Miami ends the year in Foxboro against the Patriots

Contributed by Tony Simmons
Sunday, 30 December 2012

The 7-8 Miami Dolphins conclude their 2012 NFL season on the road against the 11-4 New England Patriots in a pivotol game for the Patriots and their chances to possibly secure homefield advantage thru out the playoffs. New Enlgand needs both Houston and Denver to lose to have this happen. Meanwhile, the Dolphins are trying to avoid another losing season, which would be their first since 2008.

Let's take a quick look at how the teams matchup.

The Dolphins come into the game ranked 26th in total offense generating 315.2 yards per game. They come in ranked 26th in passing offense at 198.2 yards per game, while ranking 13th in rushing offense at 117.0 yards per game. The Dolphins are scoring 19.2 points per game. They face a New England defense that ranks 27th in total defense giving up 381.1 yards per game. They rank 29th in pass defense giving up 275.5 yards per game, while ranking 12th in rush defense giving up 105.5 yards per game. The Patriots are giving up 22.1 points per game, which ranks 17th.

Just some brief thoughts on the offense moving forward, as rookie QB Ryan Tannehill had a succesful 1st year in my opinion. He had his ups and downs, but overall the kid showed nice development and had 2 signature wins, against Seattle at home and Cincinnati on the road. Getting the Patriots on the road today would be very NICE. There is a lot to like about Ryan, but he definitely has room to grow from an accuracy standpoint and overall, but I am happy with his first year as a professional. The biggest needs for this offense is at wide receiver, as this team needs a true #1. RB Reggie Bush is one of the few playmakers on the offense and I hope the parties can come to an agreement on a contract extension, and the Dolphins have said they want to bring Reggie back, at a cost the team is comfortable with. There is still questions of whether the Dolphins have a TE that can stretch the field and OLT Jake Long is probably playing his last game as a Dolphin. If so, an ORT will be bought in to provide competition for ORT Nate Garner, while Jonathan Martin will be the new OLT. Playmakers are needed first and formost.

Switching to the other side of the ball, Miami comes into the game ranked 18th in total defense giving up 351.0 yards per game. Miami ranks 25th in pass defense giving up 246.5 yards per game, while giving up 104.5 yards per game against the run, which ranks 10th. The Dolphins are giving up 19.3 points per game, which ranks 6th. They face the most potent offense in the NFL once again as the Patriots rank 1st in total offense generated at 426.9 yards per game. They rank 4th in pass offense at 292.4 yards per game and rank 8th in rush offense generating 134.5 yards per game. New England is the top scoring offense in the league at 35.3 points per game.

Some thoughts on the Dolphins defense, and the main thing I see needing to be added with this unit is cornerbacks and a SS that you can team with developing stud FS Reshad Jones. Also, while the Dolphins ranks in the top 10 in sacks, a complimentary OLB/DE opposite of Cameron Wake is still needed. DT Randy Starks is a free agent and I believe signing Randy is big. DT that can anchor against the run and provide interior pass rush are precious, and Randy has been rock solid while with the Dolphins. Overall, this is a very solid unit, top 10 in the most important stat defensively, points allowed. But this unit has got to generate more tunrovers going into 2013.

It would be great to close the 2012 year with a win on the road at New England. The Dolphins battled New England to the end in a 23-16 lost a few weeks ago in Miami, and the Dolphins did a tremendous job containing the potent Patriots offense. But I can't lie, as my thoughts have moved on to the Senior Bowl, Combine and Free Agency.

For the last time in 2012, Go Dolphins.....