

**October 27, 2002**

## **DALLAS COWBOYS**

### **EMMITT SMITH PRESS CONFERENCE**

EMMITT SMITH: I don't know what to say. Today was a very special day, very special for a number of reasons. Obviously, individually. But when you think about the individual accomplishment that occurred today, could I not go on and just pat myself on the back, because so many people have been so inspirational in the whole process.

And this process began in 1990, with this man here, him and Jimmy, taking a chance on a young Pensacola running back out of Florida, and hopefully I haven't disappointed him over the 13 years we have been together.

But today, I've got to thank all of the guys I've played with for 13 years, the players, from Mark Tuinei, Nate Newton, John Gesek, Kevin Gogan, Mark Stepanoski, Ray Donaldson, Erik Williams, Frank Cornish. The guys that I played with right now, Adams, Gurode there's so many names that, I mean, I had them all down, but now I lost them. All of these individuals have played a major part in terms of allowing this, what you saw today and what you witnessed today, happen. I'd just like to say thank you to all of those guys, because they definitely mean so much.

Darryl Johnson, who led the way for a lot of those yards.

Michael Irvin who gave me inspiration when things got hard. Troy Aikman, who threw the ball down the field and allowed defenses to cover two and gave me running room.

Alvin Harper and Kelvin Martin and many other guys Norv Turner, Ernie Zampese, Chan Gailey and Bruce Coslet right now and all of the coaches I've been with, Brodsky, Shelman and Gailey.

It's been a 13-year journey, one that has ended, but still traveling today. I'm just still moving on, and don't plan on stopping no time soon.

So, you know, today just happened and I thank God for that opportunity. Because without Him, none of this probably would have been possible, at all. So with Him, I believe I can do all things, so I thank Him for giving me the opportunity to do what I've been able to do, and I just want Him

to know that I definitely believe in Him and He has shown favor on me throughout my whole entire life.

I guess I'm answering all the questions. (Laughing) any questions?

*Q. Can you talk about the run when you broke the record, Michael Irvin said after the game, he said it looked like you knew how many yards you needed?*

EMMITT SMITH: He's probably right. I did know, because the people that are taking care of the Jumbotrons kept showing it and flashing it and counted down for me. So I was very aware of how much I needed. And when I saw 13, and you run out on the field and the crowd is jumping up and yelling because they feel like this is the drive. Trust me, I knew. Once I broke the line of scrimmage, I knew that had to be the one.

*Q. First of all, congratulations. And second of all, I know after you broke the record, you went to the sidelines and you had a warm embrace from Darryl Johnson what. Did you guys say to each other, if anything?*

EMMITT SMITH: He just said congratulations to me. He was glad that he could be here to call the game and all of that, witness it. I just thanked him for all of the work and hard work and sacrifice that he's done for me, in terms of being my lead blocker for the pass, for probably over 14,000 of my yards, something of that nature.

I just wanted to let him know how much he meant to me in this whole process, and as a person and as a teammate and as a friend.

*Q. What was the name of the play you broke the record on it, and how confident were you coming in today that you would get the record?*

EMMITT SMITH: The name of the play was 15 Lead. That's what I think. I'm not sure, but I think it was 15 Lead. Was it on the left side? I think it was 15 Lead.

How confident I was coming in today that I was going to get it done? I knew we had an opportunity because of the defense that they play and the style that they play, but I do know this: When something of this magnitude is up against a team, they don't want it to happen to them; so therefore, they come up and they show and they play their best game.

At the coin toss, Edmond was out there saying: "You're not going to get it today on us."

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During the course of the game: "You're not going to get it on us. You ain't going to get it." He talked more noise today than anybody else on the Seahawk team. And so when it finally happened he just said, "Congratulations, man." (Laughter) No. 90 (Chad Eaton).

