Dallas faces challenge

United Press International

DALLAS — For the past two seasons, the Dallas Cowboys have made it to the doorstep of the Super Bowl only to have the welcome mat snatched away by the Philadelphia Eagles and San Francisco 49ers.

So things were a little grim around the Cowboys' training camp this summer. Those who have had to go through it and those who have watched from the sidelines agree that Coach Tom Landry ran his toughest camp in years.

And things are apt to get tougher since Dallas' offense was all but nonexistent in its first exhibition outing of the year.

But despite some salary grumblings — the chief one being resolved when defensive end Ed "Too Tall" Jones signed a new contract on the eve of the opening of camp — the Cowboys seem to be their old selves.

There are few alterations from the team that was nipped at the buzzer by the 49ers at Candlestick Park in last season's NFC championship thriller.

"I think last year's team was the best we've had since the 1978 Super Bowl team," 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, we wouldn't have to be better to win the division. But I see a major improvement in the division teams."

Dallas could be improved as well as long as the two major alterations that must come about on defense work the way the ones did 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 the Cowboys 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 both had seen their skills diminish at the end of their career, they both 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 either by members of the current team or with the injection of new blood."

At the moment, veterans Benny Barnes and Guy Brown are expected to fill the safety and linebacking positions.

But Barnes' chronic foot problems probably will keep him from going at full speed all year. Some help is going to have to be found among the youngsters.

The remainder of the defensive team is the same with the front four of John Dutton, Randy White, Harvey Martin and Jones back for their second full year as a unit.

On offense, the Cowboys seem set for another year of consistent ground gaining. The offensive line could still be in for some problems since center Robert Shaw has had his second knee operation in as many years.

That means Tom Rafferty will have to spend another year at center, where he played so well after being moved from guard when Shaw was injured in 1981.

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 finally seems to have developed into the runner the Cowboys hoped to see all along.

"Dorsett had a super year," Landry said.

"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."

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

So the Cowboys seem ready for another winning campaign, another playoff spot and, perhaps, another Super Bowl appearance. It looks to be only a matter of playing the games, which, as it turns out, may be the biggest question of all.

Lendl defeats Wilander in U.S. Open quarters

United Press International

NEW YORK — The quarter-final berths of the men's singles in the U.S. Open are in the process of being filled but Mats Wilander's dreams of winning another Grand Slam title ended Monday night.

Third-seeded Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia didn't exactly roll out a "Welcome, Mats" for his opponent as he advanced with a straight-set, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2 victory over the 18-year-old Wilander.

Guillermo Vilas of Argentina, the No. 4 seed, and 12th-seeded Steve Denton will meet in a fourth-round match today while No. 8 Eliot Teltscher meets unseeded Rodney Harmon. Jaime Fillol of Chile and Tom Gullikson also battle for a spot in the final eight.

In a fourth-round match tonight, Wimbledon champion and No. 2 seed Jimmy Connors plays veteran Ille Nastase of Romania.

In women's quarter-final matches, top-seeded Martina Navratilova plays No. 7 Pam Shriver; No. 2 Chris Evert Lloyd meets No. 16 Zina Garrison, and defending champion and No. 3 seed Tracy Austin faces No. 5 Hana Mandlikova.

Lendl will now meet Kim Warwick of Australia in the quarter-finals. The unseeded Warwick, whose doctor advised him to quit tennis after shoulder surgery in Ferbruary, continued his surprising string of victories with a 5-7, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4 victory over No. 9 Yannick Noah of France.

Sixth-seeded Gene Mayer just wants to show he can play an entire tournament without getting hurt. Mayer, an easy 6-4, 6-2, 6-1 winner over Bob Lutz of Stowe, Vt., Monday, is determined "to show my health is A-OK again " he said with a grin.

Amateur Gretchen Rush of Pittsburgh upset No. 6 Wendy Turnbull of Australia, but the 18-year-old must now battle No. 4 Andrea Jaeger in the quarter-finals. But, she said: "I don't necessarily expect to win, just to learn."

Navratilova advanced to the quarters with a 6-1, 6-2 triumph over No. 15 Andrea Leand despite a touch of food poisoning that has also plagued Evert. Other players advancing were Jaeger, a 6-1, 6-1 winner over No. 13 Kathy Rinaldi; Mandlikova, who downed Vicki Nelson, 6-4, 6-2; No. 7 Pam Shriver, a 6-3, 6-1 winner over Rosalyn Fairbank of South Africa, and Bonnie Gadusek, who ousted Elise Burgin, 6-0, 6-0.

Finally, a real surprise in the men's doubles Monday night: the top-seeded team of McEnroe and Peter Fleming were eliminated by the No. 5 contingent of Victor Amaya and Hank Pfister, who won, 2-6, 7-6 (9-7), 6-3, 6-1.

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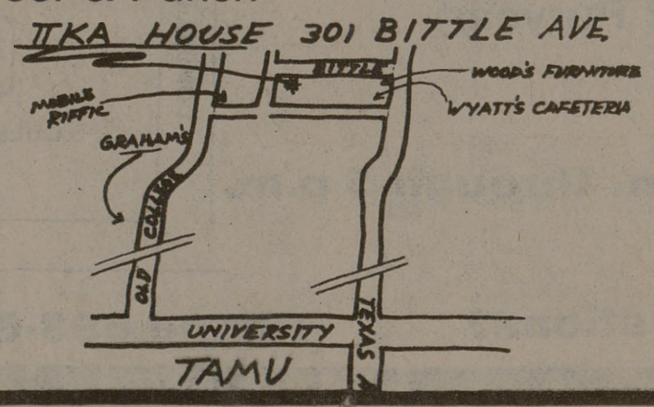

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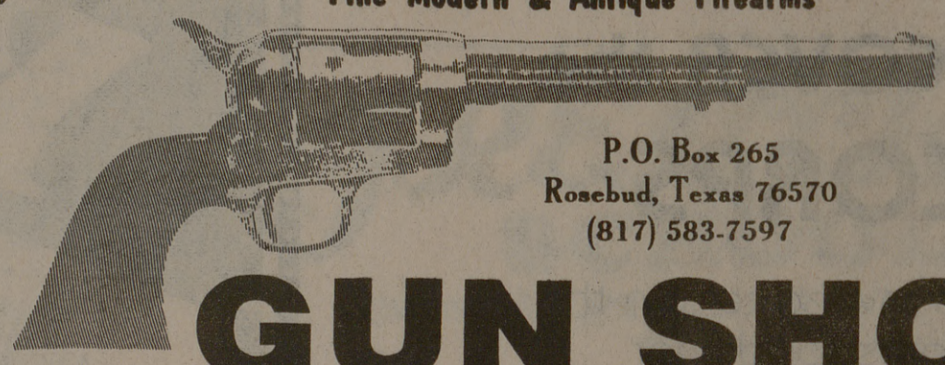

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