

## SPORTS

## Desert mission awaits Cowboys in Super Bowl

By Denne H. Freeman  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEMPE, Ariz. — The Dallas Cowboys, who have won Super Bowls in Georgia, California and Louisiana, arrived in Arizona on Sunday, hoping to win their fifth Vince Lombardi trophy.

It's the eighth Super Bowl for the Cowboys and they'll be playing in a stadium they consider home — Sun Devil Stadium, where they are 6-2 in games there against the Cardinals.

Quarterback Troy Aikman, sporting an attempt at a

beard, warned that the Cowboys aren't unbeatable.

"We lost four games this year but if we play well we'll be tough to beat," Aikman said.

Asked about the attempt to grow a beard, Aikman said: "I doubt it will last until the Super Bowl. I'm just glad someone noticed. I can never grow a beard."

The Cowboys have had excellent success in Arizona against their NFC East foe, the Cardinals. Dallas will even work out in the Cardinals' complex during Super Bowl week.

"We love this place," said

wide receiver Michael Irvin. "We love to play here. We've got a lot of fans in this area. We might have the home-field advantage."

Hundreds of fans turned out to see the Cowboys as the flew in from Dallas and settled down in their hotel. Fans jammed the entry areas hoping to get autographs but the hotel was under tight security and few fans got through the guards at the mountain retreat, The Buttes, to talk to the players.

"We're ready for all the hoopla," said running back Emmitt Smith. "We got in

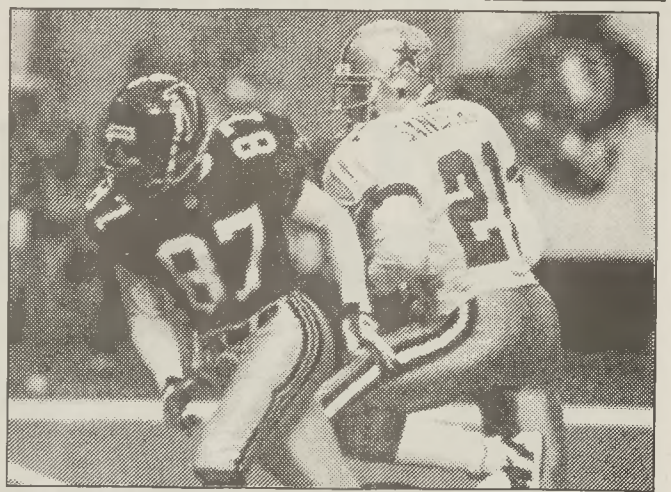
most of our heavy work in Dallas."

Aikman said the Super Bowl "is a time to have some fun. We also know it's serious business and we will have things in perspective while we're here."

It's the first Super Bowl trip for coach Barry Switzer, who won three national titles at Oklahoma.

"I'm excited about being here," Switzer said. "This is the ultimate for any coach in the NFL. It's a little bigger than the Orange Bowl that's for sure."

Said owner Jerry Jones: See COWBOYS Page 10B



PHOTO/WADE NASH

Dallas cornerback/wide receiver Delon Sanders (21) will try to help the Cowboys win their third Super Bowl in four years Sunday.

## One last delivery for Utah

Malone holds on to Jazz title aspirations

By Bob Mims  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY — In his 11th season, an aging Karl Malone stubbornly clings to his dream of wearing an NBA championship ring even as he admits his own performance has been inconsistent when it counts most.

Near the midpoint of the 1995-96 campaign, Utah's eight-time All-Star was still averaging about 26 points on 52 percent shooting overall after 36 games, on pace with his career averages.

But in matchups with teams likely to dominate the playoffs — defending champion Houston, Chicago, Orlando, San Antonio and Phoenix — Malone and the Jazz have struggled, losing seven of 10 games.

Malone's 37 points Friday night in Utah's 111-99 victory over the Magic team was a rare breakthrough for both the Mailman and the Jazz. Generally, Malone has found it difficult to deliver against such marquee big men as Hakeem Olajuwon, Shaquille O'Neal and David Robinson.

Against the NBA elite, Malone had averaged 22.6 points on 44.5 percent shooting prior to the Orlando win.

