

Texas A&M

# The Battalion Sports

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## 'Pokes might just lasso next Super Bowl crown

**United Press International**  
DALLAS — The password in the National Football League this season is "uncertainty" and it applies to the Dallas Cowboys just as it applies every other team.

But as far as the Cowboys are concerned, the uncertainty lies chiefly in the off-the-field, management-union problems that could eventually lead to a halt in

*As far as what takes place on the field is concerned, the Dallas Cowboys' uncertainty appears to be limited. The Cowboys should be good again in 1982. In fact, they could be excellent. They could go to the Super Bowl and they could win it.*

what has become the multi-billion dollar enterprise of professional football.

As far as what takes place on the field is concerned, however,

the uncertainty appears to be limited. The Cowboys should be good again.

In fact, they could be excellent. They could go to the Super Bowl and they could win it.

Dallas was on the verge of making it to the Super Bowl last year, of course, before the San Francisco 49ers drove the length of the field at Candlestick Park and nipped the Cowboys in the NFC championship thriller, 28-27.

"I think last year's team was the best we've had since the 1978 Super Bowl team," coach Tom Landry says in retrospect.

"We're capable of getting back into the playoffs again. But our biggest challenge is going to come now from the other NFC East teams.

"If everything remained the same," he said, "we wouldn't have to be better to win the division. But I see a major improvement in the division teams."

Dallas could well be improved as well, as long as the two major alterations that must come about on defense work out as well as the ones that were made a year ago.

In 1981 the Cowboys needed

to find some talent in a hurry for their defensive backfield. They found it, surprisingly, in the form of two free-agent rookies — Everson Walls and Michael Downs.

Now Dallas must find people to offset the loss of two of the most experienced players in the NFL — safety Charlie Waters and linebacker D.D. Lewis. They both retired after the '81 season and although they had seen their skills diminish at the end of their careers, the two players brought tremendous savvy to the stadium.

"The big challenge again this year is going to be on defense," Landry said, "mainly because of the retirement of Waters and Lewis. They added experience and confidence to our defensive team."

"We made big progress in our defense last year, but now we've lost a great deal of what we need, which is experience and leadership. This must be replaced

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— Cowboys' coach Tom Landry.

either by members of the current team or with the injection of new blood."

The biggest natural talent to fill the linebacking job appears to be Anthony Dickerson.

"He has the most explosion, the most quickness, the most big-play potential," Landry said. "But Dickerson's attitude has always been the question mark, all the way back to his college days at Southern Methodist."

"Whether he can concentrate on the job, become steady and reliable in the position, only he can tell us. If he does, then he can be the front-runner, just because of his ability to make the plays."

Veteran Benny Barnes went into the camp as the No. 1 choice to replace Waters at strong safe-

ty, but Barnes' chronic foot problems will probably keep him from going the full season. Some help is going to have to be found among the youngsters.

The rest of the defensive unit remains the same with the front four of John Dutton, Randy White, Harvey Martin and Ed Jones back for their second full year as a unit. The settling of Jones' contract squabbles eliminated the Cowboys' chief internal problem as training camp began.

On offense, the Cowboys seem set for another year of consistent ground-gaining.

At the skill positions the Cowboys have as much ability as any team in the league and that talent, if it stays healthy, should again make the club difficult to defend.

Tony Dorsett came close to leading the NFL in rushing last year and seems to have finally developed into the runner the Cowboys hoped to see all along.

"Dorsett had a super year," Landry said. "He prepared himself very well, had a great mental attitude and he performed as well as he's ever performed for the Cowboys."

"Now, you say, can he repeat it? Well, he can, if he wants to work hard enough and if he's lucky enough not to get hurt. It's also possible for him to be even better because he's maturing to a point where there's not much limit anymore in what he can do."

Landry has been generally dissatisfied with the fullback position and that job could change during the year.

The deep and talented receiving corps is still there and Danny White is blooming into one of the NFL's top quarterbacks.

"Danny has had two excellent years for us," Landry said. "I'm sure he was disappointed about the NFC championship game, but I think Danny White can only get better as he plays. His knowledge of the game is unsurpassed by any quarterback we've had."

So the Cowboys seem ready for another winning campaign, another playoff spot and, perhaps, another Super Bowl appearance.



photo by Donn Friedman

### Point your toes

Lisa Ragsdale, a junior business major from Bedford, stretches to reach her toes during an aerobic dance and conditioning class. Besides dancing, the class also lifts weights and its members run as part of a total fitness program.

## Predicting upcoming SWC race impossible

**United Press International**  
The Southern Methodist Mustangs won the Southwest Conference championship a year ago for the first time since 1966. The quarterback and two running backs who were chiefly responsible for the success are back for one more season together.

So why isn't SMU the overwhelming choice to win again? It's the SWC, that's why.

Over the last seven seasons, seven of the league's nine teams

have won or shared the championship — only TCU and Rice have missed out. During the last nine seasons just one team has managed to repeat as titleholder, as Houston won the crown outright in 1978 and shared it with Arkansas in 1979.

So the odds seem to be against SMU finishing first in the SWC for the second year in a row.

Of course, they could. But so could Arkansas. And so could Houston, or Texas A&M, or

Texas, or even Baylor — which provided a huge surprise two years ago by sweeping through the rest of the league unbeaten when the Bears had been popular pick for sixth place.

"On paper," Rice coach Earl Alborn said, "the top football teams appear to be Arkansas, SMU, A&M and Houston. We don't bet the rent on it."

Indeed, there seem to be more strong teams in the SWC.

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