



# HOUSTON TEXANS VS. DENVER BRONCOS



## HOUSTON TEXANS POSTGAME NOTES vs. DENVER BRONCOS Sunday, December 22, 2013 Reliant Stadium Houston, Texas

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Denver Broncos	3	13	0	21	37
Houston Texans	3	3	7	0	13

Attendance: 71,761

### TEXANS TEAM NOTES

- Houston's defense recorded a season-high nine passes defensed.
- The Texans held Denver to 2-of-11 on third downs (18 percent). Denver ranked second in the NFL with a 46.9 percent third-down conversion rate entering the game.
- The announced paid attendance of 71,761 is the third-highest attendance for a Texans game in franchise history.
- Houston held Denver to 0-for-4 on third down in the third quarter and outgained the Broncos 115-28 in the quarter.
- Houston held Denver to 0-for-2 in the red zone in the first half and 1-for-3 in the game. Denver entered the game as the NFL's top red zone offense, scoring touchdowns on 78.33 percent of its red zone possessions.
- The Texans became the first team to stop Denver on a fourth-down conversion attempt this season in the first quarter. S **Eddie Pleasant** tackled TE **Julius Thomas** for a 2-yard pass gain on fourth-and-3 from the Houston 28-yard line. Denver was 8-of-8 on fourth-down conversions coming into the game.
- Houston opened on defense with six defensive backs: CB **Kareem Jackson**, CB **Johnathan Joseph**, CB **Brice McCain**, FS **Shiloh Keo**, SS **D.J. Swearinger** and S **Eddie Pleasant**.
- The Texans lost the toss. The Broncos elected to defer to the second half and the Texans elected to receive to start the game.
- Houston's captains for the game were WR **Andre Johnson**, QB **Matt Schaub**, P **Shane Lechler** and DE **J.J. Watt**.
- Inactive players for the Texans were QB **Case Keenum**, WR **DeVier Posey**, FS **Jawanza Starling**, G **Alex Kupper**, T **Andrew Gardner**, G **Cody White** and TE **Garrett Graham**.

### TEXANS SCORING DRIVES

- Houston's first-quarter scoring drive was seven plays for 47 yards and ended with a 45-yard field goal by **Randy Bullock** at the 2:02 mark. The drive lasted 3:04.
- Houston's second-quarter scoring drive was seven plays, 10 yards, lasted 3:45 and ended with a 35-yard field goal by Bullock at the 6:06 mark of the quarter.
- Houston drove 74 yards on nine plays, eating up 3:14 of clock in the third quarter to trim the deficit to 16-13 on a 15-yard pass from QB **Matt Schaub** to WR **Keshawn Martin** at the 10:33 mark.

### INDIVIDUAL PLAYER NOTES:

#### K RANDY BULLOCK

- Made his 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive field attempt at the 6:06 mark of the second quarter, a 35-yarder. It is the sixth-longest streak in franchise history.
- Converted his 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive field goal attempt with a 45-yard field goal at the 2:02 mark of the first quarter. It marked the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive game in which he has made a field goal, the second-longest streak in franchise history.
- Tied Kris Brown (2005) for the third-most field goal attempts in a season in franchise history with 34 on his second field goal attempt of the game gave.
- Scored his 100<sup>th</sup> point of the season on a successful extra-point attempt at the 10:33 mark of the third quarter.

#### TE RYAN GRIFFIN



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- Made his longest reception of the season in the third quarter, a 40-yard pass from Matt Schaub. Griffin's previous long was 37 vs. Jacksonville on Nov. 24.
- Posted a career-high 66 yards receiving on five receptions. His previous career high was 62 yards receiving at Indianapolis on Dec. 15.

## **RB JONATHAN GRIMES**

- Ran for 7 yards on his first career carry in the fourth quarter and finished the game with 23 yards on five carries.

## **WR ANDRE JOHNSON**

- Became the second player in NFL history to have five seasons with 100 or more catches, joining Denver WR Wes Welker. Johnson caught his 100<sup>th</sup> pass of the season at the 3:49 mark of the first quarter from QB **Matt Schaub** for a gain of 33 yards.
- Passed Torry Holt for 14<sup>th</sup> on the NFL's all-time receptions list with 921 for his career on his fourth catch of the game, a 7-yard pass in the fourth quarter from Schaub.
- Extended his franchise record of games played to 153.
- Extended his franchise-record streak of consecutive games played with a reception to 116.

## **RB DENNIS JOHNSON**

- Made his first career NFL start. He is the ninth rookie to start at running back in franchise history and finished the game with 29 yards rushing on 12 carries.

## **CB JOHNATHAN JOSEPH**

- Recorded his 16<sup>th</sup> pass defended of the season in the first quarter, the most he has had in his three seasons as a Texan. It is the most passes defended in a season for Joseph since he tied a career-high with 20 in the 2009 season with the Cincinnati Bengals.

## **RB DEJI KARIM**

- Recorded season highs of eight carries for a team-best 30 yards.

## **P SHANE LECHLER**

- Extended his streak of consecutive games played to 189, tops among active punters
- Moved into fourth place on the all-time punt yards list in the third quarter with his sixth punt of the game, passing Lee Johnson (51,979). Lechler now has 52,175 career punting yards.

## **WR KESHAWN MARTIN**

- Had a 51-yard punt return in the second quarter, vaulting him into fourth place on the franchise's single season punt return yards list with 326. It was the ninth-longest punt return in franchise history and Martin's third career punt return of 50 or more yards.
- Set a career-high with his second touchdown pass of the season, a 15-yard strike from Schaub at the 10:33 mark of the third quarter.
- Tied a career-high with four receptions and had 35 yards receiving. He also had four receptions against Jacksonville on Dec. 5, 2013.

