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Broncos notes: Lynch in wait-and-see mode

By Jeff Legwold, Rocky Mountain News
October 31, 2007

Broncos safety John Lynch said he felt "better" Wednesday after suffering what he called a stinger in Monday night's loss to the Green Bay Packers, but he is still awaiting word from doctors about when he might return to the field.

Lynch did not practice Wednesday. He underwent a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) exam Tuesday and those results were sent to noted neck and spine specialist Dr. Robert Watkins in California, who performed surgery on Lynch's neck after the 2003 season.

"I'm feeling all right," Lynch said. "... Just waiting on doctors to see how we're going to proceed. (I'm) just waiting on all of the information to come back ... I think everything's good and we'll see."

Watkins removed bone fragments in Lynch's neck after the '03 season. The fragments were causing a loss of strength as well as numbness in his arms.

A stinger, which Lynch had suffered before the surgery, causes a loss of strength and numbness in the arms and shoulder area. Lynch passes a battery of physicals from several teams, including the Broncos, before signing in Denver before the '04 season.

"It's a concern because I've had little episodes since I've been here, but this is the first kind of big one I've had," Lynch said. "So it's a little bit of a concern ... Hopefully this is something not related and we'll be all right."

Lynch suffered the injury early in the second quarter Monday night when he tackled Packers running back Ryan Grant after a seven-yard gain.

The 15th-year veteran left the game and did not return.

He has missed just one game in his four seasons with the Broncos - Nov. 7, 2004, against Houston - and that was a result of a bruised scarum, which is near the tailbone.

Comeback Dominique Foxworth and Curome Cox each played in Lynch's spot in some packages against the Packers, while Hamza Abdullah could play if needed as well.

Out of the ordinary

When Broncos defensive coordinator Bob Slowik, who coaches the team's defensive backs, looks at wide receivers Roy Williams and Calvin Johnson lining up wide in the Detroit Lions offense, he sees the unexpected.

Asked if 16 seasons ago, when he entered the NFL as a Dallas Cowboys defensive assistant, he could have foreseen a day in the league when a 6-foot-3, 211-pound player like Williams would be in the same formation with a player like the 6-foot-5, 239-pound Johnson, Slowik simply shook his head.

Especially at the idea of two players that big, yet with 4.3 speed in the 40-yard dash.

"No, absolutely not, never thought I'd see anything like it," Slowik said. "You can see the trend over probably the last five, six years, you've seen bigger, bigger, faster, faster, bigger. So no you never expect to see guys like that out at receiver. You'd think they'd be linebackers."

Johnson, who was the Lions' first-round pick this past April - second overall, has missed some time with a sore back this season, and has 15 receptions for 273 yards and two touchdowns.

Williams, who was the Lions first-round pick in '04, leads the team with 40 receptions for 524 yards and three touchdowns, including a 91-yard score.

"It's amazing, when I was (coaching) in college they would have been defensive ends," said Lions coach Rod Marinelli. "They're big guys, they're special."

Henry back

Running back Travis Henry, who missed the game against the Packers with what he has called a rib cartilage injury, practiced Wednesday and took his regular work with the offense.

Broncos coach Mike Shanahan said Henry was still in some pain, but expected to practice through the week if he didn't have any additional trouble with the injury.

Rookie Selvin Young started in Henry's place Monday night with rookie Andre Hall playing as Young's backup.

Detroit has the 18th-ranked run defense in the league.

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- Wide receiver Rod Smith, who is on the Broncos physically unable to perform (PUP) list, did not practice Wednesday because he had visited the doctor to gauge his recovery from offseason hip surgery.

Smith had worked in practice last week and by league rules can work this week and next before the Broncos have to decide whether to add him to the roster or place him on injured reserve for the remainder of the season.

Shanahan said he expected Smith to practice Thursday.

- The Lions are 4-0 at home this season. The team has not started a year 4-0 at home since 1993.

Injury report

Other than Lynch and wide receiver Javon Walker, who continues to recover from knee surgery, defensive tackle Sam Adams was the only other player held out of practice Wednesday. The Broncos have not put Adams on the practice field on Wednesdays this season, letting him work out on his surgically-repaired knee in the team's weight room instead.

He is expected to practice Thursday.

Linebacker D.J. Williams, who had an MRI on his shoulder Tuesday, practiced fully with the starting defense.

For the Lions former Broncos tackle George Foster (ankle) was the only player held out of Wednesday's practice. Johnson, who had left the team's win over the Bears Sunday with back pain, practiced on a limited basis.

"(Johnson) seems to be fine right now," Marinelli said.

Numbers game

3

former Broncos starters now playing for the Lions. Foster and running back Tatum Bell were sent to Detroit during the offseason in the trade that brought cornerback Dre' Bly to the Broncos. And safety Kenoy Kennedy played five seasons in Denver before signing with the Lions in free agency before the 2005 season.

Foster and Kennedy are starters while Bell is third on the depth chart behind Kevin Jones and T.J. Duckett. Bell was a gameday inactive Sunday.

He said it

"He's a Hall of Famer. He's a great player, a great person, I was very fortunate to be with him."

Detroit Lions coach Rod Marinelli on Broncos safety John Lynch. Both were with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers together.

Heavy hitters

The Broncos four losses thus far have come against teams with eyes on the postseason. They have a combined winning percentage of .786.

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