

Great Expectations

Contributed by Gary Ramey
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If I were to ask you what are your expectations for the up and coming Miami Dolphins in 2013, what would you say? Would 8-8 really work for you this year given all the "upgrades" on both sides of the ball? Would a playoff appearance with an early exodus be a reasonable expectation? Well whatever your expectations are as a fan one thing is for sure, they're heading up around the league. Here's a nice article indicating just that <http://www.nfl.com/news/story/0ap1000000212043/article/ryan-tannehill-led-miami-dolphins-primed-for-big-offensive-year>

I'm always leary of expectations. I've gone into seasons with high expectations only to have them shattered by a slow start. I've gone into the season with zero expectations ala 2008 and found myself on the edge of my seat all season. I try and steer clear of predictions because they're based on so many factors outside of talent and coaching. For example, what if LT is a huge problem this year and a few games into the season Tannehill gets blindsided and put on IR, that would change the season for sure. Injuries and depth play a huge role in who is there at the end and who isn't. On paper before any snap in September, Miami looks to have a decent shot at finally pushing NE for the East Title. However, a lot of things would need to go right for that to happen. The following is a partial list:

- Ryan Tannehill progresses and doesn't suffer a sophomore slump.
- J. Martin holds his own at LT.
- New defense gels early.
- Lamar Miller makes us forget Reggie Bush.
- Pass rush from the DL improves.
- A surprise

While I don't think they need all of these, the first 2 are imperatives. The last one is usually my key to knowing if the season is going to turn out. Every year theres one person who seems to just stand out who isn't supposed to. In 2008 that was Pennington. Miami needs a player to stand up and play better than advertised. I'm not sure who that player is. It could be a rookie or a veteran signed in the off-season. That one person usually takes a position of perceived weakness and makes it a strength.

I know its hard to believe but July Mini Camps are barely a month away. Before you know it, the season will be here as well. So fire up the grill, pop the top on a cold one and enjoy high expectations in S. Florida. If nothing else, Irelands off-season has put Miami in the minds of more than a few NFL people.

Go Phins!