

# Cowboys picked to finish third

**Associated Press**

When last we wrote of pre-season picks, we wrote off the Dallas Cowboys. So much for genius.

The National Football League's three National Conference divisions shape up as one down-to-the-wire scramble, one race that'll be decided when the front-runners hit the home stretch, and one Secretariat runaway.

In the East, the Cowboys, as conference champions, are the team to beat. The St. Louis Cardinals, as division champions, are another team to beat.

And the Washington Redskins, their running game back in high gear, are the team to beat them... and the team which will do just that.

The Central Division still belongs to the Minnesota Vikings, as it has in seven of the past eight seasons. With a defense that shows up intruders like dogs at a flea market, the Vikes can turn aside anything the perennial runner-up Detroit Lions have to offer.

And in the West, the Los Angeles Rams, so used to running away from three other teams the past few years, will get a chance to run away from four this time as the Seattle Seahawks join the iso-ran list.

Fourteen games from now, as three division winners and one wild-card team like the Cowboys last year line up to run the gamut to Super Bowl XI, here's how the NFC's 14 teams will line up.

The Cardinals will be hard

- EAST DIVISION**
- Washington Redskins
  - St. Louis Cardinals
  - Dallas Cowboys
  - New York Giants
  - Philadelphia Eagles
- CENTRAL DIVISION**
- Minnesota Vikings
  - Detroit Lions
  - Green Bay Packers
  - Chicago Bears
- WEST DIVISION**
- Los Angeles Rams
  - San Francisco 49ers
  - Atlanta Falcons
  - New Orleans Saints
  - Seattle Seahawks

pressed to duplicate a couple of last year's numbers — an 11-3 record and running back Terry Metcalf's 2,462 yards total offense. The defense, despite being shored up by a few acquisitions, is still vulnerable. The squeakers which St. Louis won last year will be lost this year.

The Cowboys are an old team in a few key spots, and they've appeared downright shoddy at times in exhibitions. They won't collapse, but they will fade a bit. In other words, we're writing them off again.

The New York Giants have Larry Csonka, but he can't do it all. A break-even season would be a successful one. And for the Philadelphia Eagles and new head Coach Dick Vermeil, a break-even season would be a miracle.

The Vikings happen to be one of the best defensive teams in the league. Last year they were the best, against both the pass and the run. That doesn't leave much else, except for a lot of punting.

And with a pass-run offense built so strongly around elusive Fran Tarkenton, versatile Chuck Foreman and a steady if not spectacular supporting cast, they'll be hard to beat.

The Lions, second for a depressing seven straight times, can expect more of the same. If they can beat Minnesota twice... but why bother talking about it. They won't.

Green Bay took a big gamble in trading for Lynn Dickey. It won't pay off. The Pack will pack it in early. A .500 season is doubtful. The same goes for the Chicago Bears, only more so.

Los Angeles' big problem starts with the 15th game, namely the playoffs. Getting there will be a breeze with the stampede of running backs like Lawrence McCutcheon, Jim Bertelsen, John Cappelletti, Cullen Bryant and friends who needs O.J., anyway? And receivers like Harold Jackson and Ron Jessie round out the attack.

Getting them the ball will be James Harris, a workmanlike if not charismatic quarterback, and gunner Ron Jaworski. And getting them the ball will be a defense, anchored by Jack Youngblood and Fred Dryer, which allowed the fewest points in the league last year.

San Francisco has a new head coach in Monte Clark and a new quarterback in Jim Plunkett, the one-time hero of nearby Stanford. The 49ers won't finish a distant seven games behind the Rams as they did last year. It'll probably be more like four or five back.

With one year of battle under his belt, Atlanta's Steve Bartkowski will show marked improvement. The Falcons' potential for success is there... in a few years. In New Orleans, Hank Stram's return to coaching is the good news. The rest will be bad. The Saints may double their victory output — to four.

Jack Patera's Seattle Seahawks will probably win three games. That's been the story of the NFL's last five expansion teams. Minnesota, Miami, Atlanta, New Orleans and Cincinnati each posted a 3-11 record in its first season.

# Colt coach is rehired

**Associated Press**

BALTIMORE — Ted Marchibroda was rehired as coach of the Baltimore Colts Tuesday, ending a two-day confrontation between players and assistant coaches on one side and the National Football League club's top officials on the other.

