

Key Stats

From AFC

Championship

- Broncos win the Super Bowl — first time since 2005
- Denver offense gains 456 yards from scrimmage
- Broncos score on six of seven possessions
- Josh Freeman runs and passes for 280 yards, three touchdowns

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BRONCOS WIN SUPER BOWL, 38-21 OVER SAINTS!

Denver Offense Near Perfect

January 29th, 2012:

The Saints couldn't solve the Bronco offense, and Denver won, 38-21, without ever punting.

The Broncos had seven possessions in the game, and scored on six of them. One possession ended in an interception in the Saints endzone, after the Broncos had driven 60 yards to get to the Saints seven-yard line.

Except for the pick, 22-year-old starting quarterback and Super Bowl XV MVP Josh Freeman was near-perfect, completing 18 of 21 for 205 yards and three touchdowns (127.1). The Broncos also ran for 262 yards against the Saints on 43 rushing attempts (6.1). Three different Broncos ran for 75 or more yards, but none broke one hundred. The Broncos finished the game with 456 yards of offense, while the Saints accumulated 377 yards of offense, 259 through the air and 118 on the ground.

Bronco head coach Hank Sienzant said after the game, "Josh [Freeman] was incredible, and really on fire today. He has put together an incredible string of success, winning four playoffs and a championship at age 22. That young man has some future ahead of him."

While the Broncos ran the ball with much success, it was the Saints who came in with

the strong running game. They ran for an average of 261 yards per game over their previous four games alternating Jamaal Charles and Arian Foster, averaging 6.1 per carry and 43 rushes per game in that span. Those were numbers that the Broncos, not the Saints, would attain in this Super Bowl, as the Broncos ran 43 times for 262 yards.

The Saints came out throwing in this game with Tony Romo - mostly because the Broncos opened in an unorthodox 5-3 defense to try to stop the Saints incredible ground game. "We needed to do something to take the Saints out of their comfort zone with their running game, and force them to throw the ball," Hank Sienzant said afterward. "The 5-3 seemed like it would do the trick. We first saw the Redskins use it in a playoff game in 1972 when they faced the Green Bay Packers with John Brockington and MacArthur Lane. It stopped the Packer ground game cold."

The 5-3 wasn't quite so effective against the Saints, but it did cause them to adapt, as they threw on six of their first nine plays. The passing did not stop New Orleans, as they moved downfield with Romo completing four of six for 63 yards. Facing a third-and-ten

from the Bronco 12, Romo hit Arian Foster on a screen pass and Foster took it nine yards to the Denver three yard line.

Fourth and one at the Broncos three.

The conventional wisdom says put the field goal on the board. Saints coach Ed Minshull kicked the conventional wisdom in the can, put the ball in the hands of Jamaal Charles and Charles responded with a three-yard touchdown run on a trap play over the left side to put the Saints up 7-0.

But the Broncos responded with a touchdown drive of their own. But it wasn't through the air. All but the final four yards came on the ground and through penalties, with the Broncos opening the game with the running assault that was expected from the Saints. It was almost like the two teams had switched uniforms for the game just to have a little fun. The Broncos started from their own 15, and ran on the first twelve plays of the possession, picking up 61 yards on the ground and 15 more through a roughness call against linebacker Bradie James. With a third and six from the Saints nine, the Broncos got another roughing call against the Saints, this time against Calais

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SUPERBOWL CHAMPIONS (continued from page one)

"To start the second half," Sienzant said "I opened the doors and got out of the way..."



Denver won the Super Bowl one year after starting the season 0-9



Bronco Report Card

Overall Grade: A+

Campbell, and the penalty wiped out a Freeman incomplete pass and gave the Broncos a first down at near the four yard line. Freeman faked the handoff to Torain on the next play, and hit tight end Jermichael Finley for the short toss across the middle for the tying score with 2:48 left in the first quarter. On the march, Ryan Torain carried six times for 34 yards, while Ricky Williams added 23 on four runs.

