

# Denver Broncos

|   |                                    |  |                                       |
|---|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>2018 record:</b> 6-10  | <b>Total DVOA:</b> 6.6% (13th)     | <b>2019 Mean Projection:</b> 6.2 wins  | <b>On the Clock (0-4):</b> 27%        |
| <b>Pythagorean Wins:</b> 7.4 (18th)   | <b>Offense:</b> 1.1% (14th)        | <b>Postseason Odds:</b> 14.5%          | <b>Mediocrity (5-7):</b> 43%          |
| <b>Snap-Weighted Age:</b> 26.5 (13th)   | <b>Defense:</b> -9.7% (5th)        | <b>Super Bowl Odds:</b> 0.9%           | <b>Playoff Contender (8-10):</b> 24%  |
| <b>Average Opponent:</b> 2.9% (6th)   | <b>Special Teams:</b> -4.2% (31st) | <b>Proj. Avg. Opponent:</b> 3.4% (1st) | <b>Super Bowl Contender (11+):</b> 6% |
| <b>2018:</b> Riding along on the quarterback carousel, trying to catch up to you. |                                    |  |                                       |
| <b>2019:</b> Nearer and nearer by changing horses, still so far away.             |                                    |  |                                       |

For decades, the Denver Broncos were synonymous with organizational competence. Perhaps they weren't always at the top of the league, but you could count on them bouncing back very quickly. Denver hadn't experienced consecutive losing seasons since 1972. The next-longest streak in the NFL belonged to the Packers, and they had back-to-back stinkers as recently as 1990-91. That's two entire decades of success over anyone else in the league, an extended period of organizational competence most other fanbases would die for. If you're a Broncos fan under the age of 55, you had never experienced an extended down period.

The past tense can be so harsh.

Whatever luster was still left on John Elway's tenure as an executive was wiped right off with last year's 6-10 record. It wasn't just back-to-back losing seasons, it was back-to-back *double-digit*-losing seasons, a first for the Broncos in the NFL. Banners fly forever, and that Super Bowl 50 title means that Elway's reign won't be a failure no matter what, but he has also overseen his team falling into a pit the likes of which they haven't seen since bell bottoms and *Soul Train* ruled the world. With that in mind, Elway has done the electric slide over to the reset button in an effort to get the Broncos back in the general direction of the right track.

Out goes Vance Joseph, who leaves with the worst winning percentage for a full-time Broncos head coach since Lou Saban. Out goes Case Keenum, whose 2017 season looks more and more like a one-hit wonder. Out go starters Matt Paradis, Jared Veldheer, Domata Peko, Brandon Marshall, Darian Stewart, and Bradley Roby. It's time for a brand-new head coach, a half-dozen new starters on offense, and the fifth starting quarterback in the past four years.

Joseph was unprepared to be an NFL head coach. We could talk about Denver's slow starts, or their clock management issues. We could wonder about the lack of an organizational vision or guiding philosophy around which the team could grow. We could poke holes in the depth chart and personnel decisions, or list all the fourth-down and red zone errors. But the Vance Joseph experience can perhaps best be summed up by one play: in Week 15, against the Cleveland Browns, down by four with 5:29 left in the game, the Broncos faced a fourth-and-1 from the Browns' 6-yard line. Joseph elected to run the clock down all the way, take a delay of game penalty, and then kick a 29-yard field goal. Per EdjSports' Game Winning

Chance metric, the decision cost Denver 33.1 percent GWC. It was the worst play call made since tracking began in 2011. That just about sums up the Vance Joseph experience.

Elway has since admitted, in an interview with Peter King, that he was wrong to hire Joseph; that he had an idea that Joseph was "kind of [his] guy" before the hiring process began. That meant Denver passed on candidates Sean McVay and Kyle Shanahan as Elway zeroed in on his target. This time around, a more extensive interview process led Elway and the Broncos to settle on longtime defensive coordinator Vic Fangio as their new head coach.

At age 60, Fangio is old for a first-time head coach, but he brings with him an impressive resume. Fangio has spent more years as an NFL defensive coordinator alone than Vance Joseph had spent as a coach or assistant on any level prior to his hire in 2017. It's not just bygone success, either; half of Fangio's defenses have ranked in the top 10 in DVOA, and he ended up taking Chicago from 31st in defense to first in four years, showing improvement in every season. His players love him; his rivals rave about his schematic ingenuity. We have no idea what he'll be like as a head coach, but as a strictly *defensive* hire, Fangio's the real deal. While the offense got most of the talent acquisition this offseason, Fangio's job is to take the remaining defensive parts and squeeze the most out of them.

Fangio's defense, like what Joseph trotted out the past couple seasons, is a 3-4 front on paper, but they have very different philosophies when it comes to how the defense actually plays.

First, there are the play-calling differences. Expect far fewer blitzes than we have seen in recent years; while Denver ranked in the top 10 last season in both five- and six-man rushes, Fangio's defenses always rank towards the bottom of the pack. Instead, he relies on his down linemen to occupy blockers inside and allow his outside linebackers to win in one-on-one opportunities. Whereas Joseph's defense was designed around being aggressive towards the passer and using tight press-man coverage to force quarterbacks to make quick decisions, Fangio's is more about confusion and misdirection. He likes to mix zone and man coverages on the same play, creating combo coverages trying to get quarterbacks to misdiagnose the defenses pre-snap. When it works, this results in creative yet safe pressure packages.

To make that work, however, Fangio's defense needs versa-

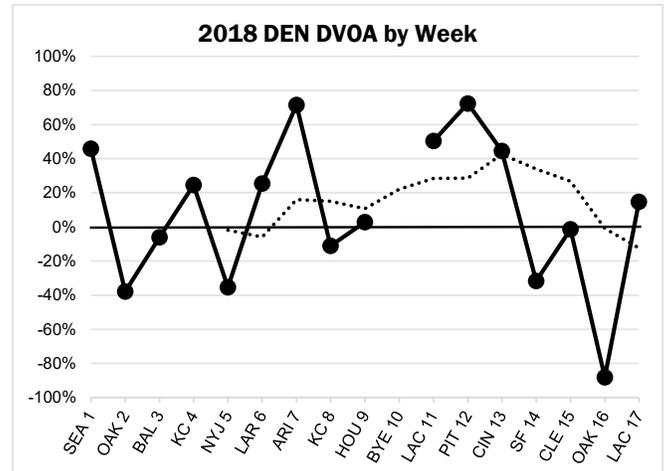
| 2019 Broncos Schedule |               |      |           |      |        |
|-----------------------|---------------|------|-----------|------|--------|
| Week                  | Opp.          | Week | Opp.      | Week | Opp.   |
| 1                     | at OAK (Mon.) | 7    | KC (Thu.) | 13   | LAC    |
| 2                     | CHI           | 8    | at IND    | 14   | at HOU |
| 3                     | at GB         | 9    | CLE       | 15   | at KC  |
| 4                     | JAX           | 10   | BYE       | 16   | DET    |
| 5                     | at LAC        | 11   | at MIN    | 17   | OAK    |
| 6                     | TEN           | 12   | at BUF    |      |        |

tile players who can play a wide variety of different roles. For the past few years, Denver's defense has been based around specialists: players asked to do one or two things particularly well. That is going to change under Fangio, and the transition could cause some growing pains.