*Q. How important was it for you to share this milestone with the Payton family and the Dallas Cowboys fans?*

EMMITT SMITH: It was very important. Especially to try to share with the Payton family, because he is an individual I was definitely chasing after, but he meant so much to me, in terms of the things that I was able to gather from him in terms of knowledge, inspiration, wisdom and the person that he was.

To share with his family, it was a wonderful thing. It was something that I've always wanted to do if I had a chance to do so. I wish I could embrace him today. You thought you saw some tears; I probably saw even more tears today. I probably wouldn't be able to finish the game.

But not only that, but to do it here in Texas Stadium was very, very important because this is where it all began here at Texas Stadium. If it would not have been for Jerry Jones drafting me, ain't telling what else I would have been or whether I would have still been playing.

But I believe God do things for a certain reason. I'm here for a reason and I think the reason has happened today, and maybe more reasons just outside the game of football.

And to do it in front of the home crowd, where they can witness it, I mean makes history of this magnitude is such a special thing. And I've learned how special it is when I saw Cal Ripken go through what he went through, and I saw Mark McGwire and is Sammy Sosa go through what they went through, and then I watched Barry Bonds do what he did; and saw the fan reaction.

I could not pick a better day to give our fans this opportunity to witness what they witnessed today. Because you have 64,000 people up there that that will go on for rest of their lives and never ever forget this moment, including myself. And so that's a special thing, that's a special moment. It was a special moment for our fans, versus being on the road and 60,000 fans, that may not be even Dallas Cowboy fans, have a chance to witness something that the Dallas Cowboys was able to do.

It was special. It was really, really special to do it at home where you could feel truly appreciated.

*Q. All that you just said, how nervous did that make you feel? How did this game compare to other games you've played, and? I know you said many times did you not want to set the record with a loss, and you guys lost today.*

EMMITT SMITH: I wasn't nervous at all because I didn't feel no pressure because the pressure was on the man up above. You heard me say I don't think He would have brought me thus far to let me down right now. So I felt no pressure. I casted all of my pressure on Him and He showed up.

In regards of being able to take us through, unfortunately, we couldn't have our cake and eat it, too.

But our team fought hard. This is probably not the ideal setting. Obviously, we would love to be sitting up there with a win and everybody enjoying this moment. But trust me, we will go back to the drawing board and try to get everything that we did not do right today rectified so we can try to get this thing on a winning track.

That has always been my focus is winning, winning and trying to do everything the right way, but it just didn't work out that way today.

*Q. At what point in your career did you know that this record was kind of in your sights, a realistic goal?*

EMMITT SMITH: About last week. (Laughter). About last week, I knew I had a shot at it. Because, I mean, at the beginning of the season, I knew I had a chance.

Last year, I had to go through an entire year to try to knock down some of this stuff. So to get 1,700 yards or 1,800 yards last year would have been tough. But going into this season, knowing that I needed 539, I felt like I had a chance.

The only thing that, to me, that I was real concerned with was maintaining health, and I felt like if I stayed healthy, this would happen. I didn't question my performance because I knew I could do it. I believed in the team that I was on. I believed in the guys up front, even we have had our shares of injuries and so forth and struggled a little bit, I still believe those guys up front will battle every day for the opportunity to go out and win a game.

*Q. When you look at it, do you think that you ever the greatest of all time? Statistically speaking, obviously.*

EMMITT SMITH: You know, to say I'm the greatest of all time is, to me, not doing everyone else justice for what their talent level really is,

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because there are so many other talented individuals out there as well. How can you sit and stay "the greatest of all time"? Statistically, it may speak that I am No. 1, but what are your criteria for the greatest of all time? That becomes the question to me in my eyes.

From a media standpoint, I'm very confident that I'm one of the best that ever played the game. I'm very confident in that fact.

But when you start talking about the greatest of all time, how can you define who is the greatest? Everybody has a unique skill. The thing that most people don't appreciate is their individual skill. Often times, they try to compare themselves or compare their person to someone else and someone else that has come before them so. They lose sight of truly what they're trying to compare.

