Dolphins 17, Panthers 23

Contributed by Rich Rodriguez
Saturday, 18 August 2012

The Good Rookies Rishard Matthews and Jeff Fuller had a nice games, each catching 4 passes. Matthews had a nice touchdown grab in which he basically had to drag his defender into the end zone. He showed a lot of heart and desire out there. Fuller, who last week appeared to be lost, also showed a little more effort and tenacity this week. I liked the aggressive approach by the Dolphins offense with 53 seconds left in the first half. Last season it would have been run, run, run and go to the locker room. Wow! That was definitely not pass interference on Sean Smith. Excellent play by him. Marcus Thigpen showing a little something on kick returns. He also showed some nice hands coming out of the backfield. Chris Hogan – 7-11 finally makes his debut on the stat sheet. 3 catches for 30 yards, a player clearly with his arrow pointing up. The Bad For the second week in a row, the first string defense looked suspect. With Cam Newton going 8 of 11 for 119 yards and a TD and the Panthers scoring 20 point in the first half, not much went right for this unit. The pass rush was invisible and the tackling wasn’t much better. There’s definitely a lot of room for improvement for this unit. In particular, Koa Misi and Gary Guyton often seemed out of position in pass coverage. I hope this coaching staff isn’t as pass happy during the regular season as they have been in the preseason. 15 rushes last week followed up by 12 this week. The Dolphins’ strength is in the backfield, not at receiver and tight end. You play to your strengths. Lydon Murtha looked terrible in pass protection. As soon as he came in, Tannehill was getting sacked over and over. Roberto Wallace – what happened? After a terrific game last week, he put the ankle weights back on. He had a hard time getting open. Michael Egnew needs to get his cranium out of his rumpus. The Ugly Ryan Tannehill – I debated whether to put Tannehill under The Good or The Ugly. The Ugly ultimately won out because at the end of the day, the results were ugly. But it was by no means all ugly for Tannehill. Yes, he had a rough start. Yes, the number don’t look pretty (11 of 23 for 100 yards), but Tannehill showed resilience. After a rough start in which several of his passes were tipped or dropped, he hung in there and in the 2nd quarter started making some big throws on 3rd down to keep drives alive. Matt Moore – Same story, different chapter. Moore’s numbers look ugly, but he just didn’t have the effort from the players around him to help him get the job done. He was less accurate than Tannehill, but also took more shots downfield Pat Devlin – He was firmly settled in The Good until that last throw. The he just joined the rest of the bunch. He did show a lot in helping get the team back in position to win, but he is also the reason we lost that position in the end. A few spikes to stop the clock would have made more sense. 10 penalties for 134 yards. Overall Analysis For the second week in a row, the team seemed unprepared, lacking in effort and played sloppily. Again it could be attributed to the lack of game-planning and more focus on individual player evaluation, but at some point the coaching staff has to bring it all together. There are several players on the ascent such as Jeff Fuller, Chris Hogan, Marcus Thigpen and Derrick Shelby and there are several on the descent such as Roberto Wallace, Clyde Gates, Koa Misi and Gary Guyton. It is going to be interesting to see what this final roster is going to look like. I think there will definitely be some surprises because some of the underdogs are showing they want it while some of the “safe” guys appear to not care.