

Press&Dakotan DAILY DOSE

Daily opinions from the P&D Sports Staff on local and national high school, college and professional sports.



BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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Normally today's (Wednesday) home baseball and softball openers for an outside assignment and be an extremely exciting event for me — no matter what the windchill at Riversdale Park is.

Today will mark the first time since early November that I have had an outside assignment and, in a normal year, I wouldn't have really wanted any outdoor assignments during that stretch. A "normal" winter would have made the openers anything but certain, with threats of snow all around on the forecast. This year, I spent a good portion of last week wishing that I had gotten around to heating the air conditioning on my overworked car.

So the chance to get out and work outside — hopefully rain will stay away enough to let that happen — is

This Spring Has A Strange Feel ... Warm

a more than welcome break from covering basketball over the last month and gearing up for the April 7 release of our spring sports preview. When spring is as nice as this one has been so far — and yes, I know that spring is technically only one day old — it's hard to stay focused on the business end of the sports reporting job.

But, for the sake of my paycheck and the sanity of my staff, I will do my best not to let the spring weather distract me from getting the things done that need to get done.

Along that line, we have a few things that we as a staff are hoping to try this spring. And, as always, if you have a suggestion about what you'd like to see us do — or an idea for a story — feel free to pass them on to us. Emailing us at sports@yankton.net or calling us at 605-665-7811, ext. 106, are the best ways to reach us.

Be sure to get out and enjoy the weather. If you've grown up in the upper Midwest, you know how rare these springs truly are.

Yankton Heat Champions At 2 Tournaments

SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Yankton Heat fifth grade boys' basketball team recently finished first place at the Roger Haas Youth Basketball Tournament, as well as at a Bon Homme tournament. The Heat, coached by Brian Carda and Jim Sawatzke, are sponsored by Steamway Cleaning, Olson's Pest Treatments and Vision Care Associates. Team members include (front, L-R): Ethan Wishon, Nick Kurtenbach, Jack Raab, Rex Ryken, (back) Owen Feser, Michael Frick, Cole Sawatzke and Miles Carda.



USD's Buell, Ballew Earn Summit League Honors

ELMHURST, Ill. — South Dakota juniors Bethany Buell and Kyle Ballew have been named the Summit League Outdoor Track and Field Athletes of the Week, the league announced on Tuesday. It is the first weekly honor from the Summit League for both athletes.

Buell (St. Louis, Mo.) earned the women's athlete of the week honor after setting a school outdoor record of 14-2.5 at the Aztec Open on Friday in San Diego, Calif. The mark topped her previous school record by five inches and is the top-ranked outdoor pole vault in the nation so far this season. While this is Buell's first Summit League honor, it is the sixth time in her career that she has earned a weekly conference athlete of the week honor.

Ballew (West Hills, Calif.) earned the men's athlete of the week honor after a strong showing in the pole vault at the Aztec Open. Ballew cleared a pole vault height of 17-6.25 — the best height in the Summit League and the ninth best in the nation so far this season. Ballew, who finished third in the Summit League Indoor Meet, is in his first year in the Coyote program after transferring from Los Angeles Valley Junior College.

The Coyote track and field teams are back in action on March 31 at the Texas Relays and the Arkansas Spring Invitational.

Big Sioux, Big 8 To Merge

ELK POINT — The members of the Big Sioux and Big 8 Conferences voted Monday to merge their two conferences, beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The new league will be named the Dakota XII Conference.

The Big Sioux and Big 8 will continue their regular schedules during the 2012-13 school year.

Big Sioux Conference schools include Berekford, Canton, Dakota Valley, Dell Rapids, Elk Point-Jefferson, Sioux Falls Christian, Tea Area and Tri-Valley. Lennox, Madison, Vermillion and West Central are in the Big 8 Conference.

Wrestling Coaches Assoc. Announces Award Winners

ABERDEEN — Devon O'Farrell of Sioux Falls Washington and Ben Gillette of Redfield-Doland will be presented the Class A and Class B Wrestler of the Year awards during the South Dakota State AAU Wrestling Tournament, March 24 in Aberdeen.

The awards are being presented by the South

Dakota High School Wrestling Coaches Association.