In the secondary, Fangio keeps his cornerbacks on one side of the field or the other, rather than having his top guy shadow the offense's top guy. The Broncos have been top-corner-on-top-guy for a decade at this point, so that's a massive shift in philosophy. Fangio's safeties are interchangeable, needing to play in the box and cover deep. They'll be asked to cover less than safeties were under Joseph, however, because Fangio's team is in nickel nearly all the time. Joseph's Broncos were in their base defense a league-leading 45 percent of the time, and then jumped right to dime in passing situations, almost never running five defensive backs. Fangio is much more likely to ask a safety to move up in the box on early downs and then drop an inside linebacker back when extra coverage is required; there's no need for substitutions to tip his hand as to what his team will be doing. That means Chris Harris will be joined by Bryce Callahan and either Kareem Jackson or Isaac Yiadom as essentially full-time starters.

Up front, Joseph's 3-4 was fairly standard, with both ends generally playing 5- or 4i-technique roles, lining up opposite the offensive tackles. Fangio's system uses more of a 4-3 under front, however. That means one of those ends will often kick in and play a 3-technique, like a 4-3 defensive tackle across from a guard. It's a position both ends need to be able to play, as Fangio likes to switch around his 3- and 5-techniques based on matchups and situation. Because Fangio doesn't blitz very often, it's important for those interior linemen to be able to generate pressure on their own—it's what made Akiem Hicks and Justin Smith Pro Bowlers in Fangio defenses. Neither Derek Wolfe nor Adam Gotsis has shown the ability to generate the sort of interior pressure the role dictates to this point.

And then we get to the linebackers, which are the most important roles in Fangio's defenses. It is no surprise that his Bears shot to No. 1 when adding Khalil Mack and rookie Roquan Smith, or that Fangio prioritized adding Danny Trevathan in his second year in Chicago. Fangio's history is loaded with linebacker units stellar both inside and out. From the Dome Patrol in New Orleans to Kevin Greene and Sam Mills in Carolina to Patrick Willis and NaVorro Bowman in San Francisco, Fangio's successful defenses have included a who's who of linebacker talent. It's critical to Fangio's defense being successful.



The Broncos certainly have the outside linebackers to make Fangio's system go. Von Miller fits in any discussion of the best rushing linebackers of all time, and Bradley Chubb's 34.5 pass pressures as a rookie were just one behind the veteran. That being said, their jobs, too, will change some in Fangio's system. The weakside linebacker typically plays up on the line of scrimmage as the fourth man in the 4-3 under front. He pins his ears back and charges after the quarterback, so no problems there. The strongside linebacker, however, is more likely to jam the tight end and drop into a short zone, or set the edge against the run. I'm not sure Miller even remembers what it's like to drop into coverage, but Fangio's edge rushers are asked to handle more targets than most. Fangio's not exactly going to ask Miller or Chubb to cover Travis Kelce one-on-one or anything, though, and each player should be just fine in Fangio's system. They could even become the first pair of linebackers to rack up double-digit sacks for Fangio since Greene and Lamar Lathon back in 1996.

Inside linebacker is another story. Fangio requires elite athleticism from both inside linebackers, who are asked to cover far more than you would expect from a standard 3-4 defense. Chicago's Roquan Smith led all inside linebackers last season with 57 targets, and Danny Trevathan wasn't far behind. Josey Jewell and Todd Davis *combined* for 57 targets a year ago. Fangio's inside linebackers are asked to handle inside gap responsibility against the run, match up with tight ends and running backs in man coverage, and rush the passer from both the inside and outside. To handle all of that, Fangio's inside linebackers are generally top-level athletes, which Jewell and Davis most decidedly are not. It's difficult to picture either managing to slow down the likes of Kelce or Hunter Henry one-on-one on a regular basis. Neither were three-down players under Joseph, but that's the role Fangio's linebackers play. This is by far the toughest defensive transition the team faces, and it may require someone like Su'a Cravens to play out of position at linebacker to make things work.

All of that might start to explain Denver's curiously low defensive projection. The Broncos defense hasn't been worse than *good* in at least five years, and they have arguably been very good or great in five of the last seven, with a low point of a -0.2% DVOA back in 2013. Yet our projections have them

downright average in 2019, and that defensive coordinator flip is a large part of it. It generally takes time to adapt to a new defensive coordinator and a new system, as the previous system’s square pegs find their places in the new scheme’s round holes. Fangio is no exception; it generally takes a couple seasons for his defenses to really start clicking (Table 1). Fangio’s first year in Chicago saw the Bears rank 31st in DVOA, though the Bears were *just a skosh* less talented than last year’s Broncos were. There’s a floor to how bad a defense with this much talent can be, but some transitional pains are to be expected in 2019.

**Table 1: Vic Fangio’s Defenses**

| Year | Team | DVOA   | Rank | Year | Team | DVOA   | Rank |
|------|------|--------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| 2018 | CHI  | -26.0% | 1    | 2003 | HOU  | 11.7%  | 29   |
| 2017 | CHI  | -1.5%  | 14   | 2002 | HOU  | 2.3%   | 21   |
| 2016 | CHI  | 5.0%   | 23   | 2001 | IND  | 15.3%  | 29   |
| 2015 | CHI  | 11.3%  | 31   | 2000 | IND  | 5.7%   | 23   |
| 2014 | SF   | -10.1% | 5    | 1999 | IND  | 9.1%   | 26   |
| 2013 | SF   | -4.6%  | 13   | 1998 | CAR  | 6.2%   | 21   |
| 2012 | SF   | -14.4% | 3    | 1997 | CAR  | 4.7%   | 23   |
| 2011 | SF   | -14.6% | 3    | 1996 | CAR  | -12.2% | 6    |
| 2005 | HOU  | 20.1%  | 32   | 1995 | CAR  | -12.5% | 5    |
| 2004 | HOU  | 1.9%   | 18   |      |      |        |      |

If the defense does drop off, it will be up to the offense to pick up the slack—an offense that continues to be charitably described as a work in progress.

Compared to 2017, 2018’s offense was a roaring success, which is a little bit like saying “compared to being on fire, these third-degree burns are a fantastic thing to have.” The Broncos saw improvements in both the running game and passing game, and they had the second-largest offensive DVOA increase last season. The problem is that 2017’s offense had the lowest DVOA we’ve ever recorded for Denver, so even a significant improvement left plenty to be desired. Case Keenum was better than the three-headed monster of Trevor Siemian, Brock Osweiler, and Paxton Lynch, but only really lifted the passing offense from “terrible” to “bad.” Philip Lindsay was a tremendous find in the running game, but there’s only so much even a top-five rushing attack can do to bolster a floundering pass offense in the modern NFL.

Furthermore, the Broncos’ offense came up smallest in the most crucial situations. They ranked 28th in DVOA on third downs. They ranked 29th when passing in the red zone, and they compounded that by passing on 56 percent of their red zone plays, 11th most in the league—and they ranked fifth in red zone rushing DVOA, so it’s not like Lindsay and Royce Freeman weren’t producing. When they did take a lead, they were worst of all. When leading by seven points or less, the Broncos’ offense dropped from 14th to 29th in DVOA. Denver had just two touchdowns all year long holding on to those one-score leads, tied for last in the NFL with Arizona. If Denver could have held on to fourth-quarter leads against Kansas City, Houston, and Cleveland, we’d be talking about a 9-7 team just missing the playoffs against a very tough schedule.

