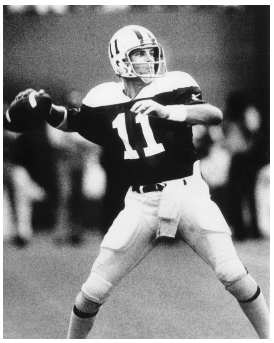
Neil Lomax (1959-)



Neil Lomax was the unlikeliest football superstar, a decent passer on a running high school team. By mid-winter of his senior year, 1976, he had the same number of college athletic scholarship offers as the studious kid who sat next to him in math class: zero. Lomax was going to try his hand at baseball at Linfield College or Willamette University, until he got a phone call from Portland State University's football coach, Darrel "Mouse" Davis.

Davis knew Boyd Crawford, Lomax's coach at Lake Oswego High, and they had spoken about the raw senior quarterback who infrequently used his big arm in Crawford's "Power I" offense. Davis had dropped by Lake Oswego High on a game night in the fall to get a look at Lomax. After watching pregame warm-ups, however, Davis left. Lomax's size and potential were impressive, but he was inexperienced in passing and threw a lot of interceptions.

The next January, a couple of weeks before the letter-of-intent signing date, another quarterback Davis was recruiting fell out of the picture. Davis decided to take a chance on Lomax. He phoned and offered him a partial scholarship—the best investment the coach made in a career that has spanned five decades.

Four years later, benefiting from Davis' wide-open "run-and-shoot" offense, Lomax had broken every Portland State passing record, as well as 90 NCAA marks. He threw for 13,320 yards and 106 touchdowns, earned All-America honors as a senior, and helped the Vikings achieve the highest profile in program history.

Lomax went on to play in the National Football League for ten years. His illustrious career was shortened by a debilitating hip injury, but not before a pair of Pro Bowl appearances and a number of record-setting performances for the St. Louis/Phoenix Cardinals. Lomax's No. 11 is the only retired football number at Portland State, and he has been honored with induction into the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame and the Oregon Sports Hall of Fame.

After retiring from football, Lomax became president of ProMax Event Management. "I was very fortunate," said the Lake Oswego resident of his time at Portland State. "No one goes there saying they're going to be an NFL player. It was ‘Let's have some fun, get an education, get on the bus and to Missoula or Cheney and play some football.' And from that, I went on to have a solid career while making a great living. I really do give Mouse a lot of credit."

Written by Kerry Eggers

Further Reading:

"ProMax Founder Neil Lomax Biography" http://www.videas.net/promaxevents/lomax.htm

Lomax, Neil. *Third and Long*. Fleming H. Revell Co., 1986.

http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Neil-Lomax

http://www.nfl.com/players/neillomax/profile?id=LOM692150

Copyright © 2008-2013 Portland State University