

Miami Dolphins 3-2 in the preseason

Contributed by Christopher Williams
Thursday, 11 September 2008

Although the preseason has officially ended, personnel moves this week suggest that new Dolphins head coach Tony Sparano is still coaching in what can conceivably be considered "preseason mode."

It can be agreed by most that camp and its corresponding preseason games is a time when coaches should be evaluating players and finding the right personnel to field during the regular season, yet it seems obvious that the coaching staff is still very much in evaluation mode.

Patrick Cobbs, our 3rd string running back, played extensively on 3rd down during the game at the expense of better players seeing field time, presumably to see if he can play a vital role in the offense while allowing more seasoned players the opportunity to rest. A theoretically sound idea, yet when the team goes 3/13 on third down, one must re-evaluate his position (especially considering he caught just 1 pass for 9 yards, and had no rushes). On Tuesday it was announced that Boomer Grigsby, the FB who unseated incumbent starter Reagan Mauia because of his vastly superior special teams skills as a wedge buster, was waived, and replaced by former Titan Casey Cramer. Sparano also seems to have admitted that having Ernest Wilford deactivated in lieu of Brandon London, an undrafted rookie from Massachusetts, was a mistake (which may have cost the game) noting that "there are places for Ernest and we're going to evaluate that right now. In fact, I did some of that this morning and just maybe try to find some spots for him." Wednesday was witness to Ronnie Brown again working with the first team after much to-do was made of Ricky Williams, who just received a rather lucrative contract extension, having "supplanted" him as the starter in the offense. Thursday morning woke to reports of our previously unheralded, and much criticized for his seemingly incurable case of the "dropsies" over the past 2 seasons, former 3rd round selection Derek Hagan taking over the #1 receiver role from last year's 1st round selection Tedd Ginn Jr. who had nothing short of an awful game against the Jets on both special teams, a fumble and at least 2 missed opportunities to return punts, and in the offense gaining just 19 total yards, catching just 2 passes and running 1 well read reverse.

I wouldn't be surprised to hear of other personnel changes, whether in the form of roster moves or simply changing existing roles on game-day, before Sunday either.

Although we are very much in the regular season in which every game counts, it seems obvious that Sparano and 1st year General Manager Jeff Ireland are still looking for players with whom they feel we can succeed as a football team, and what roles those players can perform on game days. In effect, we're still evaluating our talent (or lack thereof), a job that was theoretically supposed to be over after the final preseason game. But at what expense?

If, as I theorize, the new Dolphins FO is still in evaluation mode, effectively seeing what our players can and cannot do in game situations, wouldn't it also mean that we are placing that goal ahead of winning?

Perhaps.

It's not to say that this new FO isn't game planning to win, but it does mean that we're still searching for something better than what we have been able to field here in Miami over the last 2 seasons, at the very least, and that can't be a bad thing. After all, we did lose our 1st game of the season after having played some pretty ugly football, and I'm not sure that the gameday roster as it existed this past Sunday is one that can win more than a game or two this season. Either way, if we can diagnose and treat our issues over the course of this season, even if it means a steady diet of losing all year, we can conceivably become a team that has a real chance to compete for something more meaningful than not being last in the division.

So I say forget any media/fan scrutiny that you may receive Tony, and change the roster and/or the roles that particular players play to your heart's content. Because, in all honesty, we can use all the change we can get. In fact, if it makes any real difference, I'd be happy with a 20 game preseason this year if it means we can finally field a winning team in Miami.

Although the preseason has officially ended, personnel moves this week suggest that new Dolphins head coach Tony Sparano is still coaching in what can conceivably be considered "preseason mode."

It can be agreed by most that camp and its corresponding preseason games is a time when coaches should be evaluating players and finding the right personnel to field during the regular season, yet it seems obvious that the coaching staff is still very much in evaluation mode.

Patrick Cobbs, our 3rd string running back, played extensively on 3rd down during the game at the expense of better players seeing field time, presumably to see if he can play a vital role in the offense while allowing more seasoned players the opportunity to rest. A theoretically sound idea, yet when the team goes 3/13 on third down, one must re-evaluate his position (especially considering he caught just 1 pass for 9 yards, and had no rushes). On Tuesday it was announced that Boomer Grigsby, the FB who unseated incumbent starter Reagan Mauia because of his vastly superior special teams skills as a wedge buster, was waived, and replaced by former Titan Casey Cramer. Sparano also seems to have admitted that having Ernest Wilford deactivated in lieu of Brandon London, an undrafted rookie from Massachusetts, was a mistake (which may have cost the game) noting that "there are places for Ernest and we're going to evaluate that right now. In fact, I did some of that this morning and just maybe try to find some spots for him." Wednesday was witness to Ronnie Brown again working with the first team after much to-do was made of Ricky Williams, who just received a rather lucrative contract extension, having "supplanted" him as the starter in the offense. Thursday morning woke to reports of our previously unheralded, and much criticized for his seemingly incurable case of the "drowsies" over the past 2 seasons, former 3rd round selection Derek Hagan taking over the #1 receiver role from last year's 1st round selection Tedd Ginn Jr. who had nothing short of an awful game against the Jets on both special teams, a fumble and at least 2 missed opportunities to return punts, and in the offense gaining just 19 total yards, catching just 2 passes and running 1 well read reverse.

I wouldn't be surprised to hear of other personnel changes, whether in the form of roster moves or simply changing existing roles on game-day, before Sunday either.

Although we are very much in the regular season in which every game counts, it seems obvious that Sparano and 1st year General Manager Jeff Ireland are still looking for players with whom they feel we can succeed as a football team, and what roles those players can perform on game days. In effect, we're still evaluating our talent (or lack thereof), a job that was theoretically supposed to be over after the final preseason game. But at what expense?

If, as I theorize, the new Dolphins FO is still in evaluation mode, effectively seeing what our players can and cannot do in game situations, wouldn't it also mean that we are placing that goal ahead of winning?

Perhaps.

It's not to say that this new FO isn't game planning to win, but it does mean that we're still searching for something better than what we have been able to field here in Miami over the last 2 seasons, at the very least, and that can't be a bad thing. After all, we did lose our 1st game of the season after having played some pretty ugly football, and I'm not sure that the gameday roster as it existed this past Sunday is one that can win more than a game or two this season. Either way, if we can diagnose and treat our issues over the course of this season, even if it means a steady diet of losing all year, we can conceivably become a team that has a real chance to compete for something more meaningful than not being last in the division.

So I say forget any media/fan scrutiny that you may receive Tony, and change the roster and/or the roles that particular players play to your heart's content. Because, in all honesty, we can use all the change we can get. In fact, if it makes any real difference, I'd be happy with a 20 game preseason this year if it means we can finally field a winning team in Miami.