

SCOUTING REPORT

Broncos at Bengals » 11 a.m. today » KCNC-4

By Jeff Legwold, The Denver Post

GamePlan

When the Broncos run

Knowshon Moreno and Correll Buckhalter figure to get the bulk of the work. Moreno looked smooth in drills, and though wearing a brace on his right knee, he didn't look to be favoring the leg he injured in San Francisco.

The Bengals signed defensive tackle Tank Johnson in free agency to beef up their defensive line, but plenty of offensive coordinators believe the edges of the Bengals' front can be exploited in the run game. **Edge: Broncos.**

When the Bengals run

The Bengals led the league in preseason rushing, averaging 175 yards per game.

Cedric Benson will get most of the work, and it's tough for defenses to stack against the run with the Bengals' aerial game. The Broncos' front seven may have to win things straight up to get it done. **Edge: Bengals.**

When the Broncos pass

Josh McDaniels favors three- and four-wide receiver formations. Although that spreads out a defense, it opens up the quarterback to some hits.

Kyle Orton and Chris Simms already suffered injuries in the preseason after taking hits in the pocket. How the Broncos match up against the rush, out of the shotgun, with plenty of receivers in the pattern, will determine if the two stay healthy. **Edge: Broncos**

When the Bengals pass

Even with the success the team's running game showed in the preseason, this is an offense fueled by Carson Palmer's passing. He played in just four games last season because of an elbow injury, and Cincinnati's offense sputtered in his absence.

Palmer figures to test the Broncos' remade secondary, and rookie Alphonso Smith figures to see plenty of action in the slot, as the Bengals can line up a three-wide look with Chad Ochocinco, Laveranues Coles and Chris Henry. **Edge: Bengals.**

Special teams

The Broncos were searching for some reliability in the return game for much of the preseason. They would like Eddie Royal involved in some fashion, but with all he does on offense, he would likely only return punts.

Matt Prater was 7-of-7 in the preseason and showed plenty of leg strength on his kickoffs.

Bengals kicker Shayne Graham appeared in just one preseason game because of a groin injury. **Edge: Broncos.**

InjuryReport

Broncos

Out: S Josh Barrett (shoulder), DT Le Kevin Smith (knee)

Doubtful: None

Questionable: WR Jabar Gaffney (finger), G Chris Kuper (ankle), RB Knowshon Moreno (knee), QB Kyle Orton (finger), QB Chris Simms (ankle)

Probable: S Brian Dawkins (hand)

Bengals

Out: CB David Jones (foot), OT Andre Smith (foot)

Doubtful: None

Questionable: G Scott Kooistra (knee)

Probable: WR Chris Henry (thigh), QB Carson Palmer (ankle), S Roy Williams (thigh)

5 things to watch

1 The new guy

It's Josh McDaniels' first regular-season game as an NFL head coach, and it comes in his home state. He'll likely have plenty of friends and family in the stands to go with the pregame butterflies in his stomach.

There has been so much discussion about what the Broncos will look like in what was an off-season of change that had more than its share of drama, but McDaniels has preached a stay-the-course, do-your-job mantra through it all.

This is the first chance to see if his message got through to those who wear the helmets.

He has handled an offense before, called plays before and constructed a game plan before, but now he represents an entire roster, and his mood, his demeanor, his actions are what the rest of the team will react to.

2 The other new guy

Whichever quarterback lines up behind center for the Broncos — and it's expected to be Kyle Orton — it isn't going to be Jay Cutler.

And while there is a segment of Broncos fans that will have a hard time getting over that, Cutler isn't coming back and the Broncos have to get it done with either Orton or Chris Simms.

Orton faces a significant amount of pressure, having replaced Cutler as well as being forced to live through the comparisons, and it remains to be seen if he does or doesn't carry all that to the field with him.

McDaniels has been firmly in Orton's corner, but from a football perspective, defensive coordinators say Orton takes plenty of punishment because he doesn't always feel the rush, especially from the defenders coming from outside of his sightlines.

He has to limit his negative plays — especially early in the game — settle in and just play.