There’s plenty of blame to go around: a quarterback who wasn’t able to live up to what appears to be a flukish season in Minnesota, a very young set of skill position players experiencing growing pains, an offensive line that had the second-most blown blocks in football. But when you have so many problems in situational football, you have to turn to the guy calling the plays.

Bill Musgrave’s game plan rarely seemed to be adapted to the players under his control. Denver boasted an offensive line ranked sixth in adjusted line yards, an undrafted sensation at running back, and a quarterback who found significantly more success when using play-action. Yet Denver favored not runs nor play-action but rather standard dropbacks. Only 10 teams threw the ball more frequently than the Broncos did last season, but they were just middle of the pack in frequency of play-action fakes. It felt like Musgrave made no efforts to adjust his offense to the strengths of the actual team he was coaching.

So out goes Musgrave, and in comes Rich Scangarello, the latest fruit from the McVay/Shanahan tree. He’ll be working with a significantly changed offensive unit which should feature a half-dozen different starters compared to December of last season thanks to players returning from injury, veterans added in the offseason, and a draft strategy that saw Denver make three offensive selections in the first 42 picks. The change everyone is talking about, however, is at quarterback.

Bringing in Case Keenum was a gambit that always had a high likelihood of failure. His 2017 season in Minnesota was legitimately outstanding, but that was the only season in his career where he had been anywhere close to solid as a starter. It says something when his own franchise would rather spend \$84 million guaranteed on a free-agent quarterback rather than re-sign the guy who led them to the NFC Championship Game.

This has been the path of the post-Peyton Manning Broncos: stuck on the quarterback carousel, trying to get by with below-average quarterbacks at mid-range costs. Osweiler begat Siemian. Siemian begat Lynch. Lynch begat Keenum, and round and round we go. With each passing year, it feels more like Elway lucked into getting a Hall of Fame quarterback at the tail end of his powers, as every attempt to find a long-term answer at the position since then has failed. But it’s alright now. Elway has learned his lesson and has traded in his moderately expensive non-franchise veteran quarterback for... a different, even more expensive non-franchise veteran quarterback, albeit one with a shiny Super Bowl ring.

Saying Joe Flacco is the pinnacle of mediocre is an insult to mediocrity, and has been for years. From 2015 through 2017, Flacco had negative double-digit passing DVOA, never ranking in the top 25 at the position. His 2018 season was his best in four years, and that saw him getting benched for a rookie quarterback whom the Ravens barely trusted to throw the ball. Baltimore fans are tired of the list of Flacco “accomplishments,” but as he’s new to the Denver fan base, it might be nice to list some of his biggest hits.

- Flacco has now been below league average in adjusted net yards per attempt in each of the past four seasons,

yet remained Baltimore's starter. He is only the 11th quarterback since the merger to manage that extended feat of below-average play without getting benched, joining luminaries such as Mark Sanchez, Joey Harrington, and Rick Mirer.

- Despite his reputation for being a solid deep-ball passer, Flacco regularly ranks near the bottom of our failed completion statistics. A failed completion is a dump-off or checkdown that doesn't meaningfully advance the ball; think 2-yard screens on first-and-10, or any third-down completion that ends short of the sticks. Flacco's 2016 season had 144 failed completions, the all-time record. Second-place was Flacco's 2017 season.
- Flacco's pretty deep ball is often listed as one of his strengths, but it's overstated. His average pass traveled 8.4 yards through the air in 2018, which ranked 13th in the league, but his average completion was just 5.9 yards through the air, so there were a lot of beautiful deep balls bouncing off the turf—13.5 percent of his passes were listed as overthrown in 2018. Flacco ranked 28th out of 34 qualified quarterbacks in DVOA on passes that traveled at least 15 yards downfield, below such noted deep-ball slingers such as Nick Foles, Derek Carr, and—yes—Case Keenum.

Elway's response to all this is to claim that the 34-year-old Flacco is "just getting into his prime," noting that he "plays the position exactly how [Denver] envisions it being played." He points to Flacco's decent 2014 season under Gary Kubiak as reason for optimism, as Scangarello's offense will presumably be similar to Kyle Shanahan's offense, which bears some resemblance to Kubiak's system as Shanahan was Kubiak's offensive coordinator for two years in Houston. That's a game of telephone tag, not a reason for optimism, even when filtered through the lens of preseason platitudes. Flacco has been an anchor for Baltimore for years; there's little reason to suspect that he's going to have a breakout season and reverse years of decline just because his zip code changed.

Flacco will do some things better than Keenum did. His strong arm may mesh better with deep options such as Courtland Sutton and first-round pick Noah Fant. Flacco will do some things worse than Keenum did. He is an immobile statue in the pocket, turning his linemen's blown blocks into sacks. The point is, both players would likely have been in the same ballpark in 2019 and switching between them is just re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic. Bringing in Flacco as a free agent would have been questionable; giving up a fourth-round pick for the right to his services is certifiable.

At least Denver did bring in an alternative. The Broncos were often mocked Missouri quarterback Drew Lock in the pre-draft process, usually at their No. 10 draft slot. Instead, Denver picked Lock up with the 42nd pick, a much more reasonable value for him. Before the draft, QBASE, our rookie quarterback projection system, had Lock as the fourth-best quarterback in the class, just above sixth-overall pick Daniel Jones. Lock is an average prospect—almost prototypically so. As a senior, all of his stats QBASE uses to measure players—adjusted yards per pass attempt, completion rate, team pass-

ing S&P+—were within 0.1 standard deviations of the mean for all quarterback prospects over the last 20 years. As a first-round pick, that's underwhelming. As a second-round pick, he's more than worth a kick of the tires.

You don't have to go back far into Broncos history to find a passer Lock resembles—he's Jay Cutler, only more congenial off the field. Like Cutler, Lock has a cannon for an arm and is willing to trust it to make the big throws, sometimes to his detriment. He's mobile enough and has the pocket awareness to step up and avoid sacks. His field vision is excellent as well, and he can quickly scan through and process coverages. He needs to work on his touch and accuracy, and his footwork could use an overhaul as well, but there are enough positives there to be worth considering.

Most importantly, he at least has the potential to be a long-term starter. Even if Flacco repeats his best season of the past four years in Denver, he's still both old and mediocre. Flacco is not the quarterback who will take the Broncos back to the playoffs. Lock probably isn't either, but at least he's an unknown quantity. The best thing Denver can do this season is evaluate and develop the young talent that will make up the core of the team for the next five years. If sanity prevails, Flacco will at some point be benched for a rookie quarterback yet again in 2019.

There's plenty of that young talent to go around. The Broncos are likely to trot out half a dozen different offensive starters than they had by the end of 2018, as new arrivals and healthy returnees come in droves. Fant is a receiver trapped in a tight end's body; not many tight ends run a 4.5 40 while still showing adequate blocking chops. He'll be an immediate contributor, alongside last year's crop of rookies. Courtland Sutton and DaeSean Hamilton had promising campaigns, while Philip Lindsay was an undrafted star. The Broncos have a set of skill players who could form the basis for a solid offense when a quarterback finally does arrive, assuming they haven't all aged out of the league and retired by that point.

