

Broncos out to avoid a beatdown

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — The Denver Broncos are still smarting from their beatdown at Baltimore and they're pledging not to let themselves get pummeled by Pittsburgh.

The main message when coach Josh McDaniels installed his game plan Wednesday was that the Broncos need to get back to the basics of winning the physical matchups. It's what they did during their 6-0 start, a stretch that came to a crashing halt in a 30-7 blowout loss at Baltimore last week.

"Yeah, they beat us up pretty good, no question about it," Broncos quarterback Kyle Orton said. "We feel like we've got a physical football team and certainly Pittsburgh prides themselves on that, too. So, it'll be a hard-hitting game and whoever can win that battle is going to have a good chance to win."

The Broncos were the NFL's biggest surprise when they took an unblemished record into November. Under the brash, 33-year-old McDaniels, they proved well-coached, disciplined and physical. And they quieted any remaining doubters by beating Dallas, New England and San Diego in successive weeks in October.

Then came the blowout at Baltimore, and now the league will learn if they have a bounce-back in them that's anywhere near as impressive

as their stunning start.

They figure the ricochet begins with being the ones to deliver most of the punishment.

Physicality can be a nebulous notion in the NFL. What constitutes being more physical than one's opponent? Is it mostly about size, strength, speed, matchups, gumption?

"It's about everything," Orton said. "It's about practice. You can't just practice soft for three or four days and expect to go out and play a physical game."

Linebacker Andra Davis said being physical is almost all mental.

"You know that next day you will be hurting. So just accept the fact, go in there and bang, throw your body around and try to knock your guy back," Davis said. "It will be an all-day effort. You have to go in there and bang, bang, bang."

McDaniels disputes the perception that the Broncos lost the physical battle last week because they were overmatched in any area.

"We didn't play the way that we're capable of playing. And that's not an excuse. Baltimore forced us to play the way we played and they deserve credit," McDaniels said. "We've got to do better. But it's not about matchups. We have enough players out there that can match up physically with anybody in this league."

That would come in handy because Pittsburgh presents the same sort of challenge Baltimore did with a fast, controlled style of play piloted by stars such as Ben Roethlisberger and Hines Ward on offense and James Harrison and Troy Polamalu on defense.

"Absolutely, it's a very physical team in every phase," McDaniels said. "And to me, that's where it starts with the Steelers. If you're going to get 'out-physicaled' offensively, defensively, in the kicking game, you're going to have a hard time winning. And they are definitely going to challenge you in every area."

There's simply no soft underbelly to the defending Super Bowl champs.

"Every one of their players plays like that. I don't care if it's the kick-off returner, the kicker, the tight ends, the lines, whomever it is, Roethlisberger. They're all physical players that play tough and are going to present that challenge to us individually and as a team collectively," McDaniels said.

The Steelers (5-2) have been throwing the ball a lot more this season, but the Broncos feel that's a trap.

"Pittsburgh is going to pound the ball," defensive lineman Kenny Peterson said. "They have a physical offensive line."

Softball signee



Photo courtesy of OU sports information

Santa Fe Trail senior Courtney Cripe, sitting next to Ottawa University softball coach Jay Kahnt, signed to play softball for the Lady Braves. Standing in the back are her parents, Darin and Dayla Cripe.

Jackson feels aches

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Posting on his Twitter account Sunday night, SJ39, Steven Jackson said aches and pains from a big day against the Detroit Lions were "starting to get to me."

You should see the other guys.

The 235-pound running back was at his bruising best in the St. Louis Rams' slump-busting victory at Detroit, dragging tacklers while piling up 149 yards on 22 carries and breaking free for the winning score. He can hit the hole, he can create his own holes and he can put a team on his back, too.

The Lions certainly got their fill and then some from the unique hybrid,

a runner who can get the tough yards but with wheels to match. On a contender, he'd probably be one of the NFL's top stars.

"Man," said Detroit defensive end Dewayne White, "he's a big guy."

Jackson was so determined to put a halt to the Rams' 17-game losing streak, he accidentally ran over an official on one of his rambles. For that, he apologized on Twitter.

No need to revisit anything else in that game, or virtually his entire season for that matter. Jackson has consistently produced despite a lack of playmakers around him in the NFL's worst offense; the Rams have scored just 77 points.

EQUAL: Passing attack moving in right direction

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of ducks and managed to get a completion here and there.

"(The passing game) hasn't sufficiently made the progress that I would like, but it is moving in that direction."

Ask the offensive linemen, and they're just fine with the run-first mentality.