3 Up front

It's simple and unavoidable — the Broncos' defense over the last three seasons has not consistently controlled play on the lines.

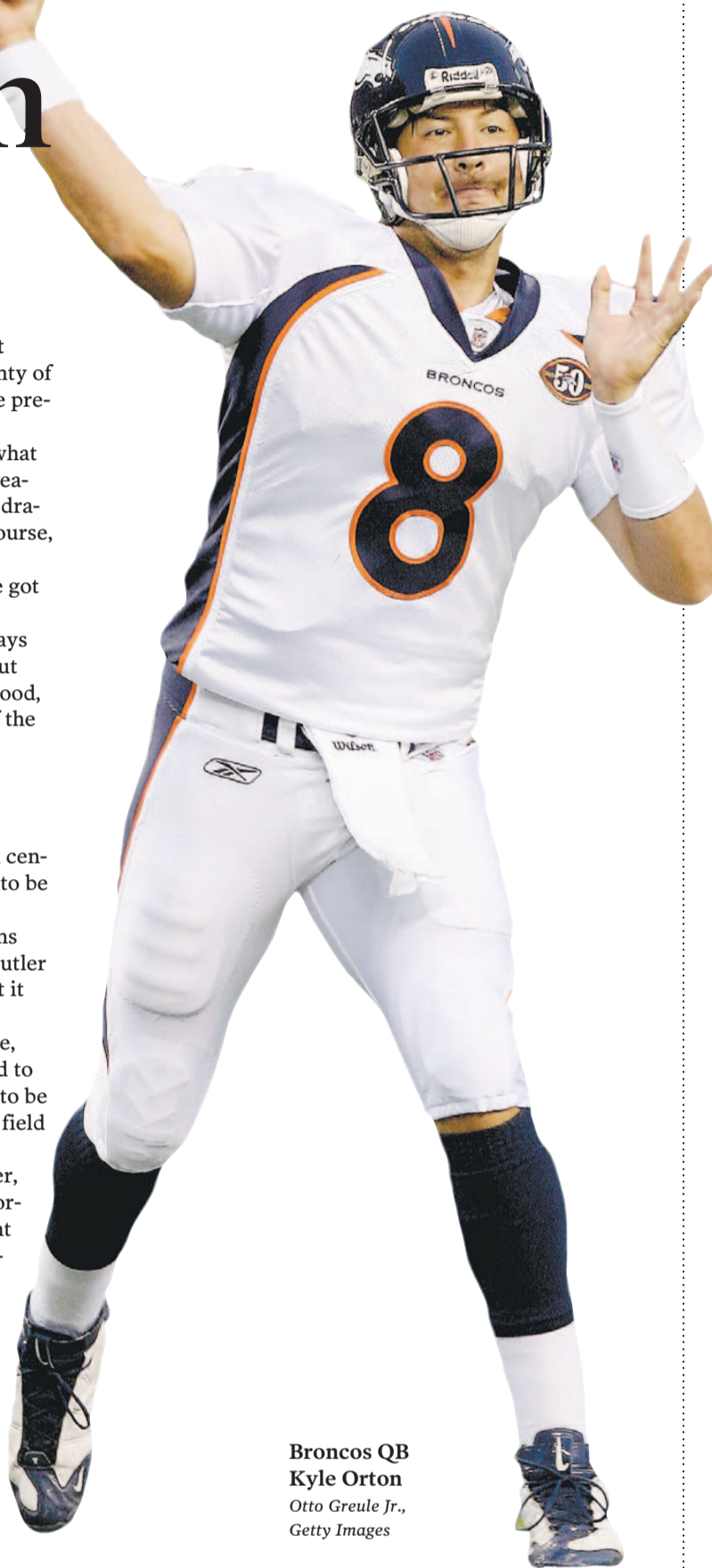
Whichever combination the Broncos tried, whichever scheme they played, they have not constructed enough of a pass rush to make QBs routinely uncomfortable and have not been able to lock it down against the opposing run games.

