

Thursday, September 26, 2002

## THE BATTALION

## Carter still the man in 'Big D'

IRVING, Texas (AP) — The one thing Quincy Carter has been able to count on since joining the Dallas Cowboys has been the unconditional support of team owner Jerry Jones. Despite evidence that may be changing, Carter insisted Wednesday he's as confident as ever.

"I'm doing everything I can to help this team win," Carter said. "I can't control anything else. Quincy Carter is my biggest competitor. That's it."

Jones considered Carter the heir to Troy Aikman the day he drafted him, then sped up his succession plan by making the rookie an opening day starter last season. Injuries limited him to a half season, so this week Carter is preparing for only his 12th career start, against St. Louis on Sunday.

This season, he's 1-2, having completed 48-of-89 passes (54 percent) for 572 yards with two interceptions and two touchdowns. His quarterback rating in 13th in the NFC.

Jones questioned Carter's progress on Tuesday, saying he wasn't sure "if Quincy will evolve into the kind of player and productive player that some of the mobile quarterbacks we see are." Regarding Carter's development, Jones said he was "in the mid-

dle" between pleased and disappointed.

Although Jones added that doubts about Carter led to the signing of Chad Hutchinson, he also said Carter is still the starter.

Hutchinson, who spent the last four seasons playing pro baseball, has yet to take a snap, even in a lopsided loss Sunday to Philadelphia.

"I don't think we can outright say what is going to happen in the future," coach Dave Campo said. "I feel good (Carter) is making progress. We are going with Quincy."

Carter certainly isn't the only thing wrong with the Cowboys' offense. The line hasn't taken to a new blocking scheme, with injuries further slowing them. That's led to fewer holes for running back Emmitt Smith and less protection for Carter.

"I don't think we've been able to put together the complete package to balance, support Quincy," Smith said. "It's not necessarily all Quincy's fault."

Offensive coordinator Bruce Coslet also said there are too many factors to blame one person.

"The thing that's wrong with us is we need to stay patient, on an even keel and get guys healthy," Coslet said.

Carter has known from the start that he has one of the most high-profile jobs in pro sports. All he's asking for is patience while he grows into the job, which is what happened with his Dallas predecessors and other young quarterbacks around the league, such as Peyton Manning and Donovan McNabb.

"Troy Aikman was given three years. Roger Staubach didn't start out on fire. I don't think Don Meredith did," Carter said. "I'm in good company."

Carter has been a target of critics nearly his entire athletic career.

"I've been able to come in and accept that it's not going to be easy," Carter said. "I look at it as a challenge."

The biggest surprise about Carter this season is how seldom he's run. He has only seven carries for a total of eight yards, with a long of nine. Coslet and Campo have said repeatedly that Carter has permission to whenever he wants.

"How many years did it take for Donovan McNabb to become the complete quarterback he is now? Quincy hasn't even had one full season," Smith said. "I think he's making progress and getting better. I look for him to keep doing better."

## Vikings' Moss charged with misdemeanors

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Randy Moss walked out of jail whistling, charged with two misdemeanors instead of a possible felony for allegedly pushing a traffic officer a half-block with his car.

The Minnesota Vikings' star receiver won't even miss a game.

Moss was released Wednesday from the Hennepin County jail after spending the night.

He was charged with careless driving and failure to obey a traffic officer.

Police said they found a small quantity of marijuana in Moss' car, an amount that would qualify as a petty misdemeanor, but no charge was immediately filed.

Moss, who has a history of trouble on and off the field, had been arrested on suspicion of assault with a dangerous weapon, a felony.

He whistled as he left jail and walked through a pack of reporters.

"You'll hear my side later," Moss said. "I was treated bad."

After retrieving some belongings from a van, he left in a car.

Head coach Mike Tice said Moss will start Sunday against the Seattle Seahawks but will be disciplined for missing part of Wednesday's practice. He did not reveal the discipline.

Allowing Moss to play is "an appropriate course of action" based on the lesser charges.

"I'm still disappointed," Tice said. "This doesn't change the fact that we've been dealing with this for the last 24 hours, that I slept very little last night."

Moss wasn't available to reporters at the team's practice facility. Tice said Moss apologized to his teammates and coaches after practice, and would make a statement on Thursday.

Moss wound up in jail after his run-in with the traffic officer during Tuesday evening rush hour on a downtown Minneapolis street.

The officer stepped in front of Moss' car to stop him from making an illegal turn. Moss used his car to slowly push her along the street, stopping when she fell to the ground, police spokeswoman Cyndi Barrington said.

Barrington said 27-year-old Amy Zaccardi — a city employee but not a police officer — was not seriously hurt. One witness called the situation "surreal." Another said he did not believe Moss intended to harm Zaccardi.

County prosecutor Amy Klobuchar said the case was turned over to the city for lesser charges because there wasn't enough evidence to prove Moss intended to hurt the officer.

Moss could get 90 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine on each of the misdemeanors if convicted. A felony assault conviction might have meant 21 months in prison.

Under NFL rules, Moss will undergo mandatory "evaluation" because he was charged. Any disciplinary action would follow a conviction or guilty plea.

Jerry Hullerman said he was parked near the intersection when he saw Moss driving his car.

"I saw a really decked-out Lexus pushing the traffic person along," said Hullerman, who was also interviewed by police. "It was really surreal."

He said Zaccardi was facing forward while sitting on the front of the car with one hand on the hood and the other hand on her radio as the car pushed her along.

After a few seconds, Hullerman said, the man in the car tapped the accelerator and knocked her down.

"She fell flat on her face," Hullerman said, adding that the driver didn't get out of his car.

Hullerman said squad cars arrived seconds later and officers took Moss into custody.

"(Moss) was going really slow," said Robert Nelson, another witness. "Apparently, he didn't want to hurt her. I think he was just trying to frighten her into moving."

The 25-year-old Moss has been in trouble before. He squirted a referee with a water bottle in 1999 — which resulted in a \$25,000 fine from the NFL — and verbally abused corporate sponsors on the team bus in 2001. The last infraction resulted in the team fining him \$15,000 and forcing him to attend anger management classes. He had a scholarship revoked by Notre Dame in 1995 after being charged with beating up a high school classmate in Rand, W.Va. Moss pleaded guilty to battery and was sentenced to 30 days in jail. He was allowed to defer most of the sentence until after his freshman year in college.

He went to Florida State, where he redshirted his freshman season but was kicked off the team for violating probation by smoking marijuana. That got him a one-year jail sentence, which was reduced to about one month of time served.

Virtually out of chances, Moss walked on at Marshall and quickly became a star.

Moss is in his fifth year with the Vikings and is the team's highest-paid player. He signed an eight-year, \$75 million contract last year.

He set an NFL record with 5,396 yards receiving in his first four seasons as a pro and is the only wide receiver with more than 1,000 yards receiving in each of his first four seasons. Moss has scored more touchdowns since his 1998 debut than anyone except St. Louis running back Marshall Faulk.

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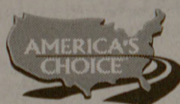
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