

Falcons 23, Dolphins 27 - The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Contributed by Rich Rodriguez
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The Good

I cannot say enough about Ryan Tannehill and the way he has played thus far this season. Despite an interception, a fumble and a couple of sacks he could have avoided by getting rid of the ball faster, Tannehill had his best game as a pro quarterback. The reason I say that is because he beat a Superbowl contending team with a fourth quarter comeback win. Tannehill was 24 of 35 for 236 yards, 2 TDs and 1 INT. Not terrific numbers, but he was 9 of 12 for 69 yards and a game winning touchdown when it mattered most.

Nice little coming out party for Rishard Matthews. 4 catches for 42 yards and some key plays throughout the game for the Dolphins 4th wide receiver.

Caleb Sturgis continues to be money for the Dolphins. He was 2 of 2, including a 50 yarder right down the middle. The guy is a machine. 5 of his 6 field goals this season have come from 45 yards or more. He also had 4 touchbacks on 4 kickoffs.

The Bad

Pass protection needs to be addressed, and it is not necessarily just the offensive line. One sack allowed by Daniel Thomas and another by Dion Sims that led to a fumble recovered by the Falcons. These guys need to start protecting Tannehill. That he is still winning games despite getting sacked at a record pace is nothing short of amazing. But it cannot last forever.

The defense missed way too many tackles today. Sure, they held the Falcons to 23 points and made key plays in the redzone, but they gave up too many running yards and failed to sack Matt Ryan once.

Playcalling continues to be puzzling. The Dolphins averaged 6 yards per carry, but the running backs only got 13 carries. Almost all of those carries came on 1st down. The Dolphins need to mix it up more with screens and draws, especially when the QB is getting sacked way too much.

The Ugly

Not sure what happened with Mike Wallace today. He was targeted 5 times in the game, but 4 of those came in the first half. Two of which he caught. Maybe it is a case of spreading the ball around because every week someone different leads the team in receptions. In week 1 it was Hartline, in week 2 it was Wallace. This week it was Gibson with 6. But I have a hard time accepting that Wallace was only open twice. Either he has to play better or this goes back to poor playcalling. He is too fast and explosive to not get him involved more.

Injuries are creeping in. The Dolphins were already missing Soliai and Patterson. Wake and Misi went down during the game and even Ellerbe got injured at one point. The Dolphins pulled out the win, but they have to get healthy quickly, especially on defense.

Overall

A big statement game for the Dolphins. One of the few remaining undefeated teams in the early season. Teams that start off 3-0 make the playoffs 75% of the time. The Dolphins have certainly started out strong this season, beating two playoff teams in Indy and Atlanta (look at what Indy did to the 49ers in San Francisco). This is the biggest Dolphins win in a while and one of the most impressive games from Miami's emerging young signal caller in his young career.

Many would have been overjoyed if the Dolphins got out of the first 5 games with a 3-2 record. Well, it isn't going to be worse than 3-2.

Next up, the explosive New Orleans Saints, who will post a serious test for the Dolphins defense.

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