3rd preseason game will be HUGE for Miami

Contributed by Tony Simmons
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Next week will be the most important preseaon game for NFL teams, as it is the 3rd preseason game. This is the week that teams will gameplan for opponents and the starters will play at least a half and some teams will play their starters into the 3rd quarter.

For the Dolphins, this week will be even more critical, as thru 2 preseason games the Dolphins have looked putrid, and that is being kind. The offensive line has struggled to protect the quarterback or generate any run game, the young wide receivers have been inconsistent and struggled to get open and you still have a quarterback situation that still has to be settled.

Defensively, the Dolphins have struggled to generate any type of pass rush, especially this past weekend with Cameron Wake out. Overall the defense did not look good at all as both starting ILB's Karlos Dansby and Kevin Burnett were held out of the game last week along with Wake. Their backups left a lot to be desired as the defense was gashed in the run game and by not generating pass rush, it was a long day for the defensive backs as well.

The coaching staff also have had their shortcomings, as offensively they have not tried at all to establish a run game. With Ryan Tannehill having a very good chance of being the starting QB for the Dolphins, one of the best friends a young quarterback can have is a stable, solid running game. The new staff is installing a new defense and offensive scheme, and they will need to make both key decisions and do a better job of in game adjustments, as that is something we will see more of this week.

In regards to who the starting quarterback will be, I do believe that David Garrard would have been the starting quarterback for the Dolphins, but he had surgery on his knee a little over a week ago and he will not be ready to at least the 1st game of the season. That has opened the door for returning starter Matt Moore and 1st round pick Ryan Tannehill. Ryan had his good moments and bad in the Carolina game, but part of those struggles do have to be given to the poor offensive line play, and the same holds true for Matt Moore. Tannehill did look much better in the 1st preseason game against Tampa Bay backups and Moore has done nothing to seperate himself in this race. With that being said, I expect Ryan Tannehill to be the starting quarterback for the Dolphins opening day.

As a fan I try not to put to much into preseason games, as you know the coaches want to see the starters briefly and see a lot of the young kids during the first few preseason games. In this case though, the Dolphins have looked so bad for the most part that as a fan you have to wonder if this team indeed will be the bottom dweller in the AFC East, as most of the so called experts expect the Dolphins to finish.

The 3rd preseason game is always a big one for NFL teams, and in the case of the Dolphins, it might be even a little more important.