

Sports

Cowboys look to the future after dismal 1986 season

IRVING (AP) — Two decades of winning football are over for the Dallas Cowboys. The "Cow Bags" are out.

Professional sports' longest active team winning streak ended Sunday when the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Cowboys 23-21, eliminating Dallas from the NFL playoffs for the third time in 20 years.

A relatively small crowd of 46,177 fans heavily booed quarterback Steve Pelluer, punter Mike Saxon and the Dallas defense. Some of the fans slipped large grocery sacks over their heads so they wouldn't be recognized. There were 17,172 no-shows who couldn't care less.

Dallas has a 7-8 record. The last time the Cowboys had a losing season was 1964 when they finished 5-8-1. The Cowboys have to beat the Chicago Bears in Texas Stadium on Sunday to escape a losing season.

The Cowboys' 20 consecutive winning seasons was the third-longest in professional sports history, behind the New York Yankees' 39 straight winning seasons and the Montreal Canadiens' 32 consecutive winning years.

"The Glory Days Are Officially

Over," headlined the *Dallas Times Herald*.

The Cowboys started the season as NFC Eastern Division champions, and won six of their first eight games.

But injuries to quarterback Danny White and running backs Herschel Walker and Tony Dorsett helped contribute to a slide that has seen the Cowboys lose six of their last seven games. It's their worst second-half of the season since 1962.

"We're probably being laughed at around the NFL," Dorsett said. "A lot of people are extremely happy things have worked out the way they have, but we'll be back."

"We don't have anything to be proud of this year. But we've had a great past and I'm sure we'll have a great future."

"It's been a rough year for me physically," Dorsett added. "I've been beat up all year. I'm looking forward to getting myself healthy and being ready next year."

Close losses to the New York Giants and the Los Angeles Raiders with Pelluer at quarterback hurt the Cowboys.

"It tore the heart out of this team," Coach Tom Landry said.

Defensive tackle Randy White said there should be no excuses.

"I've never been in this situation before," White said. "What it boils down to is we just haven't been getting the job done. We lost that little edge you need to win football games. We need to show some pride against Chicago."

Walker said the Cowboys hadn't quit on Landry.

"You're not a loser until you give up, and this team works hard and plays hard," Walker said.

Pelluer said not making the playoffs hit Dallas "like a slap in the face."

But he didn't blame the Dallas fans for booing.

"I would have booed myself a couple times Sunday," Pelluer said.

Landry said that third-string quarterback Reggie Collier would see some action against the Bears.

"Reggie will play against the Bears," Landry said. "I don't know if he will start but he will play."



Photo by Tom Ownbey

A&M quarterback Kevin Murray attempts a pass as Coach Jackie Sherrill looks on during a cold practice in preparation for the Aggies' Cotton Bowl meeting with Ohio State.

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Aggies will discover if Buckeyes prove to be a tough nut to crack

By Homer Jacobs
Sports Editor

I guess the big question in the minds of most Aggies as the 51st annual Cotton Bowl Classic nears is not how the Aggies match up with Ohio State, but what the heck is a Buckeye anyway?

Analysis

Well, to soothe the souls during these trying times of finals week, here's Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary's definition of the Big Ten school's illustrious nickname:

buckeye — 1. a shrub or tree of the horse-chestnut family; also: its large nutlike seed. 2. a native or resident of Ohio.

With that cleared up, back to the game's various matchups. When A&M (9-2) and OSU (9-3)

clash on New Year's Day, the Buckeyes will field two All-Americans in junior wide receiver Chris Carter and junior linebacker Chris Spielman.

Carter caught 65 passes this year for 1,066 yards, while Spielman racked up 194 tackles, including an astounding 29 vs. Michigan.

The Buckeyes are solid at quarterback as well with senior Jim Kartsatos, who passed for 1,927 yards and 13 touchdowns.

On the sidelines for OSU will be Head Coach Earle Bruce, who has guided the Buckeyes to 74 wins over the last eight years.

A&M Coach Jackie Sherrill is well aware of the pool of talent for the Buckeyes.