"We want to be a tough football team and we want to be physical up front and pound the ball a little big and keep the ball in our possession and keep the other offenses of the field and throw it when we have to," said senior left tackle Nick Stringer.

Center Wade Weibert agreed.

"I definitely like being

known as a run blocker," he said. "I like pass blocking as much as the next guy and it saves a little more energy when you can sit back and pass block a little bit, but it's a pride thing."

"When you know that you can run the ball and you can move it, that's definitely a big pride thing. You want to move that line of scrimmage."

But even Stringer conceded that adding a passing threat to the equation can only help in the long run.

"Why not help our offense out even more by throwing the ball even more and keeping (defenses) on their toes?" he said. "I think we need to keep running the ball effectively and when we throw the

ball we need to protect the passer."

Gregory, who misfired on his first four passes of the season against Louisiana in week two, has steadily raised his completion percentage to 62.2 with three touchdowns and two interceptions. He's only averaging 83.1 yards per game, but has raised that to 133 over the past three.

"We're a pretty solid running team and we threw the ball better last week than we have," he said.

Kansas coach Mark Mangino, a former K-State assistant under Snyder, said the Wildcats' offense has his former boss' fingerprints all over it.

"They are back to playing basic, principled foot-

ball," Mangino said. "They are not real flashy. They do not take a lot of chances."

"Their philosophy on offense is, 'You don't run a play unless you can block everybody.'"

According to Weibert, whether the Wildcats ran or threw last week was less important than the fact that they moved the ball against a stingy Oklahoma defense.

"This last weekend we were very balanced," he said. "I think we took a lot of steps forward in our passing game and our run game as far as moving some very good players."

"That's the best defensive front we've gone against so far, so it was a big confidence deal for us."

Victory bittersweet for McMurray

TALLADEGA, Ala. (AP) — When Jamie McMurray got home on Sunday night following his dramatic win at Talladega hours earlier, he turned to his wife, Christy, and asked what they should do to celebrate his first victory in nearly three years.

Champagne? A nice dinner?

Not exactly. Christy hopped on the computer while her emotionally drained husband crawled into bed with the couple's two dogs.

Sorry, McMurray's partying days are long gone.

"I've grown up a lot the last four years," the 33-year-old driver said.

He hasn't really had a choice. His four seasons at Roush Fenway Rac-

ing have been uneven at best. He moved to Roush from Chip Ganassi Racing in 2006 to compete for a championship.

McMurray failed to make the Chase in each of his four seasons and started 2009 knowing he'd likely be out of a job at the end of the year when Roush trimmed its Cup operation from five cars to four as part of a NASCAR mandate to limit team size.

His impending departure, however, seemed to alleviate some of the tension between McMurray and Roush. The team owner's tough love when McMurray struggled didn't produce the kind of results Roush expected, leading him to do something unexpected: change tactics.

"He came to me and said 'Jamie, I have learned that some people are motivated by humiliation, some are motivated by kicking them in the butt and I've learned with you that you're motivated more by positive reinforcement more than me yelling at you,'" McMurray said.

Now the prerace talks between owner and driver are friendlier. There are handshakes, compliments and the occasional joke.

There was plenty to smile about in the fading twilight at Talladega, where McMurray avoided the usual carnage to pick up his first victory since the 2007 summer race at Daytona.

McMurray and Roush doused each other with

champagne, and Roush sounded wistful talking about McMurray's impending departure.

"(It's) a great sadness, but I hope that we can win another race with Jamie, and certainly am happy for this one," Roush said. "The guys did a nice job. The car had speed in it, and they didn't make a mistake all day."

It's a difficult task at the notoriously tricky 2.66-mile tri-oval. But after wrecking six laps in at the spring race at Talladega, McMurray opted to hang toward the back early on Sunday during the single-file parade. He figured he was in good company running alongside three-time defending Cup champion Jimmie Johnson.

Sports briefs

OU soccer teams earn home matches

The Ottawa University men's and women's soccer teams earned home matches in the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Tournament, which starts Friday.

The Lady Braves were the regular season champions with a 9-0 mark and received a first-round bye into the semifinals. The men finished strong with three straight victories for a No. 3 seed. The men were 6-3. The Braves drew No. 6 Bethany and will play 7 p.m. Saturday after the football game between the same two schools.

The semifinals will be played at the higher seed with the championship matches played at Tabor College in Hillsboro.

The winners of each division will be the KCAC champion and represent the conference in the NAIA regional tournament.