That will be the real test of the new 3-4 look, especially in the middle of the field, where Ronald Fields will line up much of the time. And Fields and inside linebackers D.J. Williams and Andra Davis have to be up to the challenge, or the Broncos will be consistently suffering in difficult down-and-distance situations.

4 Match game or no match game

Chad Ochocinco was not the Bengals' leading receiver last year, but with T.J. Houshmandzadeh gone in free agency and quarterback Carson Palmer healthy, no Twitter updates are needed to know the ball figures to be headed Ochocinco's way plenty.

The decision for the Broncos is whether to match cornerback Champ Bailey on him or simply play it straight and keep to their alignment with Bailey on the defensive left and André Goodman



Broncos QB Kyle Orton
Otto Greule Jr., Getty Images

on the defensive right.

Goodman is a savvy player with good balance and tracks the ball well, so the Broncos may feel comfortable just playing whichever formation they get from the Bengals.

5 Knowshon Moreno and Brandon Marshall

The Bengals are only guessing about what the Broncos will do with this pair, since neither played much — or at all, in Marshall's case — in the preseason.

The Broncos selected Moreno with their first pick of the draft in April because they envisioned a three-down back who could impact a game running as well as receiving.

However, he's still an unknown, having carried the ball just three times in the preseason because of a sprained knee. Marshall is back after multiple troubles kept him out of things.

If the Broncos found a way to get both successfully integrated into the game plan this past week, they may have a surprise or two to spring on the Bengals.

BRONCOS ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.
1	Brett Kern	P	6-2	215
2	Chris Simms	QB	6-4	230
3	T. Brandstater	QB	6-5	223
5	Matt Prater	K	5-10	187
8	Kyle Orton	QB	6-4	225
10	Jabar Gaffney	WR	6-2	200
11	K. McKinley	WR	6-0	183
14	B. Stokley	WR	6-0	192
15	B. Marshall	WR	6-4	230
19	Eddie Royal	WR	5-10	180
20	Brian Dawkins	S	6-0	210
21	A. Goodman	CB	5-10	184
22	Peyton Hillis	RB	6-1	240
23	Renaldo Hill	S	5-11	205
24	Champ Bailey	CB	6-0	192
26	Jack Williams	CB	5-9	183
27	K. Moreno	RB	5-11	210
28	C. Buckhalter	RB	6-0	223
30	David Bruton	S	6-2	211
31	Darcel McBath	S	6-1	198
32	LaMont Jordan	RB	5-10	242
33	A. Smith	CB	5-9	190
36	Josh Barrett	S	6-2	225
46	S. Larsen	LB-FB	6-2	243
50	Ben Hamilton	G-C	6-4	290
54	Andra Davis	ILB	6-1	251
55	D.J. Williams	ILB	6-1	242
56	Robert Ayers	LB-DE	6-3	274
57	Mario Haggan	ILB	6-3	267
59	W. Woodyard	ILB	6-0	222
62	C. Wiegmann	C	6-2	285
66	Lonie Paxton	LS	6-2	281
70	Seth Olsen	G	6-5	308
71	R. Hochstein	OL	6-4	305
73	Chris Kuper	G	6-4	303
74	Ryan Harris	OT	6-5	300
75	Chris Baker	DL	6-2	329
76	T. Polunbus	OT	6-8	300
77	Brandon Gorin	OT	6-6	309
78	Ryan Clady	OT	6-6	325
79	M. Thomas	DL	6-3	316
81	Richard Quinn	TE	6-4	255
84	Brandon Lloyd	WR	6-0	194
88	Tony Scheffler	TE	6-5	255
89	D. Graham	TE	6-3	257
90	K. Peterson	DL	6-3	295
91	Ronald Fields	DL	6-2	314
92	Elvis Dumervil	LB-DE	5-11	248
94	Jarvis Moss	LB-DE	6-7	257
95	Darrell Reid	LB-DE	6-2	270
97	Le Kevin Smith	DE	6-3	308
98	Ryan McBean	DL	6-5	297
99	V. Holliday	DL	6-5	285

