



Looking Glass

686-2688





Cowboys lasso themselves

IRVING, Texas (AP)— The pride of winning the National Conference Eastern Division title has dissolved into disgrace.

The chesty bravado of beating out the Washington Redskins, the New York Giants, St. Louis Cardinals, and Philadelphia Eagles is lost now in the darkness of the Zip and Zero Show in Anaheim.

Running back Tony Dorsett pretty well captured the mood of the Dallas Cowboys after their 20-0 National Conference divisional loss to the Los Angeles Rams on Saturday.

"To hell with winning the NFC East," said the nine-year veteran. "It's just no good when you don't play well in the playoffs. Winning the division is no consolation now."

Dorsett had several other unkind things to say, implying that some Cowboys didn't give a total effort in the second half.

"I'm discouraged with the way we came out in the second half," said Dorsett. "We could just as well have given them the game when it was 3-0 at the half."

Dorsett said it was up to the coaches to figure out which players weren't giving 100 percent.

It stands to reason there will be some offseason housecleaning in a team that finished 10-7 overall.

"There are some negative elements on this team," said Club President Tex Schramm, who called Dallas' 37th National Football League playoff game "our worst ever."

Dallas Coach Tom Landry's shopping list could be a long one after the first playoff shutout in the club's 26-year history.

The Cowboys could have some ammunition to make trades, something not exactly their cup of tea. However, recall that Dorsett would have never been a Cowboy if it hadn't been for a trade.

Quarterback Gary Hogeboom is probably gone and the Cowboys might be able to put him in a package deal.

It's highly unlikey Dallas could get a first-

round draft pick for Hogeboom because of his second half performance in Dallas' regular season finale, a 31-16 loss to San Francisco.

With the game on the line, Hogeboom threw two interceptions and the Cowboys failed to score in the second half.

Dallas' No. 1 need is an impact receiver.

Mike Renfro had the best year of his career but he's a possession receiver — not a game breaker.

Tony Hill wants to be a game-breaker but his desire and health are constant problems. Rookie Karl Powe is still green.

"An impact receiver is our top need," said Landry. "We also need a top quality running back to backup Tony."

The shopping list also includes a defensive lineman and another defensive back. (Eric Dickerson did rush for an NFL playoff record 248 yards didn't he?)

Landry is defensive of his offensive line, saying "We have some quality there. They are just young. I think we'll be all right there with a lot of work."

The cold truth is that the Cowboys of the 1980's are light years away from the quality of their teams in the '70's.

"There is no comparison," said former Cowboys' running back Preston Pearson. "This team just doesn't have the players vet.

"You have to give the Cowboys' coaches a lot of credit for what they did this year. For them to win the NFC East was pretty amazing."

Landry somehow maneuvered the Cowboys into the NFC East championship with a team that was really undeserving in the talent department. Defensive tackle Randy White is the only.All-Pro.

There's a lot of chores left out at the Valley Ranch training site in Irving before the Cowboys visit their sixth Super Bowl.

It's a project that could take close to 1990 before the helmet with the silver star is back on top.

Dolphins do it with defense

MIAMI (AP)— One of the unsung heroes of Miami's eight-game National Football League winning streak is its improving defense, whose performance down the stretch of a playoff victory over the Cleveland Browns epitomized what the unit's all about.

The Dolphins' bend-but-don't-break philosophy yielded 249 yards and 21 points through the first half and 3:38 into the third period of Saturday's AFC semifinal game. A timely turnaround in the final 22:26 helped Miami overcome an 18-point deficit and advance to the AFC title game for the third time in four years.

While a Dan Marino-led offense was scoring three touchdowns in the closing stages to produce the second biggest comeback in NF., playoff history, the Miami defense held Cleveland to just 64 yards and no points as the 13-4 Dolphins rallied for a 24-21 victory.

Miami, eyeing its third trip to the Super Bowl in four years, will meet the New England Patriots for the American Confrenece championship next Sunday. "It's fun to play in the playoffs with the kind of talent we have," said linebacker Hugh Green, a mid-season acquisition from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and one of the keys to the turnaround in the Miami defense since a 5-4 Dolphins start.

"In the second half we knew we had to get the ball for the offense. We can't have a team with as potent an offense as we have and then leave them on the bench ... The key was getting them the ball and letting them do their magic." Green said.

Marino threw a 6-yard TD pass to Nat Moore to get Miami's offense rolling with 5:13 left in the third quarter. Reserve fullback. Ron Davenport scored on a 31-yard run 3:32 later to cut Cleveland's lead to 21-17.

Davenport's second TD run, a one-yard burst with 1:57 left to play, capped a nine-play, 73-yard drive that put the Dolphins ahead for the first time since Fuad Reveiz' 51-yard field goal made it

After rallying from a 21-3 deficit, the Dolphins consider themselves fortunate to be playing any place next week.

"We don't make it easy on ourselves, do we?" said running back Tony Nathan, who caught 10 passes for 101 yards against the Browns. "We seem to dig our own grave and then we say, 'Hey, we don't want to go there yet.""

Cleveland, a 10⁴-point underdog, had Miami on the ropes after Bernie Kosar tossed a 16-yard touchdown pass to Ozzie Newsome and Earnest Byner scored on runs of 21 and 66 yards. The AFC Central Division champs, however, couldn't finish the job.

After giving up the long touchdown run to Byner, who rushed for 161 yards, the Miami defense forced punts after three plays on the Browns' next two possessions.

A defense that ranked 23rd in NFL during the regular season and yielded 251 yards rushing Saturday, allowed just four first downs in the final 26:22 — including one by penalty and another on the final play of the game. 3-0 in the first quarter.

"It's extra sweet to come from behind like, that," Davenport said. "You're on the sideline and everything's going badly and the end of the season is staring you in the face. Then, when you come back like that, it's like a giant glass of Alka-Seltzer.

"What a relief it is."

Cleveland, whose 8-8 regular-season record was the worst of any division winner in NFL history, may have gained some respect Saturday. But Coach Marty Schottenheimer would have preferred a victory.

"I've always been a strong believer that nothing good comes from losing," he said.

"The problem was that when you play the Dolphins, you've got to play four quarters," Newsome said. "The Dolphins played soundly the whole game. Once we started to break down on offense, they started coming back."

Schottenheimer agreed.

"You never have a game under control," he said. "That's why they play 60 minutes."

Monday, January 6, 1986