ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — John Fox would tell Peyton Manning to take the knee again.

John Elway, of all people, agreed with that call.

Given the ball at his 20 with 31 seconds, two timeouts and one of the best quarterbacks in the game, the Broncos coach decided to run out the clock and head to overtime.

Result: Baltimore 38, Denver 35. End of season in Broncoland.

Fox said he felt good about the decision when he made it Saturday, toward the end of one of the most disheartening losses in the franchise's history. After hashing it over during the last two sleepless nights, he stood by his decision.

"I'd do it again 10 times if it presented itself in that situation," he said Monday at Denver's season-ending news conference, where he was joined by Elway, the quarterback-turned-front office executive.

Even 48 hours after the game, that single decision remained the most hotly debated of the many Fox, Manning and the Broncos made in their gaffe-filled loss to the Ravens. The second-guessing only got more intense Sunday after Atlanta moved the ball 41 yards in 12 seconds to set up the game-winning field goal in its 30-28 victory over Seattle.

But, Fox said, Denver's situation was nowhere near what the Falcons faced. The Falcons were losing and had no other choice. They were playing in a dome. The Broncos had just given up a game-tying 70-yard touchdown pass and were standing on the sideline in disbelief. The temperature was below 10 degrees. Manning had thrown the ball downfield a grand total of twice the entire game.

“You watch a (70)-yard bomb go over your head, there’s a certain amount of shock value,” Fox said. “A little bit like a prize fighter who gets a right cross on the chin at the end of a round, you’re looking to get out of the round.”

Elway, of course, built his career around extracting the Broncos from impossible situations. But asked specifically how he would’ve responded in his playing days if told to take a knee under those circumstances, he sounded not at all like the go-for-broke quarterback he once was.

“I thought it was the right thing at that time,” Elway said. “I think with where the team was mentally and the situation we were in, I thought that it was a good move.”

Though the Broncos recovered and stopped Baltimore twice in the overtime, eventually Manning threw an interception that set up the Ravens for the winning field goal. It was a sudden, shocking end to a season that had Super Bowl written all over it. Instead, this year is drawing more comparisons to 1996, when the Broncos also were 13-3, also were top seeds and also lost by three points in the divisional round — to Jacksonville instead of Baltimore.

At the time, Elway was 36 and still searching for his first Super Bowl title. He won the next two.

Currently, Manning is 36 and stuck on one Super Bowl title. He signed with the Broncos last offseason to win a few more.

“I think having been through this before, and having been disappointed before, I realized that this was a possibility,” Elway said. “The bottom line is how we learn from this situation. If we get defensive and don’t look at everything we did in this game and try to learn from it, then there is a chance we can experience it again. Hopefully, we’re back in this situation again and we will have looked at it the right way and learned from the situation.”

While Fox conceded there were coaching mistakes in the game — most notably not having safety Rahim Moore coached up well enough to properly defend the pass that tied the game —

he stood by his two most important strategic decisions.

A few minutes before kneeling on the ball, Denver was up by seven and trying to grind out the clock. Despite being down to their third-string running back, 188-pound Ronnie Hillman, the Broncos called three straight running plays, including a run off right guard on third-and-7 that went for no gain. That ran the clock down to 1:15 and made Baltimore burn all its timeouts.

But three plays after a punt, Joe Flacco threw the improbable 70-yard touchdown over Rahim Moore and into the hands of Jacoby Jones that tied the game.

“I’ve never believed in, ‘It’s one guy, one play,’” Fox said when asked about Moore’s role in the loss. “It obviously was a big play.”

Fox said he played the percentages on all the calls — nothing more, nothing less.

According to his calculations:

—There’s a 38 to 40 percent chance of converting a third-and-7 into a first down.

—By punting and giving Baltimore the ball on its 23-yard line, trailing by a touchdown with 1:09 left and no timeouts, the Broncos had a 97 percent chance of winning.

—That percentage spiked to 99.9 percent when the Ravens had the ball on the 30 with 41 seconds left.

Turned out, the Broncos are a “.1 percenter.”

“I mean this in all sincerity, if I felt like we were going to give up a 70-yard touchdown pass with 31 seconds to go, we might have re-evaluated that,” Fox said. “But that’s not what the percentages said.”

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