Head coach: Josh McDaniels

BENGALS ROSTER

No.	Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.
4	J.T. O'Sullivan	QB	6-2	230
5	Jordan Palmer	QB	6-5	235
9	Carson Palmer	QB	6-5	235
10	Kevin Huber	P	6-1	210
11	L. Coles	WR	5-11	200
12	Quan Cosby	WR	5-9	196
15	Chris Henry	WR	6-4	200
17	S. Graham	K	6-0	205
20	David Jones	CB	6-0	196
22	J. Joseph	CB	5-11	193
23	Jeremi Johnson	FB	5-11	275
24	Geoffrey Pope	CB	6-0	186
25	Morgan Trent	CB	6-1	195
27	DeDe Dorsey	HB	5-11	210
28	Bernard Scott	HB	5-10	200
29	Leon Hall	CB	5-11	199
31	Roy Williams	S	6-0	222
32	Cedric Benson	HB	5-11	225
34	Kyries Hebert	S	6-3	220
40	Brian Leonard	HB	6-1	230
41	C. Ndukwe	S	6-2	224
42	Chris Crocker	S	5-11	200
43	Tom Nelson	S	5-11	203
48	Brad St. Louis	LS-TE	6-3	243
50	Jonathan Luigs	C	6-4	315
52	Abdul Hodge	LB	6-0	240
53	Rashad Jeanty	LB	6-2	247
55	Keith Rivers	LB	6-2	240
57	Dhani Jones	LB	6-1	240
58	Rey Mauauluga	LB	6-2	255
59	B. Johnson	LB	6-5	243
62	Nate Livings	G	6-5	330
63	B. Williams	G	6-4	345
64	Kyle Cook	C	6-3	312
66	Evan Mathis	G	6-5	295
68	J. Fanene	DT	6-4	292
71	Andre Smith	OT	6-4	335
73	A. Collins	OT	6-5	315
74	Dennis Roland	OT	6-9	325
75	Scott Kooistra	OT	6-6	335
77	A. Whitworth	OT	6-7	335
80	C. Coffman	TE	6-6	257
85	C. Ochocinco	WR	6-1	192
86	Daniel Coats	TE	6-3	264
87	A. Caldwell	WR	6-0	200
88	J.P. Foschi	TE	6-3	265
89	J. Simpson	WR	6-2	195
90	Pat Sims	DT	6-2	325
91	R. Geathers	DE	6-3	280
92	Froste Rucker	DE	6-3	285
93	M. Johnson	DE	6-7	260
94	Domata Peko	DT	6-3	318
98	Antwan Odom	DE	6-5	280
99	Tank Johnson	DT	6-3	305

Head coach: Marvin Lewis

TeamStats

	Broncos	Bengals
Total offense	395.8 (2)	245.4 (32)
Rush offense	116.4 (12)	95.0 (29)
Pass offense	279.4 (3)	150.4 (30)
Total defense	374.6 (29)	325.5 (12)
Rush defense	146.1 (27)	120.1 (21)
Pass defense	228.5 (26)	205.4 (15)
Turnover margin	-17 (t31)	-2 (21)
Points/game	23.1 (16)	12.8 (32)
Opp. points/game	28.0 (30)	22.8 (19)
Punting (gross)	46.7 (5)	39.1 (32)
Punting (net)	37.8 (13)	34.1 (130)

The Picks



Lindsay H. Jones
Broncos 17, Bengals 14
Surely Champ heard Ochocinco's trash talking on "Hard Knocks." Advantage: Bailey (and Broncos).



Mark Kiszla
Broncos 28, Bengals 24
And, in the final two minutes, Brandon Marshall catches the winning touchdown pass from Chris Simms.



Mike Klis
Broncos 23, Bengals 17
Carson Palmer can't escape Elvis Dumervil.



Dave Krieger
Bengals 27, Broncos 13
Chad Ochocinco tweets that the game is over before it's over.



Jeff Legwold
Bengals 24, Broncos 20
Broncos' extreme makeover needs a little more time.



Woody Paige
Bengals 24, Broncos 19
Broncos get the Hard Knocks.



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