

Key Stats

From Week 15:

- Jets dominate first half, 333 yards to 89
- Broncos defense allows 500 yards from scrimmage
- Jets outscored Broncos 28-10 in first half
- Broncos manage only 48 plays from scrimmage to Jets 72

In This Issue:

- Game and Season Notes 1
- Broncos Report Card 2
- Injury Report and a Look Ahead 3
- Grossman Wants A Fair Shot 4

JETS BEAT BRONCOS, 31-27

Dominate First Half, Take Division Lead

December 11th, 2011: The New York Jets flew into Denver one game behind the Broncos in the AFC East and flew out with the division lead, downing the Broncos 31-27. Both teams are 12-3, but the Jets have the edge in common opponents, giving them control of their own fate. The Broncos, who two weeks ago were riding high with the best record in the ISFL at 12-1, have now lost two in a row and barring an upset by Houston over the Jets next week, can do no better than second in the AFC East and the fourth seed in the AFC playoffs.

The Jets dominated the first half, scoring 28 points and outgaining the Broncos 333 yards from scrimmage to just 89. So thorough was the domination in the first 30 minutes, the Jets had the ball for nearly 15 minutes more than the Broncos and converted seven of eight third downs while the Broncos were

zero for five in that category. "They came to play, and we clearly didn't," head coach Hank Sienzant of the Broncos said afterward. "They made some big plays in the first half, especially throwing long, and even when we had opportunities, we couldn't do much with them."

The only thing keeping the Broncos in the game early was rookie running back Deji Karim's 83-yard kickoff return for a touchdown to cut the Jets lead to 14-7, but the Jets came back to score two more touchdowns before the end of the half, while holding the Broncos to just a field goal from scrimmage.

The Jets scored on two long touchdown drives before the Broncos gained ten yards from scrimmage. Their first drive they came out passing, with Jon Kitna hitting Jabar Gaffney for 32 yards down the left sideline to move the ball to the Broncos 27. After two more first downs, including a

conversion of third and six from the Bronco 9, Michael Turner took it in from a yard out to give the Jets a 7-0 lead.

It became 14-0 after the Broncos went three-and-out, and the Jets marched for another touchdown, this time with Turner running seven times on the 14-play drive, converting a key fourth and inches from the Bronco 46 and later picking up a third and one from the Denver five. It was Brad Smith, QB/WR extraordinaire, who took it over on a QB sneak to give the Jets a 14-0 lead with under three minutes left in the first quarter.

The Broncos cut the Jets lead to 14-7 when Karim fielded the short kickoff by Connor Barth at the Bronco 17 and took it back for the 83-yard touchdown, the first touchdown on a kick off return by the Broncos since Jerome Mathis did it back in week ten of the 2006 season.

(Continued Page Two)

Game and Season Notes

The Jets now control their own fate and if the 12-3 Jets beat the 5-10 Houston Texan next week, they will own the second seed and the Broncos cannot do anything about it. The 13-2 Cowboys, by virtue of their win over the Jets a few weeks ago, have clinched the first seed as they own the key head-to-head tiebreaker over the Jets.

The Broncos are now in danger of watching their great comeback season spiral down into oblivion, as they will own the fourth seed and have to win once at home and then twice on

the road to get to the Super Bowl. Two weeks ago they were seeded first in the AFC with a 12-1 record, the best record in the ISFL, and were looking at a first round bye and two home games to get to the big game.

With the two consecutive losses, the young squad has squandered a lot of the hard work it took to get to 12-1.

Josh Freeman's passer rating has dropped from 115.0 to just 109.0 in the space of two games and he is no longer the best quarterback in the league, as Tom Brady now has a 110.0

passer rating.

The Jets 38-year-old QB Jon Kitna won the game for the Jets in the first half, completing 15 of 19 for 242 yards (136.3), while Josh Freeman was just 6 of 14 for 55 (54.2) in the same time. Both quarterbacks played well in the second half, but Kitna managed the game well and avoided any big turnovers in the game other than the one strip sack by Pierre-Paul. Kitna joked after the game that he feels like a rookie compared to the "old-man", the Jets other veteran QB, 41-year-

(Continued Page Two)

“Rookie defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul stepped up big-time... sacking Kitna, forcing the fumble, and recovering the loose ball at the Jets 21.”