## **OLB WHITNEY MERCILUS**

- Set a career-high with his seventh sack of the season, dropping Peyton Manning for a 3-yard loss in the third quarter. Mercilus' previous season career high was 6.0 as a rookie in 2012.

## **C CHRIS MYERS**

- Extended the NFL's longest active consecutive games played streak by an offensive lineman to 136
- Extended the NFL's longest active consecutive games started streak by a center to 111
- Played and started in his 95<sup>th</sup> consecutive game as a Texan

## **DE J.J. WATT**

- Had two quarterback hits to set a career season high with 44. He led the league in quarterback hits in 2012 with 43 and leads the NFL again this season.



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## POSTGAME QUOTES FROM HOUSTON TEXANS

### **INTERIM HEAD COACH WADE PHILLIPS**

**T DUANE BROWN**

**WR DeANDRE HOPKINS**

**WR ANDRE JOHNSON**

**FS SHILOH KEO**

**ILB JOE MAYS**

**NT EARL MITCHELL**

**QB MATT SCHAUB**

**DE ANTONIO SMITH**

**FS D.J. SWEARINGER**

**DE J.J. WATT**

### **INTERIM HEAD COACH WADE PHILLIPS** (Transcribed by Tiffani Walker)

(on the game) "Obviously, I thought we fought really hard. The interception, when the game was close, I think before that though, we were in field goal range to kick a field goal and got sacked twice, which kept us from tying up the score. Then, we had the ball three points behind and the game turned on that interception. The guy (QB Peyton Manning) is a great quarterback, obviously. They came out throwing; 51 passes in one game. That's a lot of passes. The last one, I was surprised, but they threw it deep late in the game, but that's part of football."

(on the game-changing interception by QB Matt Schaub and what happened) "It looked like a combination to me. Obviously, he scrambled a little bit with the ball. It was a young receiver there. I think you have to make sure they don't get the ball. If you don't get it, they don't get it. It wasn't all Matt, I don't believe, on that play."

(on the two sacks in the game on the one drive) "It's just what I said. That series certainly was a big one, and the next series where we had the interception was a big one. They've obviously got a really good football team. We played them really well through three quarters, but we didn't in the fourth."

(on the momentum and feeling like they were getting back into it) "We all, obviously, felt good, but we didn't execute. So that was the key."

(on playing the four-man front and using DE J.J. Watt instead of OLB Whitney Mercilus a lot) "We played a bigger group against them because we didn't want them to run the football, which they really didn't run the football. We wanted to force them to throw the ball and obviously they did that. You really have to get them into third downs. I thought we played really well on third down. But we just didn't get him into enough third downs."

(on defensive players playing today that he didn't expect to) "We lost J. Jo (CB Johnathan Joseph) during the game, which obviously hurt us. He's our best corner. Any kind of matchup thing we lost. And we lost two running backs during the game, too. Not only having the first two out, but then the next two went out. That hurt us."

(on how much the offense was limited due to injuries) "You have to go with what you have. We're in that situation where we have a lot of injuries, especially in certain positions. If you don't have enough of those guys you have to play somebody else, in some other combination."

(on the overall play of QB Matt Schaub) "When you score 13 against Denver, it's hard to beat them. You know they're going to score and you know they're going to move the ball, and hopefully they don't score as much as they did."

(on missing potential interceptions during the game) "We missed some picks. We had our opportunities, especially when the momentum changed in the game. I thought we had a couple opportunities right there, but we didn't make them."

(on how he approaches the final week) "Just like we have the last two. We're going to keep working hard. We're going to keep our attitude right. Those are the two things that I can control. Our guys will fight hard this next week. We want to finish the season with a win. That's our goal. That's our immediate goal. And that's what we're going to do."



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### **TACKLE DUANE BROWN** (Transcribed by Mia Fredricks)

(on losing their last home game of the season) "Yeah, it's been a rough one. I think it's an understatement that it's been a rough one. To come out here and put on a good, decent effort at home, our last time to come out in a long time, we just didn't get it done."

(on what was going on with the offensive line) "Yeah, I have to go back and look at the film. They were running a lot of good twist stunts. They did a good job of bringing linebackers from different angles in. Sometimes bringing them, we can block. But I don't know exactly what was going on."

(on if he felt like they could make something happen when down by three points) "Yeah, we had to. You can't go against Peyton Manning and that offense, and get in those situations and not take advantage of them. Our defense did a great job of keeping us in the game for a long time. But offensively, we just didn't make it happen and we have to, especially with all of those opportunities."

(on if there was rust to knock off with QB Matt Schaub starting again) "I'm not sure. In the quarterback position, you have to find a rhythm. When you go out without playing, I am sure that can affect you. I thought he did a great job of getting us into different plays that we needed to be into or adjusting protection. As far as ability, going through your reads and throwing the ball, I am sure it takes getting used to when you spend that amount of time away."

(on the cohesiveness between the offensive line and QB Matt Schaub) "He did a great job of bringing up guys we couldn't key on to make any pre-snap adjustments. When that happens, you just have to survive the play."

### **WIDE RECEIVER DEANDRE HOPKINS** (Transcribed by Trevor Caswell)

(on his chemistry with QB Matt Schaub on the play where an interception was thrown) "I thought he was going to throw it towards the sideline coming back and I guess he thought I was going to turn inside, so it's just chemistry. We have been doing well chemistry-wise, but you don't really practice too many plays where the read isn't there. You don't expect those to happen too much. You want everything to be perfect, so it's just chemistry."

(on how surprising the score turned out to be) "It's the NFL. We have been up by three touchdowns close to the fourth quarter and things haven't turned around. We have been down at the beginning of the season by a bunch and then we came back. That is just the way the NFL works. You always have to push forward."

