

SPORTS

The Curtain Closes on a Class Act

By JOHN MOSSMAN

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DENVER (AP) — For years, the Denver Broncos' offense consisted of John Elway and 10 other guys.

Gradually, the Broncos became more than a showcase for one dazzling quarterback. But now, with Elway's retirement set, the Super Bowl champions enter uncharted terrain.

After 16 seasons, the unparalleled master of the two-minute drill is leaving football.

Elway all but announced his retirement Saturday in an interview with Denver TV station KCNC in Pebble Beach, Calif., where he was playing in a golf tournament.

"For so many years everything in my family has revolved around me. It's time for that to change," the 38-year-old quarterback said. "I really accomplished everything I wanted to. There's no real upside to coming back."

Elway reportedly considered announcing his decision two weeks ago, but owner Pat Bowlen was in Australia promoting the Broncos' preseason game there. Then last week, the announcement was put off because of the school shootings in suburban Denver.

Out of respect for the victims, some of whose funerals were scheduled for Monday, the Broncos further delayed an Elway announcement.

"We're shooting for a mid-week press conference, most likely Wednesday," Broncos spokesman Jim Saccomano said Sunday night.

Bowlen bought the Broncos in 1984 and never has known a team without Elway.

"I think it's going to be odd for all of us," he said.

Running back Terrell Davis told the Denver Post: "This really lets some air out of your system. It's going to be tough to come back and not see him in the huddle."

"I really think this year we're going to face as much adversity as we've ever faced. We're really going to see how much resolve this team has now."

But offensive guard Mark Schlereth took another view.

"I think in the early years, it was a one-man show with John here," Schlereth said. "It's not like that anymore."

In fact, Elway acknowledged several seasons ago that it wasn't his team anymore.

"It's Terrell's team now," he said.

While Elway earned his second straight Super Bowl title and the game's MVP honor last January with a 34-19 win over Atlanta, he missed all or part of six games with hamstring, back and rib injuries.

Instead, it was Davis, a 2,008-yard rusher and winner of the league's MVP award, who carried the team.

With Elway gone, Bubby Brister steps in. Brister slipped seamlessly

into the lineup last season and guided the Broncos to a 4-0 record while Elway was out. But how will he hold up during a 16-game schedule? And will Brister at QB put more pressure on Davis?

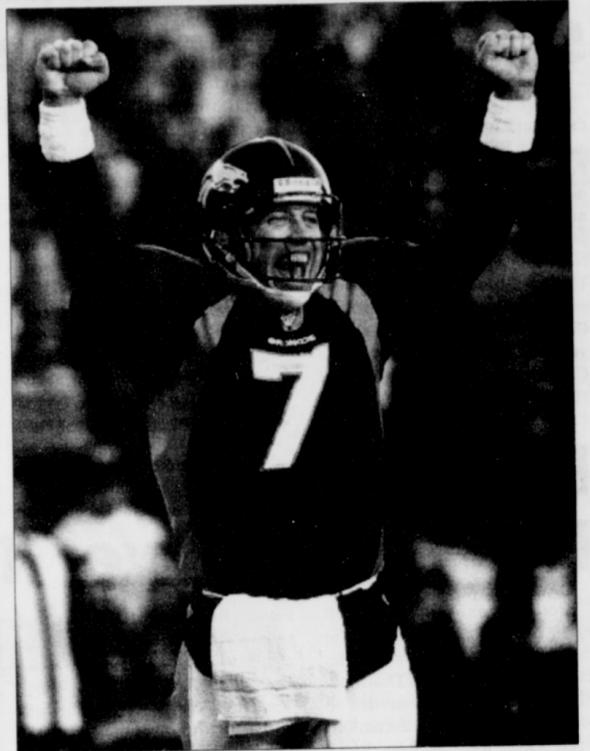
Even Shanahan has some qualms about his new quarterback.

Brister, who turns 37 in August, hasn't started more than eight games in a season since 1990. The backup is Brian Griese, a third-round draft choice in 1998 with limited experience.

So, the Denver Rocky Mountain News reported, the Broncos agreed to sign Chris Miller, who turns 34 in August and retired four years ago because of concussions.

"It's a great addition," Brister said. "If something happens, he has a lot of experience. You can't have enough good quarterbacks."

Brister is looking forward to taking over an offense that tight end Shannon Sharpe likened to a Ferrari.



Denver Broncos' John Elway

SPORTS

If You Leave Him Out as a Possibility, It's Your Loss

TALLADEGA, Ala. (AP) — Some people were ready to write off Dale Earnhardt. Car owner Richard Childress wasn't one of them.

"Dale Earnhardt is the best," Childress said after Earnhardt broke a 40-race winless streak Sunday with a dominating victory in the DieHard 500. "If anybody gives up on him, they've lost their mind."

His fans didn't give up. They were joyous after Earnhardt drove his signature black No. 3 Chevrolet to victory at Talladega Superspeedway.

As Earnhardt sat high above the front straightaway with his back to the big pressbox windows after the race, hundreds of his fans stood below chanting: "Earn-hardt, Earn-hardt."