The biggest question mark is the most important veteran, 32-year-old Emmanuel Sanders, who isn't expected back from a torn Achilles until mid-July at the earliest. If he has a setback, that bumps everyone else on the depth chart up to a level they're likely not ready to handle just yet. When Sanders went down in December, Sutton became the top target, where he averaged just 37 yards and a -12.1% DVOA over the last four games. Sutton and Hamilton are still developing; they're not ready to be the top targets quite yet. If Sanders is hurt, the young players will have to take major strides forward for the passing game to be above remedial.

The changes continue on the offensive line. The Broncos also added Ja'Wuan James, who should be a massive improvement over Jared Veldheer at right tackle, and look to get guard Ron Leary back from injury. Second-round pick Dalton Risner (Kansas State) is another rookie who should be starting from Day 1. He'll be penciled in at guard, but he's versatile enough to play anywhere along the line of scrimmage. Losing Matt Paradis hurts, but the offensive line could be much improved if all the "ifs" work out. If Leary and James are fully healthy. If Risner is able to contribute right away. If Gar-

rett Bolles can finally take that step forward Denver has been waiting for. Really, that's the best way to describe Denver's offensive prospects going forward: iffy.

No, there's no reason to suspect that the Broncos have licked their quarterback conundrum just yet, and the rest of their offense is more potential and possibility than it is a functioning NFL unit at this point in time. Combine that with some transitional pains on defense, and you get a very bleak picture for the 2019 Broncos. The Broncos may be in a better place looking ahead now than they were before the offseason began, but for now, they continue to wander in the post-Manning wilderness. The collection of young offensive talent makes sense for a team that's looking to 2020 or 2021 as a realistic shot to get back into competitive football. It won't make for a fun season, but it's medicine that Denver has to take in order to get

back to sustainable success.

However, if that's the philosophy, then the Flacco trade sticks out like a sore thumb. You don't trade for a 34-year-old veteran to facilitate a rebuilding project. That move seems to be designed to try to win now, with the always-competitive Elway feeling the pressure to try to avoid a third straight losing season. If that's the standard we're judging this team by, then 2019 is likely to be another highly disappointing year. The failures of the last two seasons have cost a head coach, two offensive coordinators, and four quarterbacks their jobs. There aren't many scapegoats left, and one more poor season might well put even a franchise legend like Elway on the hot seat.

Bryan Knowles

### 2018 Broncos Stats by Week

| Wk | vs.    | W-L | PF | PA | YDF | YDA | TO | Total | Off  | Def  | ST   |
|----|--------|-----|----|----|-----|-----|----|-------|------|------|------|
| 1  | SEA    | W   | 27 | 24 | 470 | 306 | 0  | 46%   | 5%   | -41% | 0%   |
| 2  | OAK    | W   | 20 | 19 | 385 | 373 | -1 | -38%  | -11% | 25%  | -2%  |
| 3  | at BAL | L   | 14 | 27 | 293 | 342 | -1 | -6%   | -1%  | 4%   | -1%  |
| 4  | KC     | L   | 23 | 27 | 385 | 446 | -1 | 25%   | 21%  | -11% | -8%  |
| 5  | at NYJ | L   | 16 | 34 | 436 | 512 | +1 | -36%  | 1%   | 27%  | -10% |
| 6  | LAR    | L   | 20 | 23 | 357 | 444 | 0  | 25%   | 17%  | -16% | -7%  |
| 7  | at ARI | W   | 45 | 10 | 309 | 223 | +4 | 72%   | 15%  | -50% | 6%   |
| 8  | at KC  | L   | 23 | 30 | 411 | 340 | -1 | -11%  | -8%  | -5%  | -9%  |
| 9  | HOU    | L   | 17 | 19 | 348 | 290 | -1 | 3%    | 4%   | -9%  | -9%  |
| 10 | BYE    |     |    |    |     |     |    |       |      |      |      |
| 11 | at LAC | W   | 23 | 22 | 325 | 479 | +2 | 50%   | 34%  | -17% | 0%   |
| 12 | PIT    | W   | 24 | 17 | 308 | 527 | +4 | 72%   | 44%  | -17% | 11%  |
| 13 | at CIN | W   | 24 | 10 | 361 | 313 | +2 | 45%   | 14%  | -26% | 5%   |
| 14 | at SF  | L   | 14 | 20 | 274 | 389 | +1 | -32%  | -32% | -7%  | -7%  |
| 15 | CLE    | L   | 16 | 17 | 270 | 309 | 0  | -1%   | -10% | -7%  | 2%   |
| 16 | at OAK | L   | 14 | 27 | 300 | 273 | -2 | -88%  | -31% | 24%  | -34% |
| 17 | LAC    | L   | 9  | 23 | 370 | 276 | 0  | 15%   | -13% | -34% | -6%  |

### Trends and Splits

|                  | Offense | Rank | Defense | Rank |
|------------------|---------|------|---------|------|
| Total DVOA       | 1.1%    | 14   | -9.7%   | 5    |
| Unadjusted VOA   | 3.3%    | 13   | -7.6%   | 7    |
| Weighted Trend   | -0.4%   | 17   | -13.6%  | 5    |
| Variance         | 4.4%    | 6    | 5.0%    | 11   |
| Average Opponent | 1.5%    | 25   | 3.7%    | 7    |
| Passing          | 0.4%    | 24   | -10.6%  | 4    |
| Rushing          | 7.7%    | 5    | -8.5%   | 16   |
| First Down       | 14.8%   | 6    | -0.9%   | 15   |
| Second Down      | 1.1%    | 15   | -10.8%  | 5    |
| Third Down       | -25.5%  | 28   | -25.4%  | 3    |
| First Half       | -3.9%   | 20   | -1.3%   | 13   |
| Second Half      | 5.9%    | 14   | -18.6%  | 4    |
| Red Zone         | -2.2%   | 16   | 0.5%    | 18   |
| Late and Close   | 12.5%   | 7    | -5.8%   | 14   |

### Five-Year Performance

| Year | W-L  | Pyth W | Est W | PF  | PA  | TO  | Total  | Rk | Off    | Rk | Def    | Rk | ST    | Rk | Off AGL | Rk | Def AGL | Rk | Off Age | Rk | Def Age | Rk | ST Age | Rk |
|------|------|--------|-------|-----|-----|-----|--------|----|--------|----|--------|----|-------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|--------|----|
| 2014 | 12-4 | 11.0   | 13.3  | 482 | 354 | +5  | 29.5%  | 2  | 20.0%  | 3  | -13.2% | 4  | -3.7% | 27 | 11.7    | 4  | 25.2    | 6  | 28.6    | 2  | 25.7    | 31 | 25.6   | 27 |
| 2015 | 12-4 | 9.7    | 10.7  | 355 | 296 | -4  | 17.7%  | 8  | -8.7%  | 25 | -25.8% | 1  | 0.7%  | 14 | 42.9    | 22 | 13.8    | 2  | 28.3    | 2  | 26.5    | 19 | 25.6   | 26 |
| 2016 | 9-7  | 9.1    | 8.5   | 333 | 297 | +2  | 3.7%   | 14 | -12.3% | 28 | -18.3% | 1  | -2.3% | 24 | 26.0    | 8  | 34.2    | 18 | 26.6    | 18 | 26.7    | 12 | 25.1   | 30 |
| 2017 | 5-11 | 5.4    | 5.6   | 289 | 382 | -17 | -21.1% | 29 | -19.0% | 31 | -5.3%  | 10 | -7.4% | 30 | 28.1    | 11 | 37.8    | 20 | 27.1    | 14 | 26.7    | 12 | 25.0   | 30 |
| 2018 | 6-10 | 7.4    | 8.7   | 329 | 349 | +7  | 6.6%   | 13 | 1.1%   | 14 | -9.7%  | 5  | -4.2% | 31 | 48.9    | 23 | 27.3    | 11 | 26.6    | 18 | 26.9    | 7  | 25.4   | 28 |

