

The Dallas Cowboys: From 1990s glory to modern-day frustration

By ANTHONY ANGELILLO
Contributing Writer

The new Netflix docuseries “America’s Team: The Gambler and His Cowboys” brought back memories of when the Dallas Cowboys were the NFL’s gold standard. As a New York Giants fan, I watched those episodes with a mix of respect and curiosity.

The series premiered on Aug. 19, and digs into owner Jerry Jones, the bold coaching change from Tom Landry to Jimmy Johnson and the run that produced three Super Bowls in four seasons with interviews from key people involved with the Dallas Cowboys in the 1990s and beyond.

The 1990s Cowboys were dominant, and the results were historic. Dallas won Super Bowls in the 1992-93, 1993-94 and 1995-96 seasons, beating the Buffalo Bills twice and then the Pittsburgh Steelers, with Hall-of-Famers everywhere on the field and the sideline.

Jones, who bought the team in 1989 for roughly \$140 million, was praised as a bold risk-taker after pulling off the Herschel Walker trade that powered the dynasty, behind the likes of Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Michael Irvin and a defense anchored by Charles Haley and Deion Sanders.

Those years set a standard that Dallas has not come close to matching since. The Cowboys, since their NFC Championship game win over Green Bay on Jan. 14, 1996, have not returned to a conference championship.

Every other NFC team has made one this century. For a franchise that calls itself “America’s Team,” that drought is concerning.

After Johnson left following back-to-back championships, coach Barry Switzer won

one more Super Bowl in 1995-96. Then came decades of inconsistency.

Coaches came and went. Chan Gailey, Dave Campo, Bill Parcells, Wade Phillips, Jason Garrett and now Mike McCarthy’s replacement, Brian Schottenheimer all took their turns; however, none of them delivered a deep playoff run.

The front office has been the constant. Jones is not only the owner, but the president and general manager, a system he defends in the series and in interviews. He wants the responsibility and the scrutiny, and he has held the GM role since day one.

That structure worked in the early 1990s, but it has also created blind spots.

Jones has frequently overlooked his own executives and coaches, due to his hands-on approach, and his decisions have shaped the Cowboys’ modern identity: a team that spends big, markets bigger, but falls short in January.

Dallas has not been shy about paying stars. In 2024, Dak Prescott signed a four-year, \$240 million extension with \$231 million guaranteed, making him the highest-paid player in NFL history at the time.

His cap hit for 2025 is over \$50 million, and it will climb in future seasons. CeeDee Lamb followed with a four-year, \$136 million deal that averages \$34 million annually, second only to Justin Jefferson among receivers.

The Cowboys restructured both contracts this offseason to create cap space, but that only delays the financial strain.

Five players: Prescott, Lamb, Terence Steele, Trevon Diggs and Tyler Smith have accounted for more than 65% of the team’s cap. That imbalance forces Dallas to rely on

bargain signings and draft picks to fill out the roster.

The most significant blow came this summer when Micah Parsons, the team’s best defensive player, forced his way out.

After two years of stalled negotiations, Parsons requested a trade. He wanted to reset the market for pass rushers, reportedly seeking more than \$40 million per year. Jones offered a deal directly to Parsons without involving his agent, a move that violated standard protocol and proper contract talks.

The relationship collapsed, and Dallas traded Parsons to Green Bay for two first-round picks and defensive tackle Kenny Clark.

Losing Parsons was more than a roster move; it was a statement about priorities. Jones admitted that Prescott’s contract played a role in the decision, saying the team could not afford to keep three players (Prescott, Lamb and Parsons) with top-of-the-market contracts.

Even with stars in place, the results have not changed. Since 1996, Dallas has had just five playoff wins. The team has been eliminated in the divisional round six times, most recently in 2022.

The pattern is the same every year: strong regular seasons, high expectations and early

exits in the playoffs. For all the talk of being “all-in,” the Cowboys often play it safe in free agency and lean on internal development.

