picks for 119 yards in the contest to finish with five, and Terrell Thomas added one and finished with four on the season. Porter's second pick set up the Broncos lone TD and his third, with 1:19 remaining, enabled the Broncos to run out the clock and seal the win. Porter finished with 7 tackles and two passes defensed in addition to his three picks, and was voted the game's MVP. Rookie running back Glen Coffee was the Broncos leading rusher, having perhaps his best game of

the season after missing last week with injury. Coffee finished with 63 yards on 17 carries (3.7), and finished his rookie season with 119 for 432 (3.6), just edging out Lendale White for the team lead. White had 7 - 27 (3.9) on the game. Dwayne Bowe lead the Broncos with 4 for 29 receiving, while Julian Edelman had four for 39 for Seattle. Tavaris Jackson did not get the start, but was inserted for Carson Palmer in the first quarter and completed 10 of 20 for 152 yards but threw four picks (35.8). He scrambled 10 times for 14 yards. Ronnie

Brown was the Seahawks leading rusher with 14 for 55 (3.9) and the one TD. Broncos rookie quarterback Josh Freeman finished his rookie season with 15 of 24 for 135 yards, one touchdown and one pick (74.1). He led the Broncos to victories in their final two games, beating the Chargers last week and now the Seahawks. On the year, Freeman completed 151 of 235 for 1610, 7 TDs and 7 picks (81.7). Over the Broncos final five games, he showed dramatic improvement, completing 71 of 106 for 790 yards, five touchdowns and only one pick (100.7).

EDGE SEAHAKS (continued from page one)

"...Tracy [Porter] played an outstanding game...[he] deserves some Pro Bowl recognition..."



The Broncos have won four out of their past seven games, including the last two in a row



Bronco Report Card

Denver edged the Seahawks in a tight game that was a defensive struggle from start to finish

Veteran Denver QB Daunte Culpepper probably sealed his fate and closed the books on his Broncos career early in the third quarter when Freeman came out for one play after getting twisted down on a botched handoff - Culpepper threw a pick to Seattle linebacker Lamar Woodley at the Seattle nine yard line with the Broncos threatening to score, ending that threat. It was Culpepper's only appearance in the game.

The Broncos finally broke the Seahawk goal line on the next possession, again set up in good field position when Tracy Porter picked Jackson for the second time and returned it 31 yards to the Seattle two-yard line. It took the Broncos two plays, but Freeman first scrambled out of trouble and then hit

Delanie Walker just across the goal line for the touchdown to give the Broncos a 10-0 lead midway through the third quarter.

After the Broncos missed yet another Crosby field goal, this time from 51 yards out, the Seahawks finally put together a scoring drive of their own. Taking over at their own 41 following the Crosby miss, Jackson hit Mario Manningham down the sideline for 30 to the Denver 29. Then, after two plays picked up 13 yards, running back Ronnie Brown took a pitchout around right end for the final 16 yards and the touchdown to cut the Denver lead to 10-7 with 55 seconds left in the third quarter.

But that's the way the game ended, as the Broncos defense came up with two more interceptions - one by

Terrell Thomas, and a third pick by Tracy Porter, to end the first and last of the three Seahawk possessions in that quarter. The middle possession ended in a three-and-out and a punt.

"Tracy [Porter] played an outstanding game," head coach Hank Sienzant said in the winning locker room. "He's quietly been having a very good year, as have most of our DBs. But Tracy certainly deserves some Pro Bowl recognition for the kind of season he's had."

Porter was the MVP of the game, the second time this season he's been the MVP for the Broncos (out of four wins). He also won the MVP vote in week eleven, when his pick six against Houston helped the Broncos upset the Texans in what some have called the upset of the year.

Broncos Report Card

QB: C- Rookie QB Freeman (24 yards) and finished leading the team in receiving yards for the game with only 35.

OL: B- Offensive line generally held up well, allowing the backs to pound 31 times for 117 yards (3.8). The Broncos allowed three sacks, but two of those were coverage sacks.

DL: B Seattle rushed 26 times for only 65 yards (2.5), and the D-line's penetration was the key reason. B.J. Raji had his best game in the last month, with a sack, a forced fumble, and two tackles.

LB: B- Linebackers were solid, and Will Witherspoon, who had started in the middle most of the season, handled the switch to the outside very well, making seven tackles, three tackles for loss, and one pass defensed.

REC: C- Nobody stood out, with the Broncos leading receiver (Dwayne Bowe) catching four for only 29 yards. Nate Washington had the longest gain

good, as they repeatedly forced Tavaris Jackson to pull down the ball and run, and when he did throw, they picked off four (three by Tracy Porter), and held Jackson to 10 of 20 for 152 yards (35.8).