## 2018 Performance Based on Most Common Personnel Groups

| DEN Offense |      |     |       |      | DEN Offense vs. Opponents |      |     |       |      | DEN Defense |      |     |        | DEN Defense vs. Opponents |      |     |        |
|-------------|------|-----|-------|------|---------------------------|------|-----|-------|------|-------------|------|-----|--------|---------------------------|------|-----|--------|
| Pers        | Freq | Yds | DVOA  | Run% | Pers                      | Freq | Yds | DVOA  | Run% | Pers        | Freq | Yds | DVOA   | Pers                      | Freq | Yds | DVOA   |
| 11          | 63%  | 5.5 | -1.9% | 26%  | Base                      | 29%  | 5.8 | 8.2%  | 56%  | Base        | 45%  | 5.5 | -6.2%  | 11                        | 61%  | 5.8 | -17.3% |
| 21          | 12%  | 5.3 | -0.6% | 65%  | Nickel                    | 50%  | 5.7 | -0.6% | 33%  | Nickel      | 27%  | 6.4 | 0.3%   | 12                        | 19%  | 6.0 | 6.0%   |
| 12          | 11%  | 5.9 | 7.3%  | 44%  | Dime+                     | 20%  | 5.3 | 3.3%  | 18%  | Dime+       | 28%  | 5.7 | -29.6% | 21                        | 7%   | 7.3 | -11.4% |
| 20          | 4%   | 7.6 | 38.2% | 40%  | Goal Line                 | 1%   | 0.7 | 36.7% | 67%  | Goal Line   | 0%   | 0.7 | 32.6%  | 22                        | 5%   | 4.4 | -4.2%  |
| 22          | 4%   | 7.0 | 29.1% | 69%  |                           |      |     |       |      |             |      |     |        | 13                        | 5%   | 3.9 | -20.6% |

## Strategic Tendencies

| Run/Pass          | Rk     | Formation         | Rk     | Pass Rush          | Rk       | Secondary        | Rk     | Strategy         | Rk      |
|-------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|--------------------|----------|------------------|--------|------------------|---------|
| Runs, first half  | 36% 21 | Form: Single Back | 70% 29 | Rush 3             | 4.6% 21  | 4 DB             | 45% 1  | Play action      | 25% 14  |
| Runs, first down  | 42% 25 | Form: Empty Back  | 11% 6  | Rush 4             | 60.1% 25 | 5 DB             | 27% 31 | Avg Box (Off)    | 6.28 8  |
| Runs, second-long | 37% 6  | Pers: 3+ WR       | 69% 15 | Rush 5             | 27.6% 4  | 6+ DB            | 28% 5  | Avg Box (Def)    | 6.36 4  |
| Runs, power sit.  | 54% 20 | Pers: 2+ TE/6+ OL | 18% 27 | Rush 6+            | 7.7% 6   | CB by Sides      | 58% 27 | Offensive Pace   | 30.23 8 |
| Runs, behind 2H   | 29% 13 | Pers: 6+ OL       | 2% 11  | Int DL Sacks       | 20.5% 22 | S/CB Cover Ratio | 32% 8  | Defensive Pace   | 30.40 7 |
| Pass, ahead 2H    | 34% 32 | Shotgun/Pistol    | 56% 26 | Second Level Sacks | 8.0% 31  | DB Blitz         | 6% 25  | Go for it on 4th | 1.13 21 |

Denver got a league-leading 72 percent of sacks from edge rushers. This is another thing that might change with a Fangio defense, as the Bears were near the bottom of the league at 41 percent. 🏈 The Broncos went from 6.2 net yards per pass (-10.2% DVOA) with three or four pass-rushers to 7.5 net yards per pass (0.1% DVOA) with a blitz. But those blitz numbers were split further into bad defense with five pass-rushers (16.2% DVOA, 8.2 yards) and then really good defense with six or more (-59.3% DVOA, 5.0 yards). 🏈 Denver was one of only two teams (along with the Chargers) where three different running backs had at least 20 broken tackles. But since all three were also under 40, the Broncos were only tied for tenth in broken tackles. 🏈 Once again, Denver was much better running from one-back sets (5.2 yards, 11.3% DVOA) than two-back sets (4.3 yards, -10.0% DVOA). 🏈 Denver receivers dropped a league-high 38 passes. 🏈 New quarterback Joe Flacco was blitzed on a league-high 31.5 percent of passes last season. His yards per pass actually went up from 6.4 to 7.9 against a five-man pass-rush, but Flacco had a dismal 3.6 net yards per pass with -53.5% DVOA against a big blitz or six or more.

## Passing

| Player    | DYAR | DVOA   | Plays | NtYds | Avg | YAC | C%    | TD | Int |
|-----------|------|--------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|----|-----|
| C.Keenum* | -63  | -12.7% | 620   | 3634  | 5.9 | 4.9 | 62.6% | 18 | 14  |
| J.Flacco  | 429  | 5.4%   | 392   | 2380  | 6.1 | 4.4 | 61.7% | 12 | 6   |

## Receiving

| Player      | DYAR | DVOA   | Plays | Ctch | Yds | Y/C  | YAC | TD | C%  |
|-------------|------|--------|-------|------|-----|------|-----|----|-----|
| E.Sanders   | 113  | 2.0%   | 99    | 72   | 877 | 12.2 | 4.3 | 4  | 73% |
| C.Sutton    | 95   | 1.3%   | 84    | 42   | 704 | 16.8 | 3.9 | 4  | 50% |
| D.Thomas*   | 64   | 1.6%   | 56    | 36   | 402 | 11.2 | 3.7 | 3  | 64% |
| D.Hamilton  | -20  | -18.1% | 46    | 30   | 243 | 8.1  | 2.3 | 2  | 65% |
| T.Patrick   | -16  | -17.6% | 41    | 23   | 315 | 13.7 | 4.9 | 1  | 56% |
| J.Heuerman  | -70  | -29.7% | 48    | 31   | 281 | 9.1  | 4.8 | 2  | 65% |
| M.LaCrosse* | -1   | -7.6%  | 37    | 24   | 250 | 10.4 | 6.0 | 1  | 65% |
| J.Butt      | -26  | -38.7% | 13    | 8    | 85  | 10.6 | 5.5 | 0  | 62% |
| B.Parker*   | -40  | -65.0% | 10    | 5    | 33  | 6.6  | 5.8 | 0  | 50% |
| D.Booker    | 1    | -13.5% | 51    | 38   | 275 | 7.2  | 6.3 | 0  | 75% |
| P.Lindsay   | 9    | -10.4% | 47    | 35   | 241 | 6.9  | 8.5 | 1  | 74% |
| R.Freeman   | -20  | -32.2% | 20    | 14   | 72  | 5.1  | 4.2 | 0  | 70% |
| A.Janovich  | 47   | 75.0%  | 10    | 8    | 112 | 14.0 | 7.9 | 1  | 80% |

