

# SPORTS

The Battalion

Page 9 • Thursday, September 2, 1999

## Cowboys' RB Smith on track to break Payton's record

IRVING (AP) — Emmitt Smith remembers hearing about an ordinary working man who won a huge lottery jackpot, but did not quit his day job. To Smith, it made perfect sense.

"If he chose to work, it's because he loves to work," Smith said. "I mean, I can retire right to this day. I've achieved so much and won three Super Bowls. I think it'd be easy for me to walk away right now."

"But I'm not in the game to achieve certain things and leave it alone."

Going into the 10th season of a career that's put him in the same tax bracket as the lotto winner and made him a lock for the Hall of Fame, Smith is still going strong.

Barry Sanders' retirement makes the Dallas Cowboys star the leading active rusher and paves the way for Smith to break Walter Payton's all-time rushing record, probably in 2001.

That did not seem likely this time last year when it seemed like all the pounding his 5-foot-9, 209-pound body had taken over the years was beginning to catch up to him.

Smith was coming off his fewest yards since his rookie year and the fewest touchdowns of his career. His numbers had dropped for a second straight season, a sure indication the end was near, right?

Wrong. In 1998, Smith had his most carries, yards and touchdowns since 1995, his best season

**"I always knew it wasn't over for me. I guess it had to be answered in other people's minds."**

— Emmitt Smith  
Cowboys' RB

and the last time Dallas won the Super Bowl.

"I always knew it wasn't over for me," Smith said. "I guess it had to be answered in other people's minds." Smith has been defying critics

ever since he first put on pads.

Constantly knocked for being too short and too slow, he has put together the most impressive balance of individual feats and team success of any running back in NFL history.

No player has run for more touchdowns than his 125 and his 12,566 yards is fifth on the all-time list. Smith, though, has won more Super Bowls than all four guys ahead of him combined.

Smith is on pace to reach No. 3 on the rushing chart by Thanksgiving, then pass Sanders, presuming he stays retired, in the 2000 season. Smith would catch Payton the following year.

Smith's personal accolades have been a byproduct of his team's glory, and he hopes it continues.

"There's an awful lot left to accomplish," Smith said. "I'd like to have five rings. But you've got to get four first, then get to five."

His chances of getting No. 4 are better this year than they've been in a while.

Dallas' offensive line is the first that can compare to the behemoths on the championship teams of '92, '93 and '95. It's no coincidence that Smith's 1996-97 skid happened while running behind worse blockers.

The Cowboys also have a faster, more sure-handed group of receivers, which should stretch defenses, thus creating more room for Smith to run.

"With all that in mind, you can't help but look forward to what we can achieve this season," he said.

## DE Ekuban sees action at tight end

IRVING, Texas (AP) — Troy Aikman saw a big guy catch the kickoff and was impressed. Whoever it was showed good hands in picking up the squib kick, and he seemed to know what he was doing when he ran with the ball.

Once the New England defenders were peeled off, Aikman was surprised to see rookie defensive end Ebenezer Ekuban get up from the bottom of the pile.

Ekuban's smooth handling of that play reminded Dallas Cowboys coaches that he had been a tight end for two years at North Carolina before switching to defense.

That knowledge came in handy a week later when injuries thinned Dallas' depth at tight end.

This week, the Cowboys took the first steps toward breaking in Ekuban as a short-yardage tight end by issuing him an offensive playbook and inviting him to offensive meetings.

He'll begin practicing at tight end next week, and coach Chan Gailey plans to give him a few minutes there every week to learn his assignments. He'll primarily be used in goal-line formations.

"He won't be running any post routes," Gailey said. "It'll just be in an emergency situation."

Hayward Clay was supposed to be Dallas' blocking tight end, but he went on injured reserve Tuesday with a hurt knee. The next option, rookie Mike Lucky, is recovering from a foot injury that could be stress fracture. That leaves only rookie free agent Brian Waters, who is listed as a fullback but played tight end during his junior and sophomore years at North Texas.

Even if Lucky or Waters makes the 53-man roster, there could be weeks when Gailey can not squeeze them onto the 45-man active list. Having Ekuban ready would make that decision easier.

"Anything I can do to help the team I'm willing to do," said Ekuban, a native of Ghana who has only been playing football six years. "I guess it's a compliment that the coaches have confidence in my athletic abilities."

The 6-foot-3, 281-pound Ekuban ran the fastest times among defensive linemen in the 10-yard and 40-yard dashes at the scouting combine, convincing the Cowboys to take him with the 20th overall pick. He's lived up to the billing thus far and has secured a spot as a top backup.

"If he was having to start and play every down at end, we would probably not do this," Gailey said. "But since he is in a rotation, we feel like we probably can."

