

## Where did the run game go?

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Everything imaginable worked against Miami's run game against Cleveland. The Dolphins gave up penetration, lost the battle at the point of attack, made poor decisions on where to run, missed blocks and eventually gave up on the run game. Now, part of the reason they gave up on the run was because Cleveland was in a base 34 Defense the entire day, opening up the passing game for Tannehill. Today let's take a look at why they couldn't run the football though. While I want to focus on a couple of things, there will be one constant throughout: nobody wants to block #52! The Dolphins failed to get a hat on D'Qwell Jackson consistently and it hurt them on almost all of the following examples. I also just want to say that I'm not a coach, nor do I know the playcalls. When I state Miller should have done this or that, it's my viewpoint. Right or wrong, it's just what my eyes are seeing. Let's first focus on Lamar Miller. The Dolphins second year back has tremendous physical tools and I thought a year ago displayed good vision and toughness running the football. Not in this game. This play was designed for Miller to take the ball outside and either cut it back inside if a lane opened, or take it outside where he has blockers flowing. As you can see, Jonathan Martin immediately gets off the line of scrimmage and looks to set the edge for Miller to get outside, and has nobody to block. While it's harder to see on just a still image, the offensive line is shifting towards Miller's left. Lamar has tremendous speed and right now should go outside hard, which he initially does. As we can see in this angle, Miller initially takes the play outside and has room to get to the edge. Hartline is challenged with a difficult block in the slot, however Martin is also out there to help bring it back inside and hit up-field at the hash marks. Instead, Miller decides to play it safe and jams in behind Incognito and Pouncey, losing 2 yards. Miller has the speed and blocking to get to the edge and should have used it on this play. This next play is what I was referring to with not getting a hat on Jackson. This play was actually well blocked. Pouncey is in a stalemate with Taylor, Incognito and Martin have Wynn on one knee and out of the play, and Clabo/John Jerry open up a nice hole on the right side. What you can't see is a player beating the WR in the slot and preventing Miller from bouncing it outside; but that's OK. Miller's eyes are on Jackson all the way and his left foot is planted, as it's an inside run play. Miller has a decision to make: take on Jackson in the hole, or jam it behind Incognito? Again, he jams it behind Incognito, as you can see here: The problem I have with this play is this: Incognito and Martin are double teaming the DE all the way. Jackson is unblocked either way and will meet Miller in either hole. Why doesn't Miller try and take him on up the right A-gap? He has space to at least force an arm tackle and fall forward for 3 yards, or possibly beat Jackson entirely. Instead it's more 2 yards and a cloud of dust running. Miller is a big play back. **PLAY LIKE A BIG PLAY BACK.** It doesn't mean bouncing it outside every time, or reversing field when getting back to the line of scrimmage it tough; but Miller shouldn't be just jamming it behind Incognito consistently because it's safer. Onto the next play &hellip; Again, Miller has a chance to bounce this outside. Dion Sims is in a mismatch against #99 Paul Kruger. However, while he gets pushed back, he maintains his block and does provide Miller a chance to go outside and take on the safety (#43), as you can see clearer in the next angle. This play is well defended by Cleveland. Everybody flows quickly, the safety is ready to play Miller either inside or out. My problem isn't that Miller lost two yards, it's how he lost two yards. Daniel Thomas should shove this ball inside, lose 1 yard and call it a day. Miller should take this outside and see if something breaks, at worst probably getting back to the line. Instead, Miller jams it inside and Jackson stuffs him for a loss of 2 yards, again. **PLAY LIKE A BIG PLAY BACK.** Play confident; take defenders on. Not that these are the only plays, but we'll just look at one more regarding Miller and move on: Again, Miller has a clear opportunity to take this play outside. Miller has a linebacker #53 trying to close the hole outside the tackle. Miller has the speed to beat him outside easily. Charles Clay is also locked in with his man and there are no DB's outside as they got sucked into the draw play. What happens? Miller thinks about cutting it inside for a second. Instead of cutting it inside, he just slows down to an almost-stop and hit Charles Clay in the back. Again, just poor vision and a lack of confidence from Miller. This could have gone outside for a nice gain, but instead it loses 2 yards again. Let's move on to Tyson Clabo's performance: This play is pretty well blocked for a stretch play. Jerry is going to neutralize his man, Clay has his man locked up, and the left side of the line get their men on the ground with low blocks. The problem is the penetration that Clabo allows. Wynn, #90, is able to get into the backfield before Miller even gets the ball from Tannehill. Let's take a look at the next one: As you can see, Incognito and Martin again do their job keeping their assignments away from the direction of the play. Martin is pulling in case there is an opportunity to cut the ball back inside and Pouncey is pulling to help Clabo set the edge for Miller to bounce this outside. If you'll remember, this was the play where Miller came in motion and took the handoff as he was running. Miller has plenty of speed built up to take this outside, except Clabo let's his man cleanly into the backfield again (although this time because of a mental mistake). This was a big play if Clabo gets a hat on Kruger. Clabo allowed penetration on these two plays, and all afternoon played poorly. He got beaten by quickness consistently and looked old. **Conclusion:** After watching the tape from this Sunday, I have a couple of conclusions, other than Miller needing to play with more confidence/vision and Clabo's play needing to improve. Miami needs to use a lead blocker for Miller more consistently. The opposing team's inside linebacker should not be allowed to read the play and meet the runner in the hole unblocked consistently. A lot of these run plays were out of 3 WR sets, with Clay as a TE. I understand Miami must help its OT's, but against Cleveland Clay would have been better served to help Miller gain yards up the A-gaps on those designed inside runs. Miami should also throw a lot on early downs. The Dolphins had a lot of problems with Cleveland's base 34 defense, not being able to generate much movement. Mike Sherman would be wise to throw the ball early and attempt to get defenses nickel packages on the field. Since Miami wants to be able to run the football out of a 3 wide set, they'll need to find a way to get teams' base front 7 off the field. Hopefully

Miami gets their run game going against the Colts this Sunday.

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