By DAVID GINSBURG

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OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Joe Flacco knows his stature as the highest-paid player in NFL history may not last for long and he's OK with it.

What matters most to the Super Bowl MVP is that the Baltimore Ravens were willing to pay him that kind of money in the first place.

Flacco signed his new contract Monday worth $120.6 million over six years. He will receive a $29 million signing bonus, $52 million in guaranteed money and $51 million over the first two years of the deal.

The former first-round draft pick out of Delaware is the first starting quarterback in NFL history to make the playoffs in each of his first five seasons. He's led the Ravens to nine wins over that span, tying Tom Brady for most among quarterbacks in the first five years of a career.

Flacco threw 11 touchdown passes and no interceptions during the recent postseason and led Baltimore to a 34-31 Super Bowl win over San Francisco.

And it all made the Ravens willing to pay him more money than Aaron Rodgers, Peyton Manning, Drew Brees or any other of the great quarterbacks in the game today.

"When guys that are drafted in the first round, when guys that win football games for you, quarterbacks like that, when the time comes up for those guys to get paid, they usually become

the highest-paid guy in the league," Flacco said. "I'm sure in a couple of months from now, someone is going to sign a deal and you guys are going to be talking to them about how they are the highest-paid guy in NFL history. That's just the name of the game.

"I know that this isn't going to hold up for that long but that's not a priority of mine to be the highest-paid guy. The priority of mine was to get that respect that I felt, that I feel now from this organization."

Flacco is the quarterback the Ravens have longed to have for years and they weren't about to let him get away.

"We just returned from the (scouting) combine and I remember the days of going there and studying and hoping that one of the quarterbacks could be our guy. … We've been out in that desert before," Ravens general manager Ozzie Newsome said. "That all changed when we drafted Joe in 2008 and now we've secured him for many more years. He's a significant reason we've been to the playoffs five years in a row, played in three AFC championship games and now, we are Super Bowl champs with Joe as MVP."

Flacco's performance this past offseason almost certainly helped him receive his record-breaking contract. But the quarterback thought he was good enough to receive all that money before he threw three touchdown passes against the 49ers.

"Listen, winning the Super Bowl, winning the Super Bowl MVP doesn't make me as valuable as I am," he said. "I think I bring to the table what I bring to the table. I think I'm an asset to this team and I'm worth what I'm worth. The fact that we won the Super Bowl just comes with that. If we didn't win the Super Bowl this year, I still think I'm worth the same and I still think I'm the same person to this organization. It may not be seen that way but that's the bottom line. I still think I give the team the best chance to win moving forward."

By signing Monday, Flacco avoided receiving the franchise tag, which would have hindered the

Ravens' salary cap in 2013.

"I know we have a lot of good players on the team and I love to play with those guys, so hopefully it works out very good for the organization and we can keep as many people as we need," he said.

Flacco turned down a contract before the 2012 season that would have paid him roughly $15 million a year. His decision turned out to be a wise one.

"I thought I was worth more and didn't really see any circumstances where I wouldn't end up getting paid more than what they were willing to give me at that point," Flacco continued. That assessment was as precise as one of his many sharp spirals in the Super Bowl.

"The real risk is that I could get hurt," he added. "I always kind of had faith that we were going to get something done here no matter what. I didn't know if we were going to go win the Super Bowl and all of that, so that kind of helped the situation out, I think, a little bit."__PUBLIC__