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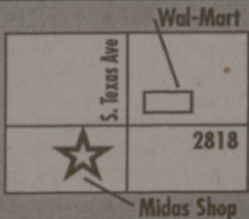
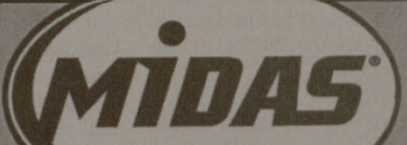
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.91	I	I ₁	1095 ⁰⁰	1.12	E	SI ₃	2950 ⁰⁰
.64	I	SI ₁	1250 ⁰⁰ EGL Cert.	.58	I	SI ₁	1150 ⁰⁰
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.52	G	SI ₂	750 ⁰⁰	1.63	G	SI ₁	6800 ⁰⁰
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Parcells: time for Ekuban to live up to potential

By Stephen Hawkins
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN ANTONIO — Ebenezer Ekuban's talk with Bill Parcells was short and simple. The message from the coach was clear. The Dallas Cowboys expect Ekuban, their right defensive end and former No. 1 pick, to have more quarterback sacks. He had just one last season.

"He sees ability, so he's just trying to tweak some things so I can get to the quarterback," Ekuban said. "He's always scrutinizing and never satisfied, so every day you're learning."

Parcells likes the potential he sees in the 6-foot-3, 265-pound Ekuban, who has always relied on his speed to get around blockers, most bigger than him. But that is not enough anymore.

"Basically what I've seen is a little bit of a one-dimensional rusher kind of guy. He just needs to get a little more versatility in the package," Parcells said. "He does have the acceleration and speed to be successful, if he can just mix up his technique enough."

Parcells insists he didn't know that Ekuban was the team's No. 1 pick in 1999. But the new coach was very aware of that single sack last season, which put Ekuban in a group of just five starting defensive ends in the NFL with one or no sacks.

And that lone sack came in the season opener against the

expansion Houston Texans, who went on to allow a record 73 sacks. Ekuban may have set career highs of 43 tackles and 20 quarterback pressures last season, but the sack total was disappointing.

"It's encouraging to know you have a coach who is going to be working with you and sees positive things from you."

— Ebenezer Ekuban
Cowboys defensive end

"It matters to me. I'm a defensive end and that's what I'm here for," Ekuban said. "Everything matters to me, the way I play the run, the amount of times I get to the quarterback. I look at ways to get better and I'm the hardest critic of myself."

Parcells told Ekuban to set his goals high, and to work on his counter moves. At some point during camp, once things settle a bit and a few players have been cut, the coach plans to work individually with Ekuban.

"It's encouraging to know you have a coach who is going to be working with you and sees positive things from you," Ekuban

said. "It's encouraging that he has the patience to see me develop into a football player."

After playing all 16 games as a rookie in 1999, starting the last two after Greg Ellis broke his leg, Ekuban led the Cowboys with 6 1/2 sacks the next season despite playing primarily in a reserve role and missing four games because of a big toe injury.

Ekuban started the 2001 season opener, but played only in the first half against Tampa Bay before a herniated disk in his back required surgery and forced him to miss the rest of the year. He then had to earn his starting job back in training camp last summer.

"Through even the back problems he had, he still was getting some tackles and getting some pressures on the quarterback," said Ellis, also Ekuban's teammate at North Carolina and drafted No. 1 by Dallas a year earlier. "He still played hard. He just wasn't hitting on all cylinders last year."

Ekuban insists he's not dwelling on the past ups-and-downs, or the fact that he is going into the last year of his contract. But his disappointments seem to be a motivator for him.

"I am just out trying to make amends for the past couple of years when things haven't gone right and hopefully put everything together," Ekuban said.

And that's also what the Cowboys want.

Better late than never for new Bucks coach

By Arnie Stapleton
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. FRANCIS, Wis. — Terry Porter is finally over the heartache of being bypassed by his hometown team in the NBA draft 18 years ago.

Now he's coach of the Milwaukee Bucks. "I'm glad they didn't pass on me this time; '85 was a tough year for me," Porter said Wednesday at his introductory news conference.

Porter replaces George Karl, who was fired on July 20, and becomes the first black coach in franchise history.

