

Ngata adds up to giant package: \$11.9 Million

Rookie takes place on defense with great expectations

BY JAMISON HENSLEY

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By the time he stepped on the field for his first full-team Ravens practice, defensive tackle Haloti Ngata realized the stressful contract negotiations were actually the easy part.

The Ravens' first-round draft pick signed his five-year, \$11.9 million contract yesterday and jumped immediately into the starting lineup for a defense known for its dominance and complexity.

"I heard so many things being said today by the defensive backs and the linebackers, I didn't know what to follow," Ngata said. "I just kinda went straight. Hopefully, it was the right thing."

Known for the rare combination of bulk (6 feet 4, 340 pounds) and athleticism, Ngata understands his biggest challenge will be keeping up with the pace of his teammates.

The biggest knock on him coming out of the University of Oregon was that he took some plays off, something that is frowned upon by the Ravens' high-motor defense.

"I can guarantee that his Oregon defense didn't prepare, didn't run to the ball and didn't have the tradition that this defense has," linebacker Bart Scott said. "It's an adjustment. It's not the college jog here; we finish plays. If not, you're going to be held accountable and not so much by the coaches. You're going to have to deal with your teammates. You have to go back to the huddle."

Ngata will have a major impact on last year's No. 5 defense in the NFL, which is reflected in the rich contract he was given.

He will receive a \$1.24 million roster bonus this season and a \$6.13 million option bonus in 2007. There is a one-time bonus of \$1.6 million that he will earn when he either participates in 35 percent of the defense's snaps this season or 45 percent in 2007.

The total guaranteed money is \$9.275 million.

"I just wanted to play football," Ngata said. "I'm happy that's all over now and I can focus on football."