Special Teams: D Nothing on returns, and the placekicking of Mason Crosby was abysmal (one of four on field goals). Only Jon Ryan's punting (49.0 gross) saved this grade from being an F.

Coaching: B+ Team finished strong, winning four of their final seven, including the last two, and nobody checked out early. Despite rumors to the contrary, Sienzant never lost this team and they now believe they can win. The Broncos may have turned their ship around right here.

DB: A+ Coverage was very

FREEMAN, PORTER GET PLAYER OF THE WEEK RECOGNITION

December 22nd, 2010: Bronco rookie quarterback Josh Freeman received the ISFL's coveted Offensive Player of the Week award for his play against the Chargers in week 16. Freeman led the Broncos to a 27-10 victory over the Chargers, and completed four passes of forty or more yards in the game. In only his fifth start at quarterback, the rookie first round draft choice of the Broncos earlier this year completed 20 of 33 for 362 yards and two touchdowns, with no interceptions.

Freeman hit the trifecta with this award. Not only is he the youngest player (only 21), and the lone rookie quarterback to ever win the ISFL's Offensive Player of the Week award, he is also the first Denver Bronco to win it since it was first issued in 2008.

While Freeman was the first

Bronco to ever win a Player of the Week award, he didn't have long to wait to get company, as Porter won it a just week later. Second year cornerback Tracy Porter received the week 17 Defensive Player of the Week award for his exceptional game against the Seattle Seahawks. In the Broncos 10-7 victory, Porter had three interceptions, two passes defended, and led the Broncos in tackles with seven. He returned the three picks for 42, 31, and 46 yards - for a total of 119 yards. His second interception, returned 31 yards to the Seahawk two, led to the Broncos only touchdown and the deciding score, while his final interception at the Denver four yard line, with 1:14 remaining in the contest, sealed the Broncos win.

"I'm pleased to be given this award," Freeman said in ac-

cepting the trophy, "But this is more a recognition of my teammates play in this past game than it is of mine. I appreciate the sentiment, but we still have much more to do."

Bronco head coach Hank Sienzant said of Freeman and Porter, "We are proud of Josh and his achievements thus far this year, including this award, and believe he has only scratched the surface of his talents and abilities. Tracy has always been an asset to this team and we believe he will be an even bigger asset in the future. We believe these awards help establish we are on the right track, and will have a winning team very soon."

Freeman was the first player drafted by the Broncos in 2010, (the 12th player overall) while Porter was a third round pick in 2009. He was the 65th player selected that year.



Rookie QB Josh Freeman has really impressed over the final five games for Denver

On the Rise (continued from back page)

The Broncos believe they have the best pair of young tight ends in the league. Jeremiah Finley was a fifth round pick of Denver in 2006, and after catching just 13 passes as a rookie, he emerged in 2010 with 53 for 457 yards (8.6) and three scores. Opposite him when the Broncos go to a two-tight end offense is Brandon Pettigrew, an overaged rookie (24) who caught 32 for 326 (10.2) on the year. Pettigrew is a former first round pick of the Rams in 2010, obtained in the Tony Brown trade after the start of the season. Pettigrew had only one reception in his first seven games, that one coming as a member of the Rams. but once he was acquired by Denver and moved into the starting lineup, his numbers jumped. Over the final nine games, Pettigrew caught 31 for 315 yards, which projects to 55 for 560 over a full 16 games slate. Delanie Walker is a solid number three, catching 22 for 169 and two touch-

downs, while also rushing 14 times for 83 yards and three scores when given the opportunity as a fullback for Denver. Only 25, he still has his best years in front of him as well. Tom Santi missed the entire 2010 season with injury, and this free agent who led the Denver tight ends with 22 receptions in 2009 and surprised many with his solid all-around play, may have a tough time making the squad in 2011.

At wideout, the Broncos have former first rounder Dwayne Bowe, who missed almost half the season with injury, and caught only 45 for 535 playing in just 11 games. His numbers were down from the previous two seasons, when he averaged 83 catches for 1033 yards and 12 touchdowns, but he has developed into a quality possession wide out. The problem is Bowe has only scratched the surface of his talent, and he has the ability to be a true game changer at the position, but his work ethic

hasn't caught up with his skill set as of yet, as demonstrated by his 22 drops over the past two seasons. Nate Washington has been a solid number two, but the Broncos also like what rookie Louis Murphy brings to the table, and he may supplant Washington this year. Washington is solid, averaging 45 receptions and nearly 500 yards over the past two seasons (13.9), but the Broncos believe Murphy can be the game-breaking wideout and deep threat they have been searching for. As a rookie for the Broncos, Murphy caught 26 for 515 yards and four touchdowns, with seven catches of 34 yards or more. He also averaged 6.5 per rush on six rushes. Behind the big three are three non-descript players who haven't done anything of note, Kevin Ogletree, Sam Hurd, and Mathew Slater. Ogletree and Slater also return kicks, but none of the bottom three had more than 30 yards from scrimmage all season. Look for the Broncos to try to upgrade here.

