

Publication: The Gazette;Date: Sep 24, 2006;Section: Sports;Page: 38



# BRONCOS (1-1) AT PATRIOTS (2-0)

## Team brings in arsenal of specialists for Denver players

By **FRANK SCHWAB THE GAZETTE**

ENGLEWOOD - About 10 years ago, Denver Broncos head trainer Steve Antonopulos noticed some players seeking outside help. They were seeing masseuses, chiropractors and muscle specialists — anyone in addition to the training staff to help keep them healthy.

Antonopulos, who would rather have the players seek help in-house, brought extra help to Broncos headquarters.

“You might as well get the best there is and have it here and keep them here,” Antonopulos said. “That way you control the people coming in and you always know what’s going on with the players.”

The Broncos have two full-time masseuses on staff, and every week they bring in a chiropractor and two muscle healing specialists. The results of their work will be apparent tonight when Denver plays at New England.

The muscle specialists are Dr. Michael Leahy of Colorado Springs, an expert in the soft-tissue massage known as active release techniques, and Greg Roskopf, who developed what he calls muscle activation techniques.

Antonopulos checks out the gurus and their techniques before he allows them to work on players.

“I have to feel comfortable with them,” Antonopulos said. “A lot of times I’ll have them work on me, to make sure what they’re doing.”

Roskopf’s muscle activation techniques target muscles that have been traumatized or overused. When muscles aren’t properly working, the surrounding muscles overcompensate. The imbalance causes instability in joints and can make players vulnerable to serious injuries.

Roskopf resets the nervous system’s communication with the weak muscles by putting pressure on the neurological connections in the muscles. The Indianapolis Colts and New York Giants also have a muscle activation expert, Roskopf said.

The Broncos brought Roskopf into their inner circle about 10 years ago. Roskopf realized in 1998, when quarterback John Elway had a hamstring injury, how many people were trying to get in the door.

“Everyone was calling the training room saying, ‘I can fix him, let me work on him,’” Roskopf said. “I realized they have to be very protective.”

Roskopf comes to the Broncos headquarters on Wednesdays and Fridays from 7 to 9 a.m. He works on injured players and a group of regulars that see him for preventative work, which includes kicker Jason Elam, receiver Rod Smith and defensive end Ebenezer Ekuban.

“I always try to see him first thing in the morning, to wake up the body,” Ekuban said.

Roskopf’s best client has been safety John Lynch.

Lynch was a few months removed from neck surgery when he started his first Broncos training camp in 2004. He lost most of the strength in his right arm the year before, and Lynch had numbness and tingling in the arm during camp.

Lynch met Roskopf, who worked to activate the weakened muscles. Within a few sessions, Lynch felt better.

“He was instrumental in waking up a lot of that stuff that had gone to sleep,” Lynch said.

Since then, Lynch sees Roskopf every week, even during the offseason, to prevent small injuries from becoming a problem. Lynch, who turns 35 Monday, has missed only one of his 34 games as a Bronco.

“He’s so much healthier now than when I met him,” Roskopf said. “Now it’s maintenance. Before it was trying to fix problems.”

Some players, like Ekuban, receive treatment from everyone the Broncos bring in because they figure it all can help.

“We’re finely tuned machines, man,” Ekuban said. “When a little thing isn’t feeling right, you can tell.”

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