### **WR ANDRE JOHNSON** (Transcribed by Roman Petrowski)

(on if he felt like it was the time to get something going when the score was 16-13 and they got the ball back) "Yeah I thought we kind of got momentum in the game in the second half, but we had those penalties that took us out of field goal range. That's just been kind of the moral of the story all year where we'll be in that situation and we'll do something, you know have a penalty, or something bad happen to take us away from scoring. I think if we got some points there, you know we got a field goal we'd have still have been fine because going against a team like that, they're going to score points, and you have to get something. You can't just have drives where you don't get anything, but I think we gained momentum in the second half, but we just didn't take advantage of it."

(on how he felt QB Matt Schaub played today) "I think at times we did some good things. At times we didn't. They're a good football team. They did some things and made some plays against us. We was able to make some plays against them, but they made more than we did. You know, they ended up winning."

(on his record setting fifth 100 catch season) "It's all fine and dandy, but I only play the game for one reason, and that's to win. Like I said, it's a great thing to have happen, but under these circumstances it really doesn't matter."

(on if the team finds itself thinking things will go bad because that's the way things have gone this season) "No, when we came in at halftime nobody was down. Guys were energetic. It was about us, guys were amped. It's probably the most pumped that we've been in a while at halftime. I don't think guys were looking forward to anything going bad. Guys were trying to win. You're just trying to do anything you can to get this taste out of your mouth, because it's not a good feeling, but it didn't work out for us."



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(on if it was just the opposite that they thought it was going to go well when they came out well in the second half) "When you're playing a game you don't really look ahead. You just take it one play at a time, one drive at a time. You don't even, well for me; I don't pay attention to the clock. I'm just playing. You don't sit there and wonder well when are things going to go bad for us. You're trying to capitalize on every opportunity you get. I don't think anybody was sitting around here wondering well when are things going to go bad."

(on what was said postgame between him and Broncos' QB Peyton Manning) "You know I just told him congratulations on the record and I told him good luck, and he told me the same thing."

(on how weird it is dealing with all of the injuries and playing so deep into the depth chart) "It's weird, but at the same time you still have to go play the game. I think we got some guys nicked up today. You just have to fight through it. It just seems like when one thing goes bad, they just keep coming. It's been tough. I can't sit here and say it hasn't. It's been tough. It's been tough on everybody, but guys are still motivated. We've got one game, and when we came in here after the game guys were just like we're going to do whatever we need to do to try to win this last game that we have. Nobody's throwing in the towel. Just going to keep playing man. Those are the kind of guys we have in this locker room. So we're just going to keep fighting, and hopefully it will work out for us on Sunday."

(on how important it is to break the losing streak before heading into the off-season) "It's something you don't want to have happen, but who knows. We'll see what happens Sunday. We're going to go out there and try to win, and hopefully we don't have to go into the off-season with a losing streak."

(on what happened on the pass in the end zone before WR Keshawn Martin's touchdown) "You know, it was a play I should have made. The ball actually got up on me pretty fast, and I couldn't really see it with the glare of the sun. If you threw that ball to me 10 times, I'll make that play. The sun is not an excuse. It just got up on me real quick, and I just really couldn't adjust to it. That's pretty much it."

(on if he and QB Matt Schaub talked about the play after it happened) "Yeah we talked about it. It wasn't anything bad. I just told him what happened, and he even came to me and told me he actually threw it early. We just talked about it and moved on from it. We still got points out of the drive, but like I said, you want to make that play. That's something I pride myself on. Unfortunately it didn't happen. Keshawn bailed me out. It wasn't nothing bad. That's the type of relationship me and Matt have. When something happens we're able to talk about it and just move on from it. I know a lot of people made a big thing about the argument we had, but we communicate about everything when we're out there playing together. We just talked about it and moved on from it, and we're just trying to see what we can do to make more plays out there."

(on if the chemistry was off a little bit with QB Matt Schaub after him not starting for a while) "I think when you don't play in a while it kind of throws your rhythm off a little bit especially when you have timing and stuff down with guys. I don't know. It could have thrown him off a little bit. Like I said, at times we did some good things. At times we didn't. That's the nature of the game. Everything's not going to be perfect, but they made more plays than we did."

(on if he's thought about possibly playing with a new quarterback next year and all the changes that could possibly follow) "You know what, I try not to look that far ahead, but that's the nature of this business. From the time I came here, until now I've seen everybody come and go out of this locker room. Coaches and players and trainers and all that stuff, That's the nature of the business. I think Matt's a great player. I think if he's not here he'll get another opportunity. Matt can start in this league. He's done it for eight seasons. Sometimes a fresh start could be something beneficial. You hate to see it, because when you build chemistry like that with somebody you hate to see it go, but that's just the nature of the business. We'll see what happens."

### **FREE SAFETY SHILOH KEO** (Transcribed by Trevor Caswell)

(on Texans momentum during the game) "We had momentum coming out in the second half and we just couldn't get the job done. We couldn't keep the foot down on the pedal. We allowed them to get a couple of big plays on us and it switched the momentum of the game."



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(on the interception being deflating to the defense's mentality) "It's disappointing, but it's not deflating. We were one play away from keeping the momentum back on our side. One play away from getting back in the game as well. We have to come up with those plays."

(on hanging on for three quarters then losing grip in the fourth) "It's frustrating because that is kind of how our season has been going. We have been playing great games, but not full games. To add another one to the long list of losses is frustrating. We just have to find a way to get over that hump."

(on QB Peyton Manning's performance and Texans defensive scheme) "We had a great game plan and we were executing that game plan pretty well. They were able to make the big plays and we weren't able to stop them from doing that. We weren't surprised. We wanted to play the way we had been playing for the first three quarters the whole game. We have to find a way."

