

SUPER BOWL

Super fan backs 49ers at home, in San Fran

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In discussing who will win Super Bowl XLVII with Ely Matlow, you don't want to take side with the Baltimore Ravens.

That would infuriate the 26-year-old Stouffville resident.

Mr. Matlow is a diehard San Francisco 49ers fanatic.

And proud of it.

Not because they've enjoyed a resurgence since last season when Jim Harbaugh took over as head coach and are on the verge of winning the club's sixth Super Bowl title, if they can defeat the Ravens in New Orleans tomorrow night.

It actually goes back to the days when Mr. Matlow watched his first National Football League game on TV, which involved the 49ers, when he was around five years old.

Back then, in the early 1990s, Mr. Matlow recalled the 49ers were in the throes of their first dynasty when Steve Young took over as the club's signal caller and icon Joe Montana was in the autumn of his career.

And even through the seasons when the 49ers were wallowing in mediocrity after Mr. Young retired, Mr. Matlow never wavered.

"I've stuck with them through thick and thin," he said.

Employed in the marketing and advertising field during the day, his loyalty to the 49ers just doesn't sit with him watching them play on his big screen.

He's also made the long trek with his girlfriend Jill, whom he converted into a 49ers fan, to Candlestick Park to watch his favourite club play in the postseason.

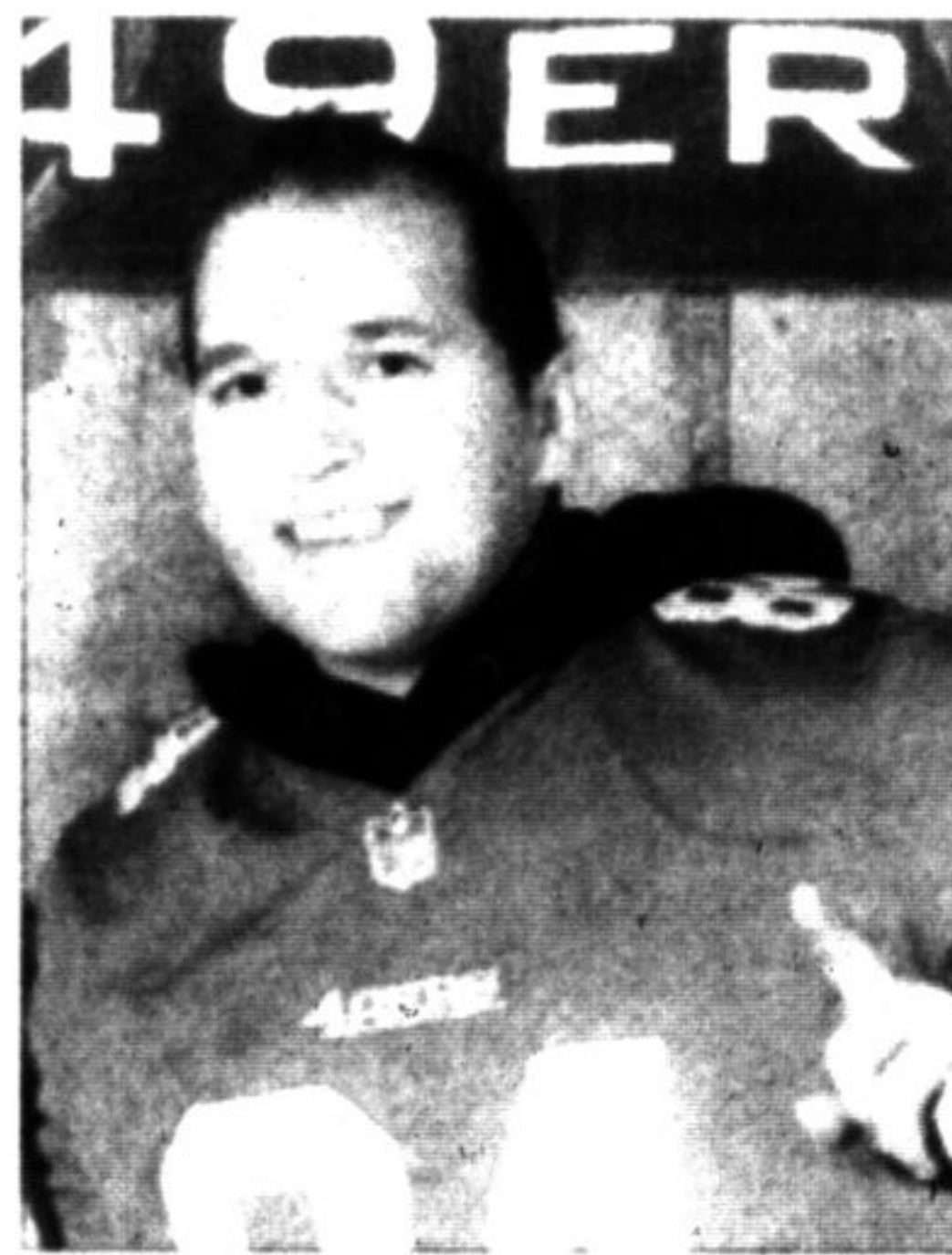
While celebrating his 25th birthday last year, they saw the 49ers defeat the New Orleans Saints in an epic National Football Conference divisional playoff game, 36-32, when tight end Vernon Davis caught the winning touchdown pass from quarterback Alex Smith with just nine seconds remaining in regulation time.

