



SPOKE TALK

Care, caution and construction

You've heard the old adage, Colorado has two seasons: winter and construction. The summer of 2021 has led us all to believe that orange cones are multiplying throughout the Yampa Valley like a certain well-known virus, blanketing the streets in neon barriers. Combine this with the intermittent Glenwood Canyon closures on Interstate 70 and the rerouting of freeway traffic down a 25 mph stretch of Main Street, and you've got a recipe for madness.

For the most part, riding a bike can be a quicker and more efficient means of transportation across town when construction traffic is peaking. Zipping up the Yampa River Core Trail is generally a more positive experience than zipping into a merge, and you tend to get honked at a lot less. Right now, however, someone is pointing out the fact that we've also had Core Trail closures this season with bridge and underpass repairs. To add to this, the act of riding a bike through a construction site can be rife with danger (did anyone see the CDOT signage on Main Street, "motorcyclists use extreme caution"?). After a deadly accident involving a cyclist in a construction zone this past month, we've been asking ourselves what could be done to prevent this from occurring, again.

One sticking point in our discussions has been that there are a multitude of contractors and agencies in charge of construction zones across town, meaning that lines of communication between their management and the public could be a spiderweb. As their work progress is constantly evolving, safe passage for cyclists through each zone is changeable and fluid. This leads us to believe that much of the awareness we would want to raise around certain zones being "sketchier" for a cyclist at certain times in the season is something we would likely want to rely on word-of-mouth (or social media or quick news alerts) in order to propagate.

As we make proclamations about whether or not a road corridor is suitable for a cyclist's safe passage, it's important to keep in mind whether your judgment of the scenario is focused on the actual objective safety for a cyclist or whether you are more concerned with cyclists slowing down your already-delayed commute by "getting in your way." One positive example of what has been done to ease passage for cyclists and pedestrians during high-traffic times and in work areas is the blinking billboard on Colorado Highway 129 that warned

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RAMS PLAY THE SAINTS



SHELBY REARDON/STAFF

Soroco High School senior Sophia Benjamin eyes the ball as she rises into the air. The Rams started league play against Vail Christian on Thursday night. They won the first set 25-16 but lost the second 25-18. The remaining sets were not finished by press time. **Head to SteamboatPilot.com to read about the rest of the matches.**

Broncos ready to go

Denver finally has deep enough roster to possibly end their playoff drought

Arnie Stapleton
Associated Press

DENVER — First-year general manager George Paton brought both a fresh approach and a throwback doctrine to the Denver Broncos in his first crack at roster building following a two-decade apprenticeship in scouting and personnel.

Paton refurbished Denver's defense, starting with the secondary, and beefed up the Broncos' backfield after succeeding franchise icon John Elway in January.

Paton acquired former Minnesota ally Teddy Bridgewater from Carolina for a sixth-round pick and selected North Carolina's pinballing running back Javonte Williams in the second round of the NFL draft.

In between those moves, he drafted Alabama cornerback Patrick Surtain II with the ninth overall pick just weeks after signing cornerbacks Ronald Darby and Kyle Fuller in free agency.

The rookie class shined at training camp and in the preseason and Bridgewater bested Drew Lock in a quarterback clash to win the starting job. He'll be the 11th starting quarterback for Denver since Peyton Manning retired. No other



BRONCOS
DENVER

NFL team has churned through that many passers in the last half-decade.

Bridgewater takes over an offense loaded with young talent.

The Broncos aim to establish their ground game with veteran Melvin Gordon II and Williams to open up the passing lanes for speedsters Jerry Jeudy and K.J. Hamler, Courtland Sutton, Tim Patrick, and tight ends Noah Fant and Albert Okwuegbunam.

Paton also re-signed safeties Justin Simmons, who has the franchise tag, and Kareem Jackson, and drafted safeties Jamar Johnson and Caden Sterns.

And he fortified his front seven by drafting Ohio State linebacker teammates Jonathon Cooper and Baron Browning, who quickly won over star Von Miller.

Paton exercised the final year of Miller's contract. He returns for his 11th season after missing all of last year with a dislodged ankle tendon and will team

with Pro Bowler Bradley Chubb for the first time since Sept. 29, 2019. In their 20 games together, the pass rush duo has combined for 29½ sacks, seven forced fumbles, four fumble recoveries and an interception.

Miller sees a roster that's legitimately two-deep across the board for the first time since he led the 2015 version to the Super Bowl title.

"We have some of the same players we had last year, but our team looks totally different," Miller said. "The energy is totally different. I know I get carried away" with his annual preseason predictions, but "this year is going to be a great year for our guys."

Some other subplots as the Broncos seek to snap the longest playoff drought ever experienced by a Super Bowl winner:

REJUVENATED JEUDY

One fan of the drudging quarterback competition that dominated Denver's offseason was Jeudy because it helped him focus as he worked to cut down on the dropped passes that plagued him as a rookie. The former Alabama star and 15th overall pick in last year's NFL draft caught 52 passes for 856 yards and three touchdowns last season, well shy of expectations.