Selected as Region Coaches of the Year in Class B were Jerry Salanoa of Deuel, Mike Gibson of Tri-Valley, Derek Pirmer of Plankinton-Mount Vernon and Clay Leonard of Red Cloud. Class A Region Coach of the Year honorees include Scott Miller of Brookings, Marc Murren of Washington, Ryan Noakes of Pierre and Lance Pearson of Rapid City Central.

Nick Bornheim and Roy Weber, both of Washington, were named the assistant and junior high coaches of the year. Les Pearson of Philip will be presented with the "Friend of Wrestling" award. Jeff Duffy of Performance Radio in Huron was honored for media coverage of wrestling in the state.

Lakeview Men's Golf Meeting March 29

CROFTON, Neb. — Lakeview Golf Course near Crofton, Neb., will hold organizational meetings for its Thursday men's golf league on Thursday, March 29, at 7 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Interested teams are asked to have a representative at the meeting. If you plan to have a team and cannot make the meeting, call 605-661-0616.

SCOREBOARD

BOWLING

YANKTON BOWL

INDUSTRIAL LEAGUE

HIGH TEAM GAME: Dakota Trailer 668

HIGH TEAM SERIES: H&K Oil 2366

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAME: Jerry Peterson 257, Mike Kellen 240, Frank Osborn Jr. 238

HIGH INDIVIDUAL SERIES: J.J. Peterson 632, Tom Grass 630, Frank Osborn Sr. 623, Frank Osborn Jr. 622, Mike Dieder 617

STANDINGS: Dakota Trailer 86.5, H&K Oil 74, Yankton Redi-Mix #2 67, H&K Oil #2 66.5, Steiner's Locker 51, Wholesale Supply 48, Yankton Redi-Mix 47, KPI-JCI 34, Smidt Captain & Crew 33, Don's Auto 33

CROFTON, NEB.

MEN'S COMMERCIAL

HIGH TEAM GAME: Don's Auto 917

HIGH TEAM SERIES: Coor's Light 2592

HIGH INDIVIDUAL GAME: Pat Lammer 269, Dennis Merkel 257, Tom Wiebehaus 257

HIGH INDIVIDUAL SERIES: Mike Johnson 678, Don's Auto 656, Leader Angus 51.5-68.5, DSM Apts 47.3

A STANDINGS: Dean's Cab 76-44, Coor's Light 74-46, Wiebehaus Rec 70-50, Goeden Steele 49-57.5

B STANDINGS: Crofton Elevator 57-63, Don's Auto 55-65, Leader Angus 51.5-68.5, DSM Apts 47.3

HIGHLIGHTS: Pat Lammer — 112 over game avg., 134 over series avg.; Don Casey 4-7-9-10

FINAL STANDINGS: Viborg-Hurley 6-0, Centerville 5-1, Irene-Wakonda 4-2, Baltic 3-3, Gayville-Volin 2-4, Freeman Academy 1-5, Alcester-Hudson 0-6

FIRST TEAM: Dennis DeNeui, Viborg-Hurley; Seamus O'Malley, Centerville; Zach Kranig, Viborg-Hurley; Scott Davis, Irene-Wakonda; Kyle Koomich, Gayville-Volin; Andrew Hora, Viborg-Hurley

SECOND TEAM: Dustin Livingston, Irene-Wakonda; Josiah Aberson, Baltic; Logan Hunter, Centerville; Tyler Kjosce, Alcester-Hudson; Jack Huetner, Viborg-Hurley; Aaron Anderson, Centerville

HONORABLE MENTION: Edward Clark, Baltic; Zach Weinzelt, Centerville; Noah Yoder, Freeman Academy; Brandon Lee, Gayville-Volin; Sam Kiger, Irene-Wakonda; Matt Jensen, Viborg-Hurley

NCAA WOMEN'S TOURN.

DES MOINES REGIONAL

Second Round

Monday, March 19

At Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Ill.

Tennessee 63, DePaul 48

Tuesday, March 20

At Stroth Center, Bowling Green, Ohio

Baylor 76, Florida 57

At Carmichael Arena, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Georgia Tech 76, Georgetown 64

At Jack Stephens Center, Little Rock, Ark.

