

Brian Hartline had zero targets ... shows Tannehill is maturing

Contributed by Dave Blake
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TANNEHILL IS SHOWING MORE DEVELOPMENT

When asked this week whether the Dolphins had a gameplan to get WR Brian Hartline the ball against the Rams, QB Ryan Tannehill said that he was "planning on getting [Brian Hartline] the ball" and "... for whatever reason we didn't get him the ball enough". How about not at all? Not only did Hartline have zero catches but he did not even get the ball thrown to him once. This, to me, is very enlightening on two fronts.

One, Hartline is the number one focus of defenses now as he is the best receiver on this team. Unfortunately, he will now be covered by our opponents best defensive backs. Against the Rams he had to create separation from Cortland Finnegan and Bradley Fletcher and failed to do so. Zero separation. Hartline has the best hands on the team, but he needs a #1 WR to give him room to play his game.

Two, Ryan Tannehill is no longer focusing on his primary receiver like a deer in the headlights and is now starting to go through his progressions looking for an open receiver. Since he had over a 70% completion percentage rate, zero interceptions, and two touchdowns, I would say that this is encouraging. Right now this is a good sign in his development, but in the future the Dolphins need to get Hartline the ball.

Right now GM Jeff Ireland is negotiating with Brian Hartline's agent, so, this should guarantee that Hartline does not get paid like a #1 wide receiver. He's a good #2 wide receiver.

{youtube}TGdMgIOALH4{/youtube}

DWAYNE BOWE???

All right, we've heard the rumors about Bowe wanting out of Kansas City. He is a #1 wide receiver playing under the franchise tag who has played well despite the lack of quality quarterbacks over the years at Kansas City. Should the Dolphins trade for him before the trade deadline?

You may be disappointed to know that I do not think this trade is going to happen. A long term contract would have to be worked out before the trade, but then again, do the Dolphins really want to bring in another player who has had attitude issues? Perhaps we should package a couple of picks together and just move up into the draft next year for a first round receiver. Of course, that is never a sure recipe for success, and Bowe is a proven receiver in the NFL. But, what do I know? ,,,, If I had my way, Brandon Marshall would still be on this team.

OLB KEVIN BURNETT PROVING TO BE A VERY GOOD FREE AGENT PICK UP

One of the frustrating things about Burnett's predecessor, Channing Crowder, was that he played inconsistently despite having a lot of athleticism. He made some memorable tackles only to whiff on other ones. In pass protection he was average and always seemed a step behind. Tight ends seemed to have their best games against our linebackers.

Ireland brought in Burnett last year and once he figured out our defense he had his first 100 tackle season last year (106 to be exact). After 6 games this year, Burnett is rock as evident by Pro Football Focus' stats on 4-3 outside linebackers. He has adjusted from the 3-4 defense to the 4-3 defense and is playing a well-rounded game. He has embraced leadership this year with the players and is also a leader on the field.

The big challenge for Burnett this year was becoming an outside linebacker in the Dolphins' new 4-3 defensive scheme under coordinator Kevin Coyle. Burnett's previous seven NFL seasons (five with Dallas, two with San Diego) were spent as a run-stopping, 3-4 inside linebacker. [link](#)

Anyways, the reason I mention Burnett is that we always hear about Ireland's mistakes, but Ireland has also made some good decisions as well.

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