The Saints came right back with another touchdown drive, this time of 69 yards in ten plays, to take the lead at 14-7 early in the second quarter. With the Broncos dropping back to a 4-3 to thwart the expected passing assault from Tony Romo, the Saints opened the drive with three straight runs — picking up two first downs. Mixing in runs and passes the rest of the way, New Orleans got to the Bronco one-yard line, from where Arian Foster ran it in on a trap play to the left side. On the march, Romo completed 2 of 2 for 32 yards, and the Saints ran seven times for 37 yards and the touch-

down. The Broncos came right back with another long drive, getting inside the Saints ten on the strength of two completions for 42 yards to Dwayne Bowe. But a first and goal pass from the Saints seven-yard line that was supposed to catch the Saints defenders off-balanced did anything but, and Freeman threw the ball right into the teeth of the Saints defense looking for the inside slant. Veteran linebacker Kevin Bentley jumped the route and picked off Freeman in the end zone, ending the Broncos drive and setting up the Saints at their own 20 after the touchback.

"That was probably Josh's only mistake," Sienzant said after the game. Freeman said after the game that he "tried to force it into tight coverage, and should not have. Kudos to the Saints on that one. They got me good there. They disguised their coverage well and caught me."

Sienzant said, "We had to take the ball away without surrendering another score, either through a turnover or forcing a punt. We didn't

want to fall behind by two scores and let them unleash that running attack on us and play keep-away for the second half. We needed a defensive stop."

It didn't look like the Broncos would get it as New Orleans picked up two first downs in five plays, moving the ball to the Denver 42 yard line. But Denver's defense came through, stopping Charles for a one-yard game and then harrying Romo into two incomplete passes, and the Saints first (and only) punt of the game off the foot of Ben Graham rolled out of bounds at the Denver 17 yard line.

With 3:53 left in the half, the Broncos knew it was time for their big comeback. "We should patent that," Sienzant laughed after the game. "It's worked well for us the last few weeks."

Sienzant was referring to the Broncos blueprint of scoring just before the half expires, then taking the second half kickoff, and scoring again. The Broncos did it against the Jets, moving from

(Continued Page Three)

Bronco Report Card

Bronco Pass Offense: A+ You can't get much better than this. The Broncos Josh Freeman completed 18 of his first 20 passes (90%), picking up over 200 yards in the air and threw for three touchdowns. Dwayne Bowe was the big receiver, with 90 yards on five catches. Jermichael Finley caught two passes, scoring twice.

Bronco Run Offense: A+ The ground assault featured three different players rushing for 75 or more yards as the Broncos out-did the Saints at their own game — rushing for 262 yards and averaging 6.1 yards per carry.

Bronco Run Defense: B+ The Bronco run defense allowed only 118 yards to a

Saints running game that was averaging 247 yards per game in the post-season. The 5-3-3 that the Broncos opened in helped tremendously to keep the Saints running attack in check.

Bronco Pass Defense: B+ Let's not be too hard on the Bronco defensive backs. With a game plan that called for Denver to challenge the Saints to beat them with Tony Romo's arm, the Broncos allowed 259 yards through the air, but picked off Romo on a key third quarter drive just after the Broncos had taken their first lead of the game. That pick led to another Bronco TD, and a 28-14 lead that Romo and the Saints couldn't overcome.

SUPERBOWL CHAMPIONS (continued from page two)

a 17-14 deficit with three minutes to go in the first half to a 28-17 lead with back-to-back touchdowns. They did it again versus the Bills in the AFC Championship Game, turning a narrow 14-7 lead into a 24-7 lead with a field goal and a touchdown.

Now they were about to do it to the Saints. They opened the drive with a short pass to Delanie Walker for no gain, but ran five straight times for forty yards to move to the Saints 43. They then mixed the pass and the run to get to a third down and three from the Saints nine. With the Broncos in a hurry-up, Ryan Torain ran inside to the Saints one yard line. The Saints stopped the clock with 22 seconds left to give their defense a breather and get some defensive substitutions in the game, but Torain took the ball over the goal behind Joe Thomas for the one-yard touchdown run to tie the game at 14-14 with just 18 seconds left in the half. On the possession, Ryan Torain picked up forty yards on the ground on the march and added one reception for 11 yards.

With the score tied at halftime, the Broncos knew they had an opportunity to take the lead in the second half for the first time in the game if they scored on their opening possession.

