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## Vanderbilt coach feels heat preparing for SMU

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Well-traveled coach Steve Sloan, now the offensive coordinator at Vanderbilt University, says he's feeling the pressure as he returns to the sidelines.

Vanderbilt opens the season Saturday night in Dallas against Southern Methodist.

"This week has been a little more emotional for me," said Sloan, former head coach at Vanderbilt, Texas Tech, Ole Miss and Duke as well as ex-athletic director at Alabama.

"I have very strong feelings about this school, and you get close to the players," he said. "You want them to do well, to be successful. As a coach, you want to have them prepared and call the right plays for them. That's a whole lot of pressure."

The last time Sloan helped prepare a Vanderbilt team for a game was in 1974 when, as head coach, he led the Commodores to the Peach Bowl where they tied Texas Tech.

Ironically, a few weeks later he became head coach at Texas Tech. From there he went to Ole Miss and then Duke. He was athletic director at Alabama last year until leaving in a dispute.

Sloan, 46, who grew up in Cleveland, Tenn., and played at Alabama under coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, said he never wonders what would have happened if he had remained at Vanderbilt.

"I'm just not a retrospective person," he said.

"The thing I do regret about my leaving Vanderbilt was that at first I said I'd stay, then I didn't. If I had it to do over again, I'd handle it differently."

Because of his indecision, he left the school in controversy. But Sloan said he has sensed no residual resentment since returning for this season.

"All the response had been positive. Probably the warmest reception has been from the guy on the street. I go to a restaurant or go shopping and I run into people who stop and tell me they're glad I'm back at Vanderbilt. That makes me feel good."

He said he's not evaluated his future.

"Maybe that's poor planning on my part. I'm just glad to be back in coaching. I missed being away from it. Right now I'm just trying to get back in the swing of things. I haven't looked beyond that."

## Try, try again

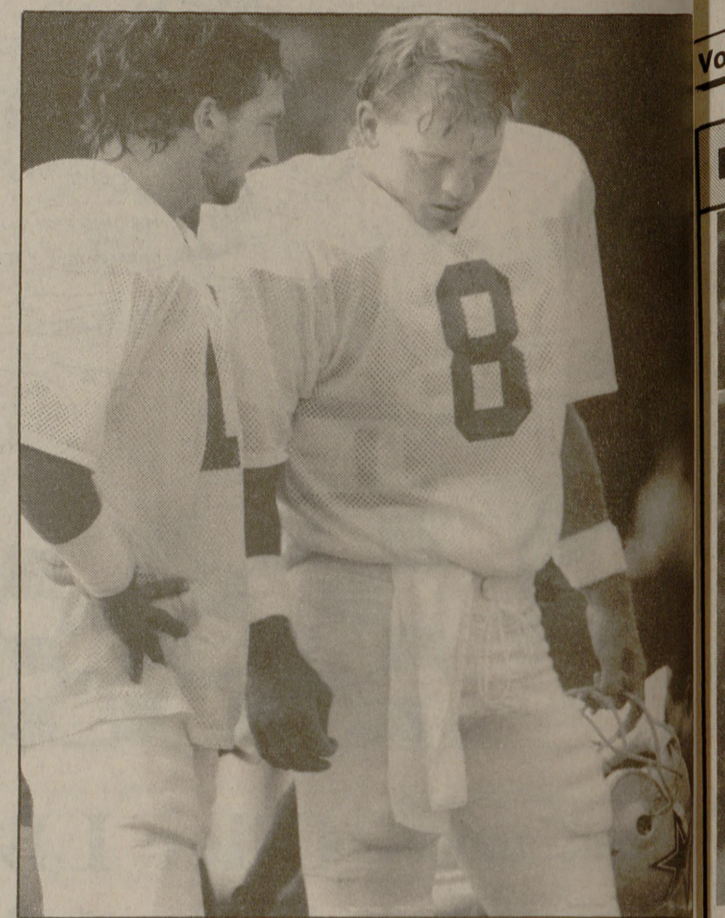


Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

Cowboys' quarterback Troy Aikman (0-11) tries to lead Dallas to a victory in its season opener Sunday over San Diego.

## Aikman tries living up to Dallas' MVP name

IRVING (AP) — Troy Aikman can joke about it but it grates on him.

He's a millionaire quarterback who has never won a game in the NFL.

Introduced at the Dallas Cowboys kickoff luncheon recently as the Most Valuable Cowboys' Player in 1989, Aikman quipped "I guess (running back) Paul Palmer couldn't make the flight in from Cincinnati."

Aikman will be 0-11 as a starting quarterback when the Cowboys open the season at home on Sunday against the San Diego Chargers at 3 p.m.

Dallas' only victory in a 1-15 rookie year for Aikman was 13-3 over the Washington Redskins.

Starting quarterback was Steve Walsh, who worked the five weeks Aikman spent on the sidelines recovering from a broken finger.

"Aikman has the same record as Roger Staubach," quipped broadcaster Dale Hansen. "Each one of them has had three concussions."

Aikman has come close to winning but the Dallas defense let him down.

Aikman set an NFL rookie record with 379 yards passing but lost to Phoenix. He was knocked unconscious as he delivered a 75-yard touchdown pass to James Dixon to give Dallas a 20-17 lead over Phoenix with less than two minutes to play.

When he woke up, the Cardinals had rallied to win the game.

Behind an offensive line that had a different cast of characters almost every week, Aikman hit 155 of 293 passes for 1,749 yards. He threw nine touchdown passes but suffered 18 interceptions.

Staubach has been impressed by Aikman.

"He has a quiet confidence about him," Staubach said. "I think our personalities might be the same."

Aikman said he's ready to win. "I learned a lot the hard way in my rookie season," Aikman said. "I can read defenses better."

"At times last year, things were a blur."

Aikman will have to be productive for Dallas to have a chance against the Chargers while the Cowboys' backfield introduces themselves to each other.

Alonzo Highsmith was obtained in a trade from Houston and first round pick Emmitt Smith signed a four-year contract, all this week.

Timmy Smith and Tommie Agee were expected to start in the Dallas backfield.

San Diego will have a surprise starter at quarterback, Mark Vlasic, who beat out Billy Joe Tolliver in training camp.

It's the Chargers' running back Marion Butts who worries Dallas coach Jimmy Johnson.

"Butts impressed us when we practiced with the Chargers and played against them in a preseason game," Johnson said.

"San Diego beat us in the preseason (28-16) so we know what's ahead of us."

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<b>FALL WEED ALLERGY STUDY</b>											
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