Training Camp Begins!

Contributed by Dave Blake
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Big Dave's Myspace All Rookies Are Signed and In Camp But One

Today is the first day of camp and the Dolphins have all of their rookies signed except for QB CHAD HENNE. With the loss of Jason Taylor to the Redskins someone has got to step up. I am sure that Parcells was thinking about a Dolphins team without JT when he drafted newly signed rookie DE PHILLIP MERLING with the 32nd pick of the draft.

Currently DEs Charlie Anderson and Quentin Moses are the players rumored to be filling in for JT. You can believe that Patsy QB Tom Brady is enjoying this change in Miami as noone gave him a harder time than JT did. By the way, the entire NFC East called Bill Parcells the same day the Redskins worked out a trade in 6 hours. He and Zach will both be wearing #55. You can buy their Dolphins Fathead posters for $10 and I highly recommend it. Who cares if you don't have a place to put them;)
What about DE MATT ROTH? Well, he has never really been the player that Saban envisioned him to be even though he has a high motor. He lacks the long arms that typifies an NFL defensive end. He also plays on the other side. One thing that the "experts" said about Roth when he was drafted was that perhaps Saban could convert him as a pass rushing linebacker. Parcells and Sparano must have had the same thought as they experimented with him this offseason at linebacker. He can do the job, but his biggest weakness will be trying to keep up with a tight end and a running back in pass coverage. He may not be able to handle that.

Here is a highlight film on DE PHILLIP MERLING. Let's not forget that not only was he the first pick in the 2nd round, but he was really a late first round pick as the Patriots lost their 1st round draft pick this year because of cheating. DE PHILLIP MERLING - 2(1)
DE | (6'4", 276, 4.71) | CLEMSON

Scouts Grade: 91

Flags: (D: DURABILITY) Player that can't stay healthy

Strengths:
Is a well built DE with adequate height and good bulk, arm length (33.2) and hand span (9.5). Has above-average initial quickness for size and can beat blockers to the point of attack. Moves well laterally and keeps head up when scraping down the line of scrimmage. Takes excellent pursuit angles, plays with a good motor and has above-average range. Generally does a good job of getting in position, plays with discipline versus the run and will execute his assignment. Thickly built with a strong lower body. Is able to take on blocks when he plays with leverage. Plays with a mean streak. Wraps up upon contact and is reliable open field tackler that can deliver the big hit. Uses hands to protect legs, shows good balance and can fight over cut blocks though is somewhat inconsistent in this area. Flashes the ability to turn the corner and is a relentless pass rusher. Athletic enough to redirect inside after starting outside and flashes an effective swim move. Stays alert, has long arms and gets hands up when isn't going to get to the quarterback. Has experience lining up at defensive tackle, has experience dropping into coverage and is versatile.

Weaknesses:
Has good size for a defensive end but stands up high too much and gets driven back on some of those occasions. Has some problems shedding bocks when he lets blockers lock onto his frame. Does not show powerful upper body strength (only 17 reps on bench press). Lacks elite closing speed for an end and is going to have a harder time turning the corner at the NFL level. Relies on quickness and athletic ability too much and isn't much of a bull rusher at this point. Turns shoulders and creates running lanes too much. Doesn't always rush outside in and lets quarterbacks break contain too much.

Overall:
Merling played 271 snaps during his true freshman season in 2005. He started all 13 games of the 2006 season, finishing with 46 total tackles, including ten tackles-for-loss. Merling also recorded three sacks, 20 quarterback hurries and one forced fumble that year. In 2007, he recorded 78 total tackles, including 17 tackles-for-loss and seven sacks. Merling does not possess the speed of a dominant edge rusher and he needs to improve his upper body power. However, Merling is a gifted athlete for his size and he projects as an impact every-down starter in the NFL. While he could develop into a solid 3-4 end, we think his best fit is at the power-end position in a traditional 4-3 scheme. Regardless, Merling projects as a mid-first round pick.

* Player biographies are provided by Scouts Inc.

Cowboys WR Terry Glenn & Packers QB Brett Favre status.

The Cowboys waived WR TERRY GLENN and he is rumored to be checking things out with Parcells in Miami. He will have to take a physical and accept a salary less than what the $1.74 million he was to make at Dallas. Those are the reasons he was released in Dallas as they did not want to get stuck with that if he went down with another injury. If he can pass the physical then I think we should sign him for whatever they work out. We have plenty of cap right now with the loss of Jason Taylor and are actually in violation of league policy as we need to spend a higher percentage than we currently are on the roster. With $21 million of free space under the cap this gives the Dolphins flexibility in signing a free agent who may come available or extending contracts of players on our roster we want to keep. With the Cowboys so close to the Super Bowl he may be better served going back to Dallas once he is able to pass a physical.

There is a good chance that the Dolphins may see QB BRETT FAVRE but it will not be in a Dolphins uniform. In fact, he may not even have to change those puke green undies of his as the Jets have now received permission to talk to Favre from the Packers. Why do they need permission? Because Favre is still under contract with the Packers.