

Addressing the Offensive Line

Contributed by Tony Simmons
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We are now less than 2 weeks away from the 2011 NFL Draft, and one area that the Dolphins will look to address via the draft is the offensive line. The Dolphins came into the 2010 season believing the offensive line was one of the strong points of the team, but still made changes to the unit going into the season. OLG Justin Smiley and OC Jake Grove were released and replaced by Richie Incognito and Joe Berger respectively. The Dolphins also drafted ORG John Jerry in the 3rd round to add to the personnel in place.

The changes resulted in Miami taking a major step back on the offensive line, as the constant changes in the interior line and lack of chemistry along with injuries that accumulated greatly effected the play of the offensive line. The Dolphins dropped from 4th in the NFL in rushing at a little over 140 yards a game to 21st in the NFL at 102.7 yards a game. The unit also gave up 38 sacks in 2010.

Once again, it is the interior of the offensive line that has to be addressed. Richie Incognito could very well be the answer at OC, as he came out of Nebraska as a OC before being switched to OG once in the NFL. The one game Incognito started at OC against Detroit, the Dolphins had one of their top rushing games of the season before he got hurt late in the game. John Jerry had a very disappointing rookie season, but I can't see the Dolphins giving up on a 3rd round draft pick after one season and he will be given every chance to win the ORG position. Miami could also possibly look to bring in a prospect to groom behind ORT Vernon Carey, as Carey is coming off a knee injury and there seems to be some lingering effects of the injury.

Offensive line personnel that Miami could look to draft early in the process is OG/OC Mike Pouncey of Florida, OG Danny Watkins of Baylor, OT/OG Orlando Franklin of Miami and OG Ben Ijalana of Villanova are all talented OG prospects with the ability to pull and move that will go in the early rounds of 1-3. OG Will Rackley of Lehigh, OG Clint Boiling of Georgia and OG John Moffitt of Wisconsin are talented kids that will probably go in rounds 3-5. OG Randall Hunt of Illinois is a kid Miami has shown interest in could be there in the later rounds.

The Dolphins have looked at OC Brandon Fusco of Slippery Rock, OC Ryan Pugh of Auburn and have worked out Florida State OG Rodney Hudson at OC, as most teams believe Rodney will have to make to move from OG to OC.

Miami have looked into OT Gabe Carimi of Wisconsin, OT Anthony Castanzo of Boston College, OT Derek Newton of Arkansas State, OT James Brewer of Indiana and OT Marcus Gilbert of Florida.

Once again, this is an area that the Dolphins would have used free agency to address a few of the needs. Depending on how the CBA is worked out, if Logan Mankins, the disgruntled and talented OG of the New England Patriots will be a major target for Miami. He is a instant and huge upgrade at OG.

It does not matter who the Dolphins bring in at quarterback or running back or wide receiver. If the Dolphins don't get the offensive line solidified, the offensive struggles will continue. It starts with the offensive line.

Go Dolphins!!!

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