

## Dolphins come out aggressive in Free Agency

Contributed by Tony Simmons  
Sunday, 17 March 2013

The Miami Dolphins came out swinging when free agency started and have added much needed speed and youth to an already young roster.

Pittsburgh WR Mike Wallace had long been a major target for the Dolphins, as the Dolphins were in dire need of a young wide receiver that could take the top off a defense. 30 minutes after the free agency period started, Wallace was a Dolphin, and a major need had been addressed.

The next 2 moves by the Dolphins caught most people off guard as Miami added LB Darnelle Ellerbe of Baltimore and LB Phillip Wheeler of Oakland. They replace LB Karlos Dansby and LB Kevin Burnett, both in their 30's and both would have counted heavily against the cap in 2014. The continuing theme here is the Dolphins not only add talent, but they continue to get younger.

Miami missed out on landing TE Jared Cook of Tennessee to St. Louis and ended up losing TE Anthony Fasano to Kansas City, but did come back and made a very nice move in signing former New York Jet TE Dustin Keller to a one year deal. Keller gives Miami that tight end that can threaten the seam of a defense and gives QB Ryan Tannehill one more weapon in the passing game.

The Dolphins added one more piece to the wide receiver core with the addition of WR Brandon Gibson of St. Louis. Gibson gives the Dolphins a very solid number 3-4 wide receiver and it will allow the Dolphins to run more 3 & 4 wide receiver sets and be able to put talented wide receivers on the field.

Miami has addressed a good bit of their needs via free agency, and could address more in the coming weeks. OLT Jake Long was considered a goner as he was looking for 10-11 million/per year. Most thought that this would be hard to get considering that Long has not been able to finish the last 2 years of the season due to injury. Also, his play has dropped a level due to the injuries he was trying to play thru. After spending 3 days in St. Louis with the Rams, Long did not get the type of money he thought would be offered, and is now back in Miami and the Dolphins are working to try to bring Jake back into the fold, but at the price they want Jake at in this time in his career. He can still be a very good OLT, a top 10 player. But he is no longer the BEST OLT in the game and his injury history is a concern. That said, getting Long back in the fold would allow the Dolphins to not have to address this position in the draft and keep a young, good football player on the roster.

The overall theme of free agency for Miami has been to add young talent in their prime. And the Dolphins have done this, as Wallace is 26 years old, Ellerbe is 27 years old, Wheeler is 28 years old and Gibson is 25 years old.

There has been criticism in some camps of what the Dolphins have done, as I have seen comments from the site Rotoworld.com of Dream Team 2, which I think is ridiculous. NFL Network personnel Jamie Dukes and Warren Sapp have been critical as well as Charlie Casserly. That has been the theme with the media and the Dolphins for the last few years it seems. At the end of the day, I believe the Dolphins have done a nice job, but the Dolphins have to mend this talent and win in 2013. If Miami wins, all this criticism will go away.

The Dolphins came into free agency with a plan and they have for the most part executed that plan. QB Ryan Tannehill needed weapons, and the Dolphins have given him weapons, as the wide receiver corp has pretty much been re made. A TE that could threaten the seam of a defense was needed, and the Dolphins added that for Tannehill as well. The Dolphins need Tannehill to take the next step, and he now has the weapons on the outside to help his progress.

Miami could look to add a veteran cornerback and maybe a pass rusher, as this is a buyer market. The process continues for Miami, and in my opinion, the Dolphins have done a nice job of using free agency to augment the talent on this roster.