(on being bothered by QB Peyton Manning throwing the ball late in the game) "No, you know Peyton Manning wants to throw the ball. They are not a big running team. I think we went out there on the field expecting them to throw. He wants to set some records and stuff like that, but that's their offense. They are a throwing offense. That's how they move the ball, so it wasn't disappointing to see that."

(on QB Peyton Manning having his best game) "I don't know. It's hard to say. I feel like it was more of us not making the plays. I thought we had plenty of opportunities to make plays, but we just didn't do it. We just have to make those."

(on reflecting on the season) "When you have rough seasons like this, it seems to kind of draw out and it just feels long and wears on you. I wouldn't say it went quick. It has been rough for us. We just have to keep fighting. That is one thing I feel about this team and locker room, no one's head has gone down. Everyone is still fighting and going out to practice with full intensity and giving it their all. Everyone is focused in the meetings. There is not a lot of goofing around going on. That is what is frustrating and makes the season seem so long. We are working so hard, but don't have anything to show for it."

### **LINEBACKER JOE MAYS** (Transcribed by Matt Bodiford)

(on if you thought Denver was going to run the clock out) "That's what I thought was going to happen (and) then they threw the ball. What are you going to do? All you can try to do it stop it. If you don't, they're going to score and that's what happen."

(on the game being extra special because it was Denver) "It stings. I've been trying to lie to myself all week by saying it didn't mean anything. Then, I come out and try to play as hard as I can, trying to play the best football I've played all year. For the result to be the way that it is, it stings. I'm disappointed and frustrated that we didn't get a chance to come out and finish better than we did."

(on having in-game conversations with the Denver players) "Yeah, I mean, I played with those guys for three years. I built some relationships with those guys, so I was talking to them, just a little chit chat."

### **DEFENSIVE END EARL MITCHELL** (Transcribed by Roman Petrowski)

(on how tough this loss was) "It's tough man. It's been a long season. It's been really rough on us and just a roller coaster. From the beginning of the season until now. It's unfortunate, but we've got another game left, and we're still playing as hard as we can. We just try to roll with the punches."

(on playing great until the fourth quarter) "It felt like we had a good read on them. We felt like we were playing; just kind of keeping Peyton on his toes, and just kind of making him think a little bit. A couple big plays kind of got them more loose in their offense. It was just a matter of us, we just got beat."

(on how disappointing the loss is) "Very disappointing. That's all it is. That's pretty much been the word of the season. All we can do is play our last game, and just try to end it with a W."

(on what he thought about Peyton Manning going for the record) "That's all good for him. Obviously we don't want any touchdowns scored on us. It's frustrating, but you see what he was trying to do, and I feel like he had the opportunity to take it so that's what he did. He did what he wanted to do and he got it done. We should have stopped it. That's pretty much the end of that story."



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**QUARTERBACK MATT SCHaub** (Transcribed by Rachel Jacob & Cali Roper)

(on the frustration of the season) "Yeah, you know we got down and moved the football, settled for a couple field goals. We had a close game then they made a play, their offense generated a couple points and separated themselves a little bit and we tried to hurry up and play catch-up and couldn't convert a third down here and there and they did the things necessary to win the game today."

(on the momentum before and after the two sacks before the interception) "We had the ball down and we're getting close to the red zone and there are two sacks in a row and really took us out of position and we had to pump the football and couldn't get a field goal there and that kind of started the snowball effect."

(on spiking the ball after the second sack) "You know against a team like that we fought so hard to be in that tight ballgame and to be able to move the football and get down there. We had some plays that we liked but we just couldn't get to them and then to suffer a sack in that situation, it really hurts you. It takes you out of points. You hate to have that situation, it's frustrating because we were right there you know to make it at that time maybe a one point game or something, I am not sure, so it is frustrating."

(on his future and that this could have been his last game here) "It has definitely crossed my mind. I didn't want to think too far ahead but you know I've played this game long enough I know how things work so you know it definitely crossed my mind. It was exciting all week to be back in the huddle, to be out there with my guys that I've been with them some of them for many years, to go to battle here today, but we fell short."

(on how much more pressure there is playing an offensive unit with Peyton Manning versus a different offensive unit) "It definitely puts pressure on you, you have to think every possession you have to get some type of points especially touchdowns. We were fortunate to be in a 10-6 ball game, 13-6 then to get to 16-13 we were fortunate our defense was playing their tails off to keep us in that game while we were working our way through some things. We were right there until the third quarter but eventually they made some plays, some big plays, so that definitely puts some added pressure on you to try and make some plays."

(on if the pass which ended up being the first interception of the game was forced) "Yeah I would say I probably forced that one on the side line to (WR) DeAndre (Hopkins) scramble drill having him work back down the sideline trying to get him a chance, he had made a first down, got ourselves some room in a backed up situation, and then just scrambled and tried to make a play, probably better just throwing it away in that situation but in this type of game we ought to go out and try to make plays."

(on if you are at a point in the season where you just want to get it over with) "We still have work to do. We want to finish this thing off right. As a group, we have got to find a way to get this negative taste out of our mouths, that we have been a part of for the past few months. We have to find a way to work through that as a team, and then we will deal with what comes our way down the line. I think for everyone in that locker room, it has definitely been very frustrating and disappointing."

(on having limited options at tight end) "Today we were limited. We were down to one tight end. You look at our history and we were very big into two tight and even three tight ends in certain situations. It definitely limits you. So then we play with more wide receivers and their running backs in there, who get put into some situations past protection wise that are very difficult on them, especially as a young running back. So you try to help them as much as you can to minimize the thought process as far as some of the exotic looks that a team like that does on third down. It definitely puts you in a position were it limits you, personnel groupings, and what you can do with some of your calls."