In a brief statement to reporters at the team's St. Marys Seminary training camp, Marchibroda said he had been given "full control of football matters" on the Colts and that his contract, due to expire at the end of the 1977 season, had been extended another year.

"But the prime thing is not that Ted Marchibroda is back," the coach said. "It's that the team is united and ready to play football."

He refused to answer questions or elaborate on what he meant by full control. General Manager Joe Thomas also declined to elaborate on the matter.

Marchibroda, chosen NFL Coach of the Year last season after directing the Colts to a 10-4 record and the American Conference Eastern Division title, had announced his resignation Sunday because of what he said was interference in running the ball club on the field from Thomas and Robert Irsey, the team owner.

The action came after Irsey, who purchased the club in 1972 and suffered through three miserable seasons before the 1975 turnaround, stormed into the Colt's locker room after a preseason loss to Detroit and berated both the players and Marchibroda.

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# Phillies still in dismal slump

**Associated Press**

The Philadelphia Phillies, in a slump that has cut 10 games from their lead in the National League East in the past two weeks, appear overly concerned, yet practice Tuesday, a handful of Phillies took batting practice in an effort to end hitting problems that have been a key factor in their slide.

But they intermingled a little im-

promptly football scrimmage with the more serious side of their practice.

Third baseman Mike Schmidt played a loose man-to-man defense on first baseman Dick Allen as both, clad in shorts and T-shirts, caught passes with a handful of teammates.

Only a few of the Phils were asked to participate in Tuesday's off-day practice, but second baseman Dave

Cash said, "There are 15 guys here who weren't asked to show up, but they're here anyway."

Two weeks ago, the Phillies had a 15½-game lead over the Pittsburgh Pirates in baseball's National League East.

The Pirates' doubleheader sweep here Labor Day trimmed that to just 5½ games in advance of another matchup between the two teams here Wednesday night.

The Pirates have won 12 of their last 13; the Phillies have dropped 10 of 11.

"It's been a combination of two things," said Cash. "We haven't had our hitting together and we've seen some real good pitching."

Phillie shortstop Larry Bowa, 0-3 Monday, found solace in the stand-ins.

"Look at it this way," he said. "If somebody came up to you in April and said, we'll give you a six game lead over the Pirates in September, would you take it?"

Of course, the question remains about the Phils' present mental attitude. Are they in a psychological rut? Might the Pirates have that elusive edge in momentum? Cash, who once played with the Pirates, sidestepped that question.

"These are 25 completely different individuals," he said.

"You know it doesn't matter what your attitude is, our main objective here is to win. The attitude is a secondary thing."

Phils Manager Danny Ozark commented, "I don't think there's such a word as tenseness on this ballclub."

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**THREE EX-DODGERS**

NEW YORK (AP) — For a while this summer, three former Brooklyn Dodgers were managing in the American League. They were new Boston Sox pilot Don Zimmer, who replaced Darrell Johnson; Dick Williams of the California Angels and Gene Mauch of the Minnesota Twins. But a few days after Zimmer was promoted from a coaching job, Williams was dropped as the Angel pilot.

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<p><b>THURSDAY EVENING SPECIAL</b></p> <p>Italian Candle Light Spaghetti Dinner SERVED WITH SPICED MEAT BALLS AND SAUCE Parmesan Cheese - Tossed Green Salad Choice of Salad Dressing - Hot Garlic Bread Tea or Coffee</p>		
<p><b>FRIDAY EVENING SPECIAL</b></p> <p>BREADED FISH FILET w/TARTAR SAUCE Cole Slaw Hush Puppies Choice of one vegetable Roll or Corn Bread &amp; Butter Tea or Coffee</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY NOON and EVENING SPECIAL</b></p> <p>"Yankee Pot Roast Texas Style" Tossed Salad Choice of one vegetable Roll or Corn Bread &amp; Butter Tea or Coffee</p>	<p><b>SUNDAY SPECIAL NOON and EVENING ROAST TURKEY DINNER</b></p> <p>Served with Cranberry Sauce Cornbread Dressing Roll or Corn Bread - Butter - Coffee or Tea Giblet Gravy And your choice of any One vegetable</p>

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