

Playoffs? Don't talk about, playoffs?! Kiddin' me?!

Contributed by J.P.
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"The Miami Dolphins?" *Laughs*. "Didn't they go winless last season or something?"

That's the response that I got yesterday from a fellow colleague; a Patriots fan, of course. After a 1-15 season, why would the consensus of how good, (or bad), this team is, be any different? We were terrible; we, literally, could not stop the run, couldn't do anything offensively, especially after the Ronnie injury, Ginn had a couple of nice returns, but really for the most part, looked like a nervous rookie. Our head coach and the way he handled things, was comical. We were a few inches from going winless, (Troy Smith's near TD pass at the end of the Baltimore game). The Miami Dolphins were a joke in 2007. Two off-seasons ago we chose a QB currently starting for the Detroit Lions, who was recently out of the NFL, over the now, possibly, best QB in the NFL, after the injury to Brady. We went 6-10. The previous year we finished off the season strong, but were just 2-7 after 9 games, and the year before we won just 4.

So why should 08' be any different? We're the Dolphins, and Don Shula is still retired. We're not supposed to be good, right? We're not supposed to, especially after last season's debacle, be anything more than some of these other lower teams in the NFL, right? We were terrible last year, and have been a very below average team for over a handful of years now. We haven't made the Post Season in 7 years. Haven't been part of the conference championship game in over a decade. Haven't been to the Super Bowl in 25. Haven't won it all in over 35.

Yet here we are, the mid way point of 08', and we, the Miami Dolphins, yes, the Dolphins, are in the Playoff Race, and very much in it. If we win next week, we'll be the 6th and last playoff seed in the AFC no matter what, (unless Buffalo and NE tie). Miami has 8 games left on their schedule; 5 of those teams have 2 wins or less, and the other 3 are division foes, which we have played very well against this season. Folks, don't be afraid to say it, the Miami Dolphins are a playoff contender. We're a good football team with a very easy schedule up ahead; a schedule with 8 great opportunities to climb up those AFC East standings.

This team proved again this past Sunday that when it prepares, and comes to play, we can play with anybody. And while Denver is on their way back to mediocrity, (again), shutting down a Mike Shanahan running game to 14 yards, in Denver, when he had an extra week to prepare, is a feat not usually met with success.

The Dolphins are coming off back to back wins, heading into the easiest part of their schedule. We now play 3 home games in a row. The first two, Seattle and Oakland, great chances to stay with the rest of the pack. The third, against New England, the ultimate chance to show the NFL who we are, and to move ahead of a lot of teams in the AFC. These next 3 games will tell us a lot about our team. Can they win the games they're supposed to win? Can they go out, and take advantage of the great opportunity that has been set out before them? Can they separate themselves from the lower teams in the league?

Whether Miami makes, or misses out on the Post Season, is completely in Miami's hands. Not New England's, not Buffalo's, and not even New York's hands. It's in theirs. Ours. The Dolphins are a good, solid football team, who knows how to play; whose coach's/coaching staff's game planning is getting better and more consistent, every week; whose players are growing more confident each week, and know exactly what position they are in right now. Whose fans are finally gaining some confidence, and trust, in their beloved team. No team has ever gone from winning just one game one year, to winning 10 the next. But Miami could be the first.

So while a season is 16 games long, and not just 8, it's hard not to realize the possibilities of the 2008 Dolphins. The Tuna has put together some incredible comebacks, including taking a 1-15 Jets team to the playoffs the next season, at 9-7. But this could be his finest rebuilding project by far. By this time last year we were wondering when...if...our first win would come. We were debating who to take with the number 1 pick in the draft. We were debating if Coach Cameron deserves another season...if he deserved to finish the one he started. We gave up on our team, and just didn't care what happened on Sundays anymore.

Now, we're talking playoffs. We're talking big time FAs that we could grab next off-season. We're talking about maybe playing the Cheatriots or Jets more than just twice in a season. We're talking playing in January...January! Something that has not been done by us fans at the midway point of the season in a long time. Too long. So sorry, Coach Mora, but us DolFans just can't hold it inside any longer. And nor should we. This team has a chance to get into the Post Season, maybe even as division winners. And we're, at least I know I am, lovin' every minute of it!...

{youtube}p3-eavMSBnk{/youtube}GO PHINS!!!!

Keep your eyes on the prize, Miami. This week, that prize just so happens to be a win against Seattle this weekend...Don't take them lightly. Mike Hologram is a terrific coach. Go out there in practice, prepare, work hard, show

up on Sunday, and you'll go back to practice the next Monday at 5-4. Over .500, for the first time in over 100 weeks. (Yearly weeks, that is;-)). Take it one week at a time; one practice at a time; one drill at a time. But just know that there is great potential in you.

Side Note: Congradulations to the Obama campaign. Good luck to you, President Obama.