

3 Thoughts on the Dolphins during the NFL Combine Weekend.

Contributed by Dave Blake
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Before I get started on this week's "Saturday" blog, let me just say that I haven't been writing and it isn't due to burnout. It's because there hasn't really been anything to really write about just yet. There's a lot of speculation, and the good news is that the South Florida papers are doing their job of keeping us entertained with some of the goings on with the Miami Dolphins. In the days before the internet, everyone would take a vacation at this time of the year. Now, if you are like me, following the Dolphins is a 365 day a year obsession. I like it.

Also, in case you are wondering, I do like how the Sun Sentinel's Dave Hyde writes his columns. His content is always thought-provoking, and I like his "5" point blogs. Today I'll have to use the Baptist formula and give you 3 points and a prayer. So, as Charles Caleb Colton once coined the phrase, "Imitation is the best form of flattery", and it definitely pertains to Dave Hyde. Hopefully you will find my blogs almost as entertaining.

1. What are my NFL Combine thoughts?

To me, the NFL Combine is pure entertainment and should confirm to Jeff Ireland that he and his scouting staff have done their jobs. I do think the 40 time is very important as the NFL is pure speed, but at the same time I feel that if a player did not perform at the college level as a super star, let's not elevate them due to their 40 times, the amount of times they bench press, or their Wonderlic test scores. At the same time, the Combine is a good time to get to know the players on a personal note, and those times could jeopardize their evaluations. You do not want to draft a wide receiver who cannot gain separation at the line of scrimmage in the NFL.

If Ireland sees a player with tremendous athleticism and they did not really dominate at the college level, let's not bump him up in our draft evaluation. It would be a mistake. Let other teams do that. I would evaluate players based on their body of work during the college season, not just the Senior Bowl or NFL Combine.

When I look at Miam's draft picks since 1990 outside top 5 draft picks, I see that our best first round draft picks were the obvious draft picks such as: QB Ryan Tannehill, C Mike Pouncey, CB Vontae Davis (he still should be a Dolphin in my opinion), WR OJ McDuffie, and LT Richmond Webb. Over that same period of time, I see reaches with WR Ted Ginn, CB Jason Allen, CB Jamar Fletcher, RB John Avery, WR Yatil Green (had injury issues in college), and DT Darryl Gardener. Draft the obvious in the first round and you can't go wrong.

2. Did Jeff Ireland really say that he had no pressure to sign 'big name' free agent?

Seriously, don't believe it. I think he's going to have to sign Wallace, Jennings, or Bowe. The team needs one of them, and I think he needs to boost season ticket sales. If he doesn't sign a "name" player he's going to have problems convincing fans to buy season tickets and money is the name of the game.

So, the question isn't, "Will Jeff Ireland sign a big name free agent", but it is "Who, and how many big name free agents is Ireland going to sign."

3. Wallace or Jennings? Why not both?

There has been a lot of debate on whether the Dolphins will sign one of the talented free agent wide receivers in free agency. Bill Polian rated the top available free agent wide receivers as ...

- Mike Wallace: "A good route runner, has good instincts and typically has good hands, but he's small and you worry about injury. Inconsistency in the past also is a concern. Pittsburgh didn't reach a deal with him, which will make some teams wary, but this league is always looking for WRs with speed who can take the top off a defense -- and he can do that.

- Greg Jennings, "will be a big name, but this is the classic question mark: How much do you pay a guy who will turn 30 at the start of the 2013 season and is coming off of two injury-plagued seasons?

- Dwayne Bowe, "is certain to be one of the names all the gurus will be talking about, but he has inconsistent hands. The QB situation in Kansas City doesn't affect him that much; you have to catch the ball when it's thrown to you. Bowe will intrigue some people, and others will shy away."

Unfortunately, WR Dwayne Bowe is probably out as new Chiefs head coach Andy Reid has made a big effort to tell

Bowe that he wants him to stay in Kansas City. To me, it makes perfect sense for KC to keep Bowe. Bowe has to be intrigued with the offense that Reid put together at Philadelphia.

With only 4 teams with over \$30 million of cap space and teams desiring to build through the draft, it makes perfect sense that the Dolphins may decide to not overpay WR Brian Hartline the \$8 million that he is asking for, and go after both Mike Wallace and Greg Jennings. No kidding. While I like free agent Hartline, I am not happy with the hardball that he is playing. I am not asking for a hometown discount, but he hasn't been the example of consistency in his final season. I would rather pay that money on a proven receiver.

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