(on more down the field passes being out of necessity due to lack of running backs or to just see what would happen) "I think it was a combination of both, but we want to stretch the field and take some chances with our receivers against their defensive backs. They've played a lot more safe coverage's with two high safeties than they have shown in the past. I think it is about what we do. They decided to play a little safer but we still wanted to try to take some shots. At this point why not try to go out, especially with the offense that they have, and try to generate some big plays."



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(on after 13 straight losses feels as if it is close to the same team as it was last year) "You look at where we were at this point last year and this year. Some of the faces are still the same, but we have had some injuries and other things. So, it's a little different."

(on WR Andre Johnson not being on his "A" game) "Andre was fine today. He was out there busting his tail, just like always, trying to make plays. On one play he got his head around, and I had to get rid of it a little earlier than I probably would have liked. It was right in the sun, and that is a tough play for anyone. Dre (Andre) was there. He was in to everything from talking on the sideline, trying to do adjustments, trying to work on things on the field just to try to generate plays."

(on what getting back out there meant to you) "It was great to be out there. I told the guys earlier in the week that it was great to just be back in the huddle with them. There are so many faces in there that we have been battling through this thing for five, six, and seven years now. It is just great to be back out there to try to end the season off, these last two weeks, on a very positive note. Obviously we fell short today but it was just great to be back on the field with my team."

(on where you want to be next year) "I have no idea. I am just looking to finish 2013 off the right way, and I will deal with next year once the season is over."

### **DEFENSIVE END ANTONIO SMITH** (Transcribed by Roman Petrowski)

(on his thoughts on the game) "I would have to say Peyton Manning found a way there at the end. I was saying that all day long on the sidelines, that in a game like this and other games I've been in like this, three points are never going to win you the game. You only have so long before they start making plays themselves. So why you can get on top of them you have to go for chances; you have to do whatever you can do to get ahead, and then when you get ahead you can pin your ears back and you can rush, but the whole day they were able to stay in a mixed up offense where they could run it; they could pass it; you know they can quick throw it and things like that. Never really had to drop back and throw it."

(on if the fourth quarter for Broncos QB Peyton Manning the best he had seen him play) "He made some big plays. Definitely. It's the best I've ever played against him. If I'm not mistaken ever game I've played against him here, it was pretty close, and it was fought pretty tough. No blow outs. No big time scoring type games. This is the first one that it just got out of- in my opinion- kind of got out of hand."

(on what the feeling was coming out and facing the short field after the interception) "The feeling coming out is we have to stop them; we have to hold them to a field goal, and that's how you have to come out. That was our mind frame, and then they had a little quick score. That's kind of deflating. After then it was the thing I worried about most, but before then, we came out as a defense, thinking well lets hold them to three. We hold them to three we're still in this thing, but then when they scored the touchdown I think that put them up 10."

(on if he cares that the Broncos were going for the record when the game was 30-13) "As a defensive player you have to care about that. That has to burn you a little bit. That has to raise up some fight in you, but as a true football player, that's what football is. That's what his job is to do. He wants to be great. It's his job to try to be great, no matter how it makes anybody else feel. This is football. We're grown men. It's our job to stop them. It's his job to break records."

(on if he sees that as them running up the score) "No. It is him running it up, but how else is he going to be great. How else is he going to break the records nobody ever has broken before? So you have to do it. As a football player; as a man if you want to be great you're going to have to step on toes every now and then."

(on if he can believe the home regular season is over) "No I can't really believe it. That was the biggest shock that hit me there in the fourth quarter when they were just running down the clock, is that this is the last game of this season, possibly the last game I'll ever play with my brothers, and play in front of the fans of Houston. It kind of hit me there. It's surreal, but I guess it's reality."

(on if the sequence with the interception and the quick Denver touchdown is more deflating with the way the season has gone) "Yeah. Everything been piling up on us this season so it's definitely harder. You have more on you, than you would have if you were 13-3 or 13-2 it would be different. I think it was more deflating for the reason that we just needed something positive. Everybody's just looking for something positive. And then you have



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something positive going, and you're fighting a good game and your hopes are up like you can win this game. So, for somebody who hasn't seen and felt something positive at the end of a game since week 2 it was definitely devastating."

**FREE SAFETY D.J. SWEARINGER** (Transcribed by Cali Roper)

(on if the loss was upsetting) "Yeah, it is upsetting. I thought we did great up to a certain point, but it's the same thing we have got to do weekly, but it just isn't happening."

(on his feelings of the touchdown being thrown as if the game was already over with) "It is what it is. At the end of the day, we have to stop them with what they are doing, so it's no big deal."

(on what changed in the fourth quarter) "I thought we were doing good. It is hard to bounce back from a turnover sometimes. We just didn't get the job done like we should have."

(on QB Peyton Manning) "We were shutting him down earlier. We had the turnover and they got the score. That took the life out of us. He is an all time Hall of Famer and the best quarterback out here. So you've got to give all of the credit to him."

(on the sequence in second half following the team's interceptions being even more frustrating considering that the game was close) "Like I said, anytime you have a turnover and you are trying to make a stop. It is tough. We didn't make the stop and everything went down hill from there. It's tough and frustrating but you've just got to keep going."

**DEFENSIVE END J.J. WATT** (Transcribed by Trevor Caswell)

(on QB Peyton Manning breaking the single-season passing touchdown record against the Texans) "It's never fun to be on the opposite end of a record-breaking performance. The guy is a heck of a football player and you give credit where credit is due. There is a reason the guy should be MVP this year."

(on congratulating QB Peyton Manning after the game) "I have a lot of respect for a guy like Peyton (Manning). He works hard. I am very frustrated with how things went today, but I respect the way he goes about his business and his game. So I congratulated him on his success."