Regarded as the best route runner to come out of college in at least a decade,

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SPORTS

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Jeady proved his hands weren't quite as ready. He had two crucial drops in a season-opening loss to Tennessee and dropped a half-dozen passes in a 19-16 loss to the Chargers in Week 16.

Fangio declared afterward that he hoped that would be a "defining moment" in Jeady's career, and the wideout responded with a season-high 140-yard game against the Raiders in Week 17 that included a 92-yard TD, the longest pass play in the league in 2020.

That focus continued in training camp and in the preseason.

STEADY TEDDY

Bridgewater, with his quick reads and throws that are on time and on target if not jaw-dropping passes, proved the safer bet

to start than the more athletic Lock, a daredevil who may have a higher ceiling but also a lower floor.

One guy not surprisingly in his corner is Drew Brees, who watched Bridgewater go 5-0 in his stead during the 2019 season in New Orleans.

"I think Teddy is a great fit for Denver," said Brees, now an NBC Sports analyst. "Everywhere that Teddy's been the players have loved him, he's really endeared himself to the team, he's got great leadership ability."

Brees said it won't be easy facing Patrick Mahomes and Justin Herbert twice, "and yet at the same time I think that they've made an upgrade with Teddy going into there and competing, winning the job, winning over the team and now being in position to help them win some games."

Bridgewater is Fangio's

seventh starting quarterback. The only NFL head coach with more than that through their first 33 games was John McKay, whose expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers lost their first 26 games in 1976 and '77. The Bucs were 4-29 in their first 33 games under eight quarterbacks.

FANGIO'S FATE

Fangio is 12-20 in his two seasons as Broncos head coach and that includes 0-7 in September. With a soft schedule in the first month — Giants, Jaguars and Jets — Fangio cannot afford another slow start, especially after his poor clock management cost him chances to win September games in each of his first two seasons.

Paton signed a six-year deal and Fangio and his staff are basically on notice to prove they belong beyond 2021.

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motorists of "HEAVY PED AND BIKE TRAFFIC ON ROAD." We would like to see more examples of multimodal-minded safety precautions for two-wheeled commuters, occasional signage that alerts motorists to their presence and more thorough identification of surface-level hazards like

loose gravel or slick metal.

Overall, we just need to keep looking out for each other on the road. The human form is a fragile one, and propelling it at high speed down a paved corridor is inherently somewhat dangerous. Keep your head on a swivel, and keep a loving eye out for all commuters as we complete the next project and improve

our transportation infrastructure.

This was motivated by, and is dedicated to, the cyclist who passed away shortly after an accidental fall in a work zone on Steamboat Boulevard in early August. May her friends and family find peace.

Laraine Martin is executive director of Routt County Riders.

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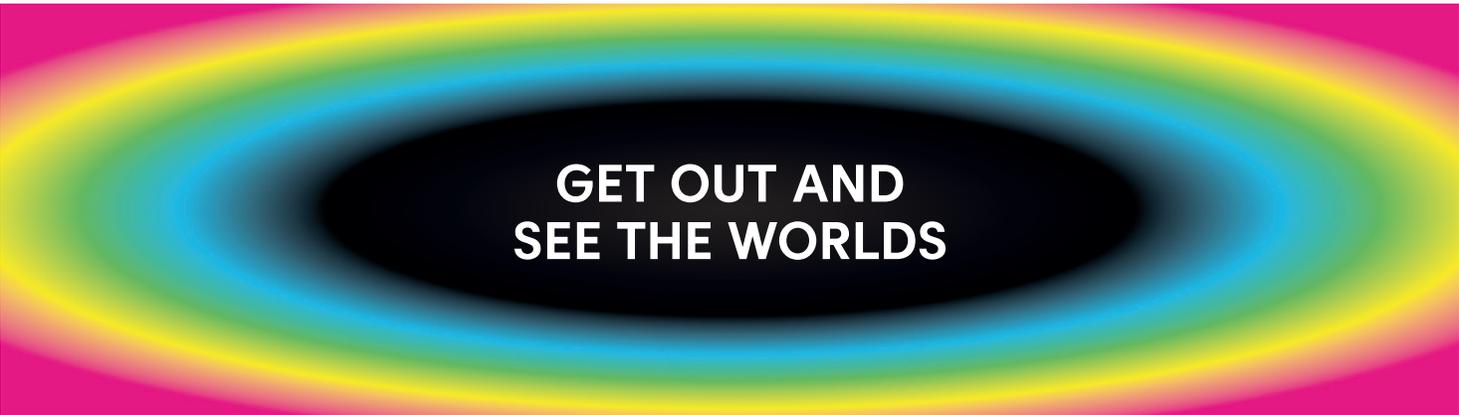
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