

1985



Manufacturer:	Russell Athletic ¹	
Unique Features:		
Design/Style Notes:	Nylon mesh fabric; rib-knit abutted V-neck neckband with left overlapping right or with neck-band extending into the body, below the horizontal cowl seam (see Fig. 85-1); horizontal seam attaches body front to shoulder cowl; ¼-length sleeves.	
Tagging:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manufacturer: 2" x 3 ¾" including blue/red logo, size (½" font), and care instructions (see Fig. 85-5)• Other: Content tag sewn beneath and centered below manufacturer's tag; "100% NYLON" in black font	
Specifications:	Home	Road
Color:	Burnt Orange	White
Striping:	Russcote 2-color, 5-stripe pattern. White center, blue outers, about 1/8" orange spacing.	Russcote 2-color, 5-stripe pattern. ½" orange center, ¾" blue outers, about 1/8" white spacing.
Numbering:		
Front:	Russcote white with blue feathered edge.	Russcote blue with orange feathered edge.
Back:	Russcote white with blue feathered edge.	Russcote blue with orange feathered edge.
Sleeves:	Russcote white with blue feathered edge.	Russcote blue with orange feathered edge.
Lettering:	White	Blue heat-set vinyl
Notes:	¹ At least one example a 1985 Champion jersey appears to exist (see Appendix below).	

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Fig. 85-1. 1985 home uniform (T. Lilly) with jersey's neckband extending into body, below the horizontal shoulder/cowl seam



Fig. 85-2. 1985 road uniform (J. Elway)

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Figs. 85-3 & 85-4. Front and rear of circa 1985 road jersey (J. Elway)



Fig. 85-5. Manufacturer's tag from circa 1985 road jersey

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Two different photos taken circa 1985 show quarterback John Elway wearing a white Champion jersey. In the first photo (Fig. 85-6), Elway is pictured as one of 24 players featured in a 1986 promotional scratch-game card series issued by McDonald's restaurants. The Champion "C" logo appears on the left sleeve between the striping and hem (as shown by red arrow).

Bill Harpole, who was the team's equipment manager from 1983-'86 insisted that Russell Athletic was the Broncos' uniform supplier during his tenure and that, to the best of his knowledge, Champion was never used as the team's supplier.

Uniform specialist Dave Miedema pointed out in his *Uniformity* newsletter, "Also interesting is the style of the number 7 on Elway's jersey... not consistent with the normal, serif-bearing block numbers that Denver normally used in that era, but consistent with numbers on various other teams' Champion-supplied jerseys in the not-to-distant past."

When presented with the McDonald's photograph, the Harpole suggested that, in spite of the live-action appearance of this photo, the photo was, more than likely the product of a staged photo shoot. Further photographic evidence would, however, refute this assertion. A second live-action photo (Fig 85-7) also faintly shows Champion's "C" logo on the left sleeve of Elway's jersey (below the "W"). Further this photo can be dated with some certainty.

The live-action shot of a game vs. the Chiefs appeared on the October 20, 1986 cover of *The Sporting News*. Assuming that this was a photo from an actual game and not a staged shot, we would deduce that the photo was taken at Kansas City on Oct. 27th, 1985 (1983 - In Elway's first game at KC, the temperature was -30° F. and it's unlikely that the players would be in short sleeves; 1984 - jersey would have had 25th Anniversary patch on left shoulder; 1986 - Game at KC was Dec. 7th). Also of note in the *TSN* photo is the issue of the number's font style as mentioned above by Dave Miedema. A serif is visible on the number "7" on Ken Lanier's right sleeve (between the tops of letters "W" and "A"), but is missing from the "7" on Elway's sleeve (between the "E" and "L") just as in the McDonald's photo.

A subsequent review of NFL Films' *Miraclemakers and Heartbreakers: The 1985 Denver Broncos*, shows Elway wearing a white road jersey with sans serif-style numbering in road games at Kansas City on October 27th, Los Angeles on November 24th (see Fig. 85-8) and Pittsburgh on December 1st. A brief shot of Elway behind center in the Kansas City game also clearly depicts the Champion logo on the quarterback's left sleeve.



Fig. 85-6. Circa 1985 photo from '86 McDonald's scratch-game card

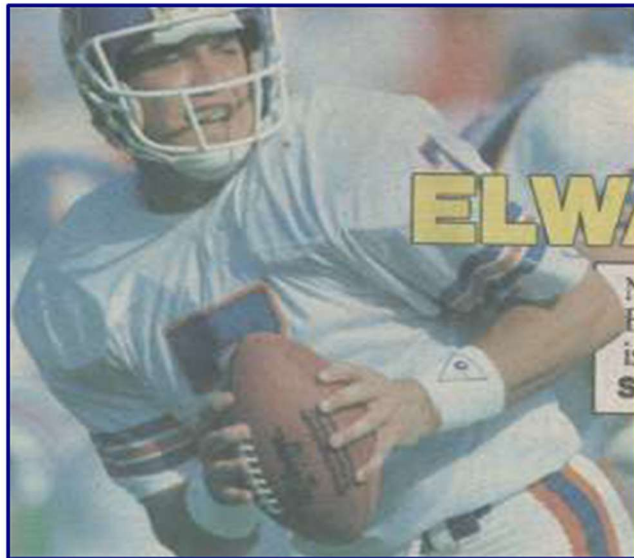


Fig. 85-7. From October 20, 1986 cover of *The Sporting News* (Photo taken at Kansas City, 10/27/85)

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Fig. 85-8. November 24, 1986 at Los Angeles. Note Champion-style sans-serif right sleeve number (7) on Elway's jersey