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Denver
Broncos

Denver Broncos 2010: A Team on the Rise Offensive Review

Yes, the Broncos finished the 2010 season with a losing record - their third straight losing record and second under Hank Sienzant. But to a man, the Broncos believe they have turned the ship around.

Key to that turnaround, according to head coach Hank Sienzant, is the excellent job the scouting department has done over the past two seasons to get players who will fit the Broncos system. "They deserve a lot of credit. We feel we can win with the players we have now, which wasn't necessarily the case when we took over the coaching responsibilities for this franchise two years ago."

Josh Freeman is the player the scouting department is most proud of and one they can build around, although his selection was not without some angst in the Broncos war room. The scouting department liked Freeman ahead of the other rookie quarterbacks last year, and wanted to select him with the Broncos first round pick (fourth overall). But the coaching staff liked all three rookie quarterbacks and felt at least one would last until at least the middle of round one, and therefore felt trading down was a viable option. Ultimately, both parties got their druthers, as the Broncos traded down, got additional second and third round picks, and still got Freeman with the twelfth pick overall.

Freeman developed slowly, and was put into the lineup too soon, something the Broncos coaching staff now admits was an error. "Josh wasn't ready, and in retrospect we should have gone with Rex [Grossman] when Daunte Culpepper went down in week one. He [Freeman] was playing on instinct and athleticism only early on, and it showed." But by the end of the season, Freeman was seeing the whole field and things had definitely slowed down for the twenty-one year rookie quarterback. Against the Chargers in the Broncos next-to-last game, Freeman put up 362 yards passing and threw two touchdowns without a pick, winning the ISFL's Offensive Player of the Week award in week 16.

"The best part about Josh is his maturity for a 21-year-old (he turns 22 during the ISFL playoffs). He is like a sponge in some respects, just soaking up as much as he can about the game and our offense. When he comes back as a 22-year-old, he can be scary good for what would normally be his rookie year (Freeman entered the ISFL after his junior year in college). We are definitely looking forward to next year with Josh and this offense."

Two veterans back up Freeman at this time. Daunte Culpepper, whose performance dropped off throughout the year even as Freeman's improved, and Rex Grossman, who is a veteran backup capable of starting in a pinch. The team probably won't keep two veteran QBs to back up Freeman, so look for one of them to be released in the off-season. Culpepper finished with a 76.6 rating on 106 passes, while Grossman put up a 71.4 on 51 attempts.

Freeman is just one of the young gems the Broncos believe will form the core of a winning team in the not-too-distant future.

Most of the job of protecting Freeman falls on the offensive line, and Broncos tackles Joe Thomas and Ryan Clady are both recognized as among the best in the business, and they are undoubtedly the best pair of tackles in the league. In 2011, Joe Thomas will be just 26, and Clady only 24. The interior sports a couple of guards who are both young and good in Eric Wood and Josh Sitton. Both emerged in 2010 as starters, Wood winning the job as a rookie and Sitton in his second year. Both will be 24 at the start of next season. Eric Wood's best position may ultimately be center, but that move may be a year or two off. Samson Satele and Nick Cole (both 26 in 2011) will fight it out once again to man the pivot, with the loser expected to be the first man off the bench. Although he started most of 2010, Cole may be better suited to being the swing man who can play anywhere in the interior line, as Satele is a better center than guard. Indeed, in 2010, when Eric Wood went down in mid-season with a broken leg and missed six games, Cole swung over to guard after being the starting center, and Satele got the starts at center until Woods returned. Backing up the front five, in addition to the loser at center, are a few young players like Duke Robinson (rookie in 2010), Allen Barbre, Breno Giacomini, and T.J.Lang, none of whom played much during the year, so they are all shy on experience.

Rookie running back Glen Coffee is not, having played his way into the starting lineup just after mid-season after being a sixth round pick of the Broncos. Expected to back up Lendale White and Ricky Williams, he showed enough in preseason to enable the Broncos to trade Williams to the Giants, and finished as the Broncos leading rusher with 432 yards on 119 carries (3.6). He also caught 8 passes for 40 yards. Coffee offered a jolt to the Broncos offense, as he is a hard-running back who fits the Broncos one-cut-and-go running style. Lendale White, who led the team in rushing the previous two years, returns to back up Coffee, and finished just a hairsbreadth behind Coffee with 111-413 (3.7). Chris Brown, obtained in the Ricky Williams, was a close third with 105-368, 3.5. Brown is reportedly contemplating retirement, however, and while both White and Coffee run hard, they are more plow-horses than thoroughbreds, so look for the Broncos to add a young speedster or two here in the off-season.

(Continued on page three, On the Rise)