(on getting the short field after the interception) "It's not easy to give yourself a short field like that and shut down an offense like that, but we need to find a way to do it and we didn't. As a defense, it's your job to step up and make plays and we didn't do that."

(on the defensive performance) "We played pretty darn well for about a half and a half of a quarter, or a half and a third of a quarter. In the last part of the third quarter and the fourth quarter, we let it get away. We didn't play well and they made a lot of plays. It's very frustrating."

(on the Texans not playing well for four quarters) "There has been a lot of games this year where we have played well here and played well there, but we haven't put together many full games all year. I am not sure we have put together one full game all year. In this league, with all of the teams there are and how good they are, you can't afford to play two good quarters or three good quarters. You have to play all four quarters well."

(on reflecting on the home schedule) "It's been frustrating. It has been disappointing to say the least and it has been very forgettable. It is something that we never want to happen again that is for sure."

## **POSTGAME QUOTES FROM DENVER BRONCOS**

**HEAD COACH JOHN FOX**  
**S MIKE ADAMS**  
**CB CHAMP BAILEY**  
**WR ERIC DECKER**  
**QB PEYTON MANNING**  
**RB KNOWSHON MORENO**



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**C MANNY RAMIREZ**  
**TE JULIUS THOMAS**

**HEAD COACH JOHN FOX** (Transcribed by Mia Fredricks)

(on SLB Von Miller's injury status) "No, they'll have tests, it's in the medical people's hands right now. And anything until we get all of the tests will be purely speculation, so we will just wait until we hear something definitive."

(on how he feels about history being made today by QB Peyton Manning) "It was great. To see a guy that has worked as hard as he has a lot of his career, and I know for a fact that the two seasons we've had him, almost two seasons, are pretty remarkable and really exciting to be around. To see a guy that goes about his business like he does get rewarded with success. Very humble, he said the best news he heard in there was that we had won the AFC West for the third straight year and we've got a first-round bye, but we've still got to play for home field. But number one is this team's success and he's gotten us to 12-3 and 13-3 a year ago, so that's pretty good on his part."

(on how he would compare his third division championship to the past two) "Well, I think they are all completely different. The first one was unique. Last year from where we started to where we finished was unique. We had higher expectations coming into this season. I think everybody in our city, state and region did as well. So, they're all completely different, probably as much for those three reasons as anything."

(on whether he had to adjust without Von Miller) "Not really. I know people get sick of hearing me say it but it is next man up, literally. (SLB) Nate Irving stepped in, did a very good job. Our team has been that way for the whole season, doesn't matter what phase of the game it is, even me taking a leave of absence for four weeks."

(on if there was anything he could attest to for their lack of success during the third quarter) "These things are all hard. Sometimes when you look at the final score, the end of the season record, each one of these is a new test, very difficult. You're always playing against good players, guys that are good coaches. I thought the turning point was the (FS) Mike Adams interception. It was a tremendous play over there on their bench. It was a three-point game, and you've got those plays in games. And I can go through any game this season and pick out that play. So, the good news is that it happened to be in our favor."

(on his opinion of Peyton Manning's success after all of his potential setbacks) "You know, he won *Sports Illustrated's* Sportsman of the Year. And if you look at the companies, you look on that trophy and talking with the *Sports Illustrated* people, what a remarkable accomplishment it has been just the two years he has been here. I thought he was very worthy of all those super awards a year ago then fire it up with a season he has this season, so it's pretty remarkable and he deserves everything he gets."

(on what was going through his head after the Mike Adams interception) "Like I said, it's a momentum play. It happens in every game. There are two or three plays in a game that determine the outcome, so to speak. So, that was a huge play of the game, for sure."

(on if he felt that the quick score after the interception demoralized the Texans) "Not really. You've got your own set of problems to worry about on your team, so you're just trying to control the emotion and the adjustments of your team. So I can't speak for that. I thought it was uplifting for our team, obviously."

(on if he would prefer a situation where he felt more control with the future games of the season) "Well, I always prefer winning. This game is more fun when you win. There are a lot of people that put a lot of work into each one of these games. It's a pretty big sacrifice every week, so it's always better to win. I'm going to enjoy this one first before I start thinking about next week, and we will figure that out as we move forward."

(on if he ever thought he'd coach a guy with 51 touchdown passes in a season) "Well, my dad taught me a long time ago that it's always important to dream dreams and to pay the price to make them come true."

**SAFETY MIKE ADAMS** (Transcribed by Matt Bodiford)



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(on how close the game was until his interception) “Oh yeah, I forgot who the guy was, but the receiver was running a wheel route. He stopped and I was fortunate enough to read the quarterback’s eyes and I jumped it. That definitely was a game changer, so then we started to get things rolling from there.”

(on holding Houston to 13 points and how happy he is with the defensive performance ) “Definitely happy. We pride ourselves on making strides and getting better every week. This was a great stepping stone for the next week to come. We’re now worrying about the next game with the Oakland Raiders, but this is a great start.”

(on your interception changing momentum and giving the offense life) “Yeah, well, field position won. Peyton (Manning) was able to get it in. That’s what we want, points off of turnovers. Every time we get a turnover, we want points.”

(on different guys playing different positions in the secondary) “It’s not common, but the competition we have back there and the players that we have back there, it makes it easier. The transition that we have, we don’t miss a beat. When someone else comes in, it just keeps on rolling.”

(on what the sideline was like when QB Peyton Manning threw his 51<sup>st</sup> touchdown pass of the season) “Oh, we were ecstatic. Everyone was asking why we weren’t running the ball and I was like, ‘Yo, the record baby, the record.’ Then, when he got it, we all just came out to congratulate him. We were so happy for him.”

