

Miami vs Indianapolis

Contributed by Tony Simmons
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The 4-3 Miami Dolphins take on the 4-3 Indianapolis Colts in a game with major and surprising playoff implications for both teams in the AFC. The Dolphins are riding a 3 game winning streak with the most recent win, a resounding 30-9 thumping of the New York Jets in New Jersey. The Colts come in with a 2 game winning streak, winning in Tennessee last Sunday against the Titans 19-13.

Both teams are lead by rookie quarterbacks, the Colts by #1 overall pick Andrew Luck and Miami by the 8th pick in the draft, Ryan Tannehill. There is a chance Ryan may not play as he is coming off an injury to his knee and quad early in the Jets game last Sunday. If he cannot go, Matt Moore will be the starter for the Dolphins. As I was typing this article, I saw on ESPN that Ryan Tannehill will indeed be the starter for the game.

Let's take a look at these teams and how they stack up.

Miami comes into the game ranked 23rd in total offense at 327.9 yards per game. They rank 11th in rushing offense generating 115.9 yards per game, while ranking 22nd in passing offense at 212.0 yards per game. The Dolphins are scoring 21.4 points a game, which ranks 22nd in the league. They face a Colts defense that ranks 19th in total defense, giving up 350.4 yards per game. They rank 27th in rush defense giving up 137.4 yards per game and 7th in pass defense, allowing 213.0 yards per game. The Colts rank 18th in sacks with 15 and are giving up 24.4 points a game, which ranks 20th.

Once again the Dolphins were under 100 yards in rushing in a game that they faced a defense in the Jets that has struggled to stop the run, although they did improve with 93 yards rushing in the game. Once again, they face a team in the Colts that has really struggled to stop the run and the game plan will be once again to try to get this run game back on track. As I mentioned earlier, QB Ryan Tannehill is listed as questionable for the game, but I have complete confidence in Matt Moore. The Dolphins will need to be able to attack the Colts downfield with the passing game, as the Colts will want to try to load the box to take away the passing game. Continued solid play from WR Brian Hartline and Devon Bess is needed, and hopefully another week of practice will help Jabar Gaffney. TE Anthony Fasano has been solid, but Charles Clay has been missing in action. The Colts will get back OLB/DE Robert Mathis, who had missed the last few games with a knee injury.

Defensively the Dolphins come into the game ranked 22nd in total defense giving up 363.0 yards per game. They rank 2nd in rush defense giving up 82.0 yards per game while ranking 27th in pass defense giving up 281.0 yards per game. The Dolphins come in 6th in sacks with 22.0 and are ranked 3rd in scoring defense giving up 18.0 points per game. They faced a Colts offense that ranks 8th in total offense generating 373.0 yards per game. They rank 17th in rush offense at 107.1 yards a game while ranking 9th in passing offense at 265.9 yards a game. They are scoring 19.4 points a game, which ranks 27th and have given up 18 sacks.

The Colts have had success moving the ball between the 20's, but have struggled to score once in the Red Zone. The game plan does not change for Miami in this game. Take away the run game from the Colts and get after rookie QB Andrew Luck and WR Reggie Wayne. Luck has been everything the Colts thought he would be and he is a very solid young quarterback. That being said, any quarterback that has pressure on them in the pocket can make mistakes, and the Dolphins have been creative with the pass pressure they have been bringing. The secondary has improved over the last few weeks, and they will face a wily veteran at wide receiver in Reggie Wayne and a couple of talented young TE's in Coby Fleener and Dwyane Allen. You can expect CB Sean Smith to see a lot of Wayne in one on one coverage, and Sean has been up to the task so far.

As I stated earlier, the playoff implications for this game are BIG. Win this game and the Dolphins put themselves squarely in the playoff race and would be tied with New England for the division lead. Lose this game and they are still in the picture, but slip behind the Colts in a possible tiebreaker scenario.

It is always tough to go on the road and get a win and the Colts will present a stern challenge. That being said, the Dolphins are playing well right now and the defense has been dominant. If the Dolphins can continue to do what they have done the last few weeks along with winning the special teams battles, I like their chances of getting out of Indianapolis with a win.

Go Dolphins.....

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