

# Detroit's future is Harrington-to-Rogers

MSU product should compliment QB

BY LARRY LAGE  
AP Sports Writer

DETROIT — The Detroit Lions need Joey Harrington and Charles Rogers to be good for about 90 million reasons.

Really good. They aren't expected to play mistake-free football this year.

But if the Lions are going to shake the funk they've been in for generations, Harrington has to be worthy of last year's No. 3 pick overall and Rogers needs to validate Detroit's decision to make him the No. 2 selection this year.

"They have to be what they're supposed to be," team president Matt Millen said. "They can't do it alone, but in order for us to get where we



Harrington



Rogers

want to get, we can't look back and say we missed with those guys."

The Lions will pay Rogers as much as \$54.6 million over the next six years to be the big-play threat they've lacked since Barry Sanders shocked and set back the franchise with his retirement just before the 1999 season.

They signed Harrington last year to a six-year contract worth about \$36 million hoping he would be talented enough to be a star and to provide stability at the most-important position on the

field. "I don't care what anybody pays me because that is not going to match the expectations I have for myself," Harrington said, bristling. "You can't put a monetary value on what I want to do. My own expectations for myself and this team far surpass what anybody thinks about me, or this team."

The Lions haven't had a quarterback play in the Pro Bowl since Greg Landry did after the 1971 season and have lacked long-term stability since Bobby Layne was a mainstay behind center in the 1950s. Since winning the NFL title in 1957, Detroit has had only one playoff victory in part because of its problems at quarterback.

Not much is expected of Detroit this year, despite the arrival of new coach Steve Mariucci.

Few predict Harrington or

Rogers will be consistently effective this season because it's rare for second-year quarterbacks and first-year receivers to do more than merely show flashes of promise.

Even their coach has tried to downplay expectations.

"You don't just draft them and have Hall of Famers the next day," Mariucci said.

"They have to throw and catch thousands and thousands of passes before they start becoming a threat. They've got

to work and train and be in the film room and get knocked down on their butts and get back up.

"It's a process. Over the last 20 years, only three wide receivers have had good rookie years."

Rogers is hoping he can join the ranks of those receivers — Joey Galloway, Terry Glenn and Randy Moss.

"I'm thinking positive. There's always exceptions, and hopefully I'll be one," he said.

## 'Other' Rogers brings spark to defense

DETROIT (AP) — Detroit Lions defensive end Robert Porcher thinks only one thing can stop lineman Shaun Rogers from becoming a superstar.

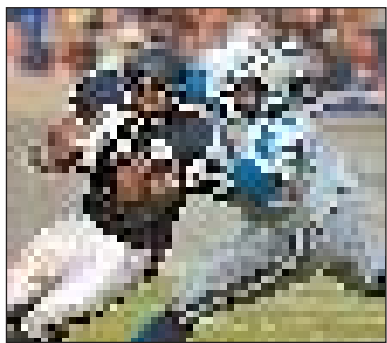
Shaun Rogers himself. "Shaun's future is entirely up to him," said Porcher, a six-time Pro Bowler. "He can be a tremendous player, but only if he is willing to do the work."

The Lions are hoping Rogers can help turn Detroit's defense around after the unit struggled along with the rest of the team the past two seasons.

Rogers was Detroit's second-round pick in 2001 out of Texas and overcame an ankle injury to have an outstanding first season. He led all NFL defensive linemen in tackles and was regarded as one of the league's top rookies.

Last year, though, didn't go nearly as well.

After missing most of camp after ankle surgery, Rogers broke his right hand in the season's second game and never recovered. His tackle total dropped from 97 to 62 and he wasn't the force he was



The Associated Press

After a promising rookie year, Shaun Rogers (92) regressed.

the year before.

"I was disappointed in last season," Rogers said. "I was hurt and no one knows what it is like to deal with that. You don't want to make excuses, but I was never healthy last year."

Along with the injury, the Lions were concerned about Rogers' weight. This year, he reported to camp in much better shape, listed at 357 pounds, which was good news for defensive coordinator Kurt Schottenheimer. "With his injuries, this is the first time that Shaun has gone

through two-a-days as a pro, and I'm not sure when the last time he even did it in college was. Clearly, he wasn't healthy a year ago, and that set him back," Schottenheimer said.

Like Porcher, Schottenheimer says that Rogers has a nearly unlimited potential.

"I think he is definitely one of the most talented young players at that position in the league," Schottenheimer said. "A lot depends on him, and a lot depends on his health.

People need to realize that Shaun is still a work in progress. He's a young man, who missed nearly all of his first two training camps. He still has a lot to learn, but he's doing a great job."

Coach Steve Mariucci is getting his first look at Rogers.

"Shaun has committed himself to getting his body into the kind of condition that will give him more stamina, not just for one week, but for the season and for his career," he said. "He's having a great camp and I expect him to have a heck of a season."

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