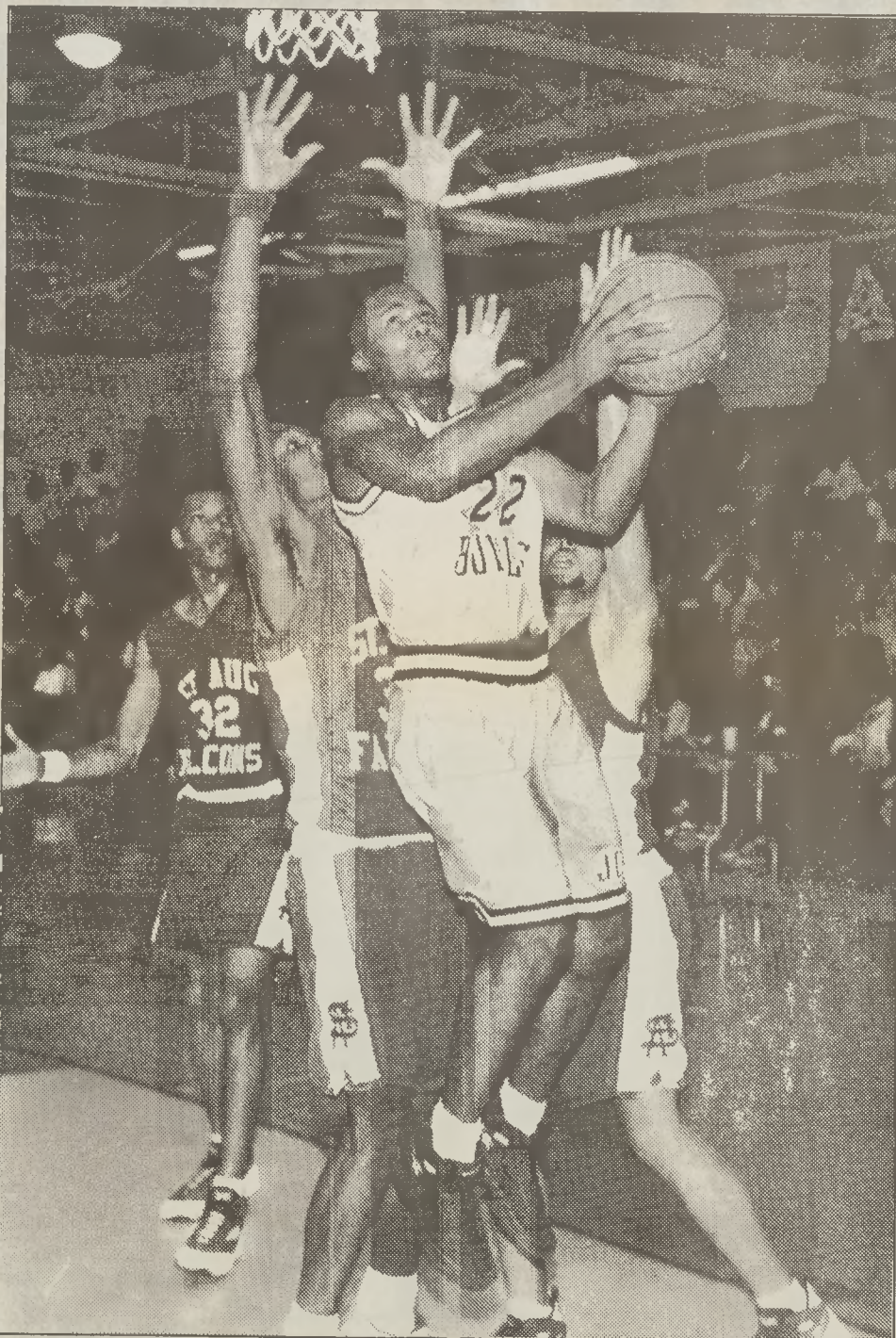
A fanatical weightlifter, the 6-foot-9 power forward concedes nothing, except his receding hairline, to the passage of more than a decade of bruising play around the basket. Along with NBA career assist leader John Stockton, Malone still comprises the heart of Utah's offense.

Still, he admits his showing has not been the stuff dreams are made of, especially his own. That has been nowhere more apparent than in games with Midwest Division leaders San Antonio and Houston.

In two losses this month with Robinson's Spurs, Malone made just 15 of 40 shots (37.5 percent), while tallying 18.5 ppg. Against Olajuwon's Rockets he did better, averag-

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## BUMPY RIDE



PHOTO/CALVIN FERGUSON

Johnson C. Smith guard Frank Wilson shoots a layup as St. Augustine's defender Julian Pitt tries to stop him in the Falcons' 90-82 win Tuesday. The Golden Bulls are 5-9 overall and 0-3 in the CIAA Southern Division.