Kansas 20-12 vs. Delaware (31-1), 8:40 p.m.

Regional Semifinals

At Wells Fargo Arena, Des Moines, Iowa

Saturday, March 24

Baylor (36-0) vs. Georgia Tech (26-8), TBA

Kansas-Delaware winner vs. Tennessee (26-8), TBA

FRESNO REGIONAL

Second Round

Monday, March 19

At Constant Convocation Center, Norfolk, Va.

Stanford 72, Purdue 61

At Mackey Arena, West Lafayette, Ind.

South Carolina 72, Purdue 61

Tuesday, March 20

At Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Fla.

St. Bonaventure 66, Miami 63

Regional Semifinals

At PNC Arena, Raleigh, N.C.

Sunday, March 25

Texas A&M (24-10) vs. Maryland (30-4), TBA

Notre Dame (32-3) vs. St. Bonaventure (31-3), TBA

KINGSTON REGIONAL

Second Round

Monday, March 19

At Reed Arena, College Station, Texas

Texas A&M 61, Arkansas 59

At Comcast Center, College Park, Md.

Marshall 72, Louisville 68

Tuesday, March 20

At Joyce Center, Notre Dame, Ind.

Notre Dame 73, California 62

At Donald L. Tucker Center, Tallahassee, Fla.

St. Bonaventure 66, Miami 63

Regional Semifinals

At PNC Arena, Raleigh, N.C.

Sunday, March 25

Texas A&M (24-10) vs. Maryland (30-4), TBA

Notre Dame (32-3) vs. St. Bonaventure (31-3), TBA

LITTLE MISSOURI VALLEY CONF.

BOYS

ALL-CONF. TEAM: Jack Robinson, Wagner; Adam Fink, Trip-Delmont-Armour; Luke Van Copen, Ackerly; Tanner Weber, Parkston; Spencer Lucas, Parkston; Noah St. Pierre, Wagner; Trevor Payer, Trip-Delmont-Armour; Kodi Larson, Bon Homme; Gabe Coumoyer, Ackerly; Nick Central, Parker Van Zee, Parkston; Nick Poppe, Ackerly; Charlie Benzen, Bon Homme; Zach Scott, Parkston; Reese Weber, Trip-Delmont-Armour; Dalton Mogoki, Scotland

SOUTHEAST S.D. CONF. BOYS

ALL-CONF. TEAM: Jack Robinson, Wagner; Tyson Leaud, Chamberlain; Richard Stern, Berg; Platte-Geddes; Matthew Randall, Platte-Geddes; Gage Basting, Chamberlain; Nolin Mikelsen, Gregory; Noah St. Pierre, Wagner; Skyler Bertram, Chamberlain; Spencer Lucas, Parkston; Kodi Larson, Bon Homme; Coby Johnson, Platte-Geddes; Parker Van Zee, Parkston; Charlie Benzen, Bon Homme; Traiton Priebe, Chamberlain; Tanner Weber, Parkston

TRI-VALLEY CONF. BOYS

Regional Semifinals

At The Ryan Center, Kingston, R.I.

Sunday, March 25

UConn (31-4) vs. Penn State-LSU winner, TBA

Gonzaga (28-5) vs. Kentucky (27-6), TBA

NCAA TOURNAMENT

EAST REGIONAL

Regional Semifinals

At TD Garden, Boston

Thursday, March 22

Syracuse (33-2) vs. Wisconsin (26-9), 6:15 p.m.

Ohio State (29-7) vs. Cincinnati (25-10), 8:45 p.m.

SOUTH REGIONAL

Regional Semifinals

At The Georgia Dome, Atlanta

Friday, March 23

Baylor (29-7) vs. Xavier (23-12), 6:15 p.m.

Kentucky (34-2) vs. Indiana (27-8), 8:45 p.m.

MIDWEST REGIONAL

Regional Semifinals

At Edward Jones Dome, St. Louis

Friday, March 23

North Carolina (31-5) vs. Ohio (29-7), 6:47 p.m.

N.C. State (24-12) vs. Kansas (29-6), 9:17 p.m.

