

Criticism Does Not Worry Meredith

By HAROLD V. RATLIFF

Associated Press Sports Writer
Don Meredith will start his 11th season of football in Dallas come September. He will be rounding out his first year as a sportscaster on television.

Meredith, the much criticized quarterback of the Dallas Cowboys, says he finds adverse comment on television, too, but not as much in football.

Ten years is a long time to play the game in one town, says the tall young man who was the first signed by Dallas when it entered the National Football League in 1960. "In that time, you get a lot of both pros and cons," he muses.

What he means is that a lot of criticism as well as praise may accrue.

He has been booed, even when playing with bum knees, cracked ribs, stomach muscle rupture, an injured foot and a sprained ankle. He might well be the most banged-up fellow as well as the most

criticized.

Meredith never has been on a championship team — at Southern Methodist, where he played four years, and with the Cowboys, where he has toiled for six.

About the only person retaining faith in him all those years has been Cowboys coach Tom Landry. Landry wavered some last year when he found Meredith's passing below par, although figured a sore arm that the quarterback tried to keep from him was a major reason.

So, after Meredith showed he was below standard against St. Louis, the coach put in his quarterback shuttle, with rookies Craig Morton and Jerry Rhome doing the playing. Dallas lost anyway and Meredith was even criticized for doing a poor job of holding the ball for try for point after touchdown.

At Cleveland Landry started Rhome but had to call on Meredith in the second period. But Dallas lost again.

Against Green Bay Landry started Morton, who played the distance in a losing cause. Then Landry said he would go with Meredith the rest of the way. "The veterans will play better for him," the coach commented.

Dallas lost to Pittsburgh although Meredith performed well enough to win. Then the Cowboys started to roam and won five of the next seven games to finish second in the Eastern Conference of the National Football League.

But criticism of Meredith continued although on a much lighter scale, not counting the storm that arose when he passed on first down from the opposition's one-yard and had it intercepted. But Landry upheld his strategy.

"I have only listened to my coaches and those who really knew what I was doing wrong," said Meredith. "I just accepted the criticism from the fans and press as part of the game. But I got some praise, too."

And so he became a sportscaster five days a week and also will do a weekly show during the football season.

"The criticism isn't as much as I got in football," said Meredith. "The football fans are more prone to sit down and tell you what they think. They want to win and they sometimes think the Cowboys would have a better chance without me."

He doesn't agree with them, of course, especially since his coaches think he's plenty good.

Considering the fact that Dallas never has had a top offensive line — the main weak point of the Cowboys since Meredith has been quarterback (most of the last three years as starter)—his record is quite good.

In his six seasons he has thrown 1,400 passes, completed 694 for 10,090 yards and 74 touchdowns. He has run with the ball 154 times, gained 767 yards and scored nine touchdowns.

"I'm 28 years old and don't have too much football time left," said Meredith earnestly. "I would like to be on a winning team before I leave."

The way the Cowboys have been coming on in the exhibition grind this season, it looks like Dandy Don may get his wish. They'll probably criticize him for not doing it sooner though.

CSST To Compete In TAGS Games

Eight members of the College Station Swim Team will compete in the 4th Texas Aquatic Games sponsored by TAGS (Texas Age Group Swimming) at Pharr today through Friday.

Members competing from the College Station Swim Team are John Greenhut, 200 meter breaststroke, 200 meter individual medley, 200 meter freestyle, 100 meter fly and 100 meter freestyle; Steve Henry, 200 meter individual medley, 100 meter breaststroke and 100 meter backstroke; Dale Henry, 200 meter breaststroke; Gerry Lowe, 100 meter backstroke; Pat Greenhut, 500 meter freestyle, 50 meter fly and 200 meter individual medley; Patsy Hedges, 50 meter breaststroke; Tina Derendinger, 50 meter breaststroke; James Haislet, 100 meter breaststroke.

Each event of the Aquatic Games will have 24 of the top swimmers from the state competing. A swimmer may qualify by having the best time in an event in one of the state's eight districts or by having a qualifying time among the next 16 best times throughout the state. The top four swimmers in each event will receive a free trip to Mexico City to compete in the international Meet Sept. 1-3.

TAGS first Aquatic Games were held at the Wofford Cain Olympic Pool in 1963 in honor of the College Station Swim Team's coach Art Adamson, who has promoted swimming for the age group swimmers of Texas as well as coach the Texas A&M Swim Team. Adamson also received the annual outstanding contribution award from the Texas Inter-scholastic Swimming Coaches Association in 1964.

Stallings Claims SWC Golf Title

Texas A&M head football coach Gene Stallings won the first prize of a complete set of Ben Hogan woods and irons and a golf bag last week as he beat the other Southwest Conference coaches during the annual football rally golf tournament in Fort Worth.

Stallings and the other coaches played at Shady Oaks Country Club. J. T. King of Texas Tech and Dave Smith, assistant coach at TCU, tied for second.

In the sport writers and public relations division, Spec Gammann of A&M and Paul Ridings of Fort Worth tied for first.

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