Between answers to numerous questions, Earnhardt would half turn in his seat and, grinning widely, wiggle his fingers at the crowd, drawing a roar that made his smile even bigger.

But he happily shared the spotlight with Childress and Kevin Hamlin, who got his first Winston Cup win since becoming Earnhardt's crew chief midway through last season.

The victory — only Earnhardt's second in the past 101 starts — was a relief for Richard Childress Racing and for Earnhardt, who will be 48 Thursday.

Still, like his car owner, he said it was other people who were worrying, not him.

"It's not been tough on me," Earnhardt said. "It's tougher on you guys, keeping the stats and asking the questions. We just race from week to week and try to win the next week."

"We don't walk around and look at each other and say, 'It's been a week since we won. It's been 100 weeks since you won.' ... We know. We talk about it. We race to try to fix that the next race."

His competitors just laugh when asked if Earnhardt has lost anything.

"I wish," said Rusty Wallace, who was among the top contenders Sunday until getting caught up in a wild, nine-car wreck. "I'd still rather have just about anybody on my tail than him. And getting around him when he's leading late in a race ... forget it."

Dale Jarrett is the latest driver to try — and fail.

The Decision is In... IAAF Strips Race Medal From Slaney

MONTE CARLO, Monaco (AP) — Mary Slaney was stripped of her silver medal from the 1997 world championships after track authorities determined Monday she failed a drug test three years ago.

A lawyer for the premier U.S. distance runner said the ruling by the International Amateur Athletic Federation was based on "legal fiction."

"It is sad that the worldwide governing body for the sport of track and field would choose to prop up its

sham drug-testing program at the expense of one of its greatest athletes," lawyer Doriane Coleman said.

Slaney is free to compete since the IAAF said she had retroactively completed her two-year ban.

A three-man IAAF arbitration panel said the 40-year-old runner tested positive for high testosterone levels before the 1996 Olympics.

The IAAF imposed a ban on Slaney that ran from June 1996, when the test was administered, to June 1998. Thus, Slaney loses the medal she won at Paris in the 1,500 meters.

"Let them come and try to get the \$20,000 (in prize money) that she won in Paris," lawyer Jim Coleman, Doriane's husband, said. "They don't say they're going to ask for it back, but the order suggested they might. ... They'll never see the money."

He called the test "bogus."

"What they should have been doing is trying to find a way to prove when a female athlete has used testosterone. Rather than doing that, they've been trying to find a way to save a test that doesn't work."

Added Slaney's husband, Richard: "According to the IAAF, you're guilty until you prove your innocence."

Slaney repeatedly has proclaimed her innocence. Earlier this month, she sued the IAAF and the U.S. Olympic Committee, which administered the original test.

She claims the testosterone-epitestosterone test is unreliable for women who take birth control pills in their late 30s or 40s.

The IAAF disputes that argument and said the decision by USA Track & Field on Sept. 16, 1997, to clear Slaney was "erroneous." The IAAF said Monday's ruling was "final and binding," with no right of appeal.

"Mary is fine," Jim Coleman said. "She was prepared for what happened in Monaco. It's of no concern to her. She's totally ignored it. It's a nonevent as far as we're concerned."

USATF executive director Craig Masback called the decision "a tragedy."

"Clearly, she's one of the great athletes in the sport and a pioneer," Masback said.

"T-E testing for women is not supported by scientific evidence ... never mind for her particular test. I think it's unfortunate that the IAAF decided to pursue this case after we exonerated her. They should come up with a legal test, not pursue someone who is innocent."

The IAAF imposed the ban after the arbitration panel said there was "failure to establish by clear evidence that an abnormal T-E test was attributable to pathological or physiological conditions."

Slaney, the 1983 world champion at 1,500 and 3,000 meters, gave a urine sample during the 1996 U.S. Olympic trials that showed a T-E ratio above the 6-1 limit.

The T-E test detects the presence of testosterone, a naturally occurring muscle-building hormone that also

is taken in concentrated form to improve performance.

The IAAF suspended Slaney, claiming USATF was slow to investigate.

USATF imposed its own suspension. But Slaney, backed by her sponsor Nike, challenged the ruling, and in September 1997 the U.S. federation cleared her. The IAAF also later cleared Slaney to compete but referred the case to arbitration.

Slaney now joins other prominent names in track found guilty by the IAAF: Ben Johnson, Butch Reynolds and Katrin Krabbe.

Another high-profile case is pending. U.S. sprinter Dennis Mitchell is going to arbitration after testing positive for high testosterone.

It's Derby Time Again in Kentucky

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Bob, Wayne and Nick have combined to win the Kentucky Derby six times in the 1990s, and it wouldn't be surprising if one of the trainers is in the winner's circle again Saturday.

"I feel good about this Derby," Bob Baffert said. "I've got two horses who are contenders. I hope one of them wins."

If General Challenge or Prime Timber — first and second, respectively, in the Santa Anita Derby — does win, Baffert will be the first person in any racing capacity to win the Kentucky Derby three straight years.