Bronco Report Card

Overall Grade: **F**



Denver now faces the prospect of having to win three playoff games, two on the road, to get to the Super Bowl

JETS BEAT BRONCOS (continued from page one)

The Jets were not fazed. They came right back with another touchdown drive, this time taking just two plays to score, with Kitna hitting Braylon Edwards twice for big gains, first for 22 yards to move the ball to their own 40, and then hitting him again deep, with Edwards taking the ball 60 yards for the score to give the Jets a 21-7 lead with less than a minute left in the first quarter.

Rookie defensive end Jason Pierre-Paul stepped up big-time after a Denver three-and-out, sacking Kitna on the Jets first play after the second Denver punt of the game, forcing the fumble, and recovering the loose ball at the Jets 21. If the Broncos could

punch over a touchdown here, they could cut the Jet lead to 21-14 and get the momentum back. But nope, after picking up one first down on a 13-yard completion from Josh Freeman to Nate Washington and after a defensive holding penalty gave Denver a first down at the Jets five, three plays lost a yard and the Broncos had to settle for a 29-yard field goal by Mason Crosby to cut the Jets lead to 21-10.

The New Yorkers came right back with a signature drive, moving their lead to 28-10 and serving notice to this young Bronco squad that they were still the defending champions. On the 12-play, 70-yard drive, the Jets three times converted third

downs, before pulling out all the stops on a second and 20 end around to Brad Smith with Smith taking the reverse and catching the Bronco defenders overpursuing, racing 29 yards for the touchdown to give the Jets a 28-10 lead with just over three minutes left in the first half.

In those final three minutes, the Broncos finally forced a Jets punt, but could do nothing much with the ball when they had possession, with the Jets ahead at the half, 28-10.

The Broncos had been totally dominated, but were not defeated.

(Continued Page Three)

Bronco Report Card

QB: C- Statistically, Freeman did not have a bad game (83.5), but his failure to win in the final minutes has come back to haunt the Broncos.

RB: F The running backs had a terrible game, but that is masked by wide receiver Louis Murphy's 51-yard burst on a reverse. The running backs finished with just 50 yards rushing against the tough New York defense. On just 13 carries, with a long run of just 8 yards.

REC: F A decent game statistically, but again failed to come up with big plays to win the game. Freeman connected on just two of nine to Murphy and Pettigrew,

Two of those incompletes were on target but dropped. Murphy had the big 51-yard end-around.

OL: D The O-line allowed two sacks, more than they've allowed since week three, and didn't give the backs room to run.

DL: F Run defense allowed too many big runs by Turner and Brad Smith, including the big 42-yarder in the fourth quarter. Two sacks of Kitna, but needed to put more pressure on him, and couldn't.

LB: B- Goff and Witherspoon contributed 14 tackles, two passes defensed, one stuff, and one hurry, but Ernie Sims had another quiet game (four tackles).

DB: F In a word, Shell-Shocked. In the last two quarters of the Patriot game and the first half against the Jets, the Bronco defenders allowed Stafford and Kitna to complete 31 of 42 for 413 yards, 2 touchdowns and no picks. That's a passer rating of 120.4—far too much,

Sp.Teams B Special Teams was the only unit to acquit themselves well, and made a couple of big plays. Deji Karim averaged 28.2 on six KO returns, including one 83-yard TD, and the Broncos returned two punts for 32 yards. Jon Ryan had two inside the 20s and no touchbacks, while Mason Crosby was perfect on five kicks.

Game and Season Notes (continued from page one)

Ryan Torain and Ricky Williams are again neck and neck for the Broncos rushing lead, with the 33-year-old Williams at 680 yards (4.9) and Torain at 676 (5.0). The Broncos running game was nearly non-existent as neither Williams nor Torain was particularly effective against the Jets. Louis Murphy led Denver in rushing with his one 51-yard reverse, while Williams and Torain combined for just 50 yards on 13 carries. By contrast Turner banged for 124 on 31 carries (scoring once), and Brad Smith ran for 24 on three carries

and two scores on the ground. Turner had his sixth 100-yard game rushing this year. Edwards and Gaffney each caught six passes for the winners, combining for 220 yards, while the rest of the team added 11 catches and 114 yards. For the Broncos, Bowe caught five for 76 yards and one score, while Pettigrew was targeted five times, but caught only one.

