

Thursday, May 4, 1989

Jones errs in personnel moves

IRVING (AP) — Jerry Jones told Doug Todd it wouldn't be a pleasant meeting.

It wasn't. Within five minutes, the Dallas Cowboys' public relations wizard for 18 years was gone. So was Jones' credibility as having the slightest clue of what's good for the new Cowboys.

It took Tex Schramm 29 years to build the team. Jones is succeeding in razing the monuments in three short months.

AP Analysis

Landry was fired and Schramm fled the premises to the International Football League.

Then Jones fired one of the Cowboys' prime image makers, the classy Todd.

Todd was the kind of guy you need to have around an NFL club.

Gifted with a world class sense of humor, Todd had a way of getting players to cooperate for media interviews.

He once chided Randy White for being a sourpuss interview.

"Randy, you're never going to

make All-Pro if you don't learn to cooperate with the media," Todd told him. "You're just hurting yourself."

The light bulb went on for White and he became cooperative. White made All-Pro nine times and thanked Todd for helping him do so.

Todd was credibility. He wouldn't tell little white fibs as some PR people have been known to do. If he told you something, you could believe it.

Jones' explanation to Todd was that he needed to cut costs.

Oh. This comes from someone who paid Troy Aikman \$2 million more than he had to and infuriated other NFL owners by jacking up the first round of the draft pay scale.

"I didn't realize I was making that much," Todd said. "I hadn't had a pay raise in three years."

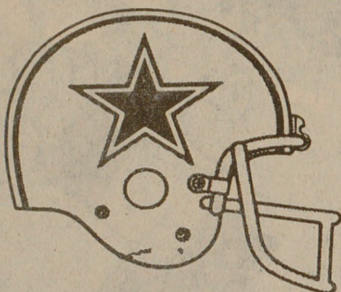
The manner in which Jones has been firing longtime members of the front office since he bought the team on Feb. 25 has bordered on ruthless.

Instead of telling the marked men all at one time, he picked them off separately, like a sniper firing from a tree top.

He hung Landry out to dry, letting him work up to the last minute

while he and coach Jimmy Johnson were celebrating at a Dallas restaurant.

Longtime treasurer Don Wilson was axed without warning a day before Todd was terminated.



The next day the director of photography, Bob Friedman, got it. Longtime assistant ticket manager Ann Lloyd was fired.

Todd's firing was a surprise because he had worked well with Johnson. The week before he was let go, Todd made a trip to New York City, finding the top columnists and writers to interview Aikman.

Johnson didn't stand in the way.

Now Todd has cleaned out his desk and left with his two Super Bowl championship rings.

Amazingly, Todd wasn't given a chance by the new regime to put his expertise on display.

Jones, apparently, feels he knows all there is to know about public relations.

Take draft day, for example, when he told a national television audience over ESPN that Aikman "still has to make the team."

It was a big hoot. It's well documented that Aikman already has a two-year GUARANTEED contract. Also, he signed for a \$2.7 million bonus which has already been paid.

Aikman isn't about to be sent packing with \$5 million of Jones' funds.

It's not too late, Jerry. Call Todd and hire him back. Then start clearing some of your ridiculous statements through Todd before you make 'em public.

It was quick-witted Todd who coined the phrase "America's Team" for NFL films. During the 1970s, that's just what the Cowboys became — "America's Team." It was Todd's brainstorm.

Todd and what once was "America's Team" are no more.

Astros fall to Expos on Owen's home run

ASSOCIATED PRESS

At Montreal, Spike Owen hit a two-run homer in the 11th inning, rallying the Montreal Expos over Houston Astros 6-5.

The Astros took a 5-4 lead in the top of the 11th on Ken Caminiti's run-scoring single before Montreal came back.

Nelson Santovenia singled with one out and Owen hit a 2-0 pitch from Juan Agosto for his second home run.

Tim Burke, 3-1, got the victory. Agosto, 0-1, was the sixth Houston pitcher.

Glenn Davis singled in the Astros' 11th and pinch runner Eric Yelding advanced on a sacrifice.

Kevin Bass was intentionally walked and Caminiti singled with two outs.

Other Major League Results:

Braves 6, Phillies 3
At Atlanta, rookie John Smoltz pitched a six-hitter and hit his first career home run as the Atlanta

Braves ended an eight-game losing streak, beating the Philadelphia Phillies 6-3.

