

Buffalo travels to South Beach to take on the Dolphins

Contributed by Tony Simmons
Sunday, 23 December 2012

The 5-9 Buffalo Bills, coming off a 50-17 thrashing in Toronto last week from the Seattle Seahawks travel to Miami to take on the 6-8 Miami Dolphins, coming off a solid 24-3 win over the Jacksonville Jaguars.

The Dolphins are mathematically still alive for a playoff spot, but they need a lot of help for this to happen. First and foremost, the Dolphins will need to win today and at New England next Sunday to even have a remote chance of getting in the playoffs. Buffalo will be once again playing out the string and winding down what has to be considered a very disappointing season for a team that was considered a chic pick to make the playoffs in 2012 after spending big money in free agency.

Let's take a look at the teams to see how they match up.

Miami comes into the game ranked 27th in total offense generating 316.2 yards a game. They rank 23rd in passing offense at 203.9 yards per game, while ranking 16th in rush offense at 112.4 yards per game. The Dolphins rank 25th in points scored at 18.9 points per game. They face a Buffalo defense that ranks 24th in total defense giving up 369.5 yards per game. The Bills rank 15th in pass defense allowing 225.4 yards per game and rank 30th in rush defense giving up 144.1 yards per game. They are ranked 31st in points allowed at 28.7 points per game.

Buffalo beat the Dolphins in a week 11 game 19-14, and in that game the Dolphins had a big problem generating a run game against a bad Bills run defense. The Dolphins can't have that happen again today against what is still one of the worst rush defenses in the league. Today will be a HUGE day for one Lamar Miller, as RB Daniel Thomas is out for the remaining 2 games of the year with a knee injury. We all know Lamar is a very talented RB with more natural talent than Thomas. He must show that he can handle blocking assignments in the passing game. With that being said, he and Reggie Bush make up a potent 1-2 punch and I believe the Dolphins will have success today in the run game. QB Ryan Tannehill is coming off perhaps his best game as a starter last week, as he was 22-28 for 220 yards and 2 touchdown passes. Ryan has been a work in progress for the Dolphins, but he has shown nice signs of growth and development and hopefully he will finish out the season with continued growth. There is a chance he will be without his top 2 receivers in Brian Hartline & Davone Bess today, so he will have to make adjustment today with receivers he has not worked with a lot.

Defensively, Miami comes in ranked 17th in total defense giving up 348.9 yards per game. They rank 26th in pass defense giving up 247.9 yards per game, while coming in 8th in rush defense giving up 100.9 yards per game. The Dolphins rank 6th in points allowed giving up 19.9 points per game. They face a Buffalo offense that ranks 20th in total offense generating 340.8 yards per game. They rank 25th in passing offense at 201.2 yards per game while ranking 6th in rush offense generating 139.6 yards per game. The Bills rank 19th in points scored at 21.9 points a game.

The key to stopping this Buffalo offense is containing one C.J Spiller. Spiller comes into the game with 1,047 yards rushing and gained 91 yards against Miami in the 1st game in Buffalo. The Dolphins will need to contain Spiller and put this game in the hands of erratic QB Ryan Fitzpatrick. Do that today and the Dolphins will have a great chance of winning this game.

I need to mention special teams in this as well, as the Bills got a big boost from a punt return for TD in the 1st game from Leodis McKelvin in the 1st game the teams played. The Dolphins did get a kickoff return for TD from Marcus Thigpen, but you generally lose games when you give up special team plays. The Dolphins have to play better in special teams today.

One thing that young teams need to learn is to beat teams they should beat. The Dolphins did that last week against the Jaguars, and even though they come into this game a little beat up, the Bills are a team the Dolphins should beat today in Miami in my opinion.

Let's go Miami.