After starring at Milwaukee South Division High School and Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Porter was hoping to be drafted by the Bucks in 1985.

He even spent the evening as their guest at the club's draft headquarters at the Milwaukee Arena.

But coach Don Nelson selected LSU's Jerry Reynolds instead and Portland grabbed Porter two spots later with the 24th pick.

He starred for a decade with the Trail Blazers, becoming their career assists leader before stops at Minnesota, Miami and San Antonio before retiring in 2002.

Through it all, he never forgot that awful night in 1985.

"It always stuck me," Porter said. "Whenever I see Nelson and guys who were on that staff, I always give them a little jab: 'Hey, you guys passed up on me.' I always say that. Growing up in this town and being a part of the draft day and then not get drafted, it was disappointing."

"But I look forward to being a big part of the organization now."

Sen. Herb Kohl had just bought the team when the Bucks passed on Porter the player.

"It's nice that you guys didn't pass up on me this time," Porter said he told Kohl after getting the coaching job.

Kohl gladly welcomed Porter to the Bucks this time.

"We are really very pleased that a man from our community has gone out and been a big success and now is coming home to provide that kind of leadership to our organization," Kohl said.

"It was just a matter of great coincidence but also great fortune for us that the best-qualified candidate was also the guy from our own community."

Porter, 40, worked last season as an assistant with the Sacramento Kings, his first season in coaching after a 17-year playing career.

"He is a proven winner in the NBA who played the game with dignity, confidence and intensity, skills that will translate directly to the improvement of our team," general manager Larry Harris said.

Bucks hire Milwaukee native Porter

Milwaukee native Terry Porter, who played 17 seasons in the NBA, was named as the new coach of the Bucks.

AGE	40	COACHING CAREER	Porter Sacramento Kings
NBA PLAYING CAREER	Portland Trailblazers Minnesota Timberwolves Miami Heat San Antonio Spurs	COLLEGE	University of Wisconsin
PLAYING CAREER HIGHLIGHTS	Two-time NBA All Star; Portland's all-time assists leader (5,319)	PERSONAL	Wife, Susie

SOURCE: NBA

Bryant makes first court appearance

By Tim Dahlberg
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EAGLE, Colo. — NBA superstar Kobe Bryant made his first appearance in court Wednesday on a charge of sexually assaulting a 19-year-old hotel worker.

Flanked by his attorneys, the 24-year-old Bryant stood quietly as his attorneys waived his right to be formally advised of the felony assault charge. Judge Frederick Gannett set a preliminary hearing for Oct. 9.

Bryant has said he had consensual sex with the woman but is innocent of assault.

Bryant, who is free on \$25,000 bond, said virtually nothing during the seven-minute hearing. He left the courthouse immediately and was expected to leave Colorado soon after the court appearance.

The hearing was held amid a media frenzy akin to the NBA finals. Hundreds of reporters and photographers swamped this quiet mountain town and the brief hearing involving the five-time All Star was carried live on national cable networks.

Bryant took a private jet to a nearby airport and was driven to the Eagle County courthouse in a sport-utility vehicle. There were scattered cheers and a shout of "Kobe is innocent!" from the crowd after he arrived.

Bryant and defense attorney Pamela Mackey both went through a metal detector before they entered the courtroom.

Outside the courthouse, a small city of television satellite trucks was set up next to a dozen or so platforms for live TV shots — precisely the type of coverage Bryant hoped to avoid when his attorneys asked Gannett to allow the Los Angeles Lakers star to skip the procedural hearing.

The judge denied the request, setting the stage for the circus-like event.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Kent drops appeal of two-game suspension for pushing

HOUSTON (AP) — Astros second baseman Jeff Kent has dropped his appeal of a two-game suspension he received for pushing team manager Jimmy Williams into an umpire, the team announced Wednesday.

Kent, who was also fined an undisclosed amount of money by Major League Baseball, will miss Houston's games against the New York Mets on Wednesday and Thursday at Minute Maid Park.

Major League Baseball officials, who issued the suspension on Tuesday, said Kent pushed Williams into plate umpire Matt Hollowell while objecting to being thrown out for arguing a check swing strike call during the Astros' home game July 26 against the Chicago Cubs.

Kent had initially decided to appeal the suspension and played in Tuesday night's 10-1 loss to the Mets.