"I reminded them of how hard they had fought to get here," Hank Sienzant said, "Then I opened the doors and got out of the way."

The Broncos did it according to their blueprint, moving from their own 13 yard line to a touchdown in 12 plays, taking nearly half the third quarter off the clock in the process. They did it with sharp passing (Freeman was five of five for 58 yards on the march, including the scoring pass to Brandon Pettigrew from four yards out), while the Torain and Williams tandem carried seven times for 28 yards.

In the prior eleven minutes of game time, the Broncos had run off 25 plays from scrimmage to the Saints two plays, and had picked up 170 yards to the Saints minus one (a Romo kneel down to end the half).

And the score had tipped in the Broncos favor, from down 14-7 to up 21-14.

It was about to reach another tipping point. As the Broncos had done against the Bills in the AFC Championship, after scoring a touchdown to open the second half and intercepting Brady to set up another touchdown, the Broncos used the same blueprint here.

After Charles had run three times for 17 yards, setting up a third and seven, Tracy Porter (who was questionable for the game but played through a lingering leg injury) intercepted Romo and Denver quickly added another touchdown to open up a two-touchdown lead. The Broncos biggest gain on the march after the Porter pick was a 23-yard completion to Nate Washington, but it was two Freeman runs that allowed the Broncos to score the touchdown. After a Campbell sack of Freeman cost the Broncos 11 yards and moved them back to the Saints 23, Freeman ran a second down-and-21 draw play for ten yards, then on third and eleven scrambled outside and picked up another ten.

Fourth and one at the Saints three.

As Ed Minshull had done earlier, Sienzant responded by going for it. Freeman feinted a handoff to Torain into the line, and hitting Jermichael Finley for the second time in the game, this time from three yards out for the touchdown with just five seconds left in the third quarter. Finley finished the game catching only two passes in the game, but scored two touchdowns, from four and three yards out.

The Saints came back with a touchdown of their own to cut it to 28-21, keeping the pressure on the Broncos. Jamaal Charles was the key man on the possession, running five times for 32 yards. Charles finished off the drive in style with a 31-yard catch and run for a touchdown. Charles went down and out, and the Broncos tried to cover him with linebacker Will Witherspoon. It was a mismatch from the start, and

Witherspoon had no chance to catch Charles once Charles caught the ball.

The Broncos needed to respond in kind. They could not curl up into a ball and just try to run out the final ten minutes of the game.

They didn't.

Starting from their own 35, Freeman hit Bowe for 18 with the Saints looking for a run to Williams, then Freeman faked a handoff to Williams and took the ball on a bootleg around left end for 39 yards, getting dragged down from behind at the Saints eight. Ricky Williams finished off the drive, and to a great extent the Saints, with an eight yard touchdown run on the next play, plowing over two Saint defenders near the goal line to put the Broncos up 35-21 with 8:23 to play. Bang, bang, bang, three plays, 65 yards, and another touchdown.

The Saints went into a hurry-up, but two illegal motion penalties kept them from getting into a rhythm, and a fourth and two at the Bronco 30 became a fourth and seven at the 35 after yet another illegal motion call.

Fourth and seven at the Bronco 35.

Romo hit Lance Moore for seven, but the spot was in the Broncos favor, and just short of the line to gain. Denver took over at their own 28 with 5:22 left in the contest and a two-score lead.

Running on nearly every down, the Broncos picked up three first downs and moved the ball to the Saints 19, from where Mason Crosby finished off the Broncos last possession in the contest with a 37-yard field goal with 1:27 left to make it 38-21 in the Broncos favor. That forged the final score, but the game wasn't over yet.

The Saints, with nothing on the line but pride, tried to score one final touchdown, but after getting to the Broncos four yard line, two Romo passes fell incomplete and the Broncos had won their first Super Bowl under Hank Sienzant, and their second Super Bowl win in the last seven years.



