

## Looking Back at Looking Ahead

Contributed by Pawfectgent  
Monday, 24 November 2008

Okay Phinfans, we've let the dust settle. We're over the shouting, cursing, screaming and venting of Sunday that some of us experience. We have come back to earth a little bit, as it has sunk in that we are still a work-in-progress. The sculpture isn't finished: we've got the general outline, but the finer details have yet to be brought forth.

This is a good thing, people. I know some will read that line and go, 'Yeah, right. Losing is never a good thing, nor is losing to a division rival EVER anything but terrible.' It's hard to separate what we feel from what we see.

We see Light hitting the back of Crowder's head, and we see Moss' hand grabbing Goodie's shoulder pads, and we see the Sultan of Smug on the sidelines giving the go-ahead for the final TD with a half-minute on the clock...we see those things and we fume. We rage about the unfairness, about the perceived inequities. We hurl epithets at the TV, the Radio or the even the doritos on the table in front of us about how we were cheated, hornswoggled, bamboozled, etc.

'Oh, the freshmen officiating crew shouldn't have been presiding over a game of checkers between ten-year-olds, much less a game this big'.

'Oh, Light should be given a suspension until 2010, and then fed to the sharks off Biscayne Bay.'

'Oh, Kraft should have his Whiskey spiked with elephant pee, be stripped naked and left on the street in Liberty City.'

These are just ventings, of course, totally motivated out of some misguided belief that the world is in error when we didn't win.

We didn't win because we don't have quite as much talent as the Pats- wretched drafting during the Wannys years (our Dark Ages) put us there. We don't have the team maturity of the Pats- our team is totally renovated, new faces everywhere, whereas they are a cohesive machine that has years together in the same scheme. We don't have nearly the big game experience of the Pats- many on our team have never been to the Playoffs, and their roster is full of guys who've played in them every year.

Geez, Paw, how in the heck can this be good?!?

It's good because we looked up at the spectre of those mighty bullies and punched them squarely in the jaw. That team got rattled a bit, too. They averaged three penalties a game this season prior; they had 3 in the 1st Qtr. This team has made a living for years by punishing others' mistakes, and minimizing their own- prior to our game, their 13 turnovers had ceded just 13 points in '08. In this game, their 2 turnovers gave us 14.

Seven lead changes. How many lead changes were there in the game in Foxboro? ONE, when we broke the 0-0 tie with a TD.

Our beloved Phins weren't awed by these Patriots, and we matched them score for score until the end.

These two teams, forever linked by a number of unusual factoids, are two different waves on the same oscilloscope. They have peaked. Although they are still obviously an excellent club, their zenith occurred at a convenient time when both us and the Jests were putrid and the Jills were merely average. It contributed to their 16-0 record, make no mistake. Now, as natural correction brings their curve back to mean center, they'll meet our arc as we ascend.

Age begins its inevitable march. None of their current AFC East fellows are pushovers. Now we are the youthful up-and-comers; now we are the ones looking forward, not exulting in the past.

Their greatest season fell one achievement short of our greatest season. Their record-setting win streak started after we whipped them, and finished with us whipping them.

In the span since Brady took over (including '08), they are an astonishingly-good 28-5 (.848) vs. the AFC East (including 2001 in which the Colts were still here) outside of us. They missed the playoffs only one season (2002) and have not had a losing record. They have been to four SBs.

In that same time frame, we've had three losing seasons, and been to only one playoff game (2001, a loss to Baltimore).

They are 10-6 (.625) against us, splitting the season series six of the eight years.

Read that again. We've beaten them more than the rest of the division combined.

As much as the team from Foxboro likes to get in people's heads (just ask Peyton Manning for the first several years of his career), we are firmly embedded in theirs.

These are good times, Dolphin fans. We are like the Phoenix, rising from the ashes of crappy drafts and lousy coaching. The biggest bully of the last decade, the Goliath of Y2k, is about to meet his David, and he is wearing an aqua uniform.