

Dallas heads tough division

Wild race in east

Associated Press
The wild, wild, wild in the National Conference East Division is this year.

And you can take that as gospel truth from a man who ought to know, Dallas coach Tom Landry, active dean of the National Football League.

The 16-year coaching veteran said he can't think of a team that wouldn't be improved. Again, the Cardinals probably won't be decided until the final Sunday and the division will produce a wild card team.

In 1975, St. Louis captured the conference crown for the second consecutive year but Dallas dealt its card 10-4 record right into the Super Bowl, bowing 21-17 to Pittsburgh.

For years, the NFC East has been dominated by either Dallas, St. Louis or Washington. But Landry sees a revival at Philadelphia and particularly for the New York Giants.

Two teams usually out of the race in October. The Giants helped themselves immensely when they got Larry Brown, says Landry. "He gives them a running threat to go with Tom's passing."

The Giants stunned Pittsburgh 17-14 in preseason without Csonka. New York was 5-9 in 1975 but Philadelphia was even worse, 4-10.

There's a new coach at Philadelphia — Dick Vermeil, who guided the A's Rose Bowl upset of Ohio State.

There's usually a lot more excitement on a team when a coaching change occurs and the Eagles could be up," says Landry.

"Of course, St. Louis has a tremendous offense and the Cardinals have helped themselves defensively in the off-season," continues Landry. "Washington should be better offensively but we'll have to see if their defense holds up."

Landry warns that the Cowboys are still a rebuilding team with less experience defensively than a year ago.

But he figures "we should be right in the middle of the scrap with the rest of them."

St. Louis was 11-3 in the regular season a year ago but suffered a swoon in the first round of the playoffs again.

"Our goal is to make it into the playoffs again but we have to improve our defense," says Cardinal Coach Don Coryell. The Cardinal offense is set with quarterback Jim Hart, who threw 19 touchdown passes, halfback Terry Metcalf, fullback Jim Otis and exciting wide receiver Mel Gray.

Coryell obtained huge tackle Walt Patulski from Buffalo and tackle Marvin Upshaw and safety Mike Sensibaugh from Kansas City in off-season trades. The Cardinals also are hoping first-round draft pick Mike Dawson of Arizona, a defensive tackle, will make some immediate waves.

St. Louis has a tough late season stretch when the Cardinals face Los Angeles, Washington, Dallas and Baltimore in succession.

Dallas pulled off the NFL shocker of the year in 1975 with a club that included a dozen rookies. The Cowboys will be younger defensively now that 14-year veteran strongside linebacker Dave Edwards has retired.

"Our defense won't be as strong as early as it was last year," says Landry.

Middle linebacker Lee Roy Jordan is back for his last hurrah with Randy White and Bob Breunig, both second-year players, filling in where needed.

A preseason injury to free safety Cliff Harris has put second-year man Randy Hughes on the spot.

Offensively, Dallas could be better with the addition of Ron Johnson, formerly of the Giants; Duane Thomas, the once-moody prodigal son; and Jim Jensen, a fast, tough rookie fullback from Iowa, to a backfield that includes Preston Pearson and Robert Newhouse.

Landry plans continued use of his shotgun formation on obvious passing downs with Roger Staubach at quarterback. Danny White, a refugee from the World Football League, will be the backup with the departure of Clint Longley.

"We know more of what kind of defense to expect against us now when we go into the shotgun," says Landry.

The Redskins tumbled to an 8-6 record and out of the play-off last year for the first time in George Allen's five seasons as Washington coach.

Allen, with money as no object, obtained running back John Riggins from the New York Jets, and signed Calvin Hill, who once played for the Dallas Cowboys. Hill is a World Football League refugee.

"We have a chance to have the best balanced squad in the five years I've been here if this new talent comes through," says Allen, who also wooed free agent tight end Jean Fugett from the Cowboys.

Allen, who needs only three victories to join the NFL's 100-victory coach club, says, "I am confident that 1976 will find us back in the playoffs."

The Redskin defense faltered badly in the stretch last year but there is still quality and skill at all positions.

Allen moved to help his defense by acquiring discontented Miami safety Jake Scott and controversial defensive end John Matuszak from Kansas City.

The Giants' defense allowed 36 points in 1975 and face a rugged '76 schedule that includes Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Los Angeles and Detroit out of the division. The Giants have young but improving linebackers in Brad Van Pelt and Pat Hughes flanking Brian Kelley in the middle. Draftee Harry Carson rates high.

But all the talk is about Csonka and what his presence will mean to a hard-pressed offense. Csonka, 29, averaged 4.6 yards per carry through seven NFL seasons at Miami.

Joe Dawkins, traded to Denver recently, was New York's leading rusher with only 438 yards last year.

The Giants, who will move to New Jersey this year, lack speed in the backfield and need to shore up one of the more porous offensive lines in the league.