**Bronco QB
Josh Freeman
was the MVP
of the Super
Bowl**

**Turnaround
for the Ages:
Denver has
gone 21-6
(including
playoff games)
since starting
0-9 last year**

Broncos 2011 Season in Review

They certainly didn't expect this result. Nobody did, Sure, Hank Sienzant said before the season that the Broncos goal was to win ten games, but coming from a coach with a 5-27 record in his first two years, that was viewed as mere hyperbole. But the Broncos went 13-3, and then rolled through the post-season, winning four straight to take the ISFL crown. Below is a game-by-game review of the Broncos magical 2011 season:

Denver 38, Houston 10 (Road):

The Broncos start slow but finish fast in this game. After falling behind 7-0 late in the first quarter, the Broncos score 38 unanswered points before surrendering a final field goal. Josh Freeman was the star, throwing for 286 yards and three touchdowns and leads the Broncos in rushing with four for 43. The defense surrenders only 15 yards on the ground.

Denver 26, Indianapolis 7 (Home)

Denver takes a 16-0 lead into the fourth quarter but loses the shutout when Aaron Rodgers hits Greg Jennings for a 66-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter. But the Broncos bounce back with the final ten points to put the game away. Ricky Williams takes over for injured Ryan Torain and rushes for 88 yards. The Broncos start to show a dominant run game as they rush for 184 and allowed just 52 yards on the ground.

Denver 13, Pittsburgh 10 (Road)

In a tight game, the Broncos show once again they were much improved over last year, as they go into Pittsburgh and nip the Steelers despite being outplayed for much of the game. It takes a total team effort as the Steelers take a 7-0 lead but the Broncos score the next 13, including a Freeman to Ricky Williams connection for a touchdown before two Mason Crosby field goals give the Broncos the edge. The Steelers put up three on the first play of the fourth quarter to cut it to 13-10, but the defense pitches a shutout thereafter.

Denver 38, Houston 13 (Home)

The Broncos jump to a 14-0 first quarter lead and are never seriously threatened by the Texans. It is 38-6 before the Texans scores their only touchdown of the game just before the two-minute warning. The Broncos ground game gains 217 yards and their run defense allows only 44 yards to the Texans. Rookie Anthony Dixon has his best game, showing some real power, as he runs 17 times for 71 yards to lead the Broncos in rushing.

Denver 31, New York Jets 20 (Road)

In a game the Broncos had been primed for since pre-season, Denver takes on the defending two-time ISFL Champion Jets and brings them down with a dominant fourth quarter, breaking a 17-17 tie with a Malcolm Jenkins touchdown on an interception return and a Josh Freeman to Dwayne Bowe 44 yard touchdown to put it away in the final five minutes. Bowe catches eight for 144 yards and two scores to show the Broncos are for real.

Denver 28, Cleveland 6 (Road)

The Broncos have a 21-0 halftime lead and lose the shutout on the final play of the game after time has expired when Joe Flacco hits David Gettis from eight yards out for the pride points. Josh Freeman completes 18 of 21 for three touchdowns and the Broncos pick up 166 yards rushing as they hold the Browns to just 70 on the ground. Rookie running back Deji Karim leads the Broncos in rushing with 51 yards while Dwayne Bowe catches nine passes and scores twice.

Denver 24, Buffalo 20 (Home)

Rallying back in the final minute, the Broncos overcome a 20-17 deficit to nip Tom Brady and the Buffalo Bills. The Broncos blow a 17-3 second-quarter lead as they surrender 17 unanswered points to the Bills before righting the ship in the fourth quarter and snatching the win. With the victory, the Broncos become the last undefeated team in the league as both Green Bay and Dallas lose in week seven.

Jacksonville 14, Denver 9 (Home)

Ryan Torain rushes for 104 yards in his first game back but the Broncos come up on the short end of the score as they cannot cross the Jacksonville goal line until the final minute of the game. Denver holds a 3-0 lead until late in the third quarter when Jacksonville gets a short touchdown run from Donald Brown to take a 7-3 lead. Brown scores again before Ryan Torain cuts it to 14-9 with 45 seconds left. The Broncos Mason Crosby earlier misses field goals from 47 and 42 yards that could have contributed to the Bronco win.

Denver 27, San Diego 21 (Road)

Josh Freeman throws for 303 yards and three touchdowns as the Broncos take a 27-14 lead into the fourth quarter, but Mark Sanchez hits Brandon Tate for 94 yards to the Bronco two before connecting with him again for the score, but the Broncos defense manages to come up big again as rookie Jason Pierre Paul gets a key sack just before the two minute warning to force a punt and preserve the win.