"They've got a great linebacker"

and a great receiver," Sherrill said. "Their quarterback is excellent, but also they've got players in every position. They don't win that many football games without good football players."

Last year's 36-16 Cotton Bowl win over Auburn propelled A&M into the national limelight; and a victory over a traditional national powerhouse like the Buckeyes should lift the Aggies out of the semi-elite mold of football programs and into the elite.

A&M halfback Keith Woodside said the Southwest Conference should get more respect from the Big Ten.

"We are representing teams like

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Cowboys' woes trouble scalpers

IRVING (AP) — Even before the Philadelphia Eagles snuffed out the faint hopes of an NFL playoff berth for the Dallas Cowboys, ticket scalpers in the Texas Stadium parking lot were feeling the pinch of a poor season.

Rainy, cold weather, coupled with Dallas' dismal record, kept fans away in droves Sunday, forcing some scalpers into the role of reluctant Santas.

"I'm just going to say 'Merry Christmas' and give it away," said Jim Blackford, who had no offers for his extra ticket.

The \$19 tickets have been known to go for astronomical prices during a good year, but

there were 17,172 no-shows at Sunday's game, the second highest number in the club's history.

"Would you come out in this kind of weather to see a team play that's going to lose?" said Mike Davern, an advertising executive who was planning to give away four seats near the 40-yard line.

After a losing streak that saw the Cowboys lose six of their last seven games, even free tickets weren't moving.

"I'd almost be willing to trade these for an umbrella," said Phil Leonard, who was trying to unload several 50-yard line seats.

But Leonard remained somewhat optimistic.

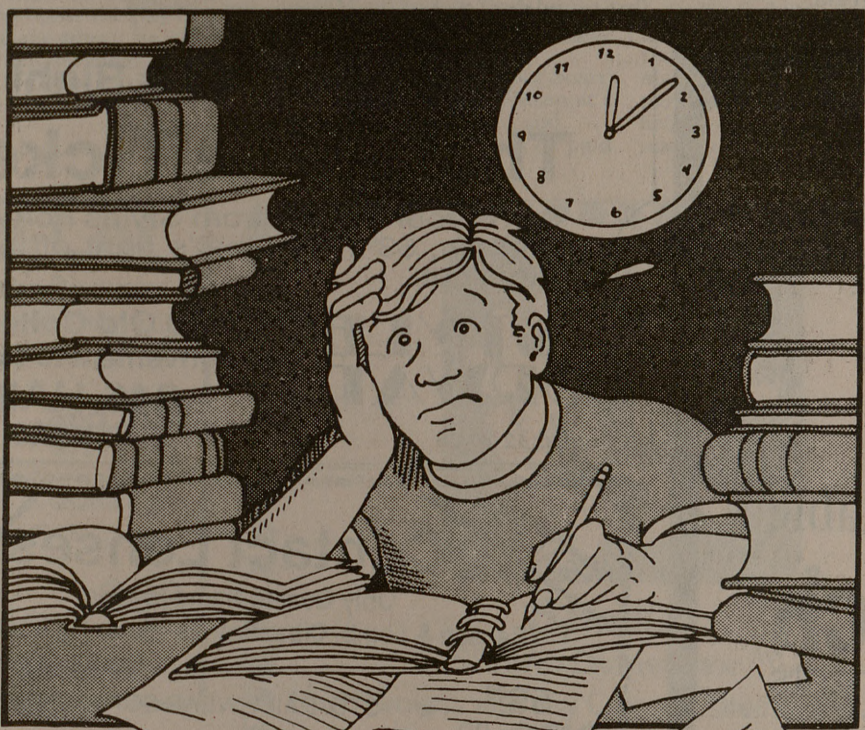
"It's crummy weather and a crummy team, but I think people still want to see the Cowboy mystique," said Leonard who was holding out for \$15 a ticket.

As game time approached, the scalpers began acting like commodities traders on the floor of the stock market, challenging their competition by shouting out lower and lower prices.

Most eventually gave up and handed their tickets over to anyone who wanted them.

Mike Kelly carried a fistful of 40-yard line seats around the stadium searching for what he called "the neediest fans."

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