



AP Photo/Ed Bertz

New York Giants kicker Brad Daluiso enjoys the moment after kicking a 22-yard field goal to clinch a 13-10 win for his team. The Giants avenged last year's 31-7 loss to the Cowboys.

Night of firsts in Giants' 13-10 win

The New York Giants defeated the Dallas Cowboys for the first time in seven tries on Monday night, while Dallas back Emmitt Smith got his 13,000th career yard.

By DAVE GOLDBERG
Associated Press Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Tiki Barber provided the New York Giants some revenge for Deion Sanders' heroics against them a year ago.

Barber returned a punt 85 yards for a touchdown, then took a short pass 56 yards to set up Brad Daluiso's 22-yard game-winning field goal with 1 second left and gave the Giants a 13-10 victory against the Dallas Cowboys on Monday night.

The game was 3-3 until Barber's punt return with 7:50 left in regulation gave the Giants a 10-3 lead. But Emmitt Smith scored on a 2-yard run at the end of a 68-yard, seven-play drive to tie it 10-10.

That led to more heroics by Barber, who had 233 all-purpose yards in the game.

On a second-and-10 from their own 41, Kent Graham found Barber in the flat, and he eluded Dat Nguyen and raced to the Dallas 3, setting up Daluiso's game-winner.

"I saw I was 60 yards away with 20 seconds left and I thought 'Just split the defenders' like I'm told," Barber said.

"So instead of running out of bounds that's what I did."

The victory was the first for the Giants (3-3) in seven Monday night meetings with the Cowboys.

It also atoned for a 31-7 thrashing on a Monday night by Dallas (3-2) last season, when Sanders returned a punt and an interception for a touchdown.

"We were embarrassed last year," Barber said. "We wanted to hold down Deion and I think we did it. Then we made the big plays."

But the Giants got a scare.

After Daluiso's game-winning field goal, he squibbed a kick and Dallas began lateraling. They got into the end zone but it was called back because one of the passes clearly went forward.

"I was at Stanford during the Stanford-Cal fiasco," Giants coach Jim Fassel said, referring to the play on which Cal returned a last-second kickoff for a touchdown through the Stanford band. "We didn't get it deep enough and I was seeing ghosts for a few seconds."

Daluiso tore a ligament in his right knee on the play and is probably lost for the season.

This was a game for defense, or poor offense.

Until Barber's punt return the only scoring was field goals of 27 yards by Daluiso and 41 yards by Richie Cunningham. Cunningham, however, also missed from 48 and 41 yards, the latter on the final play of the third quarter, when the Giants called time out to force him to punt into the tricky Meadowlands winds of 10-to-20 mph.

"The wind was trickier than it appeared," Fassel said. "And it was swirling. I thought it was worth a timeout and it worked out."

Smith, who needed 25 yards to get to 13,000 for his career, got there on his touchdown run. But he finished with just 26 yards on 22 carries as the Giants totally shut down the Dallas running game.

But Troy Aikman came through late for Dallas, going 20-of-33 for 266 yards.

Graham finished 15-of-21 for 183 yards in his first game back after missing last week with a concussion.

Still, it was mostly defense. The Cowboys sacked Graham five times and the Giants got Aikman three times as both quarterbacks were constantly under pressure.

Dallas also had a number of injuries, the most serious to rookie wide receiver Wane McGarity, who separated a shoulder tackling New York's Sam Garnes after Garnes intercepted a pass at the New York 7 to thwart a Dallas drive in the second quarter.

That led to an 80-yard drive that led to Daluiso's first field goal. The Giants eschewed a fourth-and-1 at the Dallas 10 to try the kick.

Meanwhile, Cowboys wide receiver Michael Irvin signed a six-year contract extension before he was sidelined with a spine injury, but team officials said Irvin had already reached incentives that give him the option of becoming a free agent at the end of this season.

Owner Jerry Jones said Monday that Irvin received an unspecified signing bonus when the deal was finalized earlier in the regular season.

Three Rivers proves home not-so-sweet home for Steelers

By ALAN ROBINSON
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — For the Pittsburgh Steelers, playing in Three Rivers Stadium suddenly has become the home field disadvantage.

Coach Bill Cowher doesn't understand why.

Long one of the NFL's toughest teams to beat at home, where they have played before sold-out crowds for 27 consecutive years, the Steelers have lost four consecutive home games since upsetting Jacksonville on Nov. 22.

The streak began with losses to New England and Cincinnati last December, when the weather and the Steelers normally are at their nastiest. The downfall has continued this season with losses to Seat-

tle (29-10) and Jacksonville (16-3).

The Steelers have been so inefficient and ineffective at home, their starting offense still hasn't scored a touchdown there this season. Their sudden inability to win at home baffles Cowher, who was 45-9 in Three Rivers until the streak began.

Perhaps that's why Cowher challenged the Steelers (3-3) yesterday to win their final six at home, beginning Monday night against Atlanta (1-5). The Falcons are 0-4 in Three Rivers and haven't beaten Pittsburgh since 1970.

"We need to reestablish the way we can play in this stadium, and then find a way to steal some on the road," Cowher said.

"We need to make this place a difficult place to play once again."

Some historical perspective: the

"I don't think the fans have anything to do with it. For some reason, we just haven't played well at home."

— Bill Cowher
Pittsburgh Steelers coach

Steelers haven't lost so many in a row at home since dropping their final six in 1969 at Pitt Stadium and their first game at Three Rivers in 1970.

Numerous factors have been cited for the Steelers' home collapse, even the restrictions placed on tailgating at parking lots adjacent to the stadium.

Cowher himself questioned if those changes created a less intimi-

dating environment for opponents.

A more likely cause: the Steelers' inability to find their own end zone. During the streak, Kordell Stewart is 48-of-104 for 423 yards, no touchdowns and six interceptions. He hasn't thrown a touchdown pass at home since last year's Jacksonville game and has only five touchdowns passes in his last 12 starts.

At times, Stewart seems tentative and afraid to make mistakes in

Three Rivers, where he was pelted with a half-full beer cup after a loss last year. The fans didn't give him much margin for error this year, booing him loudly late in the first quarter of the home opener against Seattle.

"I don't think the fans have anything to do with it," Cowher said. "For some reason, we just haven't played well at home."

With six of their final 10 at home, the Steelers (3-3) desperately need to regain their home field edge if they are to challenge for the playoffs. Their only victories so far are against AFC tailenders Baltimore, Cincinnati and Cleveland.

"People wrote us off too quick after we lost those home games," rookie wide receiver Troy Edwards said.

"We have a new offense, and it's

been a hard offense to learn. But once we learn it, nobody can stop us."

And, so far, Atlanta's offense still hasn't gotten started. With running back Jamal Anderson injured and out for the season, the Falcons haven't mounted the semblance of an attack and were beaten at home Sunday by St. Louis 41-13.

"But I remember two years ago, when they started 1-7 but they finished 7-1," Cowher said. "If there's any coach who will make sure they don't lay down, it's Dan Reeves. If you watch their film, it's evident they haven't quit."

Steelers All-Pro center Dermontti Dawson, who missed the last three quarters Sunday at Cincinnati with a pulled hamstring, is listed as questionable.

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