Denver 17, Chicago 7 (Home)

The Broncos take a 17-0 lead into the fourth quarter, but lose the shutout as Kyle Orton connects with Percy Harvin on a fourth-and-14 touchdown from 29 yards out. But the Broncos own all the stats, as they get a complete game from the offense (410 yards) and defense (179 yards). Chicago picks off Josh Freeman twice to keep the game close, but Freeman completes 19 of 23 for 212 yards and two touchdowns. The Broncos rush for 188 and hold Chicago to 47 yards on the ground.

Denver 20, Philadelphia 10 (Road)

The Broncos take a 17-0 lead into the fourth quarter for the second consecutive game, but the Eagles score twice to challenge Denver at 17-10. The Eagles pick off Freeman to challenge again, but Jason Pierre-Paul's second sack of the contest helps thwart Philly's comeback plans. The Broncos ground game gains 177 yards while the passing attack gets 176. Rookie QB Sam Bradford completes 30 for 281 for the Eagles but is picked off twice.

Broncos 2011 Season in Review

Denver 28, Buffalo 17 (Road)

The Broncos move to 11-1 and have the best record in the league as they overcome a tough division foe on the road behind Ryan Torain's 115 yards on the ground. The Broncos open an eleven point lead three different times (14-3, 21-10, and 28-17, but Tom Brady leads the Bills back to touchdowns twice to cut the lead to four at 14-10 and 21-17. Dwayne Bowe scores three touchdowns to lead the Broncos to victory.

Denver 37, Cleveland 31 (Home)

The Broncos sneak out a win in overtime in a tough game against a hot divisional foe that gives them all they could handle for four quarters and more. The Browns enter the contest having won their last three in a row, and nearly make it four as they overcome a 31-17 fourth quarter deficit to tie the game and send it into overtime. Each team gets the ball twice in OT before the Broncos score on Freeman's third touchdown pass, this one to Dwayne Bowe from 17 yards out to end an 85-yard drive.

New England 13, Denver 12 (Road)

In a game played in heavy snow, the Broncos lose to the Patriots as they are unable to cross the New England goal line even once. The Broncos own a 9-0 halftime lead but New England's Matthew Stafford replaces an ineffective Jason Campbell at halftime and throws a touchpass pass to Kellen Winslow Jr to cut it the lead to 9-7 on the Patriots first possession of the second half. The teams exchange field goals before Adam Vinatieri wins it with a 33-yarder with 1:50 left. The Broncos move to the NE 19 in the final seconds but time expires before they can get off a field goal attempt.

New York 31, Denver 27 (Home)

The Broncos lose two in a row for the first all season, and also lose the best record in the ISFL and the AFC East lead all at the same time when they fall to the inspired New York Jets who are out to avenge their earlier upset loss in week five. The Jets jump to a 28-10 halftime lead, then withstand a Bronco comeback that cuts it to 28-26 with 11:40 left in the contest. But the momentum shifts when the Broncos kick the extra point to make it 28-27 instead of going for two and the tie, and the Broncos offense does nothing the rest of the game.

Denver 37, San Diego 0 (Home)

The Broncos take out the frustrations of the last two weeks on a Charger team that doesn't know what hit them, They jump to a 20-0 halftime lead and then add 17 more after the half while the defense doesn't allow the Charger offense to get a play off closer than the Denver 46 yard line. Josh Freeman throws for three touchdowns and 284 yards while Mark Sanchez and Drew Stanton net only 96 yards passing as the Broncos get their first shutout since 2007. The Broncos end the regular season 13-3, but in second place in the AFC East behind the New York Jets.

Wild Card Game

Denver 23, Tennessee 12 (Home)

The Broncos passing offense is relatively inept as 22-year-old Josh Freeman has the jitters in his first playoff appearance but the Denver defense, special teams, and running game saves the day. The defense takes the ball away twice and holds the Titan running game to just 44 yards. The Bronco running game pounds for 186 and scores twice. Mason Crosby is 3-3 on field goals, while his counterpart Jay Feely misses two crucial first half kicks that ends with the Broncos up 7-3.