In his freshman and sophomore years at North Carolina, Ekuban caught six passes for 66 yards and two touchdowns.

He's already begun his NFL stat file with the 18-yard kickoff return against the Patriots, the play that impressed Aikman.

"When I came back to the sidelines, he gave me a compliment," Ekuban said. "At first, I thought he was being sarcastic. I was like, 'Troy Aikman is telling me I did a good job? What is he talking about?'"

Now that he's got the quarterback on his side, all he has to do is work on the coach.

"I'll do whatever he tells me to do, but I may nudge him on the shoulder to throw me a pass every now and then," Ekuban said, laughing. "Hopefully I'll get some passes thrown my way and get a couple of touchdowns."



EKUBAN

1104C Harvey Rd.  
College Station  
693-4575

**PET PARADISE**

http://www.petparadise.com email: info@petparadise.com

1873 Briarcrest Dr.  
Bryan  
774-PETS

Good For Life™

**Pet Paradise & IAMS**

**Welcome Back the Aggies!**

Good For Life™

**IAMS**

**\$2.00 OFF**

any Bag IAMS

Expires Sept. 31, 1999 - Good only at Pet Paradise

Pet Paradise

**15% off**

your next purchase

Expires Sept. 31, 1999  
\*not valid on tanks tops lights,  
sales items or Dog/Cat food

Good For Life™

**IAMS**

**\$1.00 OFF**

any Box of Biscuits

Expires Sept. 31, 1999 - Good only at Pet Paradise

**SOULWORKS**  
819 Texas Avenue So.  
693-3215

A UNIQUE PLACE TO PURCHASE ARTWORK, POTTERY AND GIFTS OR, IF YOU PREFER, LEARN HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN.

---

Linda at  
**Sheery's**  
Hair Design

**Free Haircut**  
with Full Highlight  
(\$20 Savings)

**696-4144**  
Serving Aggies For 25 Years

---

**THE BATTALION**  
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

•EASY •AFFORDABLE  
•EFFECTIVE

**CALL FOR MORE**  
INFORMATION  
845-0569

**GLBTA**

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Aggies

We welcome all students back to Aggiland.

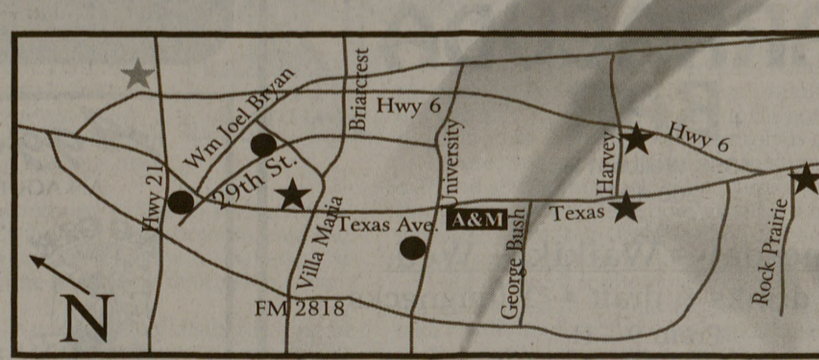
Remember, hate is not an Aggie value.

< glbta@glbta.tamu.edu >  
847-0321

**"IT'S YOUR MONEY... WHY SHOULD YOU PAY SOMEONE TO KEEP IT? WE OFFER ABSOLUTELY FREE CHECKING."**

## Free Checking

- Four Convenient Bank Locations
- 5th Location Coming Soon!
- Free Visa ATM/Check Card
- No Minimum Balance Requirement
- Unlimited Check Writing
- No Monthly Maintenance Fees
- Automatic Check Safekeeping
- Free Use of First National's ATMs
- 8 ATMs Located in B/CS
- No Per Item Charges
- Locally Owned, Community Bank
- Visit our web site at: [www.fnb-bcs.com](http://www.fnb-bcs.com)



Call Lydia Hall, Student Loan Representative, for more information.

**Bank Locations and ATMs**

2807 Texas Avenue / Bryan  
Texas Avenue at Harvey Road / CS  
Post Oak Mall near JC Penneys / CS  
1862 Rock Prairie Rd at Hwy 6 / CS  
*5th Location Coming Soon!*

**ATM Locations**

24th at South Main / Bryan  
Schulman Theatre at 29th / Bryan  
South College at University / CS

**"WE LOOK FORWARD TO SERVING YOU."**

789

2807 TEXAS AVE • 1862 ROCK PRAIRIE • TEXAS AT HARVEY ROAD • POST OAK MALL

**FIRST NATIONAL BANK**  
1862 BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION  
MEMBER FDIC/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LENDER

**The Oldest Bank in Texas**

Contact us at (409) 779-1111  
[www.fnb-bcs.com](http://www.fnb-bcs.com)