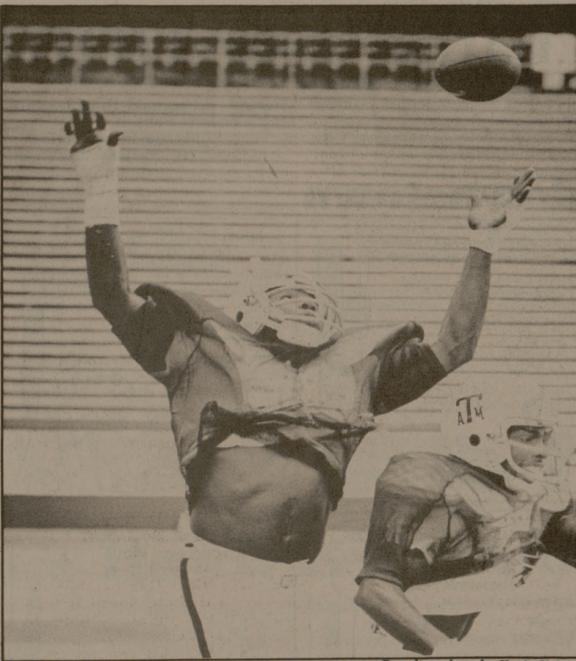
The Eagles will go with Mike Boryla at quarterback because of Roman Gabriel's chronic knee problems. There is high-octane talent in the receiver corps with tight end Charles Young and wide receiver Harold Carmichael as good as any in the NFL.

Philadelphia acquired offensive tackle Ed George from Baltimore to shore up the offensive line.

Defensively, the Eagles are tough with vigorous middle linebacker Bill Bergey and feisty safety Bill Bradley.

Vermeil had little help from the draft. The Eagles didn't get a pick until the fourth round, defensive end Mike Smith of Florida.

Vermeil jokes, "If you ask me, I'll have to go with Dallas as the favorite. They didn't graduate any seniors."



Battalion photo by Kevin Verner

Lester Hayes, senior defensive back for the Aggies, attempts an interception as senior William Thompson prepares to block. Both were starters for the Aggies last year.

Longley heads west

Associated Press
DALLAS — Quarterback Clint Longley, the Mad Bomber of the Dallas Cowboys, says he has no regrets about leaving the Cowboys — and quarterback Roger Staubach — to go play for the San Diego Chargers.

Longley's trade to the Chargers Monday for two undisclosed draft choices was the culmination of two incidents in which Longley and Staubach scuffled. The last fight occurred Aug. 12 when a Longley punch caused Staubach to hit his head on a scale, resulting in a nine-stitch wound.

Longley left the National Football League team immediately and asked to be traded.

"I am excited about it and this is a great opportunity," Longley said. "I have no regrets."

Longley, who hunts rattlesnakes as a hobby and came out of Abilene Christian College to join the Cowboys three years ago, was in a good mood as he explained he was packing "a guitar and a suitcase, vital things like that."

Longley, who said at one time that there was "bad blood" between him and Staubach, declined comment on the feud, saying, "That is not of any great significance now. I'm with another club. I'm not a person to look back on anything. As far as I'm concerned it is a dead incident. It's not worth going over again."

He praised Dallas Coach Tom Landry and the Cowboys: "They traded me to San Diego, which is a good place for me. They've dealt with me fairly since I've been here. I have nothing but good feelings to-

ward Coach Landry and the Cowboys."

San Diego Coach Tom Prothro, who is having quarterback problems of his own, told the Dallas Times Herald that Longley figures prominently in his plans.

"I don't know, but they say he has an IQ of 145," Prothro said. "He should be useful pretty quick."

The trade reportedly was a reluctant move by the Cowboys who looked upon Longley as a successor to Staubach. The team now has only rookie Danny White as a backup man.

Women's sports blooming in fall

By CAROLYN BLOSSER
Battalion Staff Writer

Texas A&M's rapidly growing women's sports program is off to a fast start this year with tryouts in intercollegiate softball, track, golf, tennis, volleyball and swimming already underway.

Tryouts for the women's basketball team begin September 13.

Final roster selection for the women's softball team will be made at the end of this week. The Ags, coming off a successful season last year when they placed second in the State championship, will begin their season here, September 14, with a doubleheader against Sam Houston State University.

The women's cross country track team is busy preparing for their first meet which will be held here in College Station on September 18. The

rest of the track team begins workouts next week. Anyone interested in trying out should attend the track meeting tonight at 8 p.m. in room 232 of G. Rollie White Coliseum.

Qualifying for the women's golf team began yesterday and is expected to run for two weeks. Eight players will be selected to the final team. The Aggie's first tournament will be October 6-9 when they travel to Albuquerque, New Mexico to compete in the Tucker Invitational.

The women's tennis team is having tryouts everyday this week between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. for those who have never before played on the team. Last year's team members will begin working out next week. The Ags will travel to Houston on September 25 for their season opener against the University of Houston.

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