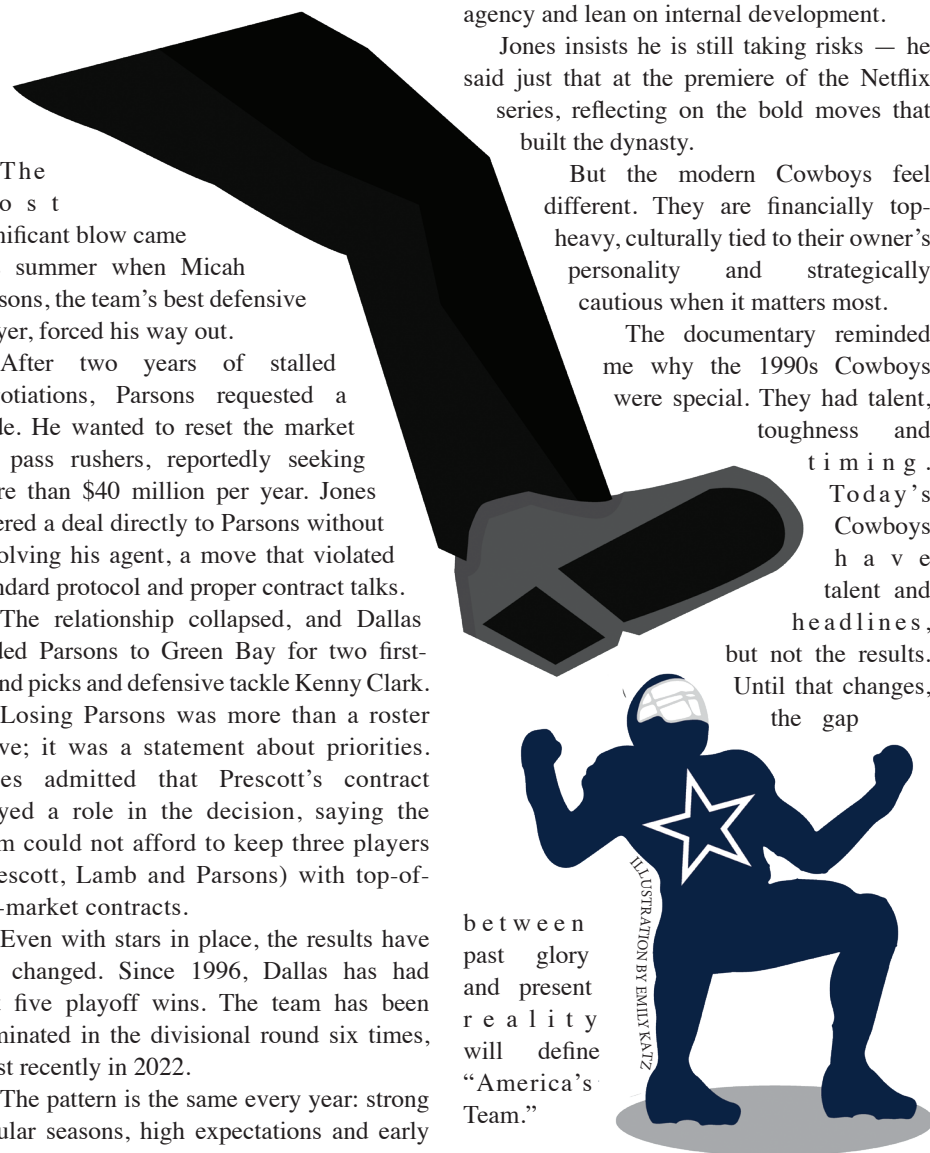
Jones insists he is still taking risks — he said just that at the premiere of the Netflix series, reflecting on the bold moves that built the dynasty.

But the modern Cowboys feel different. They are financially top-heavy, culturally tied to their owner’s personality and strategically cautious when it matters most.

The documentary reminded me why the 1990s Cowboys were special. They had talent, toughness and timing.

Today’s Cowboys have talent and headlines, but not the results. Until that changes, the gap

between past glory and present reality will define “America’s Team.”



‘Gilmore Girls’: Fall fashion icons

By RYLEY LEE
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Every year, there is a rave about Lorelai and Rory Gilmore being the fall fashion icons — every outfit they wear is carefully picked out for the perfect balance between comfort and fashion.

Whether it’s Rory’s iconic white sweater or Lorelai’s business casual workwear, the Gilmore girls never fail to wear the perfect outfit. But why is the fashion in “Gilmore Girls” so iconic? Why is there non-stop talk about it every year?

These are the questions I have been asking myself as I’ve started to rewatch the show this year. Every episode I watch, I need to know immediately where everything in both Rory and Lorelai’s wardrobes is from. Even Rory, in her Chilton uniform, makes me want to go back to high school and convince my mom to put me in school with uniforms. Everyone I talk to is obsessed with both the mother’s and daughter’s closets, and there are even news articles from renown magazines like Vogue discussing the iconic fashion in the show.

Trends come and go, and we are in an era where we are moving backward with fashion. Y2K fashion is making a strong comeback, and “Gilmore Girls” is just part of the reason.

When we wear clothes that were trending in the early 2000s, we feel like we are reliving our childhood. Personally, I feel

much more productive when I’m wearing a good outfit. Look good, feel good, do good and all that. And we all know there’s no one more productive than Rory Gilmore when she’s studying, so maybe people feel like if they dress like the Gilmore girls, they’ll be able to romanticize their life like them.

“Gilmore Girls” fashion is even taking over social media. There are Pinterest boards of Rory and Lorelai’s outfits, Instagram accounts that give “Gilmore Girls” -inspired outfits and TikTok posts about what people would wear if they were in the show.

In my opinion, some of the most iconic outfits in the show were Rory’s white sweater outfit, Lorelai’s first day of Chilton outfit and pretty much every single Friday night dinner outfit either of them wore.

Rory’s white sweater outfit was in the very first episode. She wore an oversized sweater with simple blue jeans and her backpack as an accessory. There was snow on the ground and you could tell it was freezing. That’s why this outfit was perfect. Not only was it adorable, but it was also warm and cozy. It was also one of our first impressions of Rory — you can tell a lot about a person by their outfit. We could tell that Rory prioritizes comfort and also knows how powerful a simple outfit can be. Sometimes, the simpler the better.

Next, we have the outfit Lorelai wore on Rory’s first day at Chilton. Of course, in perfect sit-com fashion, Lorelai’s alarm

didn’t go off in the morning, preventing her from picking up her dry cleaning. The only thing she had to wear was a pink tie-dye baby tee, a pair of jean shorts and cowboy boots. For an outfit that was supposed to be ugly, it was very cute. Maybe it’s just the way she presents herself, but I swear Lorelai Gilmore could pull anything off.

It would be a disgrace not to talk about the Gilmore girls’ Friday night dinner outfits, because they are iconic. How can one acquire so many dresses and skirts that they never repeat a single outfit? I don’t know, but it makes me jealous. The slip dresses and little cardigans are perfect, and wearing them with little heels makes it even better.

The fashion in “Gilmore Girls” is so thought out, and it perfectly reflects the characters’ personalities. I’m

not surprised so many people are obsessed with the Gilmore girls’ wardrobes, because I am too. Both characters can pull off business casual or comfortable night-in outfits, and they are an inspiration to lots of clothing trends today.