## Rushing

| Player    | DYAR | DVOA  | Plays | Yds  | Avg | TD | Fum | Suc |
|-----------|------|-------|-------|------|-----|----|-----|-----|
| P.Lindsay | 203  | 17.3% | 192   | 1037 | 5.4 | 9  | 0   | 49% |
| R.Freeman | 10   | -6.8% | 130   | 521  | 4.0 | 5  | 1   | 46% |
| D.Booker  | 27   | 9.6%  | 34    | 183  | 5.4 | 1  | 0   | 50% |
| C.Keenum* | 40   | 31.2% | 15    | 101  | 6.7 | 2  | 1   | --  |
| J.Flacco  | 13   | 2.9%  | 13    | 46   | 3.5 | 0  | 1   | --  |

## Offensive Line

| Player          | Pos   | Age | GS    | Snaps | Pen | Sk  | Pass | Run | Player           | Pos | Age | GS    | Snaps | Pen | Sk  | Pass | Run |
|-----------------|-------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|------|-----|------------------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-----|-----|------|-----|
| Garett Bolles   | LT    | 27  | 16/16 | 1062  | 13  | 5.5 | 24   | 4   | Elijah Wilkinson | RG  | 24  | 12/7  | 520   | 0   | 2.0 | 6    | 4   |
| Connor McGovern | RG/C  | 26  | 16/15 | 1056  | 6   | 1.5 | 16   | 4   | Ronald Leary     | LG  | 30  | 6/6   | 383   | 2   | 0.0 | 3    | 0   |
| Billy Turner*   | LG/RT | 28  | 16/11 | 824   | 2   | 1.0 | 14   | 10  | Max Garcia       | LG  | 28  | 9/4   | 242   | 3   | 1.0 | 4    | 5   |
| Jared Veldheer* | RT    | 32  | 12/12 | 704   | 8   | 2.0 | 11   | 2   | Ja'Wuan James    | RT  | 27  | 15/15 | 815   | 7   | 3.5 | 9    | 5   |
| Matt Paradis*   | C     | 30  | 9/9   | 569   | 2   | 0.0 | 1    | 2   | Jake Brendel     | LG  | 27  | 4/3   | 176   | 2   | 2.0 | 3    | 1   |

| Year                          | Yards | ALY  | Rank | Power                      | Rank | Stuff | Rank                          | 2nd Lev | Rank | Open Field                 | Rank | Sacks | ASR                            | Rank | Press | Rank                       | F-Start | Cont. |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|------|----------------------------|------|-------|-------------------------------|---------|------|----------------------------|------|-------|--------------------------------|------|-------|----------------------------|---------|-------|
| 2016                          | 3.78  | 4.09 | 18   | 51%                        | 29   | 21%   | 21                            | 1.19    | 13   | 0.50                       | 26   | 40    | 7.4%                           | 27   | 24.6% | 12                         | 20      | 32    |
| 2017                          | 4.03  | 4.31 | 9    | 65%                        | 15   | 18%   | 7                             | 1.11    | 18   | 0.51                       | 26   | 52    | 9.1%                           | 29   | 31.1% | 16                         | 17      | 28    |
| 2018                          | 4.88  | 4.75 | 6    | 71%                        | 7    | 18%   | 14                            | 1.42    | 5    | 1.01                       | 10   | 34    | 6.3%                           | 11   | 32.1% | 20                         | 9       | 31    |
| <i>2018 ALY by direction:</i> |       |      |      | <i>Left End: 5.29 (10)</i> |      |       | <i>Left Tackle: 3.57 (27)</i> |         |      | <i>Mid/Guard: 4.74 (8)</i> |      |       | <i>Right Tackle: 4.53 (13)</i> |      |       | <i>Right End: 5.44 (4)</i> |         |       |

The Broncos ranked in the top 10 in adjusted line yards for the first time since 2013, but they also had the third-highest blown block rate in the league, sixth highest on running plays. In short: when the blocking held, they were very effective. They just failed to hold far too often. 🏈 Maybe “hold” was a poor choice of words—Garrett Bolles led the league with ten holding flags. He led the league in accepted holding penalties the year before, too. He also ranked 61st among tackles in snaps per blown block and had the third-most blown pass blocks in the league. Other than that, it was a good year. 🏈 Ja’Wuan James comes over from Miami to handle right tackle duties. He ranked 32nd among tackles last season with 58.2 snaps per blown block. That’s not exactly stellar, but it’s better than Jared Veldheer, Menelik Watson, or Donald Stephenson managed over the past three seasons. 🏈 If Dalton Risner was just a little bit faster and light on his feet, he could have been an early Day 1 pick as a tackle. His stiffness matters less inside, even in Denver’s zone-blocking scheme. His experience playing all across the line at Kansas State certainly won’t hurt, either. If Bolles continues to struggle, don’t be surprised to see James moved to left tackle and Risner given a chance on the right side. 🏈 Risner started at left guard at OTAs, which would move Ronald Leary back to the right side. That presumes that Leary is fully recovered from his Week 6 Achilles tear and manages to play a full season for the first time since 2013. For what it’s worth, he’s reportedly going to be fully ready for training camp. 🏈 Connor McGovern is moving from guard to center full time to replace Matt Paradis, and that’s a downgrade. McGovern is playing out of position, and his play notably decreased when asked to move inside last season. A full offseason at center may help.

## Defensive Front

| Defensive Line | Age | Pos | Overall |       |       |       |    |      |      |      |      |     | vs. Run |      |    |      |     | Pass Rush |       |  |  |
|----------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|----|------|------|------|------|-----|---------|------|----|------|-----|-----------|-------|--|--|
|                |     |     | G       | Snaps | Plays | TmPct | Rk | Stop | Dfts | BTKl | Runs | St% | Rk      | RuYd | Rk | Sack | Hit | Hur       | Dsrpt |  |  |
| Derek Wolfe    | 29  | DE  | 16      | 710   | 49    | 5.9%  | 25 | 40   | 12   | 2    | 37   | 81% | 22      | 2.4  | 51 | 1.5  | 4   | 18        | 4     |  |  |
| Domata Peko*   | 35  | DT  | 16      | 522   | 33    | 4.0%  | 65 | 28   | 3    | 4    | 27   | 85% | 11      | 2.5  | 56 | 0.5  | 2   | 3         | 2     |  |  |
| Adam Gotsis    | 27  | DE  | 16      | 512   | 44    | 5.3%  | 34 | 34   | 9    | 2    | 32   | 75% | 41      | 1.9  | 26 | 3.0  | 6   | 9         | 6     |  |  |
| Zach Kerr      | 29  | DE  | 16      | 394   | 34    | 4.1%  | -- | 23   | 5    | 3    | 29   | 69% | --      | 2.7  | -- | 1.5  | 1   | 5         | 1     |  |  |
| Shelby Harris  | 28  | DT  | 16      | 390   | 42    | 5.1%  | -- | 29   | 9    | 1    | 34   | 65% | --      | 2.9  | -- | 1.5  | 5   | 12        | 5     |  |  |