WEST REGIONAL

Thursday, March 22

At US Airways Center, Phoenix

Michigan State (29-7) vs. Louisville (28-9), 6:47 p.m.

Marquette (27-7) vs. Florida (25-10), 9:17 p.m.

NATIONAL INVITATION TOURN.

Second Round

Friday, March 16

Washington 76, Northwestern 55

Saturday, March 17

Umass 77, Seton Hall 67

Sunday, March 18

Drexel 65, Northern Iowa 63

Nevada 75, Bucknell 67

Oregon 108, Iowa 97

Monday, March 19

Middle Tennessee 71, Tennessee 64

Minnesota 78, Miami 60

Stanford 92, Illinois State 88, OT

Quarterfinals

Tuesday, March 20

Umass 72, Drexel 70

Oregon (24-9) vs. Washington (23-10), 8 p.m.

Wednesday, March 21

Middle Tennessee (27-6) vs. Minnesota (21-14), 6:30 p.m.

Nevada (28-6) vs. Stanford (23-11), 8 p.m.

WOMEN'S NATIONAL INV. TOURN.

Third Round

Tuesday, March 20

Washington (19-13) at Oregon State (20-12), 9 p.m.

Thursday, March 22

Syracuse (20-14) at Temple (23-9), 6 p.m.

Appalachian State (27-6) at Virginia (24-10), 6 p.m.

VCU (19-14) at Toledo (23-9), 6 p.m.

San Diego (24-4) at Texas Tech (21-13), 7 p.m.

Missouri State (24-8) at Oklahoma State (18-12), 7 p.m.

Villanova (19-14) vs. Colorado (20-13), 8 p.m.

Friday, March 23

South Florida (19-15) at James Madison (26-7), 6 p.m.

WOMEN'S NCAA DIV. II TOURN.

At San Antonio

Quarterfinals, Tuesday, March 20

Bentley 72, Wayne (Neb.) 67

Ashland 71, Alaska Anchorage 51

Shaw 61, Pittsburg State 58

Rollins vs. Lander, 7:30 p.m.

Semifinals, Wednesday, March 21

Bentley vs. Ashland, 5 p.m.

Shaw vs. Rollins-Lander winner, 7:30 p.m.

MEN'S NCAA DIV. II TOURN.

At Highland Heights, Ky.

Quarterfinals, Wednesday, March 21

Stonehill vs. West Liberty, 11 a.m.

Midwestern State vs. Western Washington, 1:30 p.m.

Alabama-Huntsville vs. Bellarmine, 5 p.m.

Colorado Mines vs. Montevallo, 7:30 p.m.

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOC.

Monday's Games

Philadelphia 105, Charlotte 80

Boston 79, Atlanta 76

Cleveland 105, New Jersey 100

Chicago 65, Orlando 59

Minnesota 97, Golden State 93

Dallas 112, Denver 95

Tuesday's Games

Dallas 4, Phoenix 3, SO

N.Y. Islanders 5, Toronto 2

Florida 2, Philadelphia 1

Pittsburgh 8, Winnipeg 4

Chicago 5, Columbus 1

New Jersey 1, Ottawa 0

Edmonton 6, Nashville 3

Phoenix at Dallas, 8 p.m.

Calgary at Colorado, 9 p.m.

San Jose at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

Montreal at Buffalo, 6 p.m.

Florida at Carolina, 6:30 p.m.

Detroit at N.Y. Rangers, 6:30 p.m.

Vancouver at Chicago, 7 p.m.

Phoenix at Anaheim, 9 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Nashville at Philadelphia, 6 p.m.

Nashville at Pittsburgh, 6 p.m.

Calgary at Tampa Bay, 6:30 p.m.

Edmonton at Minnesota, 7 p.m.

Vancouver at Dallas, 7:30 p.m.

St. Louis at Los Angeles, 9:30 p.m.

Boston at San Jose, 9:30 p.m.

