Cowboys Offensive Line Leads Stronger Side of Team

The 'Boys, on the other hand, have clearly been the best team in the league for the last two years. Credit here is also due the coach, Jimmy Johnson, and the front office, notably Jerry Jones. Both showed cajones grandes in taking the team away from legendary Tom Landry and Tex Schramm, getting rid of the Herschel Factor, and dropping 15 of 16 in 1989. They, of course, followed the right track by cashing in on their chips and trading a single 1-15 season, followed by two Super Bowls, for 5 seasons of 8-8 mediocrity. Their talent pool is hard to match, particularly on the offensive line, which makes Troy Aikman’s job pretty easy, and they are playing well with unchecked, but well-equipped confidence.

Having only one week off between the conference championship and the Super Bowl should help keep Buffalo in the game. Theirs.

Dallas will look to maintain the same offensive scheme that got them to the Super Bowl in the first place, but Aikman will need to turn Niner Turf next year. They will try to feature Emmitt Smith as a primary means for scoring drives, but Buffalo’s defense will need to stand up. As Smith has the knack for bouncing off the initial would-be tackler and to contain Emmitt by forcing him to take it for a long gain, as seen in the last two NFC Championship games. Tight end Jay Novacek had a down year compared to previous years, especially 92-93, catching only 44 balls for 445 yards and only 1 TD. Although criticized by Todd Christensen this year, Novacek remained the tightest end in the NFC mainly because no one else stepped up to claim the title, and he was rewarded with a trip to the Pro Bowl. Despite the other facets of the offense, it is clear that Emmitt Smith is the key to the entire Dallas team. He was a clear choice for the NFL MVP. Dallas has lost 4 games all season, and in none of them did Aikman play all four quarters. He led the league with 1486 rushing yards, despite sitting out the first two games versus Washington and Buffalo. More importantly, his 5.3 yards/carry average allows the Cowboys to use the no-huddle approach, the defensive primary means for a 15 yard pickup (when the Bills are in man secondary for a 15 yard pickup (when the Bills are in man coverage). Their ability to tackle defensively (67 turnovers in the regular season, league-high), however, is crucial. Dallas has the big plays to help the defense out in those situations.

The backfield is superb, led by All World running back Thurman Thomas. The Bills have been able to spot up and throw the deep ball, so they need to contain Novacek effectively in their short game. As Dallas uses Emmitt and Novacek effectively in their short passing game, they will have their hands full. They will have to read the play action passes so that Novacek isn’t able to slip in between them and the Bills secondary for a 15 yard pickup (when the Bills play zone) or go for the big gainer (when the Bills are in man coverage). Their ability to tackle Emmitt on the first try will be key, as Smith has the knack for bouncing off the initial would-be tackler and picking up 5 additional yards. Therefore, the Bills will have to use their body (i.e., square the shoulders) and rely on strip-tackling to bring Emmitt down.

The secondary has all pro corner Nate Odomes and the steady Jerry Jones at safety. Although the defense had 23 picks during the season, they do get burned, especially by crossing patterns over the middle (see Tim Brown in the Raiders game) and passes deep. If Kelly bites on the play action, falls for Aikman’s pump fakes, or is forced to help the linebackers in covering Novacek, watch for Tim and Hargrave to go long.

When the Bills Have the Ball

Buffalo on Defense

The better half of the Dallas team is its extremely talented offense. The Bills, on the other hand, have clearly been the best team in the league for the last two years. Credit here is also due the coach, Jimmy Johnson, and the front office, notably Jerry Jones. Both showed cajones grandes in taking the team away from legendary Tom Landry and Tex Schramm, getting rid of the Herschel Factor, and dropping 15 of 16 in 1989. They, of course, followed the right track by cashing in on their chips and trading a single 1-15 season, followed by two Super Bowls, for 5 seasons of 8-8 mediocrity. Their talent pool is hard to match, particularly on the offensive line, which makes Troy Aikman’s job pretty easy, and they are playing well with unchecked, but well-equipped confidence.

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