Cowboys, Colts owners - good, bad, ugly

One is a super-wealthy Texas oilman. The other is a Chicago businessman. One has watched his team rise to the heights. The other has taken his team to the depths of the league. One has the respect and admiration of the local fans. The other is villified daily in the press. In fact, the only similarity between the two is that they own, or owned, National Football League teams.



Clint Murchison Jr., the original owner of the Dallas Cowboys, and Robert Irsay, current owner of the Baltimore, er, Indianapolis Colts, are about as opposite as two football team owners can be. I find it ironic that each has made the news in the past weeks.

Murchison has owned controlling interest in the Cowboys since their inception in 1960. In the past 24 years, Dallas has had one head coach (Tom Landry), one general manager (Tex Schramm), and one tradition, winning. A great deal of the credit for the team's success must go to Murchison. In an era of team owners becoming more and more meddlesome, Murchison has remained a silent, unintruding figure. He hired Schramm, Landry, and the rest, and let these talented people run the show.

Since 1966, Dallas has missed the playoffs just once and has been the most consistent winner in all of professional sports. They have a nice stadium, a front office that is in the envy of the league and their fans respond to their success.

Declining health forced Murchison to sell his interest in the team recently, but even as he bowed out, Clint Murchison ensured that his "owner-hands-off" policy would be continued. In fact, that was one of the criterion that he demanded of all prospective buyers. A syndicate headed by another Texan, Bum Bright, recently paid \$70 million to \$80 million (depending on who you listen to) for the right to sit in the owner's box at Texas Stadium. Bright insists that he'll continue

The middle-of-the-night flight of the Colts from Baltimore merely is the culmination of outrages Irsay committed against one of the game's proudest teams.

Remember Howard Schnellenberger, the Captain Kangaroo look-alike that coaches the Miami Hurricanes? Well, in 1974, Schnellenberger was the coach of the Colts. Irsay fired him. During a game. On the field.

Irsay then brought in the volatile genius Joe Thomas as his general manager. Thomas did have have a record of building winners, but he also had a record of incredible infighting between owner and coach. Ted Marchibroda built a solid team in the mid-1970s behind Bert Jones and Lydell Mitchell Contract disputes with players resulted in Mitchell and Jones exiting, Marchibroda's firing and the collapse of the Colts.

The Colts, also known as the Dolts, went 2-14 in 1981. In the strike-shortened 1982 season, they were worse - 0-8-1. Then came the John Elway affair, which ended up in Irsay trading Elway to Denver without telling either his general manager or head coach.

The Colts rallied to 7-9 last year, but any future success the Colts might enjoy will be lost on the fans in Baltimore. Instead of spending Sunday afternoons in Memorial Stadium, the Colts will be playing in the new 61,300-seat Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis.

Irsay capitalized on the mania cities have about getting an NFL team. He first offered the Colts to

New York, where the Jets have vacated Shea Stadium in favor of the Meadowlands. Then he wooed Phoenix, where a promise of a new domed stadium looked inviting. Finally, he settled on Indianapolis, where the brand-new Hoosier Dome was waiting.

The Indiana city made an impressive offer: A \$12.5 million loan at 8 percent, a new training facility and the first \$500,000 from luxury boxes at the Dome.

In a last-ditch effort to save its team, Baltimore made an even better offer: \$15 million in loans at 6½ percent, \$4.4 million in cash for the team's training facilities, which would be leased to the . Colts for \$1 a year and a hefty ticket guarantee.

So what happened? After promising several times that he would not move the team, Irsay loaded the team's equipment and records onto moving vans and pulled out of town, under police escort, in the early-morning hours of March 29. Irsay promised he'd let Baltimore's mayor know if he was leaving. He didn't even call. In a flash, the Baltimore Colts, the Colts of Johnny Unitas and Weeb Ewbank and Don Shula and the 1958 overtime title game, the Colts of Baltimore were dead.

It's idiots like Irsay that give pro sports a bad image. For all the good influences that owners like Clint Murchison have had on the game, one bozo like Robert Irsay has torn the game down. One Baltimore sportswriter summed it up nicely when he said, "Indianapolis, you're welcome to him."

Softball squad sweeps Cyclones earns two-day split with Sooners

By Ward W. Triplett III

Nebraska's women's softball team faced its first Big Eight competition Sunday and Monday in Stillwater, Okla., and left with a 3-1 conference record and an 18-10 mark overall.

Schroeder had Nebraska's only hit in the second game off Oklahoma senior pitcher Patti Graham. Mori Emmons took the loss, dropping her season record to 11-3.

In Sunday's action, Schroeder's two-run triple in the fourth inning gave Sandy Wolterman her linn victory in eight decisions in a 2-0 victory against Oklahoma. Mori Emmons pitched a three-hitter in the first game against Iowa State. Richins hit a runscoring single in the second to provide the margin of victory.

Murchison's policies.

Let's hope so. Clint Murchison was a tribute to the game.

Then there's that yo-yo, Robert Irsay.

Irsay took control of the Colts 12 years ago from another interesting character, Carroll (husband of Georgia) Rosenbloom. Since then, he's subjected the loyal fans of the Colts to many things, most of them bad. His latest - and worst - move was an outright disgrace.

The Huskers defeated Iowa State 4-0 and lost to Oldahoma 1-0 Monday afternoon, after beating those two teams 1-0 and 2-0 Sunday.

In the first game Monday, sophomore Shelby Martins and senior Sandy Wolterman combined on the shutout. The Huskers went into the top of the sixth scoreless, but Ann Schroeder's double and an error on a Denise Eckert grounder provided the only run the Huskers would need. Three consecutive singles by Cindy Aerni, Lori Nielson and Lori Richins brought in the other runs.

The Huskers were scheduled to meet Creighton in a double-header today at the Mabel Lee Field, but the game was canceled because of wet grounds.

However, the Huskers' Thursday games against Grand View still are scheduled for 2 p.m. at the Mabel Lee Field.

