

Harrington adjusts to Detroit

By Curt Sylvester
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DETROIT — As soon as he gets caught up on his sleep, Joey Harrington will get started on his to-do list.

No. 1: Get an apartment and a bed.
No. 2: Buy a refrigerator.

No. 3: Get his very own Ms. Pac-Man game.

Harrington, the Lions' first-round draft pick and quarterback of the not-too-distant future, arrived in Detroit at 5:30 a.m. Monday after an all-night flight from Los Angeles. Two hours later, he was on his way into workouts and meetings at the Lions' practice facility in Allen Park.

Two days later, he still is getting caught up on his sleep, but he is settling into the off-season workout routine, getting familiar with the area and putting together a plan.

"I want to get settled," Harrington said Tuesday. "That's the biggest thing for me right now. I'm very unsettled because I don't have a place to live yet, I have to get my stuff out; it doesn't feel like home yet. But I'm

excited now that I'm here. I want to get a place, get my own bed, get my own refrigerator and start getting acclimated with Detroit."

And, of course, the Ms. Pac-Man game — the tabletop model that provides exactly the combination of challenge and escape that Harrington appreciates.

"Ms. Pac-Man requires such thinking on the fly, peripheral vision, quick reflexes," he said.

Although he's 23, Harrington is still a kid — as he noted himself the day after the Lions drafted him last month — but there is nothing simple or shallow about him. And he is not a one-dimensional person.

There is Harrington, the All-American quarterback and the third player taken in the draft.

He grew up admiring Joe Montana, Dan Marino and John Elway, but said he didn't even consider the possibility of playing professionally until about a year ago.

"So few people get a chance to even be in an NFL camp, it wasn't

realistic," he said. "If I did everything I could to be the best college football player I could, then all that stuff would take care of itself."

In two seasons, Harrington was 25-3 as a starting quarterback at Oregon. During that time, he orchestrated 10 fourth-quarter comeback victories, a skill shared by the three former NFL quarterbacks he most admired.

"Those were the guys I watched," he said, "because those were the guys who performed in the clutch."

Harrington is eager to get into the Lions' playbook, anticipating the competition and the pressure that go with it. He went through the same thing when he was battling for the starting job at Oregon.

"If you've got the eyes of an entire city watching your every move, that's what it's all about. Sitting there in the fourth quarter with 70,000 people staring at you, that's the fun part."

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Pogue

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"We still wanted to play and have fun, and that's a big part of the success of the Club team," Pogue said. "After we've had a couple seasons at the club level and two national championships, we talked about how we beat the system."

Beat the system in a sense that the two friends, both exceptional athletes, also took advantage of the academic opportunities available at the University, something they would not have been able to do had they still been on the varsity volleyball team.

"I think it worked out for everybody," Pogue said. "Now I don't even think about (Oregon volleyball)."

"That's the only interesting part about this whole thing," Pogue said, referring to her sudden departure from the volleyball team.

Touché. Her volleyball career is hardly half the story.

Pogue likes to run, too. Yes, she enjoys running.

"I just like it," she said. "I like being able to go out and run 26 miles in an afternoon if I feel like."

Hence the April 15 marathon she ran in Boston, the largest race in the world. In just the second "official" marathon of her life, Pogue was the 497th woman to finish the race — out of 5,339 female runners (14,573 total).

"People always say if you're going to run a marathon, that's the one," Pogue said. "I loved doing it, but it hurt. There's a big hill at the end, and all of a sudden, at Mile 18, it really hits you."

Amazingly, two days after the Boston Marathon, Pogue joined up with Halligan and the club volleyball team in Dallas, Texas, where they won their second national championship. Halligan was named the tournament MVP, an honor Pogue received the year before.

Nelson has remained influential in Pogue's life. Now the volleyball coach at Eugene's Sheldon High, Nelson encouraged Pogue to try out for the Oregon track team.

In 2000, her only season with the track squad, Pogue participated in a number of events, including the 100-meter dash, the 10,000-meter run and the long

jump, competing mostly unattached in several meets.

Then she injured her knee and had to have surgery.

"I was just doing something in my off time," she said of her year with track. "I was planning on going back to track, but I was just getting out being an athlete. It was going to take a lot (after surgery) to get back to where I needed to be to be competitive on the track team."

So now she just competes for fun. And coaches on the side.

Nelson asked Pogue two years ago if she would coach a youth club team. Pogue, like Halligan and former Oregon volleyball player Julie Gerlach, agreed to be a mentor.

"Annie's got a lot of things to offer," Nelson said. "She has a passion for everything she does. She has a lot of potential as a coach; the girls really loved her. I hope she will continue to give back her knowledge of the game."

Pogue is also an artist. For her visual design classes, she has made several Web pages, many of which have some of her drawings.

"Visual design has a lot of more hands-on art stuff to do; it stresses creativity," said Pogue, who had a 4.0 GPA at Del Mar High in Campbell, Calif.

Pogue has no immediate plans after graduation; she's only planning to head back home to the Bay Area.

"I'm probably going to have a job where I just trace stuff for a couple years," she said.

Then again, her plans have been strayed before.

From a pessimistic standpoint, Pogue has had a jagged journey at Oregon; it could be said that she is a bundle of potential that was never fully released. Optimistically, she's had success with every obstacle in front of her — and she's enjoyed it, too.

"There could be sadness about what happened (with volleyball)," Nelson said. "But Annie's not that way. She goes with the punches if things don't work out. She's got a lot of intensity, and she's very talented."

And while it's not a fairly tale ending, perhaps a bit ironic, Pogue seems to be emphatic about whatever course she may run into.

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