

Carter, Cowboys in first place alone with Parcels

By Stephen Hawkins
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IRVING — The day after the Arizona game last year, Quincy Carter was replaced as the Dallas Cowboys' starting quarterback and the team had a losing record for the rest of the season.

After a 24-7 win over the Cardinals on Sunday, the Cowboys (3-1) are alone at the top of the NFC East standings. And Carter, who regained his job during coach Bill Parcels' first training camp, is leading the NFL's top-ranked offense.

What a difference the coach has made in his first month of the regular season.

"He's brought an attitude around here that's second-to-none. That's why our temperament has changed, because of the way he is," Carter said Monday. "I don't think we'd be 3-1 without him."

The Cowboys have their first three-game winning streak since they were 3-0 and last alone atop the NFC East to start 1999, their last playoff season. Dallas has at least 360 total yards in four straight games for the first time since 1993, the year it won its second straight Super Bowl championship.

There are plenty of reasons to feel good after three straight 5-11 seasons.

Still, Parcels is downplaying the early success. "We're doing some good things, I just don't want to enumerate the things we're doing

better, because I don't think we're ready to hear them all," Parcels said. "I'll tell the players, but I don't want anybody to think we're doing great. We're not."

Dallas won consecutive games in New York against the Giants and Jets, both playoff teams last season. But the teams the Cowboys have beaten have a combined 3-10 record.

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Cowboys' quarterback

"I'm trying to get the team to improve and understand what it takes to be successful," Parcels said. "We've got quite a few guys starting to figure that out. We've got a whole bushel basket full that don't know what's going on."

The coach's response doesn't surprise the Cowboys.

"He's going to be pushing all of the way. That's his style, how he does it. It's working," said defensive tackle La'Roi Glover.

"He doesn't like to lose, he doesn't like mistakes. And when you win, the ante goes up."

The Cowboys play Sunday against Philadelphia (2-2),

which has won the last six games against Dallas by an average margin of 24 points. Dallas then plays at Detroit (1-4) before six straight games, through Thanksgiving Day vs. Miami (3-1), against teams that have winning records.

"We have to try to put some wins together and get in position for November. This isn't going to be an easy task," Parcels said. In position for what?

"Just to stay in the race," he said. "Your whole goal is in Week 16 to be playing for something. We want to get to the halfway point on the plus-side of the ledger."

Through one-fourth of the season, they've done that.

The Cowboys lead the NFL with 382.2 yards per game. Carter has completed 71 of 126 passes (56 percent) for 1,031 yards with seven touchdowns and four interceptions.

Carter was benched last season after throwing four interceptions — two near the goal line — in a 9-6 loss at Arizona that also included a heated sideline argument with owner Jerry Jones. The Cowboys were 3-4 when Chad Hutchinson took over at quarterback.

When Parcels was hired, he gave both quarterbacks a clean slate. Carter won the job after working with new offensive coordinator Maurice Carthon and quarterback coach Sean Payton.

"He is now more a complete quarterback than a young guy trying to learn how to play," said receiver Joey Galloway.

Security beefed up for Kobe trial

DENVER (AP) — Authorities are tightening security before NBA star Kobe Bryant arrives in Colorado for a preliminary hearing Thursday that might not even take place.

Dozens of threats against the prosecutor, the judge and Bryant's 19-year-old accuser helped prompt the tougher steps. Armed guards will be at the courthouse, one entrance will be locked, and a metal detector will be set up at the other door for the third time in years, a sheriff's spokeswoman said Monday.

The question is whether there will be a hearing to determine whether the Los Angeles Lakers star will stand trial. Many believe that for tactical reasons, his attorneys will waive his right to a preliminary hearing, which would clear the way for a rape trial sometime next year.

"If the defense doesn't waive it, what's going to happen is that the public, and of course potential jurors, is going to be left with an image of what happened in that room — and it's going to be an image that goes unrebuted," said Norm Early, a former Denver district attorney. "I think it would be very detrimental to Kobe Bryant and I just don't see him risking that kind of exposure."

Prosecutors have said they plan to call a sheriff's detective as a witness to discuss the investigation and conclusions reached by a nurse who examined Bryant's accuser.

Legal experts say the defense will probably waive the hearing, in part because the judge has ruled the woman cannot be forced to testify and undergo cross-examination by the defense.

Either way, Bryant still has to appear Thursday before Judge Frederick Gannett to show he is complying with conditions of his \$25,000 bail. He will have to return to Colorado this week from Hawaii, where the Lakers are training.

Bryant, 25, was charged with sexual assault after the woman said he attacked her June 30 at the mountain resort where she worked and he was a guest. Bryant has said the two had consensual sex.

Legal experts say the earliest a trial could begin is February or March; it could also be pushed back until next summer, after the NBA season.

Whatever the timeline, "there's going to be a paper fight like you've never seen before. The defense will probably file every motion that's ever been filed in any sexual assault case," Early said.

Fans

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Aggieland when the yell leaders would proudly proclaim,

"Fightin' Texas Aggie 27 in a row at Kyle Field." Aggies were proud of that. It was a shame to see it go, and a greater shame to watch the memory slowly fade over the past couple of seasons. This memory for the older Aggies helps create some perspective for Nebraska's success in its home gym.

At one point the Huskers won 101 straight conference games at Nebraska Coliseum. Their record on their home court is no accident. The idea

that fan support breeds winning is as true as the concept that winning breeds fan support, especially on the collegiate level where fan support is a major recruiting tool.

"It makes them jump another couple inches higher, and hit a little harder," said A&M coach Laurie Corbelli before this year's home opener. "(And to) be a little more intense. It's the adrenaline — the louder the better."

No need to look much further than a game earlier this season at G. Rollie to see why a real home court advantage is so important. In the match against Southwest Missouri State, the Aggies were down two games to none and trailed in the third

game 27-20, a lead that looked insurmountable. However, A&M strung a couple of points together and ignited the dwindling crowd, eventually defeating the Bears in five games. The momentum shift was tangible both in the stands and on the floor, as the team was able to feed off the crowd's energy.

The Huskers average 4,390 fans in a 4,000 seat gym. G. Rollie White holds 7,800 and has never seen a crowd of more than 3,500. With a student body of more than 45,000 it doesn't seem like that much of a stretch to top Nebraska. It's just a matter of going to the game and finding out if the Aggies ever will.

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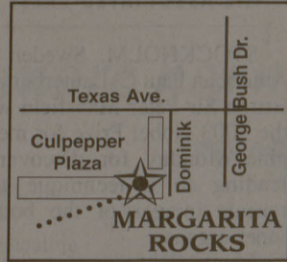
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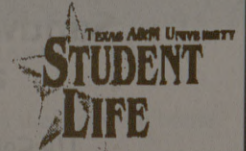
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