

## Fans of all ages unite for the Broncos

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

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Bright orange and blue have recently become more prominent colors around town as Holyoke joins the rest of the state in anxiously anticipating Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 2.

With the Denver Broncos aiming to snatch their third Super Bowl victory in the team's history, fans eagerly await the moment when the Broncos can once again lift the Vince Lombardi Trophy high above their heads as Super Bowl champions.

Storefronts in Holyoke are proudly showcasing their Broncos merchandise and memorabilia, and jerseys from all eras of the team are returning to style as excitement grows for children and adults alike.



**Fourth-grade students Rachel Krueger, Kaison Kinnie, Kristin Vieselmeyer and Koby Way are just a handful of the students in Holyoke showing their support for the Broncos in the days leading up to Super Bowl XLVIII. □ □**

**—Enterprise photo**

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It has been a long time coming for many Broncos fans as Denver's last Super Bowl title came Jan. 31, 1999. For high school age fans and younger, Denver's most successful stretch in the NFL came before their time.

"There have been up and down seasons, but they never have been really awful," HHS senior Logan Tharp said of the years he has cheered for the team. "The last two years have been the most successful by far that I can remember with Peyton Manning taking over."

Tharp, who wasn't even 3 years old during Denver's last Super Bowl run, said he is excited he finally gets to see his favorite team have a shot at the title. "School should have been canceled next Monday (Feb. 3) instead of this Monday (Jan. 27) for when the Broncos win," Tharp said with a laugh.

For many fans, this is their seventh time watching the home-state team make it to the biggest stage in the NFL.

Rick Unrein, a 25-year season ticket holder, has been to his fair share of games. A lifelong fan, Unrein has experienced the agony of four Super Bowl losses and celebrated his team's back-to-back championships in the late 1990s.

With the Super Bowl just days away, the seventh one has a bit more of a special meaning to Unrein. One of Unrein's distant cousins is Mitch Unrein, a defensive tackle for the Super Bowl-bound Broncos.

"I can't really look back and say one Super Bowl was more exciting than any others, but with Mitch playing, this one is more special," Unrein said.

While Unrein won't be making the trip to New Jersey for the big game, he does plan to gather with other family members to watch his cousin and the rest of the Broncos take on the Seattle Seahawks.

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Unrein was on hand for the AFC championship game in Denver Jan. 19 when the team secured a trip to the Super Bowl.

“In 25 years, that was as loud as I’ve ever heard the crowd,” Unrein said.

Also in attendance for the AFC championship game, Steve Young said the energy in the stands was unlike any other game he has been to. He estimated that he sat only three to four minutes throughout the night.

One Holyoke High School alum was lucky enough to snag a highly coveted ticket for the big game. Gentry Lock, a 2001 HHS grad, now lives in New York City and will be rooting for her home-state team firsthand.

While she said she is nervous about the expected winter conditions, she won’t let the cold keep her from the game.

“I can deal with 30- to 40-degree weather,” Lock said. “But if the weather doesn’t warm up soon, I’ll be watching the game in my snow pants, snow boots and parka.”

The game is scheduled to kick off at 4:30 p.m. MST.

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