| Edge Rushers     | Age | Pos | Overall |       |       |       |    |      |      |      |      |     | vs. Run |      |    |      |     | Pass Rush |       |  |  |
|------------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|----|------|------|------|------|-----|---------|------|----|------|-----|-----------|-------|--|--|
|                  |     |     | G       | Snaps | Plays | TmPct | Rk | Stop | Dfts | BTKl | Runs | St% | Rk      | RuYd | Rk | Sack | Hit | Hur       | Dsrpt |  |  |
| Bradley Chubb    | 23  | OLB | 16      | 844   | 60    | 7.2%  | 8  | 46   | 22   | 9    | 41   | 73% | 49      | 2.1  | 38 | 12.0 | 11  | 35        | 0     |  |  |
| Von Miller       | 30  | OLB | 16      | 844   | 51    | 6.2%  | 17 | 46   | 29   | 6    | 27   | 89% | 7       | 2.1  | 36 | 14.5 | 11  | 36        | 2     |  |  |
| Shaquil Barrett* | 27  | OLB | 13      | 275   | 25    | 3.7%  | -- | 19   | 8    | 3    | 15   | 80% | --      | 2.9  | -- | 3.0  | 4   | 5         | 0     |  |  |
| Shane Ray*       | 26  | OLB | 11      | 253   | 11    | 1.9%  | -- | 8    | 4    | 1    | 5    | 80% | --      | 4.2  | -- | 1.0  | 1   | 6         | 0     |  |  |

| Linebackers       | Age | Pos | Overall |       |       |       |    |      |      |      |      |     | vs. Run |      |    |      |     | Pass Rush |      |      | vs. Pass |       |    |    |     |
|-------------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|----|------|------|------|------|-----|---------|------|----|------|-----|-----------|------|------|----------|-------|----|----|-----|
|                   |     |     | G       | Snaps | Plays | TmPct | Rk | Stop | Dfts | BTKl | Runs | St% | Rk      | RuYd | Rk | Sack | Hit | Hur       | Tgts | Suc% | Rk       | AdjYd | Rk | PD | Int |
| Todd Davis        | 27  | ILB | 16      | 842   | 121   | 14.6% | 28 | 61   | 11   | 14   | 76   | 53% | 65      | 4.8  | 75 | 0.5  | 4   | 10        | 36   | 42%  | 60       | 8.3   | 65 | 7  | 1   |
| Brandon Marshall* | 30  | ILB | 11      | 468   | 43    | 7.6%  | 73 | 17   | 5    | 3    | 27   | 52% | 71      | 4.7  | 74 | 0.0  | 0   | 3         | 16   | 63%  | 5        | 4.4   | 6  | 1  | 0   |
| Josey Jewell      | 25  | ILB | 16      | 459   | 53    | 6.4%  | 79 | 29   | 7    | 5    | 38   | 58% | 51      | 3.9  | 43 | 0.0  | 0   | 2         | 21   | 52%  | 32       | 8.3   | 66 | 3  | 0   |

| Year                   | Yards | ALY                 | Rank | Power | Rank                   | Stuff | Rank | 2nd Level            | Rank | Open Field | Rank                    | Sacks | ASR  | Rank                 | Press | Rank |
|------------------------|-------|---------------------|------|-------|------------------------|-------|------|----------------------|------|------------|-------------------------|-------|------|----------------------|-------|------|
| 2016                   | 4.03  | 4.60                | 28   | 65%   | 20                     | 11%   | 32   | 0.91                 | 1    | 0.52       | 7                       | 42    | 7.6% | 2                    | 32.2% | 1    |
| 2017                   | 3.44  | 3.37                | 4    | 45%   | 1                      | 26%   | 3    | 0.91                 | 3    | 0.60       | 9                       | 33    | 6.9% | 11                   | 32.7% | 7    |
| 2018                   | 4.78  | 4.58                | 23   | 73%   | 26                     | 14%   | 30   | 1.14                 | 8    | 1.16       | 29                      | 44    | 8.0% | 9                    | 30.2% | 17   |
| 2018 ALY by direction: |       | Left End: 4.29 (14) |      |       | Left Tackle: 5.17 (29) |       |      | Mid/Guard: 4.40 (14) |      |            | Right Tackle: 4.51 (22) |       |      | Right End: 5.47 (29) |       |      |

In an interview, Von Miller stated that coverage was a huge part of his game, and that he's excited to be doing it more in 2019 under Fangio. For the record, Miller has been targeted 11 times in the past three seasons and hasn't had a successful play in coverage since 2016. That's not a deal-breaker—Khalil Mack went 0-for-4 in pass coverage for Fangio's Bears in 2018—but let's not exaggerate things too much here. 🍷 Bradley Chubb's 34.5 pass pressures are the most we've ever recorded for a rookie. 🍷 Stick a pin in fifth-round pick Justin Hollins out of Oregon. He's not going to see the field too often with Miller and Chubb in the way, but he's more of the type of linebacker Fangio looks for, blending both pass-rushing talent and zone coverage potential. 🍷 Josey Jewell got a big vote of confidence when Denver passed on Devin Bush in the draft. Going from Brandon Marshall to Jewell is a drop-off in pass coverage, but Jewell's instincts made him a much more involved and successful player in run support. 🍷 Todd Davis is still an above-average tackler, but he has seen his broken tackle rate increase in each of the last two seasons. 🍷 In Chicago, Fangio's top interior rusher (Akiem Hicks) averaged 27.3 quarterback pressures over the past three seasons. Derek Wolfe averaged 15.2 over that time period and hasn't topped two sacks in a season since 2016. He's a solid run defender, but he's just not an interior presence against the pass. 🍷 Something to keep an eye on: Wolfe, Adam Gotsis, and Shelby Harris are all free agents after this season. It is highly unlikely Denver will have the cap space to re-sign all three, so seeing how well each player adapts to Fangio's system will be key to figuring out who will be wearing orange next season. 🍷 Gotsis was second in the league in pass disruptions (balls tipped at the line plus incompletes caused by hitting the quarterback) with six. Harris was just behind him, tied in fifth. 🍷 Dre'Mont Jones is going to fight his way into the lineup sooner rather than later. The Ohio State product might have been the best interior pass-rusher in the draft. He fell to the third round because he's skinny for a lineman at 281 pounds and tested out fairly poorly at the combine, but he might just be the 3-technique Fangio is looking for.