If you come up with a criteria of the greatest of all time and stack me up with those criteria and say the greatest of all time, you show me the form and I'll look at it. But until then, I can't look at it that way.

*Q. Inaudible?*

EMMITT SMITH: It's kind of hard to compare the two, because I play a team sport. This is not like I'm running track and I'm running 100 meters and I run the world record. It's not like I'm in a NASCAR race and I'm driving my car around because it's just me against everybody else.

But see, here, I've got to have everybody. There's no such thing as individual accomplishment without their help or the assistance of needing many people that, and that's what makes this game of football such a unique sport, because I need everyone to allow me the opportunity to showcase my talent.

And along the line, if we do great things individually, then that's a plus. But the most important thing for us as players is to try to win the game for the team, and that's been my motivation.

*Q. Maybe it's unavoidable when you play as long as you do, but how surreal of an experience was it to do this without Troy Aikman and Michael and the guys you won Super Bowls with?*

EMMITT SMITH: How surreal of an experience? How odd was it? I think if you ask any of those players, no one can really dictate when they are going to leave the game and how they are going to leave the game.

For me, it was an odd experience because I felt like Troy Aikman and Michael Irvin would have been right there with me playing, doing alongside, doing the things we've always done, including Daryl Johnson. But unfortunately, that is not the case. It was different.

But it was gratifying to know that Darryl was there and Michael was there and was there supporting, and was there to witness this opportunity because those guys played a major part. I think they understand that. If you ask one of them what they felt like, if I would have been the one to do this, they probably would have said no. There was so many people out there that said he's not going to do it; because Jimmy and Jerry was giving me the ball entirely too much, but that's not the case. I am up there right now and this is the situation that we're dealing with, and that's the reality which I live.

*Q. Are you going to do anything special for your offensive line now?*

EMMITT SMITH: I will do something. But I'm not going to tell you exactly what I'm going to do -- (Laughter) -- because if it was going to be a surprise, then you would ruin it for me.

*Q. Walter Payton said he wanted to set this thing so high that a guy would have to bust his heart to break it. How high do you think you can push this record and how long do you think it will last?*

EMMITT SMITH: I don't know how long it's going to last. I mean, the game is still evolving. There are some unique circumstances some people are going to have to deal with, free agency and all of those things, salary cap and all those things. I don't know if you are going to find anybody to do it with one team like Walter did it and like I did it. That's going to be tough. Especially with the day and market that they are faced with right now.

So, I didn't bust my heart, but I sure worked hard and tried to get here. (Laughter).

*Q. Jerry you did a lot for this organization, Super Bowls where this does rank in your experience with the Dallas could you guys?*

JERRY JONES: This is one of the top things that is right there alongside the three Super Bowls, this accomplishment of Emmitt's. What it meant to our fans, is right there with it.

That's one of the things that motivates us in putting that permanent flag, permanent pageant up in the stadium. That will always be there as long

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as there's Super Bowl flags up there because that's how we are proud of it.

Emmitt did this when the greatest, most physical athletes over the last 12, 13 years have played this game in the history of football. They are bigger, they are faster, they can cover more ground and they can stop more plays than any other time in the history of football. And Emmitt won this rushing record for all time in the NFL, and it's quite an accomplishment.

And Emmitt, you did it your way.

EMMITT SMITH: Thank you.

*Q. How has it been for you this week?*

PAT SMITH: We have about 200 family and friends with us today that I would love to say thank you to for all of the love and support that each of you have given to us. This has been really exciting. I could not have imagined how it would feel today to see him break that.

You know, he's a good husband and a good father, and so sometimes I forget how good of a football player that he is, and how hard he's worked over the years to get to this point. So I'm just very proud of him. We just love him dearly and we are thankful. We thank God for this day.

*Q. Can you describe what it was like right after you broke the record?*

EMMITT SMITH: It was very exciting. I almost lost it, but then the game, when you're behind by seven points, and it's kind of hard to jump up and get excited, but I did, but I had to move that out of the way real quick because I knew we had a job to do. So I didn't know how long I could really do it.

