

# Broncos embark on 2024 season



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

### Entering the year with Mile High expectations

Top, left: The Broncos Cheerleaders. Top, right: Brandon Johnson hauls in a 46-yard touchdown pass from Zach Wilson in the Broncos' final preseason game against the Cardinals.

DAVE GIBSON  
DENVER

The Russell Wilson experiment is now but an ill-advised bad dream. Desperate for a quality veteran quarterback, management acted with their hearts and pocketbook when they brought him to Denver, not seeing what Seattle already knew – that Wilson's greatness was already in decline. Disappointing fans again during an eight-year span after winning Super Bowl 50 that included 13 different starting quarterbacks and zero playoff appearances, it depleted draft picks and financial resources under league salary cap restrictions. Strong safety Justin Simmons and wide receiver Jerry Jeudy were released or traded earlier this year as the Broncos and head coach Sean Payton scrambled to find enough money to rebuild with.

A steal compared to the Wilson deal, the Broncos are banking heavily upon quarterback Bo Nix, their first-round draft pick (chosen 12th). With three years spent playing at Auburn and his last two at Oregon, he is the most experienced quarterback selected in the 2024 draft. A competent field general with quick feet, good instincts, and a 74.9 career completion percentage, Nix will be the Broncos' starting quarterback when the team opens the regular season against the Seahawks on September 8. The last time the Broncos began their season with a rookie quarterback at the helm was 1983. His name was John Elway. Jarrett

Stidham will be Nix's backup with Zach Wilson in reserve.

Denver's leading wide receiver Courtland Sutton is back to ease Nix's transition into the Pros as are Josh Reynolds and Marvin Mimms Jr. Tight ends Adam Trautman and Greg Dulcich will also see their share of passes.

Running back Javonte Williams seeks to regain his form as a dominant power runner with Jaleel McLaughlin and rookie fifth-round pick Audric Estime sharing time in the backfield.

Anchored by center Luke Wattenberg and flanked by eight-year veteran All-Pro left tackle Garrett Bowles and right tackle Mike McGlinchey, the Broncos' offensive line has yet to fully prove itself. Their play this year will be an integral factor in determining the team's success.

The loss of standout Pro-Bowler Justin Simmons was a big blow to a defense that ranked 29th in the NFL last year. Safeties P.J. Locke and Brandon Jones will attempt to take up the slack. The good news is that perennial Pro Bowl cornerback Pat Surtain II should again shut down opponents' receivers on the left side with Ja'Quan McMillian or Riley Moss on the right. The front three of D.J. Jones, Zach Allen, and John Franklin-Meyers appear relatively strong. Behind them, inside linebacker Alex Singleton is solid in the middle. 2023 sack leader Jonathon Cooper heads up the outside linebackers who hope to turn up the heat on opposing quarterbacks this year.

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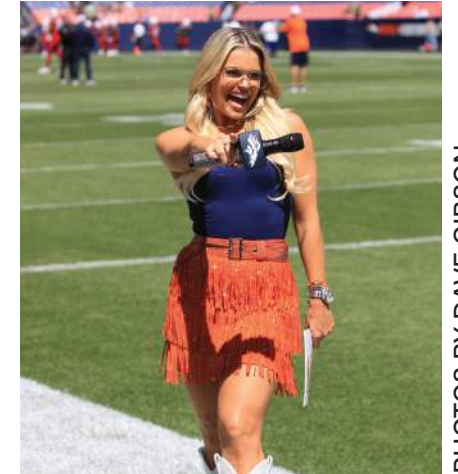
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**A 38-12 victory to build on**  
 Top, left: A Nate Atkins receiving touchdown. Top, middle: Miles the Mascot is pumped. Top, right: A Broncos announcer. Middle: Cheering Denver on. Bottom, left: Positive yardage



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**Denver Broncos 2024 Schedule**

- September 8 at Seattle Seahawks
- September 15 vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
- September 22 at Tampa Bay Buccaneers
- September 29 at New York Jets
- October 6 vs. Las Vegas Raiders
- October 13 vs. Los Angeles Chargers
- October 17 at New Orleans Saints
- October 27 vs. Carolina Panthers
- November 3 at Baltimore Ravens
- November 10 at Kansas City Chiefs
- November 17 vs. Atlanta Falcons
- November 24 at Las Vegas Raiders
- December 2 vs. Cleveland Browns
- BYE WEEK
- December 15 vs. Indianapolis Colts
- December 22 at Los Angeles Chargers
- December 29 at Cincinnati Bengals
- January 5 vs. Kansas City Chiefs



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