

Smoke and Mirrors? More like Blood and Sweat

Contributed by Pawfectgent
Monday, 27 October 2008

The win against New England caused some chattering, some good-natured guffaws and a little bit of 'Oh, the blind squirrel found a nut' stuff from most analysts. It was viewed as a freakish event, an anomaly in the grand scheme of things.

We had the week off to ponder it, but the consensus felt that the San Diego game would bring us back to earth. Instead we soared toward the heavens as we beat the two best AFC clubs from last year.

Now after two more losses, surely these upstart Dolphins with their single-wing and B-team WRs would not be able to handle 5-1 Buffalo.

I spoke to someone yesterday in Duffy's (a sportsbar), a Cowboy fan, who remarked that eventually our 'gimmick offense' would peter out and we would go back on the trash heap. This was AFTER the win over Buffalo. Of course, he was fueled by too much alcohol and the joy at the Cowboys winning and saving Wade Phillips' job for now, so I overlooked it.

I could have told him that the Wildcat is only a small part of the offense, not a staple. I could have pointed out that other teams quickly copied it and some of them have found success, though not to the extent we have. I chose to do neither: what did I care? His team is on the way to finding itself under Jason Garrett.

I merely asked him if Pac Man's next Bail tab would be added to Dallas' Salary Cap. I asked in all seriousness without a trace of sarcasm, as if I actually wanted to know. The look on his face, a mixture of pained embarrassment and confusion, was worth staying for another round.

How has Coach Sparano done it? Has he coerced Dan Henning into a vaudeville act, a Wildcat tap-dance? Has he disguised gaping defensive holes with cardboard cutouts of great players, and snuck around lacing opposing players' shoes together? Has it been smoke and mirrors?

Not by the salt on your next Margarita.

He has done it with an age-old mantra, a creed put forth by the greatest leaders football has had in its glorious history. He has done it with a routine that Shula would be proud of (and by all accounts from his former players, did use himself).

It's called WORK.

If the opponent has more speed, I can outwork him and win.

If the opponent has more strength, I can outwork him and win.

If the opponent has more savvy, I can outwork him and win.

This team has put in the extras. This team has busted its collective a\$\$, and it is showing up. Look at the miniscule injury report. By this time last year, it needed a table of contents. Look at the W-L record. By this time last year, we were making excuses and finding blame, lamenting the 'what might have beens'. We actually have a shot at a .500 record at the halfway point.

What a difference.

Listen to his press conference 10/27...it's a day off and Coach Tony is remarking about how there were 'guys in there banging the weights around'. He remarks about how the veteran leaders, 'the Porters, the Hollidays, the Penningtons' could have taken it easy last week, especially after the two losses.

They didn't.

Coach was the right guy for the job. BP, you picked a good one. He works, and although it is obvious that any NFL staff has to work, Coach Tony gets his Players to do it as well. His attitude and outlook are contagious. The team listens to him, and does their best to perform for him.

Even the best charade in the world can't do that. A façade, no matter how carefully crafted, would be seen through by the veteran players. This isn't smoke and mirrors; it's sinew and bone, dirt and blood on the brow.

This is Real. The best part? It's only going to get better.