

# Dallas a good bet to repeat

United Press International  
DALLAS — The Dallas Cowboys 1978 should be about like the Dallas Cowboys of 1977 and 1976 and most any other year in recent memory. They ought to be quite good, they probably win most of their games and they are as good a bet as to win the Super Bowl. Cowboys coach Tom Landry admitted that at this time last year he did not look upon his team as one that was capable of reaching the Super Bowl. But four key changes on the defensive unit last year worked out right and by midseason it was the defense was one capable of doing impressive things. The defense is back untouched in 1977 and should be even better. The young players who stepped into the defense were especially important to our success," said Landry. "They have the ability to get better and they must continue to do so if we're to stay in strong contention for the things we achieved most on defense a year ago with the

addition of (linebackers) Thomas Henderson and Bob Breunig, the change of Bandy White into the line and with (cornerback) Aaron Kyle coming along. These four players all were pluses and they may be pluses for a number of years if they continue to improve. "I felt our defensive team reached its potential at just the right time. And I think that is what carried us to the Super Bowl." The emergence of White, combined with Harvey Martin and Ed Jones, made Dallas' pass rush a difficult force with which to contend, but Landry has hopes that his offense might match the quality of his defense this season. There could be a problem in the offensive line with the retirement of Ralph Neely at tackle and the failure of veteran Rayfield Wright to fully come around from a knee operation that cost him a chance to play last year. But this is the second year for Tony Dorsett in the backfield and the coaching staff expects him to explode this season. Dorsett didn't do all that bad last

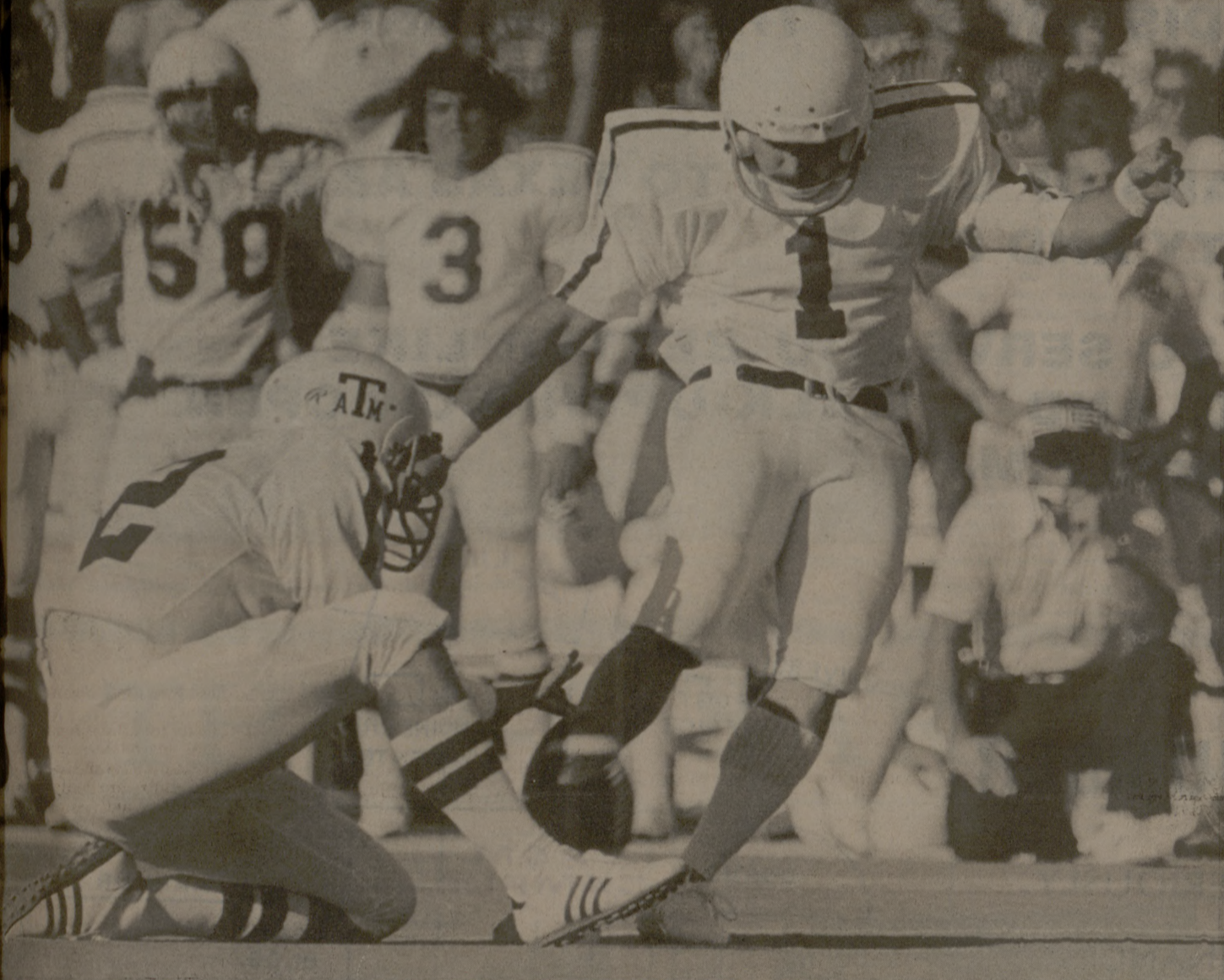
year. Although he started only half the games of his rookie season, he still gained 1,000 yards. "Tony's performance last year was just average — for him," said Landry. "He played much on instinct. He was trying to learn our system and was hurt quite a bit. The latter is a critical point for Tony. "If he's willing to work hard enough all year, prepare himself physically for the season that's coming, then it's unlimited what he might do. He's very capable of gaining a lot more than the 1,000 yards he had in 1977 and with the 16-game schedule and an injury-free year he should be in the 1,500-yard area." Quarterback Roger Staubach is back, of course, rolling along at age 36. In early training camp and exhibition season action, Staubach looked as good as ever. And the talented receiving corps of Drew Pearson, Golden Richards, Butch Johnson and Billy Joe DuPree will benefit greatly from the rule change that does not allow bumping more than five yards past the line of scrimmage.