But they allowed me the opportunity to enjoy it a little bit more, a little bit longer than probably what I really wanted to because I knew my job was to go out here and try to win this game and help the team do what we needed to do to win the game.

But everything was such an emotional high at the moment, and it became really, truly emotional when you see your mother's face; and only a mother could make a son weep up like she do. And then you've got your wife and your shorties over here; it was very, very special.

Do they understand the magnitude of what I did today? Probably not. Probably not. They just saw a lot of people around daddy and a lot of cameras and probably trying to figure out what in the world is going on.

But Jasmin, asked me the other day, she said -- how did she word it -- "How are you going to break the record? What does that mean?" She

asked me what does it mean and basically the only thing I could tell her was that I had run for the more yards than the person that's in front of me; and if I do that, I would have done it, rushing more yards than anybody that has ever played the game of football in the National Football League. That's about the best way I can describe it to her.

Ten years from now, they may understand it, because if I don't have to tell them about it -- which I probably won't say much about it, I don't really talk that much about football at the house anyway, but someone else will. And I think the reason why she asked, because students at her school probably say things to her.

When I drop her off, sometimes they say good luck and she's probably wondering why they say good luck. She knows I play football, but that is a part that they can always go back and research. And trust me, we take a lot of newspaper clippings and leave it for them to read later on.

*Q. Can you talk about players who you were in the huddle with when you made the record, specifically Chad Hutchinson, his first start and how did he do today?*

EMMITT SMITH: I think Chad did well. I think that he dropped back and threw the ball in the right direction. He did a good job of taking care of the football. Obviously, I have to look at the tape and see what Bruce had to say about it all, but I thought he performed fairly well.

Obviously, up front, we had a few breakdowns where he ended up getting sacked and didn't have enough time to do what he needed to do, but outside of that, I thought he played within himself.

*Q. Marcus Allen was here today; what did he say to you, if anything, and have you heard from other guys?*

EMMITT SMITH: Marcus only said to me that he -- he said, "Man, you are the best. I don't care what nobody else say, because you're doing" -- people don't really understand what it takes, first of all, and foremost to be a running back in the National Football League. And secondly, they don't really have no idea or clue how hard you have to work. And last, how blessed to stay healthy and the psyche of the running back, he understands the magnitude and the work that goes into, to trying to be one of best.

He said I deserve it and he wishes me luck. He was happy to be here. He wanted to be here, and he said, "I can't care what nobody else says,

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they can be predestined to be here at this moment and this time.

*Q. What do you strive for now? What does a man do when his dream comes true?*

EMMITT SMITH: One, he don't quit. He create a new dream.

Two, he stays motivated because he loves the game, not because he loves breaking records.

Three, he's trying compare this and compare that and all that, but you are the best, if not the best. You deserve it." That's about it.

*Q. The focus today is on the number of yards that you got, but can you talk about what this record signifies beyond just the regards and sum that up?*

EMMITT SMITH: It signifies, first of all, that one has to believe in someone higher than themselves and then they have to believe in themselves. Because all of my life I've been touted to be too slow, not big enough, and I was counted out many times. Been counted out many times in my career, my 13 years here. And I'm probably still being counted out because people want to see younger players play.

But, I believe truly in my own ability. I believe in Jesus and I believe in what He has given me, and that's my talent; and I believe my talent level stacks up there with the next man, I don't care how young or how fast he may be. There's some things that he can do that I can do. There's some things that he can do that I probably cannot do. That, to me, when I think about it from that perspective, that makes it very hard to define what's the best.

Because so much goes into the game of football, and, you know, I feel like today's accomplishment is something that was something that was predestined for me and I thought I lived out that destiny as best as I possibly could. I'm glad that it's behind me, and I'm looking forward to going out there next week and getting prepared to play Detroit and hopefully come back here with a victory.