Divisional Round

Denver 35, New York Jets 27 (Road)

In a back-and-forth first half that has six lead changes, the Broncos score a key touchdown just :12 before halftime to take a 21-17 lead, then extend it to 28-17 on the first possession of the second half. The Jets close to 28-20 early in the fourth quarter, but the Broncos answer with a long strike to Dwayne Bowe that makes it 35-20. The Jets get another touchdown to make it 35-27 with five minutes left, but Malcolm Jenkins picks off Brett Favre's final pass ever to seal the Bronco win.

AFC Championship

Denver 34, Buffalo 21 (Home)

The 4th-seed Broncos get an unexpected home game in the Championship as the 6th-seed Buffalo Bills upset their two opponents (3rd seed New England and 1st seed Dallas) to get to the AFC Championship. Buffalo scores first on a strength of 53 yards rushing on their opening drive as the Broncos concede the run to stop Tom Brady. But as the Broncos take over the contest, scoring repeatedly to make it 31-7 by late in the third quarter, the Patriots abandon the running game (finishing with just 64 yards to the Broncos 211 on the ground and throw on nearly every down. Brady leads two touchdown drives but runs out of time for the comeback as the Broncos advance to the Super Bowl. Josh Freeman is stellar with 19 of 24 for 225 yards and one touchdown.

Super Bowl

Denver 38, New Orleans 21

The Denver offense is almost unstoppable as it pounds for 262 yards on the ground and Josh Freeman completes 18 of 21 (86%) for 205 yards and one pick to score on six of seven possessions in the game. The Bronco defense holds the vaunted Saints ground game to just 118 yards as they force Tony Romo to throw 30 times. Romo is relatively effective, but his third quarter pick by Tracy Porter turns a 21-14 game into a Bronco 28-14 lead when Denver converts the pick into a touchdown a short time later. The teams exchange touchdowns to make it 35-21 before the Broncos add a late field goal to close out the scoring. The Broncos are now 2-0 in Super Bowls, while the Saints lose their second in a row.

THE
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Denver
Broncos

GAME NOTES

Jamaal Charles was the Saints leading rusher with 18 for 94 (5.2), but he was bottled up in the first half, picking up only 25 yards on eight carries (3.1). In the second half, he carried ten times for another 69 yards. Arian Foster, who was fourth in the league in rushing during the regular season, ended up with six for 25, but carried only once for no gain in the second half. Tony Romo had a good game, completing 21 of 30 for 259 yards with one touchdown and one pick, and he was equally effective in each half (94.0 in the first, 93.2 in the second).

Josh Freeman had a good first half (7 of 9 for 71, one touchdown, one pick), but a second half for the ages as he went 11 of 12 for 134 and two touchdowns (152.8). He completed his first eleven passes of the second half until he missed his last attempt on the Broncos final scoring drive. The Broncos Ryan Torain led both teams in rushing with 17 for 96 (5.6), with one touchdown, while Ricky Williams wasn't far behind, with 17 for 88 (5.2) and one score. Josh Freeman, was the unaccounted-for factor, as he scrambled and ran for 75 yards on just seven carries (10.7), including a big 39-yard bootleg that helped the Broncos put the game away midway through the fourth quarter after the Saints had rallied back to cut the Bronco lead to 28-21.

New Orleans' Lance Moore finished with six receptions but did minimal damage, picking up only forty yards. Michael Jenkins for the Saints gained 69 yards on four receptions, while Arian Foster added 68 through the air on five catches. Dwayne Bowe was the Broncos leading receiver, with five for 90 yards. Josh Freeman's three touchdown passes were Bogarted by the tight ends, with Finley scoring twice and Pettigrew once.

After some uncharacteristic jitters in the Broncos first post-season appearance, Josh Freeman was incredible over the final three playoff games, completing 54 of 68 (79.4%) of his passes for 690 yards and seven scores, with one pick. That translates to a 137.1 passer rating. In the four playoff games, he threw at a 115.2 clip.

The Broncos ground game certainly contributed to Freeman's success, rushing for an average of 203 yards per game (and 5.5 per carry) in the post-season, but Freeman's fingerprints were all over that stat as well. Freeman scrambled and ran for 232 yards in the four post season games, an average of 58 yards per game, and averaged 8 yards a carry.