The Jets ran 72 plays from scrimmage to the Broncos 48, with the Jets having nearly as many rushes (41) as the Broncos had plays. As you might expect,

the Jets won all the stats, including third down conversions (9 of 16), compared to Denver's dismal two of ten.

Deji Karim finished with only a 28.2 average on six kickoff returns, as the Jets squib-kicked repeatedly after Karim took the second one back for the 83-yard score. On the other five returns, Karim gained just 86 yards (17.2). For the winners, Dave Ball, a trade acquisition, had three tackles and two big sacks, while the 21-year-old Pierre-Paul had three tackles, a sack, a stuff, a forced fumble, and a fumble recovery.

Injuries And a Look Ahead

Injury Report

A week after getting tight end Jermichael Finley back from a season-long injury, Denver wound up losing him again against the Jets. This time the culprit is a slight concussion, and Finley will definitely miss the final game of the regular season, but may be back for the first round of the playoffs. Finley has been a major disappointment this season due to injury. A year after catching 53 passes and leading the leading the Broncos in catches, Finley's season is over with just 15 receptions. In his absence, however, the emergence of Brandon Pettigrew in just his second season (61 receptions) has cushioned the blow more than a little bit.

The Broncos get back second-year DE / LB Robert Ayers for their next game, but will be without the services of Jared Odrick and Kaluka Maiava for their final regular season game.

A Look Ahead

The AFC Eastern Division leading (and defending Super Bowl champion) New York Jets finish their regular season with a home game against the 5-10 Houston Texans. A win against Houston will guarantee the Jets the second seed in the AFC and a bye in the first round.

With their two consecutive losses after a 12-1 start, the Broncos are reeling and need to right their ship against the always tough San Diego Chargers. The Broncos, who sport a 5-2 home record versus a 7-1 road record, get to face the Chargers in Denver. They will, barring a miracle, get to host the fifth seed in the wild-card next week.

If, by some event, the Texans upset the defending ISFL Champions, a Bronco win or tie will give the Broncos the AFC crown, the second seed, and a first round bye.



The Broncos get Robert Ayers back for their game against the Chargers

JETS BEAT BRONCOS (continued from page two)

They came out throwing on every down, moved the ball crisply from their own 39 to the Jet 13. But the drive stalled there when Freeman missed connections three straight times, and the Broncos had to settle for a Crosby field goal from 31 yards out to make it 28-13.

After an exchange of punts, the Bronco defense forced the Jets to punt it back after one first down, and the Broncos finally got an offensive touchdown from scrimmage. Taking over at the their own 38, the Broncos ran twice for 12 yards, then Freeman hit Dwayne Bowe on a fly route over Charles Woodson, and Bowe outraced everyone to the goal line for the 50-yard touchdown that cut the Jets lead to 29-20 late in the third quarter.

Early in the fourth quarter, after the Jets were stuffed on a third and two, with Turner originally being awarded the first down on the field that was overturned by challenge, the Jets went for it on fourth and inches from the Bronco 42, running Turner again on a trap play to the right, but B.J.Raji held his ground and Roy Miller stopped the play for a yard loss when Turner tried to cut back.

The fired up Broncos came out throwing and Freeman hit Nate Washington for a 33-yard gain to

the Jet 24, but a flag negated the play and left the Broncos facing a first and 20 back at their own 33. Two runs by Ricky Williams gained 11 yards, and the Broncos converted the third and nine by borrowing a play from the Jets playbook, running a reverse to Louis Murphy that quickly got Murphy around the corner and down the sidelines before he was finally caught from behind and dragged down by Woodson at the Jets five yard line. After an incomplete pass, Freeman connected on a short pass to Delanie Walker for the touchdown to cut the lead to 29-27. With an opportunity to tie the score here, and take all the momentum back, the Broncos coaching staff declined that opportunity, instead kicking the extra point to leave the Jets ahead 28-27. The Broncos Hank Sienzant defended the call after the game, but admitted he would do it differently if he could. "With nearly 12 minutes left in the game, we felt it was too early to go for two. If we fail to convert, a touchdown by the Jets leaves us down by nine. We felt the smarter choice was the one-point conversion, which would leave us within one score the next time we got the ball regardless of what the Jets did."