## Defensive Secondary

| Secondary       | Age | Pos | Overall |       |       |       |    |      |      |      | vs. Run |     |    |      |    | vs. Pass |       |    |      |      |    |       |    |    |     |
|-----------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|----|------|------|------|---------|-----|----|------|----|----------|-------|----|------|------|----|-------|----|----|-----|
|                 |     |     | G       | Snaps | Plays | TmPct | Rk | Stop | Dfts | BTKl | Runs    | St% | Rk | RuYd | Rk | Tgts     | Tgt%  | Rk | Dist | Suc% | Rk | AdjYd | Rk | PD | Int |
| Justin Simmons  | 26  | FS  | 16      | 1077  | 101   | 12.2% | 12 | 30   | 10   | 9    | 38      | 45% | 33 | 9.2  | 57 | 49       | 11.4% | 56 | 9.2  | 47%  | 48 | 7.0   | 35 | 4  | 3   |
| Bradley Roby*   | 27  | CB  | 15      | 926   | 62    | 8.0%  | 47 | 27   | 11   | 12   | 9       | 56% | 15 | 6.3  | 38 | 78       | 21.2% | 55 | 12.0 | 46%  | 62 | 10.3  | 76 | 12 | 1   |
| Darian Stewart* | 31  | SS  | 14      | 874   | 63    | 8.7%  | 51 | 18   | 8    | 12   | 25      | 24% | 62 | 8.8  | 54 | 18       | 5.2%  | 9  | 9.8  | 56%  | 20 | 9.4   | 61 | 3  | 2   |
| Chris Harris    | 30  | CB  | 12      | 747   | 59    | 9.5%  | 27 | 28   | 11   | 3    | 13      | 54% | 19 | 6.2  | 35 | 64       | 21.6% | 56 | 8.7  | 50%  | 51 | 6.9   | 25 | 10 | 3   |
| Will Parks      | 25  | SS  | 16      | 572   | 43    | 5.2%  | 71 | 21   | 8    | 7    | 20      | 65% | 3  | 4.5  | 7  | 25       | 11.0% | 55 | 10.2 | 48%  | 43 | 6.2   | 14 | 4  | 1   |
| Tramaine Brock* | 31  | CB  | 12      | 437   | 29    | 4.7%  | -- | 10   | 5    | 3    | 3       | 33% | -- | 10.7 | -- | 38       | 21.9% | -- | 12.7 | 58%  | -- | 6.6   | -- | 6  | 0   |
| Isaac Yiadom    | 23  | CB  | 13      | 263   | 20    | 3.0%  | -- | 8    | 6    | 3    | 3       | 33% | -- | 5.3  | -- | 30       | 28.7% | -- | 12.1 | 50%  | -- | 7.0   | -- | 3  | 1   |
| Kareem Jackson  | 31  | CB  | 16      | 985   | 104   | 12.3% | 3  | 55   | 21   | 13   | 40      | 55% | 17 | 3.7  | 8  | 59       | 15.0% | 14 | 11.3 | 51%  | 49 | 6.4   | 16 | 17 | 2   |
| Bryce Callahan  | 28  | CB  | 13      | 675   | 51    | 7.7%  | 53 | 25   | 15   | 10   | 7       | 43% | 36 | 7.6  | 56 | 37       | 12.5% | 1  | 7.3  | 51%  | 43 | 6.9   | 23 | 6  | 2   |

| Year | Pass D Rank | vs. #1 WR | Rk | vs. #2 WR | Rk | vs. Other WR | Rk | WR Wide | Rk | WR Slot | Rk | vs. TE | Rk | vs. RB | Rk |
|------|-------------|-----------|----|-----------|----|--------------|----|---------|----|---------|----|--------|----|--------|----|
| 2016 | 1           | -29.6%    | 2  | -58.5%    | 1  | -24.0%       | 4  | -9.1%   | 11 | -54.4%  | 1  | -20.7% | 5  | -7.1%  | 15 |
| 2017 | 15          | -33.6%    | 2  | -13.3%    | 9  | 28.5%        | 30 | -28.6%  | 3  | -2.1%   | 12 | 19.8%  | 31 | 5.6%   | 19 |
| 2018 | 4           | -5.8%     | 11 | 0.1%      | 17 | -36.4%       | 1  | -7.7%   | 16 | -14.2%  | 3  | -9.3%  | 12 | 5.4%   | 18 |

Kareem Jackson is the most interesting player to watch in this secondary. For his first nine years in Houston, Jackson was primarily a cornerback, but he started making the transition to safety in 2018, and has lined up there in Denver's early workouts. Fangio loves his defenders to be versatile, so Jackson's ability to play both corner and safety was impossible to resist. Fangio has been mum as to where Jackson will line up come Week 1, and he might well end up playing plenty of both corner and safety as the year goes on. 🍷 If Jackson plays corner for most of the year, that puts either Will Parks or Su'a Cravens into the starting lineup. If he sticks to safety, last year's third-round pick Isaac Yiadom would be in line for a starting boundary corner role. 🍷 Fangio brought one player with him from Chicago: slot corner Bryce Callahan. Callahan was targeted on just 12.5 percent of his snaps last season, fewest in the league—opponents didn't want to challenge him. He's a perfect fit for Fangio's scheme when healthy, but he has never managed to play all 16 games in a season. 🍷 Callahan's arrival likely ends Chris Harris' career as a regular slot corner. As Denver's top corner last season, he ended up splitting time between the slot and boundary roughly 60/40, moving inside whenever they went into nickel or dime. It's the end of an era for arguably the best slot corner

of the 2010s. Fortunately, he's just as good playing outside. 🍷 Justin Simmons saw his charting stats drop across the board in 2018. His down season was in part due to having to play not only both safety positions, but plenty of fill-in snaps at corner for a depleted secondary. It was too much on his plate all at once, and he struggled handling it all. Being able to focus just on playing safety will hopefully bounce him back to where he was in 2017.

## Special Teams

| Year | DVOA  | Rank | FG/XP | Rank | Net Kick | Rank | Kick Ret | Rank | Net Punt | Rank | Punt Ret | Rank | Hidden | Rank |
|------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|--------|------|
| 2016 | -2.3% | 24   | 1.6   | 12   | -8.6     | 29   | -0.9     | 14   | 3.3      | 11   | -6.8     | 28   | 4.3    | 11   |
| 2017 | -7.4% | 30   | -10.3 | 29   | -9.8     | 31   | -3.6     | 24   | -8.8     | 26   | -4.5     | 27   | -2.6   | 15   |
| 2018 | -4.2% | 31   | 0.3   | 15   | -1.4     | 21   | -6.4     | 32   | -9.3     | 28   | -4.3     | 27   | 11.4   | 4    |

If anything, Vance Joseph had too much faith in Brandon McManus. McManus was a perfect 18-for-18 from within 50 yards, but only 2-for-7 past that. McManus has never been particular good at long field goals (11-for-21 lifetime coming in to the season, despite kicking at altitude half the time) and hasn't made one from more than 55 yards out since 2016. With that in mind, asking him to kick a 58-yarder against Oakland and a 62-yarder against Houston was a bit daft. At least the 58-yarder came as the first half expired; the miss against Houston directly led to a Texans field goal in a game Denver lost by two points. 🍷 Colby Wadman replaced Marquette King early last season, to somewhat disappointing results. Denver's net punt value of -9.3 points was their worst since Britton Colquitt's rookie season in 2010. 🍷 The Broncos also had their worst kick return season since 2014, as Devontae Booker and Phillip Lindsay were unable to make much of a splash. Booker averages 21.3 yards per kick return; that's the third-worst total in the league over the past two seasons. An open competition would be advised. 🍷 Pacman Jones and River Cracraft split punt return duties last season. Jones is now retired, and Cracraft isn't a lock to make the 53-man roster. Brendan Langley, a third-round pick in 2017 who converted from corner to wideout last season, might be an option going forward.