The last horseman to be in position to win three straight was D. Wayne Lukas. He sent out Thunder Gulch to win in 1995 and followed with Grindstone, but in 1997 his Deeds Not Words finished 13th as Baffert won with Silver Charm. Baffert's winner last year was Real Quiet.

Lukas will try to return the favor at Churchill Downs when he sends out Charismatic and Cat Thief.

"I think the horses that are battle-tested will be there at the end," said Lukas, whose two colts certainly are just that.

Charismatic, fourth in the Santa Anita Derby and a winner of the Lexington at Keeneland, will be making his 15th start. Cat Thief, winless in four starts this year but second twice and third once in Grade I stakes in his last three, will be going to the post for the 12th time.

"I'm grateful to be in this position," said Nick Zito, who will try to win his first Derby since 1994 (Go for Gin) with Adonis, winner of the Wood Memorial at Aqueduct, and Stephen Got Even, winner of the Gallery Furniture.com at Turfway Park.

Zito likes the Derby rivalry he's formed with Baffert and Lukas.

"I would love to finish it off," he said of winning the final Derby of the '90s. "I would love to have that honor."

Zito also said he didn't want to see the 1990s end with four trainers have two Derby wins apiece. That would happen should Carl Nafzger win with Florida Derby winner Vicar. Nafzger won in 1990 with Unbridled,

his only previous Derby starter.

A Clean-up Man, for Real

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mark McGwire never did it. Neither did Babe Ruth nor Hank Aaron.

Nobody in baseball history had ever hit two grand slams in one inning. Until Fernando Tatis came along.

With home run king McGwire playing setup man, Tatis hit a pair of bases-loaded homers in the same inning Friday night. Both were off Chan Ho Park in the third inning of the St. Louis Cardinals' 12-5 win over Los Angeles.

"What an accomplishment; I get goose pimples just thinking about it," said St. Louis manager Tony La Russa, who also had a great seat last year during McGwire's 70-homer season.

"What have they got, 100 years of baseball, and this is the first time it's ever been done? Wow."

Tatis, who had never hit a grand slam and totaled just 24 homers in his previous 225 major league games, also set a record with eight RBIs in one inning.

He was stunned.

"I can't believe it happened. I did not expect to hit another one. I've never been a home run hitter. I just try to meet the ball. I'm not like Mark McGwire," said Tatis, who at 5-foot-10 and 170 pounds is 7 inches shorter and 80 pounds lighter than the St. Louis first baseman.

Everything fell into place for Tatis to make baseball history.

Eric Davis was out with an injury, so Tatis moved up a spot to bat cleanup. McGwire singled to load the bases once, then flied out to leave them loaded the next time.

Davis missed his second full game with an injured left hand, hurt when he was hit by a pitch in the seventh inning of Tuesday's game.

PIL Standings

SPORTS STANDINGS
1999 SPRING STANDINGS

BASEBALL			SOFTBALL		
W	L	To	W	L	
Madison	10	1	Wilson	8	1
Lincoln	9	2	Madison	8	2
Wilson	8	3	Marshall	8	2
Cleveland	7	4	Franklin	5	5
Franklin	7	4		G.M.B.W	
Marshall	6	5	Grant	5	5
Roosevelt	5	6	Lincoln	4	6
	L, M, J, W, C		Benson	3	7
Grant	2	9	Cleveland	3	7
Benson	1	10	Roosevelt	0	9
Jefferson	0	11	Jefferson		No team
MENS TENNIS			GIRLS TENNIS		
W	L	To	W	L	
Lincoln	8	0	Cleveland	8	0
Grant	6	1	Lincoln	7	0
Wilson	6	1	Wilson	7	2
Franklin	5	3	Grant	5	3
Benson	3	4	Benson	4	4
Cleveland	3	5	Franklin	4	4
Roosevelt	2	6	Marshall	3	6
Madison	1	6	Jefferson	2	5
Marshall	0	8	Roosevelt	1	8
Jefferson		No team	Madison	0	9
MENS TRACK			GIRLS TRACK		
W	L	I	W	L	
Madison	4	0	Benson	4	0
Benson	3	1	Grant	3	1
Franklin	3	1	Lincoln	3	1
Grant	3	1	Madison	3	1
Lincoln	2	2	Cleveland	2	2
Wilson	2	2	Wilson	2	2
Cleveland	1	3	Franklin	1	3
Marshall	1	3	Jefferson	1	3
Roosevelt	1	3	Marshall	1	3
Jefferson	0	4	Roosevelt	0	4
MENS GOLF			GIRLS GOLF		
W	L	I	W	L	
Wilson	6	0	Lincoln	4	0
Grant	5	0	Grant	2	0
Cleveland	4	2	Wilson	6	1
Franklin	4	2	Franklin	3	1
Lincoln	4	2	Cleveland	3	2
Benson	3	3	Roosevelt	3	3
Madison	2	3	Madison	1	5
Jefferson	0	6	Benson	0	5
Marshall	0	6	Marshall	0	5
Roosevelt	3	7	Jefferson		No team

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