“There were some Teams that wished they won yesterday” Tony Sparano 12/1/2008

Contributed by Gary Ramey
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There’s wisdom in that. A week and a half ago two AFC East Foes clashed. The announcers even played back one of the violent collisions with the comments you could hear the pads smack together. Seven Lead changes and multiple ferocious hits left both teams gassed. Miami came out on the low end of that emotional and physical battle because they lost the game. However it was evident to me that both teams suffered the week after. NE put up a decent battle through the first period at home against Pittsburgh…and then got completely clobbered as they appeared exhausted. Miami stumbled through a lackluster performance and squeaked by a Rams team that was playing a little more inspired because 3 veterans returned. The latter had some folks questioning whether Miami was a true playoff team because they had a weak schedule and were barely winning against lesser competition. Yet the odd part is the same criticism was levied against Miami’s greatest team ever, the ’72 Dolphins. The criticism goes like this: “The 1972 Dolphins' claim as the best team ever has always inspired disagreement. They played a weak schedule and won six games by a touchdown or less” (TSN Dec29, 2007). My point in bringing this up is to point out that winning is the reason you play the game. No one remembers the 16-14 win against Minnesota or a 1 point win against the Bills in 1972, but they’ll always remember 17-0. This year’s Dolphins will remind no one of that 72 team … especially on defense. But let’s give this year’s Dolphins the credit they’re due. They’re 7-5 and in control of their own destiny. Win out, and they’ll go to the playoffs, and therefore by definition, will be a playoff team.

The Bills vs Miami matchup has always been special. I remember going to sports bars packed with Bills Fans to watch these games. It was brutal. It was a place called Jackson’Hole where about 10 of us Miami Fans hunkered down in the enclave whilst 200 screaming Bills lunatics ran amok. This game will be just like the Patriots game a few weeks back, a slugfest. There’s no lost love here. We hate them and they hate us (insert Bryan Cox two fingered salute here). I always loved the commercial which featured the poor Dolphin’s Fan in Bill’s Country. You see the guy exit his house and a snowball busts against the door. The little dog in the Bill’s sweater that growls as he reaches down to pet it was priceless. In any case, how can you not be up for this game if you’re a Dolphin’s or Bill’s Fan? Miami is in position of having to win up North in December for a playoff berth. Sound familiar? It should. In years past this was a normal storyline. One that would end in disappointment more often than naught, but now, Miami has a chance to write a happy ending. Armed with a protected Dome in Toronto, the weather arch-enemy has been eradicated. All Miami has to do is shut down one of the most prolific runners in the NFL and life will probably be pretty sweet come Monday. This game is as much a must-win game if there ever was such a thing. A divisional loss in the conference would be devastating to any playoff hopes. The Bills are without Trent Edwards but you have to be leery of the guy on the bench trying to win his job back. Miami has to start dropping 8 guys in coverage to mix things up like they did against the Patriots and Bills early in the season. This rush 4 all the time with the occasional blitz is proving worthless. They also have to start moving Porter around on the LOS a little more. On offense, Miami has to run the ball. The Bills are smallish on defense but quick. SF was blowing the Bill’s off the LOS all day last Sunday. There’s no reason Miami shouldn’t approach this game trying to establish the run.

If the right Miami Team shows up Sunday, they have a clear path to a showdown with the hated puke green the last week of December. When I first saw that game on the calendar, my first thought was “will it have any special meaning”…I’ll have to wait for that answer but my gut told me that destiny awaits!!!

Go Phins!!!