

the sports

Jones trades Bowl ring for boxing ring

NEW YORK — Two years ago, Ed "Too Tall" Jones became a world champion when the Dallas Cowboys won the Super Bowl. Now the All-Pro defensive end has his sights on another championship — the heavyweight boxing title.

Jones, the Cowboys' first-round draft pick in 1974, announced his retirement from football Tuesday to become a boxer. Jones, who played out his option last year and is a free agent, had been seeking a \$1.3 million long-term contract.

"I want to state as clearly and as strongly as possible that my retirement from professional football is final and complete and not subject to change for any reason," said Jones.

"My reasons for this decision are positive. To become a professional heavyweight boxer is something I have wanted to do for a long time and I am going to do it, given the help and support of my family and friends. With intense training and hard work, using the ability the good Lord gave me, I will become the heavyweight champion of the world.

Jones will be managed by David Wolf and trained by Murphy Griffith, 57, uncle of former world welterweight and middleweight champion Emile Griffith, has been a trainer for 39 years. Jones discounted the contract problems as the reason for his deci-

sion to leave football.

"My decision is not based on any negative reason," he said. "I am not using it as some sort of contract negotiation. It's not a money decision. I am not considering any offers from the Cowboys or any other football team.

"I will not negotiate a contract — I will not accept a contract. I simply want to become the heavyweight champion of the world."

Jones' only boxing experience came in high school in his home state of Tennessee.

"I fought in Golden Gloves when I was in high school," he explained. "I never lost a fight. In fact, none of my fights ever went past the first round. I loved to fight but I was an All-America basketball player and the coach said it was one sport or the other. I decided on basketball even though I loved to box."

Jones, who was joined at his announcement by World Boxing Council heavyweight champion Larry Holmes, said he expects it will be two years before he can meet top competition.

"I'm 28 and I don't feel I'm too old," Jones said. "If you take care of your body, your body takes care of you and I feel I've always kept myself in good shape. Within two years I should be able to compete with any of the top heavyweights. I don't say I'll be ready to win the title then but I will be able to take on the top contenders."

"I'm in no big hurry. You have to learn to crawl before you can walk." Jones said he felt no malice toward the Cowboys.

"I have with me my Super Bowl ring and they tell me it's the largest of its kind," Jones said. "In a sense it represents the greatest years of my life. The five years with the Dallas Cowboys have been the greatest five years in my life. They believed in me and made me a first-round choice even though I was from a small school. And I have the greatest respect for Tom Landry as both a coach and even more as a fine human being.

"But boxing is where my heart lies and a person should be able to do what he wants to do."

Landry and the Dallas management wished Jones well.

"We were very surprised to find out his alternative, which is boxing, which we didn't know anything about," said Landry. "We're disappointed obviously, that he's leaving us. He's given us five years of excellent defensive play. We're going to miss him. All we do is wish him the best in his new field."

Landry said Larry Bethea, a first-round draft choice last season, will be given first shot at Jones' slot.

Griffith, who has worked with such well-known fighters as Joe Frazier, Ron Lyle, Willie Monroe and Hedgemon Lewis, say he hopes to have Jones fighting within four to six months.

"He has the mental attitude to be a great fighter," said Griffith, "but we have to get him into training and teach him techniques. He has great athletic ability and a great attitude and it's now simply a matter of learning the fundamentals. We've had a few sessions with him and I like what I see. He has tremendous discipline — he's not a youngster — he's a mature person.

"I wouldn't want him to go in before four months. Anytime after that I think he'll be ready. We don't want to match him up with any bums. We'll put him in with somebody he can learn from. Every fight should be a learning experience for him."

Gil Clancy, veteran manager and trainer and now director of boxing at Madison Square Garden, was a bit skeptical.

Rangers' Bell reaps honors

NEW YORK — Buddy Bell, who hit an impressive .480 last week, Tuesday became the season's first Texas Ranger to gain American League Player of the Week honors.

The Rangers' third baseman went 12-for-25 with a double and three homers — two of them in the same game against the New York Yankees — and had six RBI and seven runs scored in the period June 11-18. Bell slugged .920 and had an on-base average of .480.

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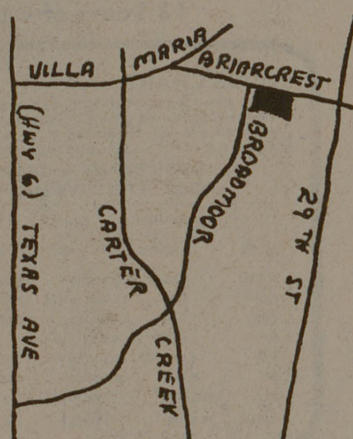
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Andujar, Astros win

HOUSTON — Joaquin Andujar led a two-hitter and Terry Puhl scored a pair of runs Tuesday night, leading the Houston Astros to a 3-1 triumph over the New York Mets.

Houston opened the scoring in the first inning when Puhl drew a leadoff walk, advanced to second on a sacrifice fly, stole third and scored on Cesar Cedeno's double. Puhl scored the second run in the third when he singled to right, advanced to third on the sacrifice by Julio Gonzalez and scored on a single by Joel Youngblood's throw got ill soon away from third baseman Richie Hebner.

Andujar, 7-4, drove in Houston's final run with a fourth inning leader's-choice grounder after Jose Cruz led off the inning with a single and Art Howe doubled.

In Anaheim, newcomer John Henry Johnson and Jim Kern com-

bined on a five-hitter and Larvelle Blanks knocked in the deciding run with a fifth-inning double Tuesday night, leading the Texas Rangers to a 2-1 decision over the California Angels.

Johnson, 3-8, making his first start since coming to Texas from Oakland last Friday, scattered four hits and struck out 10 over five innings before leaving with a pulled leg muscle. Kern allowed just one hit over the final four innings to earn his 10th save.

Jim Sundberg singled and stole second before Blanks delivered his fifth-inning double to give the Rangers a 2-0 lead. Texas had opened the scoring in the fourth on singles by Buddy Bell and Pat Putnam and a sacrifice fly by Oscar Gamble, sending Jim Barr to his second loss in five decisions.

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