Anything to get a championship or two in the few years he's got left.

Peyton Manning stood next to John Elway, holding up a bright orange jersey with the No. 18 on it.

Yes, that could take some getting used to.

And now if Manning's surgically repaired neck cooperates, these two quarterbacks - one in the Hall of Fame, the other headed there one day - think they might be taking a similar photo together, only next time they'll be holding a Super Bowl trophy.

Manning was introduced as the new quarterback of the Denver Broncos on Tuesday, the four-time MVP taking the spot once held by Elway, who as Broncos vice president engineered the deal to bring the NFL's most sought-after free agent to town.

It's a deal that could also mark the end of Tim Tebow's days in Denver - a bold move, for sure, but one Elway was more than willing to take.

"Plan B?" he said. "I don't have a Plan B. We're going with Plan A."

After his photo op with Elway and owner Pat Bowlen, Manning answered many of the questions that have been bouncing around since March 7, when his old team, the Indianapolis Colts, released the quarterback and set in motion one of the most frenetic free-agent pursuits in history.

On the neck injury that kept him off the field through 2011: "I'm not where I want to be. I want to be where I was before I was injured. There's a lot of work to do to get where we want to be from a health standpoint."

On his potential role in being the man who could bring about the end of Tebow's popular stay in Denver: "I know what kind of player Tim Tebow is, what kind of person he is, what an awesome year it was. If Tim Tebow is here next year, I'm going to be the best teammate I can be to him. He and I are going to help this team win games. If other opportunities present themselves to him, I'm going to wish him the best."

On Elway's role in leading him to choose Denver over other suitors, the most serious of which were the Titans and 49ers: "I'm seeing him as the leader of a franchise. I really liked what he had to say. Everyone knows what kind of competitor he is as a player. I can tell he's just as competitive in this new role. That got me excited."

And so, the deal was sealed.

Manning has a five-year, $96 million contract and plans to retire in Denver. His familiar No. 18 was actually retired - a tribute to Denver's first quarterback, Frank Tripucka, who was more than happy to let Manning bring it out of mothballs. The Broncos, meanwhile, have some protection

in the way the contract was formulated. There's no signing bonus. Manning will get $18 million guaranteed for next season, but must pass a physical before each season, starting in 2013, to get paid.

"I don't consider it much of a risk, knowing Peyton Manning," Elway said. "I asked him, `Is there any doubt in your mind that you can't get back to the Peyton Manning we know of?' And he said, `There's no doubt in my mind.'"

It was 14 years ago that Bowlen stood on the podium in San Diego, lifted the franchise's first Super Bowl trophy and proclaimed: "This one's for John."

But this franchise hasn't been anywhere near what it was since Elway retired a year later with a second title in tow.

His return to the front office last year set off a whirlwind of activity that landed the Broncos in the playoffs. But Elway has always been in this to win Super Bowls and he's throwing his hat in with Manning, the 50,000-yard passer who redefined the quarterback position through the 2000s, not Tebow - who seems most comfortable carrying and not throwing the ball.

"Tim Tebow's a great kid. If I want someone to marry my daughter, it's him," Elway said. "Tim is a great football player, but with the opportunity that presented itself here, we had to take advantage of that."

He said no decision has been made on Tebow's future, but he seemed to be preparing the quarterback's fans to say goodbye.

"That's the tough part of this business," Elway said.

Manning, who turns 36 on Saturday, said he made a quick connection with Elway, who won his two Super Bowls in Denver after his 37th birthday. Since No. 7's retirement, a long string of

quarterbacks have come to Denver, trying in vain to replace the unreplaceable. If anyone can get out of that shadow, Manning could be the man.

He's got two trips to the Super Bowl and one title, 11 Pro Bowls and was the fastest player to reach 50,000 yards and 4,000 completions.

Long known as a master student of the game, there are hours of highlights available that begin with Manning standing at the line of scrimmage, surveying a defense, checking out of a play - or two - then calling the right one and getting the Colts to the end zone.

It's expected he'll be able to run his kind of offense in Denver, which reverted to an option-style system to maximize Tebow's potential last year.

One other factor in Manning's decision to play outdoors in the Mile High City: The nearly $40 million in salary cap room the Broncos have, putting them in the mix for quality free agents, possibly including Manning's former teammates Jeff Saturday and Dallas Clark.

Anything to get a championship or two in the few years he's got left.

"I realize I don't have 14 years left, by any means," Manning said. "This isn't something where I'm just building a foundation to do something in two years or three years. This is a `now' situation. We're going to do whatever we can to win right now. That's all I'm thinking about right now."

The status of Manning's neck, however, will be an ongoing issue. It's one thing to throw through the entire route tree on a practice field, which he did to pretty much everyone's satisfaction, quite another to take a blindside hit from a 300-pound defender, which hasn't happened since he was surgically repaired.

"There's no question I have work to do," Manning said. "I've been very open with the Broncos,

really all the teams, about my medical history, about where I am, about how I feel. I really let them tell me. I've put all the cards out on the table, working out for three teams, going through my entire medical history, not just this past year. I couldn't sell myself when it came to that. I had to let them tell me and decide this was something they wanted to do."