

5 Thoughts on the Dolphins during Wild Card Weekend.

Contributed by Dave Blake
Saturday, 05 January 2013

1. Happy Birthday, Don!

First off, happy birthday to The Don. He turned 82 yesterday. Word is that his health is in decline these days, so, we will definitely wish for another healthy 10 years for him.

Everyone knows his accomplishments as an NFL Head Coach as he owns the record for most wins in a career at 347 among several others. Good luck to any coach trying to break that record. During his 36 years as a head coach he only had 2 losing seasons. Heck, we've just endured 4 straight losing seasons. As a Miami Dolphins fan that is unacceptable.

Did you know that as a player, Don Shula was actually drafted in 1951 in the 5th round by the Cleveland Browns as a defensive back? The Don had speed? He played 2 years for the Browns and then was traded to the Colts where he played for 4 more years where he intercepted 21 passes and recovered 4 fumbles. Not bad, eh?

I've watched Shula coach my Dolphins since 1970 and I have to say that every season was significant as you knew his team always had a chance to go to the Super Bowl because, as the late great Bum Phillips once said about him, "He can take his'n and beat your'n and you'r'n and beat his'n". One thing that I regret is the way he was treated by Jimmy Johnson when he took over coaching duties. Pure arrogance.

Enjoy these 9 quotes on The Don and relive some of the glorious years. They were taken from the Sun Sentinel .

47. "It was always banging into things, knocking things over, and he was the kind of dog [that] if he ran away I knew he would come back." - Don Shula on why he named his collie puppy "Zonk"

36. "I can't talk now." - then-Baltimore coach Don Shula, hanging up the phone, when Joe Robbie called to talk about the Dolphins job. A fistfight between two Colts assistant coaches was breaking out on Shula's front lawn and he had to stop it.

32. "He can take his'n and beat your'n and you'r'n and beat his'n." - Houston Oilers coach Bum Phillips on Don Shula's coaching talent

30. "Why don't you go right to the top and get the best there is? Don Shula." - Miami Herald columnist Edwin Pope to Dolphins owner Joe Robbie when the Dolphins were looking for a new coach after the 1969 season

27. "Five yards is my life!" - Don Shula to a referee who had told Shula to quit arguing, that the penalty he just called was only five yards

18. "Who's he?" - Don Shula when the Jets took Ken O'Brien with the 24th pick in the 1983 draft, leaving Dan Marino for the Dolphins

15. "You're missing an earring." - Don Shula, when tight end Marv Fleming brandished a new earring at the start of a training camp and asked Shula what he thought of it

12. "I had my Gatorade shower at No. 324. When you get my age, you can't take too many of those ice-cold showers." - Don Shula on why he got a ride on his players shoulders after victory No. 325 in Philadelphia in 1993

1. "I think about 40 people." - Don Shula when asked after a second-straight Super Bowl in 1974 who had written "Best Ever" on the blackboard in the locker room.

2. Could Jeff Ireland's work pay off in 2014?

A lot of us are tired of the losing and want to win next year. It is understandable, but keep in mind that the Dolphins are a very young team in transition. When Bill Parcells took over the job he brought in an older philosophy that worked for him, but Jeff Ireland has been trying to move to a faster pass happy team the past couple of years. Perhaps that is why Parcells decided to abruptly leave the Dolphins and there was a rift between he and Ireland. Who knows, but the last two years of moves indicates that the Dolphins are in the middle of another rebuilding program. Adding Philben as head coach was a great move as I am getting the feeling that there is a real plan for a change. We will have to see how he does in year 2.

So, what year could we expect to challenge the Patsies for the AFC East divisional crown? Scouts Inc's Matt Williamson was impressed with Jeff Ireland's moves over the past couple of years and targets 2014 as the year that the Dolphins will be highly competitive. Factor in that Tom Brady has been carrying that Patriots team and he will start to show his age

soon.

3. Jeff Ireland has to hit big in this draft.

Unless Jeff Ireland takes advantage of the draft picks that he accumulated for this year's draft in the trades of Brandon Marshall to the Bears and Vontae Davis to the Colts, we'll be taking a step back. He has to hit on those draft picks. Two of our biggest areas of need are a playmaking wide receiver and a starting cornerback.

This team needs playmakers, and VD/Marshall were playmakers. Too bad they were head aches for the Dolphins coaches. I think the player we miss the most is Vontae Davis. When his game is on, he is really on. Last week, a lot of the media gave him a lot of credit for helping the Colts beat the Texans, but his lack in maturity made our new Dolphins coaching staff tire of him quickly. To me, I think you have to put up with some of that immaturity as he was our best cornerback. I think trading him is still a big mistake.

4. DC Kevin Coyle was decent.

An attaboy goes out to Defensive Coordinator Kevin Coyle for the work that he did this year. He had numerous injuries in the secondary and the Dolphins still played competitive.

5. Dolphins need a #1 wide receiver.

I think Miami's biggest priority this offseason is to resign WR Brian Hartline. If we do not pay him then someone else will. He has great hands and is a very intelligent player.

Also, it's a no-brainer that the Dolphins need to fill the void that trading Brandon Marshall caused. The three free agent wide receivers that are linked with the Dolphins are Greg Jennings, Dwayne Bowe and Mike Wallace. To me, Greg Jennings would be the guy that could step right in and possibly do what Reggie Wayne did for the Colts. He is 30 and coming off of a groin injury that caused him to miss several games this year, but think of what a difference Anquon Boldin would have made for this team if we had pursued him when he became a free agent.

I think Jennings' sister is ready for him to move to South Beach as she has been busy on Twitter these days.

“Who can make a play @GregJennings can. He’s the best freakin [sic] receiver these clowns got. Now take your talents to south beach and get paid.”

“@GregJennings ball out so you can leave this team. They will miss u when your [sic] gone. It’s all good bye Packers. Cheap team, can’t afford him.”

Just because the Dolphins pay big for a free agent wide receiver does not mean that they should not draft a good one in round 2.

6. Rex Ryan is the perfect Ringmaster.

The Jets are a circus and Rex Ryan is the ringmaster. There is no way that the tattoo of on his arm is a real tattoo. I mean, come on. It is a tattoo of his wife wearing nothing but a Sanchez jersey and she is Tebowing. The man is a genius to punk the Paparazzi. Did you notice that the person that took the picture had to sneak in the bushes to get the picture of his tattoo? Hilarious!

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