

Sports



The Colorado Rockies have made believers of a lot of us. I could say that I said for a long time that Clint Hurdle was a career underachiever and replacing him should have been done last year. But, in spite of long believing that Hurdle could not manage and 2007 was a fluke, I would never have predicted the Rockies could have become the team they have - no matter who the manager was.

As of today, August 30, 2009, the Rockies have one everyday position player hitting over .300 - Todd Helton. The "power hitters" on the Rockies are their double-play combination - Troy Tulowitzki and Clint Barmes. Tulo has 123 hits, 24 home runs. Barmes has 109 hits, 21 home runs. Barmes has seen his average fall from near .300 to below .250 - all the while the Rockies continued to win.

Most of the time, the Rockies play two rookies in the outfield - Carlos Gonzalez and Dexter Fowler. The Rockies have four pitchers with between 10 and 14 wins and another with eight - none with an ERA under 3.33. Plus, almost all of their regulars are batting .278 or below and Garrett Atkins has eight home runs. Their manager has been fired twice before but is pushing all the rights buttons with the Rox.



If the first two preseason games were any indication, it is going to be a very, very long season for Broncos fans.

Because Coach McChild ran a franchise quarterback out of Dodge in exchange for a mediocre clipboard carrier, at best, Broncomaniacs will soon ache for the days of John Elway and Terrell Davis.

McChild will have to stick with Kyle Orton, no matter what, because he orchestrated the trade and claimed Orton was "his man." To switch to the quarterback who had already been signed to back up Cutler would be an admission of failure. In the Seattle preseason game, Orton "pushed" a lefthanded (his off arm) pass toward three defenders. Not since the Super Bowl with Garo Yepremian has there been a more futile pass. It wasn't because a defender was hanging on his right arm or shoulder. He just panicked and put it up for grabs. The next scene was McChild sitting with Orton and the other QB's, looking at pictures while the offensive coordinator stood futilely by.

Another reason the Broncos almost *have* to stick with Orton, barring injury, is that he is right handed and one of the few Pro Bowl caliber players they have is left tackle Ryan Clady. Chris Simms is left-handed and Clady would have to switch to right tackle to protect Simm's blind side. That would be a tough switch for him. The Broncos have an incredibly tough schedule. They have no defense and they have no offense. They're looking 4-12, 5-11.

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Talk about a long season.

With three Mountain West football teams being preseason picks for the Top 25 and playing a very good Weber State team, along with Big 12 teams Texas and Colorado, there is little reason for optimism in the know-it-all's first season in Laramie.

Interestingly, the Denver Post recently had a feature story about the Missouri football team for this upcoming season.

There was a brief mention that the new UW coach had left Mizzou but nothing else. The praise was all for the current head coach of Missouri, Gary Pinkel. The article said, "However, Pinkel's spread offense ..." suggesting that it was Pinkel, not Christensen who dictated the offense. The article went on to say that a program can "go south if [it] doesn't have a quarterback to run it." Christensen recruited a JC transfer with grade problems. UW may go winless - almost certainly won't win more than two or three games in '09.

And, before the new coach kisses anyone's ring except Paul Roach, he should be reminded that Joe Tiller had one good season at UW. One. The one before he left to become a very good coach with greater talent at Purdue. Before that, he was a .500 coach at UW.



Broncos fans may have their fingers crossed, hoping that Jay Cutler will fall on his face with the Chicago Bears, but it ain't gonna happen. In spite of an even won-loss record with the Broncos and not making the playoffs in his two seasons, he was 12-1 when the defense held opponents to 21 points or less. It's hard to win very often in the NFL when your defense gives up 28 - 42 points a game.

The Bears were 9-7 in '08, the Broncos 8-8. He can improve on that record.

Cutler is a franchise quarterback and they don't come along often. The Bears have defensive standout Brian Urlacher and one of the five most exciting offensive players in the NFL, Devin Hester. The Bears also signed Orlando Pace to protect Cutler's blind side. They have a 23 year-old thousand-yard rusher in Matt Forte and their third string running back is Adrian Peterson. No, of course not that Adrian Peterson. That one is now Brett Favre's sidekick in Minnesota.



As long as Brett Favre is the Vikings QB, I am a Vikings fan. Having grown up in northern Wisconsin, the Packers were in my blood. Until the raw deal they gave Brett Favre. Had they just released him when they decided Aaron Rodgers was the Packers quarterback of the future, no problem. But to trade him to the Jets, an offense he would have to learn from scratch at 38 years old, with the caveat that if the Jets traded him to the Vikings, it would cost the Jets three first round draft picks was unconscionable and should not have been permitted by the NFL league office. That's a violation of antitrust.

Brett Favre brought football back to Green Bay. After years of forgettable QBs and lamentable records, Favre made the Pack winners again. He deserved better treatment from the publicly-held Packers. His not being QB there will mean nothing at the gate - they sell out every home game and have a 57,000 name waiting list.

My wife and I lived in the Twin Cities most of our adult lives before moving to Cheyenne. I used my company to purchase season tickets to Vikings games and gave all of the tickets away to employees except the Packers game. In old Met Stadium, we endured weather well below freezing to watch the Packers. To hell with the Vikings - we just wanted to see them lose.

Sportswriters who don't know whether the ball is stuffed or inflated, wired or wound, have been critical of Favre for returning from retirement again. He never retired. He said, twice, he was going to retire. He has not missed a regular season start since 1992. He'll be there again this season. For \$12.5 million, I'd give it a shot.

Some of the same idiot sportswriters should be asked where they stood on Bud Grant coming back to the Vikings after he had retired. Or how they feel about Barbra Streisand retiring, then touring again. How many will complain when Garth Brooks unretires? Brett Favre may be the greatest QB to ever play the game. He brings an enthusiasm and excitement to NFL football that no one else matches. Without one day of training camp, he is considered the 16th best of 50 NFL QBs.



The New York Jets went from 4-12 the year before Favre to 9-7 in the only season he led them. The gratitude shown was to fire the head coach and release Brett Favre. Favre in New York City just was wrong. He's a hick. He's no Broadway Joe. But Mark Sanchez is. In two years, Mark will lead the Jets to the playoffs. Favre almost did in one season.

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