

January 20, 2006



An Interview With:

JOHN LYNCH Denver Broncos

Q. This will be your third conference Championship game. Is there a common emotion that fills the club as you go into one of these games, and can you relate what your feeling now in the Denver clubhouse with what you felt at Tampa Bay?

JOHN LYNCH: I think it's tremendous excitement. That's the feeling that's going around our locker room. Everyone understands that you're a game away from the biggest stage in what we do. And it's what you play for each and every year. And to have made it this far, and be one game away from that is incredibly exciting. And it's a lot of fun. We have a team who works real hard, but we also enjoy ourselves. And we've tried to enjoy the process, too. But we're ready to play.

Q. John, can you talk about Ben Roethlisberger and the progress he's made, and how he probably doesn't look like many second-year quarterbacks out there?

JOHN LYNCH: When you turn on the tape, if you didn't know how many years he'd been in the League, you wouldn't think this would be a young guy. He came in the League and the first year took his team to the AFC Championship game. Second year, he's done the same. And that speaks volumes to me, because his game is about winning. He's a tremendous player. A gifted athlete. And you see a big, strong guy, but you also see a gifted athlete who makes plays when he runs around. That's something we have to be conscious of. You can see he has a presence about him. And guys like playing with him. Guys like playing for him. And it's been very impressive to watch.

Q. What do you think is the biggest difference on this *Broncos* team, as opposed to when you first got here?

JOHN LYNCH: I think first and foremost, we're just better. We went out and got some players, and we're a much improved team personnel-wise. But then, you know, there's a lot of talented teams in this League. I think early on, we recognized that there was something special about this team. **Mike (Shanahan)** talks all the time about playing for the guy next to you, playing for each other. And I think we really embody what a team is all about. We've got a lot of selfless players, who don't care about attention and accolades and have their own agendas. We're all about one goal. As I mentioned earlier, we have a good time doing our work. It's just really been a fun season to be a part of this team.

Q. You have a strong rushing team right here in Denver. Practicing against them every day, does it give you more confidence as a defense to play against a strong rushing attack?

JOHN LYNCH: I think that's more in the off-season when we go against our own guys. Generally in the regular season the back up players are running the other teams' plays. But it's certainly impressive to have come in here, and you wonder why the *Broncos* year in and year out are such a good running team. It's because it just all works together. It's pretty fun to watch. And it's been fun for me to be a part of it.

Q. John, from playing with *Champ Bailey*, what is it you see that makes him a special player?

JOHN LYNCH: There's so many things. But I think the thing that impresses me about **Champ**, everyone sees the gifted athlete, the guy who's just a superior athlete on the field, but I think to me, it's his want to be a truly special player. And the way he goes about his job each and every day. It's no coincidence that he's had so many interceptions and so many big plays, because he does it every day in practice. I first recognized that with **Champ** before we were teammates, when I played with him in a Pro Bowl in Hawaii, no one

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likes to tackle in those Pro Bowls. The first play he put a lick on a running back, and I said, 'I like this guy.' It's important for **Champ** to be a complete player, not just a cover corner. He's a complete football player, and as good as I've been around in this League.

Q. Can you talk about the importance of the secondary, being able to come up and stop the run, especially some of those younger players?

JOHN LYNCH: Yeah, that's -- obviously playing the **Steelers**, that's going to be a big challenge for us. It's something we've done well the entire year. As **Mike** was just telling you, it's always first on our priority list as a defense is to stop the run. That's always the first thing we talk about.

Because to be successful we feel we need to do that to give ourselves the best chance to win. But this is a team in **Pittsburgh** that a lot of people don't see. They're a very effective passing team. They in a lot of ways lure you up with all the talk about the run. They've run the ball more than anybody in the League. The more you watch them they're really an effective group at passing the football. You've got to play everything with these guys.

Q. How important is it to get pressure on Roethlisberger, is that needed to be successful against him? And talk about the confidence in the secondary to stop that running game, obviously you have to have that confidence to get the turnovers.

JOHN LYNCH: I think first of all, the pressure is always important. It's something we've done very well this entire year. People look at the sack numbers, and the sack numbers weren't at the top of the League. In fact I can bet that we're at the bottom of the League. But the pressure has been constant. And it's something we've done well, whether it be a four-man rush or blitzing. And the pressure has been consistent. I think to be able to create pressure, you have to do the dirty work first, and stop the run. And it all works together. When you get the pressure we've got, the kind of guys with ball skills, then we're going to make some turnovers. We're going to create plays for ourselves, and it's something we are very confident about.

Q. I know you wanted to finish your career in Tampa, but obviously things like that don't work out in this League anymore. Do you see yourself finishing your career here in

Denver? How much longer do you plan on playing?

JOHN LYNCH: One of the nice things about coming to Denver is that I'd been in Tampa so long, I constantly heard, 'How much longer are you going to play?' A lot of ways you come to the new place and you're the new guy, you're not the guys that's played 13 years. **Rod Smith** and I are always joking about how old we are. I've had more fun playing football than I ever have. As long as I have the passion for the game and as long as I continue to play at a high level, I'll continue to play. And right now, I feel both of those things are there. I truly have always believed, well, sure, it was a tough situation leaving Tampa. Things happen for a reason. And this has kind of reenergized my career.

Having the opportunity now to get to the **Super Bowl**, it's just an awesome deal.

Q. Back on Tampa, as well, can you talk about what you learned playing for Herm Edwards there, and just about your relationship with him that continues today and also his son?

JOHN LYNCH: You know, I learned so much. He's the first guy, he and Tony Dungy and Monte Kiffin and that group that really believed not only could I be a player in this League, but be a special player. I owe a lot of my success in my career to **Herm**. I'm excited for him and his new opportunity in Kansas City. He'll do a great job.

Q. This team has been aggressive defensively all season. But have the coaches talked to you at all about being too aggressive, knowing that Pittsburgh throws in in gadget plays.

JOHN LYNCH: You can't prepare for teams that run gadgets. You can study all the film, but when you face a team that utilizes a lot of gadgets, you just read your keys. We're aggressive because I think we're well schooled in what we do. We've got smart players. When you head into big games, more importantly, particularly when you have a team that has a lot of gadgets, you have to read your keys. We can't practice everything they throw at us, but if you read your keys we'll be in the right position, and we've done that well all year.

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