BASEBALL

MLB SPRING TRAINING

Monday's Games

Houston 7, Miami 4

St. Louis 4, Atlanta 3

Philadelphia 4, Detroit 3

Minnesota 8, Boston 4

Cleveland 4, L.A. Dodgers 3

Chicago Cubs 12, Seattle 7

Milwaukee 5, Texas 3

Oakland 6, Arizona 5

Cincinnati 1, Chicago White Sox 0

Colorado 4, L.A. Angels 3

Tuesday's Games

Philadelphia 4, Baltimore 1

Detroit 7, Atlanta 2

Tampa Bay 3, Miami 2

St. Louis 6, Houston 1

Texas 6, Chicago Cubs (ss) 2

Kansas City 6, L.A. Angels 4

Oakland 5, Chicago Cubs (ss) 5, tie, 10 innings

L.A. Dodgers 7, Milwaukee 6

Seattle 8, Cincinnati 1

Arizona 4, San Francisco 3

N.Y. Mets 2, Washington 0

Toronto 9, Boston 2

N.Y. Yankees 10, Pittsburgh 3

Colorado vs. San Diego at Peoria, Ariz., 10:05 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

Toronto vs. Baltimore at Sarasota, Fla., 12:05 p.m.

N.Y. Mets vs. St. Louis at Jupiter, Fla., 12:05 p.m.

Atlanta vs. Washington at Viera, Fla., 12:05 p.m.

N.Y. Yankees vs. Tampa Bay at Port Charlotte, Fla., 12:05 p.m.

Boston vs. Pittsburgh at Bradenton, Fla., 12:05 p.m.

Minnesota vs. Detroit at Lakeland, Fla., 12:05 p.m.

Chicago White Sox vs. Seattle at Peoria, Ariz., 3:05 p.m.

San Francisco vs. Cleveland at Goodyear, Ariz., 3:05 p.m.

TRANSACTIONS

BASEBALL

American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES—Agreed to terms with LHP Dorell Willis on a minor league contract.

DETROIT TIGERS—Reassigned C Bryan Holaday, INF/OF Eric Patterson, OF Jerad Head and OF Matt Young to minor league camp.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS—Traded LHP

Can-Am League

NEW BRUNSWICK BEARS—Signed C Eric McGee.

Frontier League

EVANSVILLE OTTERS—Released INF Chad Flenore.

FLORENCE FREEDOM—Signed RHP Kevin Asselin and LHP Chris Skogolski to contract extensions. Signed 1B Jesse Skoriski.

LAKE ERIE CRUSHERS—Released OF Jeremie Milons.

Liriano

From Page 9

rookie in 2006, it seemed like electricity pulsed through his veins. He went 12-3 with a 2.16 ERA and 144 strikeouts in 216 innings, with a knee-buckling slider that few could touch.

Then he had ligament-replacement surgery, and it's been four

years of searching and chasing the hitter he once was. He threw a no-hitter against the White Sox last year, but still went just 9-10 with a 5.09 ERA in another uneven season.

The 28-year-old Liriano will be a free agent after this season, so there is a lot riding on his performance in 2012.

The Twins lost 99 games last season, so they need Liriano to emerge as a top-of-the-rotation starter as he does.

Football

From Page 9

Likness equated it to not necessarily starters, but reserves, where a significant disparity can be found.

"In those metro areas, with more numbers and more talent, they can't water down," he said. "Their substitute might be a second-string senior who would probably start at another school, and then obviously you would have a mismatch."

Likness used the example of Spearfish. Winners of two 11AA titles (1997 and 2003), the Spartans won a total of 12 games over the next seven years after the '03 championship before moving to the 11A ranks in 2011.

Not even just with first-round playoff games but routinely featuring massive blowouts, safety becomes a concern, Specht said.

"Schools like Sturgis, Spearfish and Douglas were playing the two larger Rapid City schools and the four Sioux Falls schools all in the same year," he said. "They were getting beat four or five times by 60 points."

"How safe is it for those kids to be on that same field?"

Some in favor of Yankton

avoiding the Sioux Falls schools in the playoff picture will point to the Bucks' recent record against the state's largest city. In its last seven games against teams from Sioux Falls, Yankton has been out-scored 295-49.

Last season, for example, the Bucks lost three games to Sioux Falls opponents, including a 54-14 defeat in the second round of the playoffs.

