

BRONCOS FACE SEAHAWKS IN CHILLY SUPER BOWL 48

NEW YORK: Denver's Peyton Manning is hoping to cap a record-setting season with a historic victory in tomorrow's Super Bowl 48 over a Seattle squad determined to spoil his dreams of a fairytale moment.

The Broncos' star 37-year-old quarterback set National Football League season records with 5,477 passing yards and 55 passing touchdowns, sparking Denver to a record 606 points and meaning they go into the weekend action as slight favorites.

"He has built this unbelievable legacy and he is one of the best-if not the best-quarterbacks to ever play the game," Seattle's Russell Wilson said of his opposite number.

The Seahawks counter with the NFL's top-rated defense-the self-styled "Legion of Boom"-which forced a league-leading 39 turnovers, and a balanced attack powered by running back Marshawn Lynch and run-pass threat Wilson.

"He's at the top of the menu," said massive Denver defensive tackle Terrance "Pot Roast" Knighton, referring to Wilson ahead of the United States' biggest sporting spectacle, which is expected to be watched by more than 110 million television viewers in the US alone.

The showdown at the 80,000 MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, will be the first outdoor Super Bowl in a cold-weather city and it is set to be the coldest,

with temperatures forecast to dip below the Super Bowl record 39 degrees Fahrenheit (four degrees Celsius) from 1972.

Both teams went an impressive 13-3 in the regular season to share the NFL's best record. And it's the first time the league's top offensive and defensive units have been pitted against each other in a Super Bowl in 23 years.

Manning could become the first starting quarterback to win a Super Bowl with two different teams, having led the Indianapolis Colts to the 2007 crown. He lost with them to New Orleans in the 2010 Super Bowl.

New culture

Uncertainty after four neck operations led the Colts to cut Manning and Denver signed him in early 2012, setting the stage for him to lead the Broncos to their first Super Bowl since John Elway took Denver to titles in 1998 and 1999.

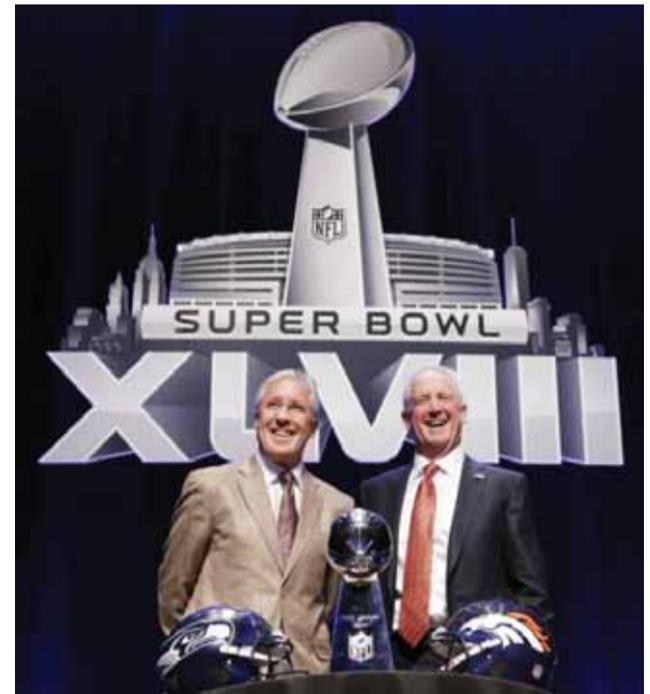
"To try to get comfortable with the new culture you are playing in and surroundings, just to get comfortable, is hard enough," Manning said. "To actually turn it into some production and help your team get back to this game, it's hard to do." The Seahawks lost in their only prior Super Bowl, to Pittsburgh in 2006. "Being a Super Bowl champion is like being struck by lightning-it hardly ever happens," Seattle defensive end Michael Bennett said. "That's why you want to make

the most of it when you get the chance."

To do that, Seattle pass rushers will have to hurry Manning to thwart his precision passing game while the defensive backs, led by the formidable Richard Sherman with an NFL-best eight interceptions, must contain Denver's speedy receivers, topped by Demaryius Thomas and Wes Welker.

"We've got to rush the passer. We've got to have good coverage as well," Seahawks coach Pete Carroll said. "We have to get him to hold the ball and make him go to his second or third option.

"It's all but impossible looking at the numbers. We're going to try to do something about that." Manning brushes off the notion his legacy might rely on a victory tomorrow. "If I had my choice what my legacy would be, it would be that I played my butt off for every team that I ever played on, I was a really good teammate and I did everything I could to win," Manning said. The 12-year age difference between Manning and Wilson will be the largest in Super Bowl history. Wilson offers scrambling ability and can buy time for his receivers to elude defenders, a valuable asset. "I don't know if I prefer him to run it or throw it because he is dangerous both ways," Denver cornerback Champ Bailey said. "One thing we can't let happen is him to get out of the pocket and buy some time, then we lose our guys, a breakdown in coverage. — AFP



EAST RUTHERFORD: Seattle Seahawks head coach Pete Carroll, left, and Denver Broncos head coach John Fox pose before speaking at a news conference yesterday, in New York. The Seahawks and the Broncos are scheduled to play in the NFL Super Bowl XLVIII football game tomorrow, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J. — AP

SCOREBOARD

WELLINGTON: Completed scoreboard in the fifth and final one-day international between New Zealand and India at Westpac Stadium in Wellington yesterday:

New Zealand:

M. Guptill c Shami b Aaron	16
J. Ryder c Rahane b Kumar	17
K. Williamson c Rahane b Aaron	88
R. Taylor c Dhawan b Shami	102
B. McCullum c Sharma b Kohli	23
J. Neesham not out	34
L. Ronchi not out	11
Extras (b1, w5, lb6)	12
Total (5 wickets: 50 overs)303	

Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Ryder), 2-41 (Guptill), 3-193 (Williamson), 4-243 (B.McCullum), 5-274 (Taylor)

Did not bat: N. McCullum, M. Henry, K. Mills, M. McClenaghan
Bowling: Shami 10-3-61-1 (2w), Kumar 8-0-48-1 (2w), Aaron 10-0-60-2 (1w), Ashwin 6-0-37-0, Jadeja 9-0-54-0, Kohli 7-0-36-1

India:

R. Sharma c Taylor b Mills	4
S. Dhawan c N.McCullum b Henry	9
V. Kohli c Young-Husband (sub) b N.McCullum	82
A. Rahane lbw Henry	2
A.Rayudu c Williamson b Henry20	
M. Dhoni c Williamson b Neesham	47
R. Ashwin b Williamson	7
R. Jadeja c Guptill b Mills	5
B.Kumar c Ronchi b Henry	20
M. Shami not out	14
V. Aaron b Neesham	0
Extras (lb1, w4, nb1)	6
Total (all out: 49.4)	216

Fall of wickets: 1-8 (Sharma), 2-20 (Dhawan), 3-30 (Rahane), 4-78 (Rayudu), 5-145 (Kohli), 6-167 (Ashwin), 7-174 (Jadeja), 8-181 (Dhoni), 9-215 (Kumar) 10-216 (Aaron)

Bowling: Mills 10-1-35-2, McClenaghan 10-0-45-0, Henry 10-1-38-4, Neesham

5.4-0-45-1, N.McCullum 10-1-33-1, Williamson 4-0-19-2

Result: New Zealand win by 87 runs.

NZ BEAT INDIA BY 87 RUNS TO WIN ODI SERIES 4-0

WELLINGTON: Ross Taylor and Kane Williamson continued prolific summers with the bat while Matt Henry claimed four wickets on debut as New Zealand beat India by 87 runs to complete the one-day international series 4-0 winners yesterday.

Taylor scored his second century in consecutive innings and Williamson his fifth half century of the series as New Zealand made 303-5 batting first. Henry then took 4-38 in an impressive debut as India was all out for 216 in 49.4 overs.

The win continued seventh-ranked New Zealand's complete dominance of top-ranked India in the series, the third match of which was tied. New Zealand won the first two matches by 24 runs and 15 runs and the last two more emphatically, by seven wickets and 87 runs.

New Zealand's emphatic performance in the series owed a great deal to its consistency with the bat, and that in turn owed much to Taylor and Williamson.

Taylor followed his 112 not out in the fourth match on Tuesday with 102 yesterday, and also scored two half centuries in five innings, totalling 343 runs in the series at an average of 85.75.

Williamson became only the second player, after Pakistan's Yasir Hameed, to score half centuries in every innings of a five match series.

With scores of 71, 77, 65, 60 and 88, Williamson tallied 361 runs in the series, surpassing by 10 runs Nathan Astle's record aggregate for New Zealand in a five-match series.

Great series

"It's been a great series all round," Taylor said. "The way we've batted and

bowled has been very consistent.

"I think the way Kane Williamson has gone about his business and set the platform for the whole team has been outstanding. Five 50s in a row is not an easy feat and he deserves a lot of credit."

Henry was called into the New Zealand lineup yesterday as it continued to rotate its bowlers, exploiting its newly developed depth in that area. It now has Kyle Mills, Tim Southee, Mitchell McClenaghan, Hamish Bennett, Henry and the allrounders Corey Anderson and Jimmy Neesham to call on in limited-overs cricket, along with Trent Boult, Doug Bracewell and Neil Wagner in tests.

Henry's performance yesterday was so impressive he has a strong chance of being called into the New Zealand test squad if injuries occur during its forthcoming two-match series against India. He claimed the vital wickets of Shikhar Dhawan (9), Ajinkya Rahane (2) and Ambati Rayudu (20) as India crumbled to 30-3, then 78-4.

Mills also ramped up pressure on the India top order by bowling his first six overs at a cost of only 8 runs, claiming the wicket of Rohit Sharma (4). He finished with 2-35 from 10 overs while Williamson, in an outstanding all-round performance, took 2-19.

India once again relied on Virat Kohli, restored to No. 3 in the order after opening in the fourth match, and captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni to do the majority of its scoring. Dhoni had previously chosen to bowl on winning the toss for the fifth straight time.

Kohli made 82 as India's top-scorer and Dhoni 47 but after its slow start, India fell hopelessly behind the needed run

rate and its challenge was extinguished well before its innings ended.

Fantastic

"Throughout the series, I think the New Zealand team has played very good cricket," Dhoni said. "Their new-ball bowling has been fantastic but where they've really taken the game away from us is the middle-overs batting.

"They start off slowly but they build partnerships and keep wickets in hand there so they know they can get 80 to 90 runs (in the last 10 overs)."

In a remarkably abundant summer, Taylor has posted his ninth and 10th one-day international centuries after scoring centuries in each of three tests against West Indies.

Under the tutelage of former New Zealand batsman Martin Crowe, Taylor has overcome the leg-side pattern of scoring which was the feature of his early career and developed a much more broad-based and prolific run-scoring ability.

He came to the wicket yesterday when New Zealand was 41-2 and after India bowled exceptionally well in the early overs. With Williamson, Taylor set about repairing the innings and stayed together from the 13th to the 38th overs.

Williamson reached his half century from 64 balls and Taylor followed with a 50 from 54 balls, including six fours.

Captain Brendon McCullum dashed 23 from 18 balls and Jimmy Neesham 34 from 19 balls, with three fours and two sixes, to substantially boost New Zealand's total in the final overs. The first test starts in Auckland on Thursday. — AP