

Elway hints at retirement

DENVER (AP) — For years, the Denver Broncos' offense consisted of John Elway and 10 other guys.

Gradually, the Broncos became more than a showcase for one dazzling quarterback. But now, with Elway's retirement set, the Super Bowl champions enter uncharted terrain.

After 16 seasons, the unparalleled master of the two-minute drill is leaving football.

Elway all but announced his retirement Saturday in an interview with Denver TV station KCNC in Pebble Beach, Calif., where he was playing in a golf tournament.

"For so many years everything in my family has revolved around me. It's time for that to change," the 38-year-old quarterback said. "I really accomplished everything I wanted to. There's no real upside to coming back."

Later in the day, Elway told The Associated Press: "I know everybody wants to know, but I'm not going to talk about it right now. There'll be an announcement next week. That's all I have to say about it for now."

Sources close to Elway, speaking on condition of anonymity, said he has told friends he is leaving the game.

Elway reportedly considered announcing his decision two weeks ago, but owner Pat Bowlen was in Australia promoting the Broncos' preseason game there. Then last week, the announcement was further delayed because of the school shootings in sub-

urban Littleton.

Elway's announcement could come as early as Monday. But Broncos are leaning toward a delay of several more days because of the outpouring of grief over the killings.

"I've talked to him and he told me what he's going to do," Broncos Coach Mike Shanahan said. "But I'm not going to comment. I'm going to let John make his announcement."

Bowlen, while declining to confirm Elway's plans, said at a charity event Saturday night: "I've known this was coming for a long time."

Bowlen bought the Broncos in 1984 and never has known a team without Elway.

"I think it's going to be odd for all of us," he said.

Running back Terrell Davis told the Denver Post: "This really lets some air out of your system. It's going to be tough to come back and not see him in the huddle. ...

"I really think this year we're going

JOHN ELWAY
Denver quarterback

to face as much adversity as we've ever faced. We're really going to see how much resolve this team has now."

But offensive guard Mark Schlereth took another view.

While Elway earned his second straight Super Bowl title and the game's MVP honor last January with a 34-19 win over Atlanta, he missed all or part of six games with hamstring, back and rib injuries.

Instead, it was Davis, a 2,008-yard rusher and winner of the league's MVP award, who carried the team.

With Elway gone, Bubby Brister steps in. Brister slipped seamlessly into the lineup last season and guided the Broncos to a 4-0 record while Elway was out. But how will he hold up during a 16-game schedule? And will Brister at QB put more pressure on Davis?

Brister, who turns 37 in August, hasn't started more than eight games in a season since 1990. The backup is Brian Griese, a third-round draft choice in 1998 with limited experience.

Arkansas boosters upset at Little Rock losing game

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Some providers of big money to the Arkansas Razorback athletic program are threatening to pull their support if the University of Arkansas trims the number of home football games it plays at Little Rock.

The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported Sunday that Warren Stephens of Little Rock, whose family has been a major supporter of the Razorback program, warned UA athletic director Frank Broyles in an April 16 letter.

"If you continue on your present course, I will eliminate some or all of our support for the university," wrote Stephens, president of the Stephens Group, a finance and media company based in Little Rock. "Please note that, in doing so, I do not believe I will be alone."