"Would we do it differently if we could? Yes, knowing what we know

now, the two might have given us a big lift, but we still had to go out and play. If we won the final twelve minutes, we would win. If we didn't, we would lose."

As it turned out, the Broncos lost, mostly because a third-and-four run around left end by Michael Turner went for 42 yards down to the Bronco 20, putting the Jets in field goal range and allowing them to Although the Denver defense stiffened and forced a Connor Barth field goal attempt, with the field goal by Barth giving the Jets a 31-27 lead with less than eight minutes remaining in the game.

The final minutes were back and forth, with the game ultimately ending with the clock expiring on the Broncos near midfield. But the game was truly lost when Josh Freeman was picked off by Terrance Newman. This came after the Broncos defense forced a Jets three-and-out and a punt on fourth and 22 to get the ball back just after the two minute warning. The pick by Newman gave the Jets the ball at Denver's 28 with just 1:28 left in the game and Denver with just two timeouts remaining. Four runs by the Jets failed to pick up the first down, but left only 27 seconds on the clock, insufficient time for the Broncos to mount a comeback.

Denver Bronco

Fast Fact:

The Broncos have been 12-3 only once before in their history. They were 12-3 at this point in 2005, their Super Bowl season

THE
OFFICIAL
NEWSLETTER
OF THE ISFL
BRONCOS

We're on the Web!
[http://
www.simfootball.net](http://www.simfootball.net)



Denver
Broncos

GROSSMAN WANTS A FAIR SHOT

Rex Grossman says he isn't done yet. Not by a long shot.

Grossman was unceremoniously released by the Bears in 2009 after one year as a starter and signed by the Broncos off the waiver wire shortly before the beginning of the 2009 season. No one else in the ISFL wanted him. The Broncos signed him because he was still relatively young (only 28), had starting experience, and as a former first round pick, they felt he had more of a future than the three quarterbacks they had on their roster - Brad Johnson, Brian Griese, and Daunte Culpepper. They were right, as Grossman is still playing and those three are no longer in the ISFL.

Grossman started three games in 2009, and another three in 2010. All six starts came as a result of injuries to other quarterbacks and the Broncos admittedly turned to Grossman only in desperation. Rex looked like a potential star in some games, but he looked woefully inadequate in others. Overall, however, Grossman did not look like starter material because of his inconsistency and his penchant for throwing interceptions. This year, however, with the continued development of Josh Freeman into one of the best quarterbacks in the league, Grossman's only action has come in mop-up duty in five games. His passing attempts have dropped every year since he was a starting quarterback in Chicago in 2007.

So Grossman longs for more, insisting he still can be a starter in the ISFL. He wants to get an opportunity to start again, but he doesn't believe that will happen in Denver. "I appreciate the opportunity the Broncos have given me over the past three years when nobody else wanted me. With Josh Freeman entrenched as the starter here in Denver, however, it's clear my opportunities here are limited. I continue to believe I would be better served going to another team."

Head coach Hank Sienzant says Grossman isn't going anywhere, but sounded more than a little exasperated by the situation. "We've talked with Rex about this in the past, and I'm unclear why the issue is being raised at this time. Let me be clear: We're not anticipating moving Rex anywhere. We haven't had any discussions concerning Rex with any other teams in the league, and don't anticipate initiating any. He continues to be a valuable asset to this team and a player we believe can help us win, both now and in the future."

Asked if Grossman will continue to back up Josh Freeman, who is eight years younger than Grossman, Sienzant said yes, but with an asterisk. "We make those decisions in pre-season, and aren't inclined to change them unless we see a strong reason. So Josh is the starter and will be the rest of this year—barring injury. That said, next year in pre-season there will be an open competition for the quarterback job — as there is for all jobs — and if we deem Rex the better player, then Rex will be the starter."