

"Musts, needs, wants" and my top 5

Contributed by J.P.
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Every year Jeff Ireland mentions three words that he drafts by: Musts, needs and wants. Generally the Dolphins go for a "must" in the first round, but they attacked Free Agency heavily enough at all the "must" positions that there are no real absolute must haves in the first round. Offensive Tackle is certainly a "must", but Miami doesn't need to get a starter in the draft at that position, as they can always sign Eric Winston if they come out with nothing at the position.

Still, while there are no must haves in the first round, there are still some musts. I'll try and breakdown where I view Ireland's musts, needs and wants list.

Musts:

Cornerback: Miami does not necessarily need to come out of this draft with a starting corner, but they do need to come out with a talented player to develop. Brent Grimes is on a one year deal, and Richard Marshall is likely entering the last year of his stay in Miami as well. Both players are also coming back from serious injuries and there is very little depth behind them talent wise, despite the starting experience. Getting a CB who can compete for playing time right away with Patterson and Carroll, and provide Miami with a potential 2014 starter is critical.

Offensive Line depth: Whether or not Miami comes out of this draft with a starting tackle is uncertain. They should, but it's not an absolute must. Winston and Clabo provide very solid veteran options post-draft. However acquiring depth at OT and OG is absolutely a mid-round must. The Dolphins don't have a set starter at RG and don't have a back-up LT, (possibly not a starter either). Miami needs to find competition at RG and depth at OT, as John Jerry and Lance Louis cannot be counted on to start.

Needs:

Starting OT: I just pointed out how acquiring a starting tackle isn't necessarily a "must", but I do think Miami feels like they need to make a concerted effort to draft a OT high. Not necessarily in the first round, but I don't see Miami leaving the 2nd round without having drafted an offensive tackle. There should be solid options available at either #42, or after trading up a few spots to secure a player like Terron Armstead, (as I have in my mock).

Tight End: My favorite move of Free Agency was the signing of Dustin Keller. For years Miami has lacked a seem threat at the Tight End position, and Keller now should provide that. With that said, the Dolphins lack a couple of things at the position: 1) Charles Clay and Michael Egnew aren't good enough depth for my liking; Joe Philbin is used to having plenty of bodies at the position, and if Keller were to go down he would have nothing to work with. 2) Size - Miami lacks size on offense and needs to acquire a big body badly. 3) The Dolphins have very little in the way of blocking at the position; they need to acquire a #2 TE whose a capable blocker in both pass protection (to help out what should be a mediocre OT situation) and the run game. I have Miami getting this right away with Tyler Eifert in the first round. The Dolphins are also rumored to love Gavin Escobar, who would make a lot of sense in the second round.

Defensive End: The Dolphins do have some nice young talent in Olivier Vernon and Josh Kaddu at DE. Jared Odrick also seems to have a starting spot locked down. However, do any of these players provide anything more than average pass rush ability opposite Cam Wake? An elite rusher opposite of Wake would completely change the dynamic of this defense. While Miami may not get the chance at an elite pass rusher in this draft, they should try and acquire more talent at the position. They are also going to need more young bodies with a likely switch in 2014 to DT coming for Odrick.

Depth at Safety: Chris Clemons is signed to a one year deal and Reshad Jones is entering the last year of his contract. There's also very little depth behind them, (unless you're counting on Kelcie McCray to break out). Miami needs depth for 2013 and competition for 2014 at safety. It's not necessarily a position that Miami has to have early on (although it wouldn't be a surprise if they did), but at some point on draft weekend the Dolphins need to get a safety with some coverage ability.

Wants:

Slot WR: The Dolphins currently have 4 Wide Receivers on the roster that they feel very comfortable with. Not only is Davone Bess strictly a slot receiver, but you might as well count Dustin Keller as one too. Miami also paid Brandon Gibson enough money that it's clear they view him as an option in the slot as well. With all that said, Bess is a candidate to be traded on draft weekend and Gibson played very little in the slot as a Ram. Even if Bess is kept, he's on the last year of his deal and it seems unlikely that he'll be resigned. Miami would like to come out of this draft with another receiver, especially since it's a strong class. It's not a high priority though.

Runningback: Anybody who has read me type the words "Daniel Thomas" knows how I feel about him. Honestly, I don't know that he can be counted on to make the roster this August. Miami loves Lamar Miller (and so do I), but can you really put all your eggs in his basket? Miami needs competition and depth at RB. The reason I have this as a "want" and not a "need" is because the group is so young and a veteran option would probably be the better route to take. Still, don't be surprised at all if Miami takes a RB in the first 4 rounds.

Competition for Carpenter: After a rough first few games, Dan Carpenter was DC\$ for the rest of the season. Still, he's entering the last year of his contract and his cap number is relatively high. The Dolphins could be looking to add a replacement for Carpenter as early as this season. Either way, I think competition is certainly something they want.

Depth at DT: You can count on Miami spending a late round pick on a Defensive Tackle again. Odrick can certainly kick inside if he needs to, and will on 3rd down. Starks and Soliai and a very good starting duo, and Kheeston Randall showed some promise in his rookie season. With that said, Starks and Soliai are both Free Agents after this season and Miami lost Tony McDaniel in Free Agency this Off Season. Miami would like to come out of the draft with some depth and potential 2014 competition at DT.

As I mentioned, I don't think Miami has any "musts" in the first round. They did a good enough job in Free Agency setting themselves up to do whatever they want with the 12th pick. Looking at the list there are three positions that I'd be very surprised to not see drafted in the first 3 rounds: Tight End, Corner and Offensive Tackle. Miami should look to grab immediate impact players at those positions, even if the CB and TE aren't "starters."

Also, I thought I'd throw my top 5 out there at positions we could be attacking early. The rounds next to them aren't projections as to where they'll be drafted...they're where I'd grade them. TE: 1) Tyler Eifert - top 20 pick. 2) Travis Kelce - 2nd round **This isn't taking his character issues into account 3) Zach Ertz - late 2nd round 4) Gavin Escobar - late 3rd round 5) Jordan Reed - late 3rd round WR: (not really a huge need anymore, but I did a ton of work on the position anyway, so here it is): 1) Cordarrelle Patterson - top 25 pick 2) Tavon Austin - late 1st round 3) DeAndre Hopkins - late 1st round 4) Markus Wheaton - early 2nd round 5) Justin Hunter - early 2nd round OT: 1) Luke Joeckel - top 10 2) Eric Fisher - top 10 3) Lane Johnson - top 20 4) DJ Fluker - late 1st round 5) Kyle Long - early 2nd round DE/OLB: 1) Dion Jordan - top 5 2) Jarvis Jones - top 10 3) Bjoern Werner - late 1st round 4) Alex Okafor - early 2nd round 5) Ziggy Ansah - early 2nd round CB: 1) Dee Milliner - top 5 2) DJ Hayden - late first round 3) Desmond Trufant - late first round 4) Xavier Rhodes - early 2nd round Tie 5) Robert Alford and Jamar Taylor - early 2nd round **I accounted for scheme fit with the CB's a little.

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