

ON TO THE PROS

By Rob Jackson

The career aspirations of an undrafted collegiate can be quite daunting. Nonetheless, Dave Treadwell approached his own ascent with none of the expectant trepidations.

"I just felt that playing at Clemson, at that level, I was prepared to move on to the next level. A lot of guys say that the biggest difference (from college football) is playing in front of bigger crowds. And I was used to playing in front of bigger crowds in Death Valley.

"Even going on to play at the professional level, I don't think those moments can be matched just because of the pure excitement and enthusiasm at the college football level. Just talking about it again, I still get chills up and down my spine. How unbelievable those moments were. How fun and exciting it was for me and my teammates

I just knew I wanted to go out and give it my best shot. I was undrafted, which was a little disappointing because I thought I might be drafted since I was a consensus All-American coming out of college. But I decided --I walked on once, I can walk on again."

"I went on to try out with the Broncos. I didn't make it. I was in the last cut. I went back to Jacksonville briefly and continued to train. And then took a job with Dow Chemical (with) which I had a pending offer coming out of college and continued to stay in shape. I actually got a few tryouts during the season. Four or five teams called me, brought me in, and worked me out. They said, 'we're really looking for a veteran at this time, but we wanted to take a look at you.' I actually ended up signing with the Cardinals at the end of that 1988 football season. I was eventually traded back to the Broncos in May of 1989."

Dave started his career in the NFL with a Broncos team that posted an 11-5, conference best record and a berth in Super Bowl XXIV. He put 120 points on the scoreboard during the regular season by hitting on 39 of 40 PAT's and 27 of 33 field goal attempts.

In the playoffs, it was Dave's PAT in the fourth quarter that put the Broncos ahead of the Steelers for good and won the divisional game 24-23 and set Denver against Cleveland again in the conference championship game for the third time in four years. Against the Browns, Dave contributed thirteen points and started the scoring in the first quarter after a Dennis Smith interception of Bernie Kosar. He sealed the game in the fourth with two field goals, both coming off interceptions of Kosar desperation passes.

The obvious blight on the season came two weeks later in the Louisiana Super Dome. Dave scored the first Bronco points of

the Super Bowl blowout in New Orleans that would become the worst of Denver's four championship losses. He would tack on one extra point in the third stanza as San Francisco defeated the Bronco's 55-10.

All told the AFC's leading scorer contributed 143 points to his team's cause and earned himself a trip to the pro bowl in his rookie season where he connected on all three of his extra point attempts.

"A playoff game, in the NFL in my first year was just unbelievable. When I look back on it, it seems like that first year was almost a blur, the way it went by so quick and we had so much success. It's like I almost expected that kind of success year in and year out and I didn't realize until I played a few years, how difficult it was to achieve what we achieved in only my first year there. It was like going to Disney World when we were playing in the Super Bowl. Unfortunately we ran into a juggernaut in San Francisco that day. I am just truly grateful for the opportunity to have played in a Super Bowl because so many guys go through their entire career and never get that opportunity, win or lose, to play in a Super Bowl. It's a wonderful experience."

After finishing three of the previous four seasons in the Super Bowl, the Broncos fell out of the saddle in 1990 and dropped to last place in the Western Division.

The season even started on a sour note when head coach Dan Reeves underwent heart surgery to clear blocked arteries. "It was probably a reality check for us a little bit to realize how fragile life was at that point. Football wasn't the most important thing. It just kind of gave you a different outlook on life."

The team made a dramatic improvement the following year and finished the 1991 season not as the division's cellar dweller, but as its champs with a solid 12-4 record and a berth in the playoffs. They waited for Houston in the second round in a game that was played at Mile High Stadium. Dave contributed nine points all told, including the game winning 28-yard field goal in the fourth quarter. The win propelled the Broncos into the AFC title game against the Bills in Buffalo.

In the ensuing defensive struggle that remained scoreless until the third quarter, the AFC's top rated defense held the vaunted Bill's attack without an offensive touchdown.

However, aside from their own many squandered opportunities to score, the Broncos themselves fell victim to one of the league's least impressive defenses. After an injured John Elway left the game early in the fourth, Denver narrowed the Buffalo lead to 10-7 on a Gary Kubiak 3-yard run with Dave converting the point

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after. But after the Broncos successfully recovered the ensuing onside kick, a Steve Sewell fumble in Buffalo territory sealed Denver's ill fate for another season

"At least defensively we did dominate the game, holding Buffalo in check, who had been just an offensive powerhouse throughout the season. I think if we'd had the home field advantage, there's no question in my mind it would have made a tremendous difference for us."

