Eli Manning is an elite quarterback

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It was Eli Manning's coming out party.

No better place to have it than in the House that Peyton Built.

Little Brother took the spotlight away from Big Brother.

And, for the record, Eli is an elite NFL quarterback.

It was played out before a packed Lucas Oil Stadium, whose fans were treated to one of the most competitive, exciting Super Bowl games since the idea was hatched 46 years ago.

During Super Bowl week, it was Peyton Manning who commanded much of the attention and press coverage generated prior to Super Bowl Sunday.

Eli grew up in Peyton's shadow. Peyton was five years older, getting a five-year start in athletics. Five years is a distinct advantage when one boy is 12 and the other boy is seven. They used to compete in basketball where Peyton would beat Eli up.

The first time Eli won was a day when the game was tied and it was next bucket wins. Eli drove around Peyton and dunked on him.

That's the day Eli knew he gained Peyton's respect.

Eli grew into a hotshot high school quarterback at Newman High School in New Orleans, where Peyton set records but never won the big one.

Eli chose Ole Miss, where father Archie had been a folk hero. Eli beat Florida as a senior, a feat Peyton never accomplished at Tennessee.

While Peyton is at a crossroads in his decorated NFL career, Eli has risen to the elite class of NFL quarterbacks with two Super Bowl rings, one more than Peyton.

Peyton deserves some credit for Eli's success. Most little brothers hate being picked on by big brothers. It does one thing, however, makes the little brother fight back, toughens him in the long run.

We see that toughness in Eli. We saw it in a playoff game when he got hammered. When he picked himself off the ground, he had grass and mud wedged in his facemask. His helmet was twisted half-way around his head.

While Peyton specializes in getting rid of the football before the posse arrives, Eli hangs in there until the last second, taking a smack-down in order to give his receivers a chance to get open.

Peyton often walked away from a game with his uniform clean as the Board of Health. The Giants equipment staff doesn't have enough stain remover to get rid of all the blood, grass and mud from Eli's uniform.

With yet another come-from behind 21-17 victory Sunday, Eli has built a legend as the Comeback Kid. Games are never over until Eli says they are.

Will history reflect that Eli is the most productive quarterback in the Manning family? After all, he

could have an extra five years to catch and pass Peyton.

I don't think Eli will have all the glitzy numbers that Peyton accrued as an Indianapolis Colt. Remember the Colts offense was built specifically for Peyton from the first day he stepped on the field. Peyton played home games indoors on artificial turf while Eli has to battle the elements of New York's raw winters. Swirling winds and icy blasts are tougher on a quarterback.

Where Eli can pass Peyton is on the NFL's biggest stage. Fairly or not, quarterbacks are often judged by how many Super Bowl rings they have. The game-winning 88-yard touchdown drive took nine plays. Five of them were passes completed by Eli Manning.

New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees gave Eli his props before the game.

"I absolutely do think (Eli's) elite. I have a lot of respect for Eli,'' Brees said. "He plays in a tough market and handles himself with a lot of class.''

It takes an elite quarterback to know one.

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