"No matter what, we've been working pretty hard," Likness said. "It's hard to take the numbers you have and still be at the top, like we were before. Those power schools have different programs available for people in a large community, and it's hard to overcome those if you don't have the numbers."

Still others, including activities director Wally Bosch, maintain that it's too early to tell how the changes will affect Yankton.

One former player, however, said the immediate argument would be that Yankton — and schools outside the top eight — believes it cannot beat larger schools.

D.J. Eversley, a former two-year letterwinner who recorded 1,026 rushing yards, 527 receiving yards and 12 touchdowns in his career, said he believes the Bucks can indeed beat the bigger schools.

"I still think Yankton could

Everyone knows he has the talent. Now it's just about harnessing that talent without stifling the power.

"We're not looking for nine innings every outing," general manager Terry Ryan said. "We'd take it, you know that. But most of the best pitchers, and I'm talking about the top 15 or 20 in the game, they give you seven-some innings per start. So we're not talking about anything that's not unattainable."

compete with them, it's more of a pride thing," the 2008 YHS graduate said Tuesday. "They have to go in with a different mindset; not expecting to lose just because it's a Sioux Falls team."

During Eversley's junior season in 2007, the Bucks suffered a 21-14 loss to Roosevelt and a 23-19 loss to Washington. The next season, in 2008, Yankton scored one of its biggest upsets when it beat defending champion Roosevelt on Pioneer Days.

"We were supposed to lose by 50; that's what everyone else thought," Eversley said. "I knew we could beat them because we had a very good team back then."

"It didn't matter to us who we played."

With still one more season, 2012, under the current 6-class system, the Bucks are left to find a way to compete with the biggest schools, Likness said.

"The positives definitely outweigh the negatives in most cases right now," he said. "We'll see, though. South Dakota is still growing in certain areas, and I think that'll continue to make a difference."



MORNING COFFEE

WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

Wednesday, March 21

7:40 a.m. Truck Driving Academy (Wayne Henson)

8:15 a.m. Hy-Vee Foods (Chef Staci)

Thursday, March 22

7:40 a.m. Yankton Chamber (Carmen Schramm)

8:15 a.m. Yankton Conv/Visitors (Lisa Scheve)

Manning

From Page 9

choose Denver over other suitors, the most serious of which were the Titans and 49ers: "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 — the club's most dramatic since Elway was acquired from the Colts in 1983 — was sealed.

With the new contract in place, Manning plans to retire in Denver. The Broncos, meanwhile, have some protection in the way the deal 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 off?' And he said, 'There's no doubt in my mind.'"

Elway's move to the front office last year set off a whirlwind of activity that landed the Broncos in the playoffs. But the old QB is 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.

But to run an NFL offense, to get a title, he wanted Manning.

"My goal is to make Peyton Manning the best quarterback that's ever played the game," Elway said, "and he's got that ability with the football that he's got left."

"He's a guy that raises all boats. He's already made (his teammates) better, and they haven't met him yet just because of the type of person he is, his reputation and what he's doing in this league. So, he's just going to have a tremendous effect on the Denver Broncos."

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 11 quarterbacks have come to Denver, trying in vain to replace the irreplaceable. 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. His first TD toss for Denver will be his 400th.

Manning's familiar No. 18 was actually retired — a tribute to Denver's first quarterback, Frank Tripucka. But Tripucka was more than happy to let Manning bring it out of mothballs.

The new face of the Broncos stressed that he was ready to work and was planning to stay in town to do so.

Manning even picked up a play-book Tuesday, but the offense crafted for and by him will be drastically changed from the option-heavy one that Tebow ran in Denver last season. And coaches can't answer any questions Manning might have until April 16, when offseason programs can begin around the league and he'll

finally be able to work out at Broncos headquarters.

Still, it's expected he'll be able to run his kind of offense in Denver. Coach John Fox said he can't wait to pair that no-huddle approach with Denver's altitude for a double-whammy on defenses.

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.

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."

Elway, general manager Brian Xanders and Fox all said the goal is for Manning to start the Broncos' first exhibition game in August. That's Manning's desire, too.

"I want to be out there every single snap," Manning said. "Every single play."