**CORNERBACK CHAMP BAILEY** (Transcribed by Matt Bodiford)

(on the most important thing today being that the team won the division despite QB Peyton Manning breaking the passing record) “Absolutely, you know that’s a big accomplishment for us. That was one of our team goals at the start of the season. We got that one done, but I’m glad he got his 51. He definitely deserves it. He puts the work in and I can’t believe he did it in his 16<sup>th</sup> year. That’s crazy. It’s unbelievable. The guy is great.”

(on the difference between the first three quarters and the fourth quarter) “Well, on defense, we needed to make some plays. Mike Adams got us started and, when he got that pick, things just turned up from there. There was no looking back.”

(on his performance today) “I feel good. I like the role I was playing. I didn’t play every snap, which is probably smart at this point. I feel good and I was just trying to do a little more each week.”

(on the Denver Broncos winning the division three times in a row for the first time) “I didn’t know that, did not know that. It’s a tough division, so not real surprising.”

(on playing for something next week) “We have to continue to get better. We’ll go out there and try to get a win. We know we’re in the playoffs, we just have to go out and get better than we are this week, and that’ll carry over.”

(on the injury to LB Von Miller) “Well, there is always some concern when your teammate goes down especially a guy like Von who has really started to click now. It’s unfortunate, but hopefully it’s something minor that he can come back quickly from.”

**WIDE RECEIVER ERIC DECKER** (Transcribed by ReShun Gilmore)

(on the game) “We started off slow offensively and we started getting things rolling in the second half. I think the biggest thing is being a part of it. How fun it is and what an accomplishment it is for 18 (QB Peyton Manning) and really this whole team in general. It’s a game I’ll remember for a long time.”

(on the team’s mental switch from the first to second half) “I think we knew we lost some opportunities kicking field goals and if we let them stay around, they could beat us. They can be in games and have been in games. Making the completion when it’s there, executing the play when it’s called and I think some guys came up and made some big plays.”

(on if he knew the historic touchdown pass was coming to him ) “I had an idea it was coming. I was making sure I was in the right spot because if I wasn’t there, and didn’t have a chance to catch it, I would’ve heard about it. That was a play that was designed to come to me or TE (Jacob) Tamme, but I’m happy I made it.”

**QUARTERBACK PEYTON MANNING** (Transcribed by Ellie Pardee and Lance Jaramillo)



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(on what breaking the single season touchdown record means to him) "I really feel like it's a team accomplishment, certainly an offensive accomplishment. But a lot of people played roles in this. I think it's a unique thing and neat thing to be a part of NFL history, even though it may be temporary. I personally think all season records are going down especially if they go to 18 games and there won't be an asterisk next to them. (Tom) Brady will probably break it next year and the year after, so we'll enjoy it for as long as it lasts and hopefully the Hall of Fame would send the ball back once somebody throws for more. Our receivers caught a lot of touchdowns, made a lot of special plays. Eric (Decker)'s touchdown catch today was typical of a lot of great catches these guys have made all season long. Protection, blocking by the tight ends and running backs, play calling and scheming. Adam Gase has been awesome all year and the coaches that have helped him call those plays and the defense getting us the ball. Mike Adams' interception, in my opinion, was the play of the day today. We were in a little rut on both sides of the ball and that really spring boarded the whole team. But certainly, I'm very appreciative of it."

(on if it means more now having come back from an injury) "Not necessarily, 2004 was kind of a unique chase. I still think Dan Marino's record in '84 is extremely special. Certainly, the game has changed since then and, for him to have thrown 48 touchdowns in '84, is still one of the most remarkable ones. It lasted for so long and he was one of my favorite quarterbacks growing up. So to break his record in 2004 was special and Tom (Brady's) year in 2007 was nothing short of phenomenal. It's been a fun season and fun to be a part of this NFL history with the whole group. Like I said though, I'm sure it's just a temporary record, but I will enjoy it during this time."

(on having five receivers with at least 10 touchdowns) "It's a credit to all of those guy. It's a credit to Clancy (Barone) and Tyke (Tolbert), the wide receivers and tight ends coaches getting those guys ready. But certainly some great individual efforts from all of those guy's parts. Great route running, great attention to detail, obviously all of those guys are super talented otherwise they wouldn't be in the NFL, But a lot of credit goes to them and their work ethic. They've distributed this year. I'm certainly proud to call all those guys teammates."

(on TE Julius Thomas not knowing he had broken the record with QB Peyton Manning) "Julius, it wouldn't have surprised me if he had handed it to some babe up in the stands and tried to get her phone number in exchange for the ball. That'd be right up Julius's alley. That's pretty in line with his thinking often times. Great catch, great route by him and, like I said, Decker's catch was awesome, that's probably one of the best ones of the year in my opinion."

(on being close to the all-time NFL yards passing record) "Yards to me doesn't, touchdowns to me, means it's helping your team win games. To me, if we would have had a losing record and you break an individual record and you're just throwing a lot, attempts and yards and you don't have a chance to make the post-season, that doesn't mean a whole lot. But touchdowns, to me, means you're scoring points and helping your team win games, so that's something that means a little more. You know you can have a lot of yards and not have points and not win games. This only means something because it helped our team win games and we won the division today in a competitive AFC West. That's a good thing."

(on this possibly being his best year statistically and if it means more because of his neck surgeries) "I think it's well documented that this is the second chapter of my career and didn't know what to expect off that injury and new team, new players and new physical state after an injury. So I had no idea what to expect and I've put a lot of time and a lot of hard work in to it, but I've received a lot of help along the way from coaches and trainers and strength coaches and teammates. So I'm very grateful. When something like this happens, it just reminds me even more of how grateful and thankful I am for a lot of people that have helped me during this second chapter."