This season, they made the return trip to watch the 49ers rout the Green Bay Packers 45-31 in an NFC divisional postseason game.

They flew out of Buffalo and upon crossing the border en route to the airport, were asked what their purpose of visiting the United States was.

"My dream was to go to a 49ers game and we told the border guard we're 49ers fans and were going to their game. He thought we were nuts but said 'So you're a 49ers fan? OK!'"

Even in talking with fans at Candlestick Park, Mr. Matlow said



ELY MATLOW: Normally chatty Stouffville man was speechless when he met Joe Montana

the initial reaction they got when informed fellow fans they flew all that way just to watch the 49ers was one of disbelief.

"At first they thought we were crazy coming all that way. But they loved the fact that we were Canadians and made us feel welcomed," he said.

If that's not enough, after moving to Stouffville just a couple of months ago from Richmond Hill, Mr. Matlow has turned his basement into a 49ers shrine that includes several jerseys and other memorabilia pertaining to his

team.

Not to mention a big screen where he watches the games and is not to be disturbed — unless a 911 call comes his way.

He was up until the wee hours of the morning just to complete his own hall of 49er fame.

Of all the items, a 49ers logo pin given to him by a fan sitting one row back last year when they saw the 49ers play the Saints is cherished the most.

The pin was given to the fan by former 49ers wide receiver, legend and club executive Dwight Clark.

Mr. Matlow said it's been a good luck charm — the 49ers have yet to lose.

He also has fond memories of meeting Mr. Montana at an organized meet-and-greet in days leading up to the game last year against the Saints.

"I'm normally a talkative guy but when I met him in person I was in shock, I almost choked," he said.

After this year's playoff game against the Packers, Mr. Matlow said he saw 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick going to a restaurant after the game and managed to offer him congratulations.

"I don't think he wanted to be seen. But he gave us a quick hello and when he entered the

restaurant (Morton's Steakhouse) everyone there gave him a round of applause," he said.

As for Sunday's big game, Mr. Matlow entertained going to New Orleans for it.

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But citing the cost of tickets, hotel accommodations and other things like parking being exorbitant, he passed on it.

Instead, he will watch the game in Toronto as part of a Super Bowl party sponsored by Bud Light.

Needless to say, he is excited.

"I'm jacked up, pumped up, nervous ... a little bit of everything," he said.

In an attempt to drum up local support for the 49ers in preparation for Sunday's big game, Mr. Matlow has launched a page on Facebook, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/SanFrancisco49ersFansInCanada>

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