

A Season to Remember

Contributed by J.P.
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This season has been a 200% success. Nobody could have predicted the Dolphins being tied for first place with just 3 games to go. Nobody could have predicted that this team would have it's best record in over a handful of years, at this point in the season; not even our Thursday blog writer...

Here is what I will remember most about this season, no matter how it ends:

---We were competitive, and fun to watch. It has been some time that the Dolphins have been mentioned as a 'winner', rather than a 'loser', on a consistent basis. Well, this year, Miami is just that. We've won 6 out of our last 7 games and 8 out of our last 11. We've beaten teams like the then undefeated Patriots in Foxboro, the then still in-it Chargers, Denver in Denver, the then 5-1 Bills, the Bills in Toronto (and oh, how sweep that was). The Wild-Cat has been the craze of the NFL this season; Joey Porter leads the league in sacks; the R&R Express has nearly 1500 yards combined and is on pace to nearly 20 scores. The Dolphins are enjoyable to watch again, folks. Not just to Phin fans...and definitely not to opposing teams' fans; but to plain old football-watching lovers.

---First place. With 3 weeks to go, we're tied for first place in an extremely competitive AFC East; the tightest division in the NFL right now. We control our own destiny. We win, we're in. We lose, we need help. It's that simple.

---We played with heart, and passion. This team is playing with confidence, heart and passion. Coach Sparano has done an unbelievable job of gathering his troops and getting them fired up for gameday. This is an inspired Dolphins team on a mission.

---WE FINALLY HAVE A QUARTERBACK! Chad Pennington is no Dan Marino, but is sure as hell better than anything we have had since the great Dan, (and by the way, RIP Dan Marino Sr.). Pennington has been the sole reason, in my opinion, that this team has an identity; not just offensively, but the team as a whole. Pennington has been the leader of this team from day 1. Without him, I doubt we have more than 3 or 4 wins. No, I KNOW that we do not have more than 3 or 4 wins, without Pennington.

---We won the close ones. The Dolphins might be 8-5, but their average margin of victory, (wins and losses), is less than 1. We have scored just 9 more points than our opponents. Some take that as a bad thing; I take that as a blessing. That year we were cursed with losing the down-the-wire, type games. We lost 6 games by 3 points or less in 2007. This year, we are winning nearly all of them. We're not blowing anybody out, but we are getting the job done, and picking up a win at the end. This year, in games that were decided by less than 10, we are 6-2. A MAJOR improvement. Our Phins are no longer making you chew down on your nails until the very end for nothing anymore.

---We don't expect to lose...against anybody. Going into Sunday, we as fans are expecting to win. Dolphin Stadium is filled and loud on Sundays again; it's upsetting every time we lose. Not because it is a loss, and every loss hurts; but that we knew that we could have...should have won that game; whoever it's against. That is a great feeling. Not the losing part...

---We're excited about the now, and for good reason. For too long, coaches have been promising us instant success. I remember one time last year, when Coach Cameron was being asked about the London game being considered a home game, he said that Miami would make it up, by hosting a playoff game that year. I think you see my point. This year, it was the opposite, and with opposite results. The trifecta has devoted to rebuilding; we cut Zach Thomas, traded away JT. They told us that we are rebuilding. And while we are, we are winning. Now. It is so refreshing to know that you have a good team now, and that will only get MUCH better as the years pass...

---The media...National media...is talking about us. There are articles coming out almost every day, either from ESPN, or NFL.com, talking about our Post Season chances, and how historic our season has been/could finish. We are on the brink on pulling off the biggest year-to-year turn around in NFL history. Why wouldn't we be talked about??

---We can brag! For once in the last God only knows how long, we can go to work, school, whatever, and brag to our Bills-fan friends, or some other team that has fed off of our pedestrian-ness, (at best), for the last few years. We can ask, 'So how was your weekend?', with a smirk on our faces. We won't get any smart remarks from anybody who sees us priding our aqua and orange shirts, and sweatshirts, (at least not by anybody who knows anything about the NFL).

Enjoy it fellow DolFans. This is a season to remember...nobody what happens in the next 3 weeks.

One last thing...

---Tony Sparano. Finally, a coach who loves his players, whose players love him, whose fans love him, and who loves his fans. A coach who gets fired up on the sideline, and becomes a fan during a play. A coach who loves doing what he does. A coach that you would run through a brick wall for. Dare I say(?), a Great Head Coach. Go easy on me there, Shula lovers (which is all of us...).

GO PHINS!!! Let's end this already miraculous season with a division title and a Playoff birth!!! As almost surely soon-to-be Coach of the Year Tony Sparano, would say...

Let's go out and get number 9!!!