## 5-9 Golden Bulls lack court confidence

By Herbert L. White  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

A glimpse at the latest CIAA basketball statistics offer proof that numbers can be deceiving.

The Golden Bulls started the week leading the league in field goal percentage at 49.9 percent and sixth in offense at 79.5 points a game

and third in three-point shooting with 39.8 percent. But Smith is 5-9 and 0-3 in the Southern Division, bringing up the rear headed into a four-game road swing. The problem, coach Steve Joyner believes, isn't always physical.

"If there was one thing I'm concerned about, it's our emotional self," he said. "We just don't have the confi-

dence we need as a basketball team., and therefore, some areas are beginning to deteriorate."

That lack of confidence didn't get any help Tuesday in a 90-82 loss to St. Augustine's. The Falcons' big men, led by center Eric Harris and forwards LaFonte Moses and Bernard Heard, combined for

See SMITH Page 10C

## Big task awaits Dungy with Tampa Bay

By Fred Goodall  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAMPA, Fla. — Tony Dungy expects the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to be like him next season.

"I think you'll see a real efficient team that is non-frills, not fancy, but very precision-like," the Jackson, Mich., native said Monday after accepting the challenge of trying to turn the perennial losers into winners.

Dungy's philosophy for success is fairly simple, stressing a solid kicking game, protecting the football on offense and taking it away from opponents on defense.

"I think Tampa has a lot of those elements in place. We've got to work on not turning the ball over a little bit," Dungy said. "Every place I've been we've been able to take the ball away, and I feel we will continue to do that."

The Bucs haven't made the playoffs or finished above .500 since 1982. The soft-spoken Dungy, Minnesota's defensive coordinator for the past four seasons, said he will begin by trying to instill a winning attitude.

"That's what separates the real good teams from the also-rans," he said. "I think we have some great, young players. There are some real building blocks and guys who are going to be able to do the things that I want to do and the things I feel are necessary to build a winning team. And I think you're going to see that in the very near future."

The hiring ended a week of speculation that Dungy, 40, was on the verge of getting the job.

It ended an even longer odyssey for him.

Interviewed but passed over by four other teams hiring head

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## Abdul-Rauf yearns for simpler life with Nuggets

Happiness tops Denver guard's list

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — In a sport dominated by popular culture, the Denver Nuggets' Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf is considered slightly eccentric. He doesn't socialize with his teammates and the upper level of his home has a decidedly Middle Eastern flair.

Abdul-Rauf, the former Chris Jackson, embraced Islam in 1991 and things on and off the court have never been the same.

Recently, the day after he played 42 minutes in the second of games on consecutive nights, Abdul-Rauf knelt on a rug facing one corner of his home and recited the "dthur," the second of five daily prayers.

The Nuggets guard knows his religion has made him a magnet for young, African American Muslims, especially those with basketball in their blood.

Many make pilgrimages to Denver to meet Abdul-Rauf.

Abdul-Rauf considers himself a student of Islam, but he is increasingly seen as a teacher by younger members. He straddles

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## Bonds 'excited' by Giants signings of Dunston, Fernandez

By Rob Gloster  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO — When Royce Clayton was traded away in December, Barry Bonds went to his father — Giants coach Bobby Bonds and questioned whether the team was headed in the right

direction.

Now, with the signing of Shawon Dunston and Cuban defector Osvaldo Fernandez, the younger Bonds has gotten his answer.

"I have never been more excited since I came here," said Barry Bonds, who joined San Francisco as a free agent

before the 1993 season.

Bonds was taking some cuts in the hitting cage at Candlestick Park when Fernandez appeared for a news conference Tuesday. They spent 30 minutes chatting through a translator.

Then Bonds declared that the Giants, who signed short-

stop Dunston to a free-agent contract a week ago to fill the hole left when Clayton was dealt to St. Louis, definitely are building a good team.

Giants owner Peter Magowan called the acquisition of Fernandez the most important move the team has made "since the signing of

Barry Bonds," and general manager Bob Quinn went further — calling it "one of the most significant days in the history of the Giants franchise."

The Giants won a bidding war with several other major-league teams by signing Fernandez, a former star

right-hander for the Cuban national team, to a three-year contract that could be worth \$3.9 million.

Fernandez, 27, who nervously tapped his right foot while Giants officials talked about him, had a 22-0 career record

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