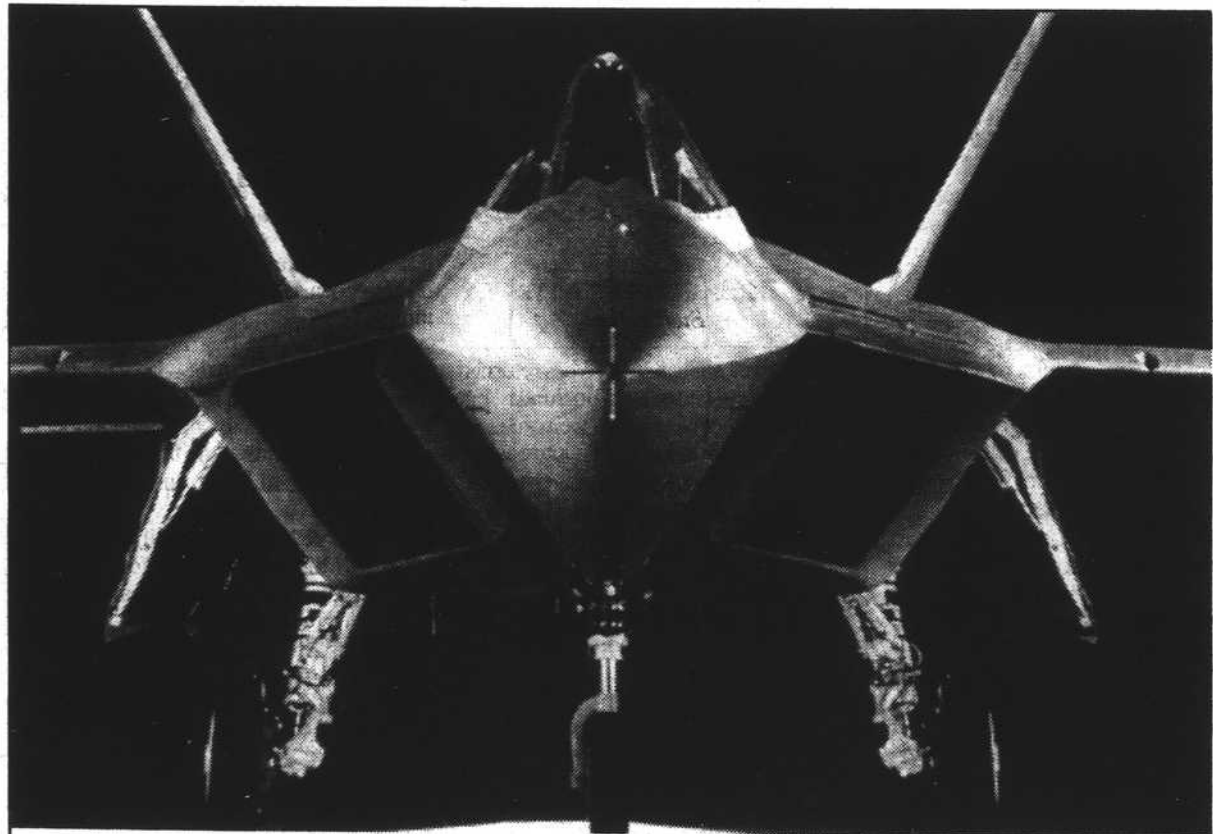
Broyles has proposed to the UA board that the half-century tradition

of playing at least three home games a year in War Memorial Stadium at Little Rock be ended after the upcoming football season. The board does not plan to take up Broyles' proposal until a meeting this summer.

The proposal calls for only two games to be played in the state's capital and largest city, while five games would be played in Razorback Stadium on the university's Fayetteville campus, for five seasons beginning in 2000.

The university clears an average of \$990,000 for each sellout in the Little Rock stadium, which seats 53,727, while it nets \$1.06 million for a sellout at the Fayetteville stadium, seating 50,000.

However, an expansion of Razorback stadium — for which the UA board has approved \$30 million in bonds — would increase the net from games at Fayetteville.



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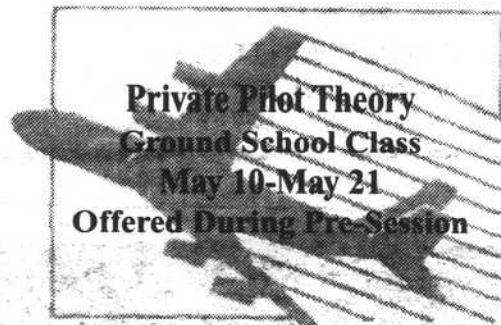
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