Mat Masters' sign-up set for Tuesday

The Ottawa Mat Masters, a kid wrestling club, will have registration for the 2009-10 season 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Ottawa High School Cyclone Room.

The first practice will be 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Nov. 19 from in the Cyclone wrestling room.

For more information, contact Renee Burdick at (785) 242-4883.

Volleyball tryouts will be Saturday

The Fireballs Volleyball Club tryouts will be Saturday at West Franklin High School in Pomona. Tryouts for 10-year-olds and 11-12 will start at 8 a.m. The 13-year-olds is at 10 a.m. and the 14-year-olds at 1 p.m.

Tryout fee is \$10. For more information, call Betty Greer at (785) 418-4311.

Scoreboard

Schedules

Thursday College volleyball Ottawa at Bethany, 7 p.m.	Aug. 22 — Sharpie 500, Bristol, Tenn. (Kyle Busch)
Friday College basketball Ottawa at Central Methodist (M), 7:30 p.m. Ottawa vs. Hillsdale (W), 5 p.m.	Sept. 6 — Pep Boys Auto 500, Hampton, Ga. (Kasey Kahne)
Saturday College football Bethany at Ottawa, 1:30 p.m.	Sept. 12 — Chevy Rock & Roll 400, Richmond, Va. (Denny Hamlin)
College soccer Bethany at Ottawa (M), 7 p.m.	Sept. 20 — Sylvania 300, Loudon, N.H. (Mark Martin)
College cross-country Ottawa at KCAC Meet, Wichita, 10:30 a.m.	Sept. 27 — AAA 400, Dover, Del. (Jimmie Johnson)
College basketball Ottawa vs. Baker (M), 1 p.m. Ottawa vs. Central Methodist (W), Wichita, 2 p.m.	Oct. 4 — Price Chopper 400, Kansas City, Kan. (Tony Stewart)
	Oct. 11 — Pepsi 500, Fontana, Calif. (Jimmie Johnson)
	Oct. 17 — NASCAR Banking 500, Concord, N.C. (Jimmie Johnson)
	Oct. 25 — Tums Fast Relief 500, Martinsville, Va. (Denny Hamlin)
	Nov. 1 — Amp Energy 500, Talladega, Ala. (Jamie McMurray)
	Nov. 8 — Dickies 500, Fort Worth, Texas.
	Nov. 15 — Checker O'Reilly Auto Parts 500, Avondale, Ariz.
	Nov. 22 — Ford 400, Homestead, Fla.

NASCAR

2009 NASCAR Sprint Cup schedule and standings By The Associated Press Aug. 16 — Carfax 400, Brooklyn, Mich. (Brian Vickers)	Driver Standings 1. Jimmie Johnson, 6,248 2. Mark Martin, 6,064 3. Jeff Gordon, 6,056 4. Juan Pablo Montoya, 6,009 5. Tony Stewart, 5,969 6. Kurt Busch, 5,936 7. Greg Biffle, 5,908 8. Ryan Newman, 5,846 9. Kasey Kahne, 5,834 10. Carl Edwards, 5,811 11. Denny Hamlin, 5,800
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ANNIE

Annie is a darling little (although a little heavy) tri-colored Beagle. She is about 5 1/2 years old and is good with dogs and cats and did well with the owners cattle and horses as well. She was a breeder's dog and then got a home in the country, where she was threatened by neighbors that she would be shot. So she is now looking for a home situation where she can be safe. She would be a great companion for someone or a family. Come to the shelter to visit with Annie!



SADIE

Meet Sadie. She placed in a costume contest at Cottonwood Animal Hospital this weekend! She is beautiful in person. She really has a Shar Pei face. Her coat is just wonderful - look at her shine. Sadie is in foster care so if you want to see her, call the shelter to ask to meet her.



GARFIELD

CHEESE! This is Garfield. He is one of many beautiful cats we have available at the shelter. We are overloaded with cats. Please, if you can help just one cat find a warm home for the winter, please act now. Garfield says thanks.



If you are interested in this animal, please either email Bea Martin Peck Animal Shelter at bmpas.pet.inquiry@hotmail.com for an application or call 785-242-2967. If you would like to come visit the shelter, the address is 230 W. 19th St. in Ottawa, KS. The shelter is open to the public, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 1:00 pm to 5:30 pm and Saturday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The shelter is closed on Wednesday and Sunday. Off-site adoptions sponsored by HAHS are held at PETSMART at 115th & Metcalf in Overland Park every Saturday from noon to 3 p.m. To confirm that this animal will attend the off-site adoption at PETCO, please email the shelter.

Visit www.bmpas.org for more details!