*Q. Can you name your favorite individual performance over the past several years?*

EMMITT SMITH: I would probably say -- probably the Giants game in '92-'93 when I hurt my shoulder. That was probably my favorite one.

*Q. Inaudible?*

EMMITT SMITH: I didn't think about it. I didn't think about it.

*Q. You've gone through three different Super Bowl weeks. How much sleep did you get last night and could you talk about how this week with the different media demands and the family and friends coming in and the expectation level compared to those three different Super Bowl weeks?*

EMMITT SMITH: I slept very well last night. I'm telling you, I did, I really did. I slept so good. Man, I think I got up about 6:00, which would have been 7:00 the old time; so I was right on time.

With all of the media attention that occurred this week, it felt like a Super Bowl. So it added that much more excitement to the game. I was able to feed off that energy and channel that energy into a positive direction.

With family coming into town, if anything, if there was any pressure, that probably was all the pressure that I felt in terms of trying to get it done in front of all of the people that were in town, because if I don't do it, I probably would have had to fly them all to Detroit the next week. (Laughter). It's cheaper this way. (Laughter).

*Q. You mentioned the emotion you played with. Did you find it tough to keep your mind from wandering during?*

EMMITT SMITH: No. No. My mind was always in the game. After hearing Edmond talk like he did, he motivated me when I came back on that field. I mean, he talked too much to me. I told him if he was an All-Pro, I probably would respect what he's saying, but he's not. (Laughter).

*Q. Inaudible?*

EMMITT SMITH: Formula? The only formula I can say is the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. That's about it. Outside of that, I have no answers for the reasoning why out of I veto win; win more games so we can get back in the playoffs and get another big old banner up in the stadium again.

You see these Super Bowl trophies up here? This is what it's all about. You play the game to win super bowls. That's why you're in the National Football League. Everything else in between that happens is because you've been here a long time. And if you're fortunate enough to get one of those things, you want it again, and I want to win another one with the team that I'm with right now. That's always been the motivation.

So that's where I go from here, back to the drawing board.

*Q. When the game started, your first drive*

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*rebound the ball was placed on the 22-yard line, did you notice that and think "maybe this is my day"?*

EMMITT SMITH: No, I didn't. No, I didn't. (Laughter).

*Q. Did Larry Allen talk to you at all? He didn't play today; was he frustrated he was not out there for you?*

EMMITT SMITH: He might have been frustrated but he didn't show it. He was as happy for me as Michael and Daryl was. He's been a guy that I ran behind many years and opened up great running lengths for me throughout the years.

Unfortunately, he could not play in this one, and if there's anything that probably is bugging him, it's probably the fact that he couldn't play in this one.

*Q. Jerry, No. 22 has been important worn by Emmitt and it has been worn by Bob Hayes. After Emmitt, whenever he retires in the game, what is going to happen to the No. 22, officially?*

JERRY JONES: What's he going to look like if he beats those two, with that Bob Hayes 22 and Emmitt's 22?

But, as you know, we've never retired a jersey with the Cowboys. But certainly, today, I don't even want to try to think approximate where we go from here, for somebody to fill up 22.

I do want to make one comment. Today at halftime, right before the half, they were shutting us down pretty good. The coordinator was up going over what we were going to do offensively and where we were going to go, and right about halfway through, Emmitt spoke up from the back and said, "Coach, this play might work real good for us." And that's a great suggestion, let's try that one right there.

Emmitt was wearing a lot of shoes in there today. But it was done, and don't get me wrong, the coordinator said, "Hey, that is a heck of an idea and we're going to run some of that."

Was that necessarily the play you broke the record on?

EMMITT SMITH: That's one of the plays I wanted to run at the beginning of the game.

JERRY JONES: That might have been the play; you made the call at halftime.

*Q. You've obviously celebrated here with everybody today. What are your personal celebration plans for this evening?*

EMMITT SMITH: Well... (Pausing) -- (Laughter) ... I can't say. (Laughter).

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