After a 7-3 start to the 1992 season, John Elway went down with an injury. He missed four of the final six starts and the Broncos lost five of those games including four straight. The team fell back to mediocrity with an 8-8 record and Dan Reeves was let go at season's end. Defensive coordinator Wade Phillips was promoted to head coach. In spite of his finest season thus far in the pros, Dave was released.

"Sometimes teams decide to go in a different direction and basically clean house. A new staff came in. A new special teams coach decided he wanted a bigger stronger guy and that kicker turned out to be Jason Elam. No regrets on my part, you can't have those in this business. You gotta move on and I got an opportunity to kick two more years in New York."

NEW YORK, NEW YORK...

Not long for the unemployed, Dave quickly found himself reunited with head coach Dan Reeves on the East Coast with the New York Giants and another playoff bound team.

"It was pretty much straight to New York. I think I sat for about three or four days while they made some player moves and then I was on my way to New York."

The team rolled out to a 5-1 start. Then lost two games before running off six straight victories to get to 11-3. A week fifteen loss to the Cardinals dropped them to an 11-4 stalemate with Dallas, heading into the last game of the year with the Cowboys at Giants Stadium. This game would go down as one of the great match-ups of the decade, and one that secured Emmitt Smith in annals of greatness.

With the Giants shut out at the half, Dave put up one PAT and a 29-yard field goal in the third quarter. Then, with 14 seconds left in the fourth, he found the center of the up-rights for a 31-yarder that sent the game into overtime. Eddie Murray kicked the winning field goal for the Cowboys' win but the roles could have easily been reversed.

The Pokes were toying with the possibility of signing Dave before the start of the season, but eventually landed Murray.

"I was considering taking a look at that possibility, it just didn't work out. They waited a couple of games into the season before Lin Elliott was released and they picked up Eddie Murray."

"That was a tough game, trying to win the home-field advantage. You saw what it did for Dallas because that paved the way for them to make it to the Super Bowl."

The next week against the Vikings, Dave started the scoring in the first quarter with a 26-yard field goal and added two PAT's in the third after runs of 51 and 2 yards by Rodney Hampton. The 17-10 victory sent New York to San Francisco the following week.

In Candlestick Park, Dave was greeted by a specter from his past as the Giants were mauled by a gang of 49er ruffians in scarlet and gold. Dave's 25-yard field goal was the only New York score against a 44 point avalanche in the San Francisco onslaught. Shades of *deja vu* haunted the bitter end of another successful season.

IN THE END

Cursed with a seven game losing streak, there would be no post-season accolades for the 1994 Giants. Still, the team finished strong with six straight victories and a respectable 9-7 record.

Dave's swan song came in the thirteenth week of the season against the Browns in Cleveland when he was lifted in favor of Brad Daluiso.

"I struggled there a little bit. I really didn't think I was in too much of a slump. The week prior [in Washington], yeah, I'd missed a couple of field goals but it was in a pouring rainstorm. The season was pretty much decided at that point. We really didn't have but a very slim, outside chance of making the playoffs and I think Coach Reeves wanted to go in and see what Brad could do in game situations."

"And, at the time, with the salary cap being implemented, they wanted to go with one kicker. I just think, again there was a team that was looking to move in another direction with a bigger, stronger guy. And that had never been my forte. My forte had always been accuracy."

As of this interview, Dave is happily married, golfing, and with his engineering degree set aside, about to graduate from Denver University with a new degree in law.

The Georgia's of the world had better take notice, because in life, as he was in his football career, Dave is in there at the end, kicking.

DAVID MARK TREADWELL

K - 6' 1", 180

Clemson

The Bolles High School, FL

Born: 2 / 27 / 1965, Columbia, SC

Year/ Team	G	Pts	FG	FGA	FG%	XP	XPA	XPA%
1989 Den	16	120	27	33	81.8	39	40	97.5
1990 Den	16	109	25	34	73.5	34	36	94.4
1991 Den	16	112	27	36	75.0	31	32	96.9
1992 Den	16	88	20	24	83.3	28	28	100.0
1993 NYG	16	103	25	31	80.6	28	29	96.6
1994 NYG	13	55	11	17	64.7	22	23	95.7
6 yrs	93	587	135	175	77.1	182	188	96.8