

John Joseph Harrington (1978-)

By Kerry Eggers

The list of great quarterbacks at the University of Oregon runs deep and wide—Norm Van Brocklin, George Shaw, Bob Berry, Dan Fouts, Chris Miller, Bill Musgrave, Akili Smith, and Dennis Dixon. John Joseph "Joey" Harrington eclipsed them all.

A 1998 graduate of Portland's Central Catholic High, Harrington finished his college career with a record of 25-3 as a starting quarterback. His record includes bowl wins against twelfth-ranked University of Texas (2000 Holiday Bowl) and the seventh-ranked University of Colorado (2001 Fiesta Bowl).

As a senior at the University of Oregon in 2001, the 6-foot-4-inch, 220-pound Harrington finished fourth in voting for the Heisman Trophy. It was the highest ranking ever for an Oregon player until LaMichael James earned third place in 2010 and Marcus Mariota won the award in 2014. That year, Harrington also was named Football News' national Offensive Player of the Year and the Pac-10 Offensive Player of the Year.

The 2001 campaign was a dream season for Harrington, who led the Oregon Ducks to an 11-1 record and a number two national ranking at season's end. He was known for his leadership qualities, and time and time again he led the Ducks from behind to victory. University of Oregon coach Mike Bellotti called him "probably the best leader I've ever coached."

Harrington's National Football League began when he was selected as the third pick in the 2002 draft by the Detroit Lions. He was a starter through most of his first six seasons in the league—four years with Detroit, then a single year with Miami and Atlanta. Harrington was released by the Falcons after the 2007 season and was working out for several teams but was signed early in the 2008 campaign as a backup quarterback by New Orleans. He retired from the NFL in 2009.

An accomplished pianist, Harrington continues to make his home in Portland and contributes regularly to charities through the Harrington Family Foundation.

Sources

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