

After Further Review

Contributed by Gary Ramey
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Is it too late to ask for the replacement refs back? If yes, can we at least ask the league that Steelerators never officiate a Miami Game again? Every single major call, just like the Steeler Game a few years ago, went against Miami. The catch, football move and subsequent fumble...that was an easier call than the dual possession of the Packer Game. Tuck Rule...can the league just end it? How many games is this asinine rule going to impact before someone does the right thing. There. It is off my chest. Had I watched that game in real time, I would've popped an artery. These are the kinds of games Miami always loses...always. It has been a stigma of Miami Teams since I remember. Thanks to an opportunistic defense and a young gun QB, things are changing in Miami. The Technical: First 3 games were characterized by a great rushing attack, a great run defense, but no pass rush. On offense the team was giving away the football and on defense there were no takeaways. The last 3 games have been marked by no running game, an increasingly worse run defense but a young QB who is throwing darts. I might be mistaken but that TD pass to Fasano was so accurate it blew my mind. Fasano turns, gets his hands up and head around just in time to see the ball hit him between the hands. You couldn't have handed it to him in a better place. The defense is more bend, not break and is getting its hands on the football along with sacking the QB. Things to be fixed: I saw it last week and I saw it again this week at least once. Bush had a small crease inside but he chose to bounce it outside. Both runs were negative plays. On one 3rd and short he easily had the first down if he follows his big fullback. I think Reggie is pressing instead of taking what the defense is giving him. In fairness to Bush the defenses are flooding the box. The Rams had a brilliant plan of sending lots of people. They singled up the outside guys and then brought the house. RT couldn't exploit them deep because there was always one more blitz than blockers. Miami fixed this to open the 2nd half by running some quick hitting passes. RT was 7 for 8 on that drive and marched it right down the field. Sprinkled into those quick hitting passes were some well timed screen plays to Bush. Miami will see a steady diet of the blitz against the Jets. Run defense wasn't good against the Rams. The good news is it was mostly poor tackling, or good hard running if you want to put it another way. Sean Smith remains a liability against the run. He simply refuses to throw his body into the mix. He tries to arm tackle guys, he takes poor angles and generally approaches tackling like he's trying to pet a porcupine. Most teams with poor CB's have them run with WRs. It appears to the QB they are covered but a DB's backside should be an invitation to throw into one on one coverage. Miami has to take some shots downfield against the blitz instead of relying only on the short throws. The defense is purposely shifting resources to cover the short passes and giving you the deep throw. They have to let Hartline take his chances on those. The Future: The immediate future is @Jets, @Indianapolis, Titans, @Buffalo, Seattle. If Miami is going to have a shot at the post season which has been the water cooler chat the last week, then winning 4 out of 5 of these will be necessary. It is doable, but nothing is easy in the NFL. Catch a team on the right day and any one of them can throttle you. The Miami Team we saw last week can do that. The next games aren't so easy. Miami has NE at home followed by @SF. If they go 3-2 in the five above, they'll need to win one of these games to get to the post season. That will put them 4-3 or 7-6 at the 14 game point.

The last 3 games are Jags, Bills and @NE. Miami would need to go 2-1 in these games. This would put them at 9-7 for the year. The best case scenario is for Miami to go 4-1 in the first 5 games after the break, split with NE and sweep Buffalo. It also means beating these teams they should beat. That would leave them at 10-6 and pretty much certain of a wildcard spot.

In any case, it is nice to be in the discussion of playoffs with complete changes in coaching and a rookie QB. Miami's future is looking brighter with every snap.

Go RT!

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