Reds 6, Mets 4

At New York, Chris Sabo snapped a seventh-inning tie with a sacrifice fly and Barry Larkin followed with another sacrifice fly leading the Cincinnati Reds past the New York Mets 6-4.

Blue Jays 2, Athletics 0

At Toronto, Mike Flanagan pitched a four-hitter for his 19th career shutout as the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Oakland Athletics 2-0.

Indians 6, Royals 2

At Cleveland, shortstop Kurt Stillwell dropped Joe Carter's two-out pop fly, allowing two runs score during a three-run fourth inning, as Cleveland beat Kansas City 6-2 and snapped the Royals' four-game winning streak.

Mariners 3, Tigers 2

At Seattle, Jim Presley hit his first home run in 207 at-bats and rookie Erik Hanson allowed four hits in 6 2-3 innings as the Seattle Mariners beat the Detroit Tigers 3-2 to complete a three-game sweep.

NBA Playoffs make season m-o-n-o-t-o-n-o-u-s, not exciting

Will it ever end?

As the NBA playoffs drag on, alternative systems become more attractive.

The NBA needs a playoff system, but there's got to be a better way.

I admit I'm not the world's most avid basketball fan. But let's face it, the regular season is long enough. Six months worth of basketball is more than enough for most fans.

Then the playoffs tack almost two months on to the season.

I realize fans want to see their team in the playoffs, but a team that doesn't have a good year doesn't deserve to be in the postseason anyway.

Most basketball fans I've talked to have agreed the problem is that the NBA playoffs are too long. With the long season, fans lose interest, the players get burned out and they have a greater chance of being injured.

Alan Lehmann
Sports Writer

The NBA playoffs also run into the first two months of baseball season, forcing media attention to be divided between the two sports.

One of the most frustrating aspects of early-season baseball is turning on HSE to find the Rangers game has been bumped off by another Rockets playoff game. That's why I consistently root against the Rockets

and Mavericks.

Another reason to hate the current NBA playoff system is that it creates boredom. Granted, some people are tired of basketball long before the season ends, but the drawn-out playoffs only add to fan boredom.

However, the strongest argument against the current NBA playoff system is that it makes a mockery of the regular season. Sixteen teams get to play in the playoffs.

Being the best team in the NBA for six months doesn't assure a team of even having a shot at the championship.

And worse, a team that hardly reaches the .500 mark has a chance to eliminate the best teams in the league. All it takes is a key injury or a lucky streak.

Take Portland for example. The Trailblazers lost seven of their last eight games of the season, lost four games more than they won during the year and still

made the playoffs.

How about Golden State? They lost their last six games, were only four games over .500 and somehow made the second season.

However, Utah Jazz fans may be the maddest about Golden State's playoff fortunes. The Jazz were swept by the Warriors in the first round.

So why play over 80 games in the regular season, if they count for almost nothing?

The reason is money. NBA owners claim they barely break even on ticket revenue during the regular season. However, playoff revenue gives the owners a wider profit margin.

Owners also support the 16-team playoff system because it gives their team a chance to make the playoffs in years when they are not among the top four teams in their conference.

Therefore, owners almost unanimously have been against any reform of the playoff

system.

Obviously, any move to change the playoff system will have to come from outside the ownership circle.

So, I've taken it upon myself to propose a better way.

First, we do away with the 16-team format. Eight teams are more than enough. Then, take the champions from each division as automatic qualifiers.

Next, two teams from each conference with the next best records would receive berths similar to the NFL wildcard playoff system. From there it would be a simple eight-team tournament, with the champion team that has the best record being seeded first in each conference.

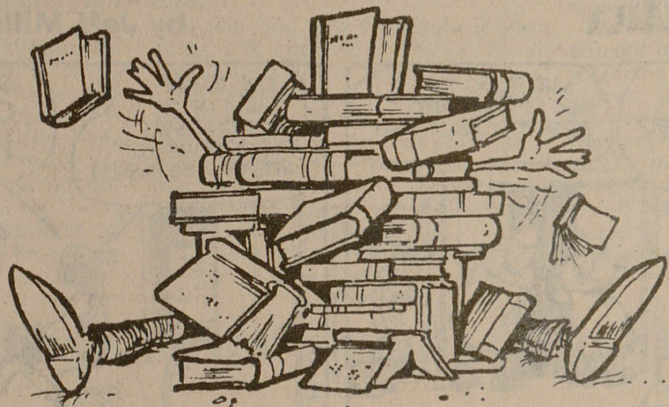
Hey, it may not be original, but it sure beats the current system.

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