But there is a slight shadow on the hopes of the Cowboys this season. The kicking game is a matter of great concern to Landry. Efran Herrera held out for more money and was traded to Seattle and much-travelled Skip Butler and rookie Jay Sherrill are trying to take his place. Few rookies have a chance to make the club but No. 1 draft pick Larry Betha, a defensive lineman from Michigan State, is almost certain to stick as are running backs Todd Christensen of Brigham Young and defensive back Dennis Thurman of Southern California. The retirement of Mel Renfro, who had been used sparingly last year because of foot problems, opens a defensive backfield spot. Dallas has a chance to become the first team ever to win three Super Bowls and Landry hopes that goal is enough to fight off any fat-cat thoughts. "In returning to a level that won't for us last year, stress will come from the problem of complacency," Landry said.



Unsung hero

One of the thankless jobs on the Texas A&M University football team is that of holding field goal attempts. David Beal carries out his job (above), while kicker Tony Franklin sends the ball on its way (left). Beal, a sophomore quarterback, will get a chance for glory this season, as he and fellow sophomore Mike Mosley both are expected to see action at quarterback.



# Culp talks about Campbell

United Press International  
HOUSTON — Curley Culp is a cautious interviewee who offers only a few well chosen words for public consumption. He approaches his job as checking blockers and downing blockers as business-like as he can. Some say the hulking Houston Oilers middle guard makes too much of his "9-to-5" philosophy. That was the case after a recent interview in which he admitted that financial matters affected his play last season. "I'm here," he said, "because I love football. But the emblem on the helmet doesn't mean a damn thing to me." It was interesting to note, therefore, his answer in a subsequent interview to a question about Oilers' rookie running back Earl Campbell. "I think he will be a great asset to the team," Culp said. "He's solid and strong. But the real test will come once the regular season begins. As for his structure and style of running, it is all there." There was more. "Of course, we're not going full speed now. But he runs low to the

ground. We need that outside threat and he and A.D. (Anthony Davis) should be able to give it to us." It was high praise indeed from the man who has made the Oilers defense a potent force in the NFL for three seasons. He knew, as do most veterans and youngsters in Houston's organization, that the former University of Texas tailback may bring the same impact to the previously pass-happy Oilers' offense that he did to the Longhorns last year. Campbell led the nation with 1,744 yards rushing in his senior season with the Horns. During the past month Campbell and the Oilers have gone through a rigorous training camp on the other side of Texas' Hill Country from Austin, where he built a reputation which earned him the Heisman after last season. Campbell handles himself much like Culp. He appears mature and tough-minded in his business dealings. Before training camp began, Campbell dabbled into commercial endorsements. The list of endorsements included shoes, snuff, autos

and furniture. His agent, Mike Trope, said Earl was paid \$2,500 to sign autographs for 45 minutes. "Right now I'm not doing any of that. I'm not going to (do that) during football either," said Campbell. "I've got to zoom in on one thing." Since signing a reported \$1.38 million, five-year contract with the Oilers in May, the presence of Campbell has paid off for the club. Season ticket sales are way up. Oilers publicist Jack Cherry tells the story of the Houston auto dealer who had not renewed his large block of Oilers season tickets early this

spring. The auto dealer heard the news of Houston's trade to obtain Campbell while on vacation in Hawaii, and when he did he called the Oilers offices long distance. Told the lines were busy, the auto dealer held for 20 minutes before placing his order, Cherry said. Campbell does not sell everything. He freely signs autographs after practice as he does his slow walk, the one which reminds NFL followers of Jimmy Brown. "If I don't have time for the kids," Campbell said, "I'm spending too much time on unnecessary things."

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