



Broncos Trade Fletcher, Cut Three, Ink Three



Denver, August 19th, 2011: The Broncos today announced a number of transactions as the start of the 2011 season looms, getting their roster into final shape for the first game of the new season at Houston.

A few days ago, the Broncos traded Dane Fletcher, a supplemental round pick who has looked at times like the best linebacker in Denver's camp, to the New York Giants for the Giants 6th round pick next year and veteran linebacker James Anderson. They today then issued the unconditional release of three players and acquired three off the waiver wire to replace them. Released today were two-year veteran year linebacker Brian Kehl, linebacker James Anderson (acquired from the Giants in the Fletcher deal), and rookie cornerback Aaron Berry, their final supplemental pick. The three players signed to fill those spots were placekicker Graham Gano, and two linebackers, veteran outside backer Will Herring, and former Bronco Kaluka Maiava.

Maiava was initially cut by Denver at the conclusion of the regular draft to make room for supplemental pick Dane Fletcher. Maiava was originally a sixth round pick of the Broncos last season.

Herring last played in the ISFL last year with the Eagles, where he had 15 tackles in a backup role, and was released in the off-season as Philadelphia went into house-cleaning mode. Herring is now the second ex-Eagle linebacker to join the Broncos in the last few months, as the Broncos acquired inside linebacker Jonathan Goff in a draft-day trade from the Eagles for cornerback Kelly Jennings.

The Broncos G.M. Hank Sienzant went out of his way to stress that the signing of kicker Graham Gano was not made to challenge incumbent kicker Mason Crosby. Gano last year as a rookie was 13 of 13 on field goals for the Chargers after winning the Lou Groza award as a college senior as the nation's best kicker. "We liked him last year", Sienzant said, "but with Mason Crosby being a solid kicker for us last year, we didn't see a spot for Graham on our squad. However, we re-assessed that this year. With Graham's strong leg, and with the long-snapper spot opened up because starting guard Josh Sitton will handle the snapping (freeing up a roster spot), we feel he [Gano] will be able to handle the kickoff duties and allow Mason [Crosby] to concentrate solely on kicking field goals for us." The Broncos insist Gano is no threat to Crosby's job at this time, although Crosby was just 14 of 26 on field goal attempts last season for the Broncos, and Gano made nearly that many in half the attempts. Of course, if Mason goes into a funk, look for the Broncos to switch kickers in a heartbeat.