Teams figuring out Miami

Contributed by JP Correia
Wednesday, 14 November 2012

I hate to come on here and be a negative nelly. But for weeks I have been calling Miami the most over-rated team in the NFL, and that the lack of talent at the premium positions in today's game to compliment your Quarterback, (WR, TE, DE, CB), would get to the Dolphins at some point. We've seen it clearly the last two weeks.

While the game last Sunday was one to throw out, we've been witness to some very similar and concerning trends over the course of the past few weeks.

1) We now all realize, (I would hope), that the regression in the run game was not a one or two game fluke. Miami can't run the ball with any consistency and lacks the ability to create a lot of chunk plays in the run game like they did in September. Jake Long, Richie Incognito and John Jerry have all regressed significantly, and at this rate I would be surprised if any of them were starters in 2013. Reggie Bush doesn't have much to work with, but he needs to start hitting the hole harder and picking up yards that are available. If he can't handle doing that 20 times a game, fine. We have depth. But Bush needs to come to terms with the fact that the big play just isn't there like it once was.

2) We have no weapons at all for Tannehill. No run game; no depth or top-end talent at WR; a non-existent duo of young TE's who were supposed to stretch the field; an offensive line that is losing more often than winning the battle upfront...In order for Miami to move the ball down the field and score, they have to be perfect. No penalties, positive yards on 1st down, everybody has to be fundamentally perfect, the playcalling has to be one step ahead, etc. etc...This team just doesn't have the necessary playmakers on the outside to make up for negative plays. There is way too much stress right now on Hartline, Bess and obviously Tannehill to make it work; not only would it be tough for any QB to make it work with just 2 WR's, but none of the 3 are good enough to carry an offense...yet.

3) The defense stinks. Say what you want about the run defense. It will rebound and finish a top 5 unit. But even if it doesn't (or does), I don't care. What matters in this league on the defensive side of the ball are two things. 1) Can you create turnovers? 2) Can you defend the pass? Miami can't do either. In order to do both you need pass rushers (as great as Cam Wake is, Miami doesn't have even close to a good enough pass rush to have a solid pass D), you need playmakers in the secondary, (nobody in that unit even comes close to carrying that title), and depth. Miami doesn't have any of those three components working for them.

4) They're really young. I think most of us forgot that this is a rebuilding year. Yes, we won a few close games against bad teams, but this was a rebuilding effort for the get-go. It's a very young, inexperienced team in all three phases of the game as well as in the coaching room. The types of games against the Titans are bound to happen; you'd hope your team shows much more heart in the 2nd half than they did, but these games are to be expected at some point.

It will be interesting to see how this team responds on Thursday. I think everybody realizes they are realistically out of the Playoff picture, given that they're already two games behind, (having lost to the team ahead of them), and have one of the toughest schedule in football remaining. With five losses on the season, you'd have to assume Miami has to win 5 of their last 7 games at least. With games against the Seahawks, 49ers and two against the Patriots...that's not happening.

Still, I think we all want to see this team rebound on the national stage against a divisional opponent. If they come out flat again, not only will Philbin have to think about making some serious changes, but the coach that was the front-runner for coach of the year just 10 days ago will be the center of A LOT of criticism and skepticism...and rightfully so.