(on if it was discussed to break the record this week in case he didn't play next week) "I had no idea that we had a chance to secure the division. I didn't realize the Chiefs had lost the game, so Coach (John) Fox said, 'Go play ball.' That's what he told Adam (Gase) and that's what Adam told me and that's what we did."

(on what he saw from the route in the record breaking touchdown) "We put Julius (Thomas) out wide. Adam (Gase) has done a great job all year of putting players in different positions, whether it's a running back out wide or Eric (Decker) or (Demaryius Thomas) in the slot putting him in different places. In that particular play, (we) had Julius out wide, split by himself with four receivers to the other side and obviously it makes the defense have a discussion. If they have a couple of receivers on the other side, you have to put your corners over there, put a linebacker on Julius and that's always a tough matchup for any linebacker as athletic as he is. He ran a good route and we had good protection on the play and he made a great play getting in to the end zone."



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(on the emotions he went through after breaking the record) “Yeah, it was very special. Very rarely during an NFL game do you get to have a moment like that and, in 2004, when we broke Marino’s record, we had to go for two and we really did not get to enjoy it. We went for two, converted it to tie the game and the game ended up going in to overtime and then we ended up winning the game. We got to enjoy it after the game in the locker room, but very rarely during the course of a game, having some of my teammates come out on to the field, there were some defensive players coming out there high fiving me and I was just telling them, ‘Thanks’ back for all their help, but that’s certainly a moment I’ll remember. A lot of Broncos fans in the stands today. That was pretty unique as well, so it was surely a moment that I’ll remember because of the team bonding that kind of went on during that time.”

(on if he saw WR Eric Decker with the touchdown ball in his jersey) “I missed all of that. I saw Julius (Thomas) score the touchdown and I remember it kind of brought a smile to my face and after that a lot of people coming toward me and whacking me in the head and slapping me, so I was trying to come out of that unscathed, but I appreciated the coaches and teammates coming up to me and I thanked each one of them as well, because that’s really how grateful I am for all of their help and support.”

(on if he would have believed he would throw 51 touchdowns after neck surgery) “No, probably not. Like I said, I had no real expectations because I couldn’t really get any doctor or anyone to give me some sort of gauge or time table for strength recovery. You can believe I asked every question I possibly could and with the injury I was dealing with, there was major unpredictability, so a lot of them said ‘maybe you’ll come back to this level and maybe not,’ so there was definitely some wait and see and like I said, I’m grateful for people that helped me along the way and I’ve certainly put some time and work in to it, but no, it would be hard to say you could have imagined this at that point, so we’re excited about the win and hopefully we can keep it going next week.”

### **RUNNING BACK KNOWSHON MORENO** (Transcribed by ReShun Gilmore)

(on what he expected from the offense coming into today’s game) “Just wanted to put points on the board, you know? We wanted to keep a consistent drive going and just put points on the board.”

(on Peyton Manning’s impact) “It’s definitely very special. The man works at it every day and he’s professional about it. He and the receivers all go over it every day and work on those things. So, it’s a great accomplishment and he deserves it.”

(on what the Broncos need to accomplish going into the playoffs ) “We’re just trying to get another win. We have another team that we have to face and we have to go to their house. It’s going to be a tough environment, a tough team, and we have to focus on that first.”

(on if the team was aware of the historic touchdown pass) “I guess a couple of people were, but once you’re out there and you get a part of the game, and things are flowing, you kind of forget about those things.”

### **CENTER MANNY RAMIREZ** (Transcribed by Matt Bodiford)

(on QB Peyton Manning throwing his 51<sup>st</sup> touchdown pass of the season) “I didn’t even know that was the catch to break the record. We were just trying to make sure as an offensive line that Peyton had enough time throughout the game. I didn’t realize that touchdown was the one that set him over. It’s just amazing to be able to be a part of it. Everything we see from Peyton, being prepared, it worked for him. Again, it’s been an amazing year so far and hopefully we can continue it.”

(on the difference from the first three quarters to the last one) “I think everyone understood the position we were in and wanted to play for each other. We were able to get the ball moving and the defense created turnovers, which we were able to capitalize on those turnovers. That helped us out a lot and, in the first three quarters, we hurt ourselves with the penalties and all that stuff. Whatever the situation may be, we were able to come out on top.”

### **TIGHT END JULIUS THOMAS** (Transcribed by ReShun Gilmore)

(on Peyton Manning) “I’m not going to lie to you guys, I’ve said it all year, in this room we’re not surprised at what Peyton does. The work he puts in everyday, you see how he demands the best from himself. Fortunate for us, we’re the beneficiaries of that. A guy slinging the ball around at a very high level and we’re extremely happy for him and it’s a great accomplishment.”



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(on not realizing it was Peyton Manning's 51<sup>st</sup> touchdown pass) "Absolutely not. I dropped the ball so fast to do my usual thing and Deck (WR Eric Decker) picked the ball up so fast. I was like, "Why did Deck picked the ball up so fast?" I'm not paying any attention and I came back to the sidelines and I'm sitting down on the bench and somebody said, "That was the one!" Maybe I shouldn't have dropped it so carelessly, I should've kept it."

(on if the players had a bet on who was going to catch Peyton Manning's record setting ball) "To be honest, we didn't speak about it one time. It wasn't something we were focused on or something we even talked about. We were able to get in the end zone a couple of times for him and I'm really happy he was able to achieve that accomplishment."

(on if there was a conservative effort to throw the ball towards the end) "Absolutely not. It was not talked about or factored in to our game plan. We want to come out here and we want to execute. If that means we have to run it in four times today, that's what we would have done. We know we have to win and personal records aside, the goal is to go into this tournament and be in the best possible position and we're happy to get this win today."