

THE BEAST



A couple months ago, if you were an opposing team's defense getting ready to face the Miami Dolphins the game plan was simple. All the defense had to do was eliminate Miami's running game. The talk around the league was that the Dolphins wide receivers didn't scare anyone. Miami's receiving group consisted of an ascending slot receiver in Davon Bess, a sure-handed Greg Camarillo, a promising rookie in Brian Hartline and a speedy yet inconsistent Tedd Ginn. Something was seriously lacking from the group and everyone around the league was saying that if Miami wanted to get better they had to acquire a true number one wide receiver.

Roberto's Fin Fridays

Written by Roberto Yanes
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Free agency came and went; and the Fins did not sign any wide receivers. They did not sign Nate Burleson, a solid veteran receiver, nor trade for Florida native and fan favorite Anquan Boldin. While many Dolphins kept bringing up the name Brandon Marshall, the talk around the league was that the Dolphins had no interest in this problem child.

Marshall, a restricted free agent, would require a first round pick and big pay day in order to get traded from the Broncos. He also had a history of off-the-field problems which included domestic disputes and run-ins with the law. There were even rumors of him and his Head Coach not getting along. Those issues alone were enough for a team like Miami, who shies away from troubled players, not to acquire him. The solution was simple, yet very risky, if the Dolphins were going to find their Alpha receiver. Miami would have to look for their guy via the NFL Draft and everybody knows there are no certainties in the Draft.

The Dolphins wasted no time in the coming weeks. They interviewed and worked out a ton of prospects for the wide receiver position. Names like Dez Bryant, Mike Williams, Golden Tate, Arrelious Benn along with many others were being linked to Miami. Draft pundits, beat writers and radio hosts all agreed on one thing: if the Dolphins were going to find a number one receiver it would have to be Dez Bryant with their 1

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pick in this year's draft. Several problems stood in the way if that was going to be their decision. Rookies are not guaranteed immediate success. There was no guarantee of Dez being there when Miami picked, and like Marshall, the kid had a series of off-the-field issues along with a troubled past.

Things did not get any better last week. The Fins biggest rival, the New York Jets, acquired troubled receiver Santonio Holmes for a fifth round pick from the Pittsburgh Steelers. Miami became the talk of the town for the next week and everyone was criticizing the Fins, a team with a serious need at receiver, for not being aggressive like their arch rival.

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All that changed this week. On Tuesday, April 13, Brandon Marshall signed his tender with the Denver Broncos which allowed the Broncos to trade him to a team of their choice. There was talk of Miami being interested, but the likely suitor was Seattle who had hosted Marshall earlier during free agency. On the night Marshall signed his tender, several rumors were spreading of Miami being in trade talks with Denver and while many Dolfans were doubting the rumors he was coming to Miami, we were all praying for the rumors to be true.

On the morning of April 14, Adam Schefter announced on the Mike and Mike show on ESPN that the Fins had traded for Brandon Marshall. It was later reported that Miami had given two second round picks, one in this year's Draft and another in next year's Draft. The Fins would also sign Marshall to a \$47 million contract for the next 4 years. Christmas had come early for Dolfans and Santa Tuna had reeled us in a HUGE catch.

The Dolphins have not completed a deal like this in years. This was a required move if the Dolphins want a shot at a championship. Marshall, at 26 years old, 6'4" and 230 pounds, gives the Miami Dolphins the Alpha receiver they have so long coveted. The addition of Marshall makes the whole offense better. He gives Chad Henne, a young, strong-arm quarterback, a much needed weapon. He helps the running game tremendously as teams can no longer stack the box. Miami's group of receivers just went from anemic to a possible really good unit.

Let's take a look at Marshall's young career. In four years, Brandon has achieved 100 receptions three years in a row, an achievement only four other players have accomplished. In those three seasons he has also surpassed the 1,000 yard mark. In his last three years, young Brandon has 1,694 yards after the catch, a stat Dolphin coaches stress about tremendously to their wide receiver unit. You can also add 4,019 yards, 25 TDs and an average of 12.3 yards a reception, but those stats can be looked up on any site.

I wanted the opinion of a professional on what the Marshall trade meant for the Miami Dolphins and that is why I contacted Sam Monson of Profootballfocus.com. The guys at Profootballfocus.com eat, sleep and breathe football stats. They spend their time watching films to bring us with latest and best stats around the net. Here is what Sam had to say:

There's a few ways to look at the Marshall trade. □ Firstly, it's worth pointing out, Denver did get great value for Marshall, given most people thought they'd only get a 2010 2nd rounder for him, but they actually managed to get a 2011 2nd round pick as well. □ But it's also a great deal for Miami, who get a proven Pro-Bowl caliber player in an area of need, and keep their 1st round pick in this draft.

Some people have noted that Marshall doesn't really stretch the field for Miami, because he's not a true speedster at the position, and while we can understand what they mean, Marshall does stretch the field, but in a different way. □ Marshall's brute physicality and ability to throw off the first tackler prevents teams from crashing down in coverage and playing too close to the line.

In 2009, the 510 YAC that Marshall racked up was good enough for 4th in the NFL by a WR, and the 14 missed tackles forced by him was good enough for 3rd in the league. Any team that cheats up towards the line of scrimmage because Marshall doesn't have track-star speed runs the risk of him catching the ball, breaking the first tackle and taking the ball the distance. □ He may not be a sprinter, but his longest reception of 75 yards last season was bettered by only 6 WRs.

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Marshall may not stretch the field for Miami in the conventional sense, but he will force teams to back off in their coverage, or he'll make them pay for not doing it, something the other wide receivers in Miami haven't been able to do. □ The extra space underneath could also really benefit a guy like Davone Bess, who thrives in working the zones underneath coverage.

Sam Monson

ProFootballFocus.com

After reading and researching on Brandon Marshall it is no coincidence they nicknamed him "The Beast", he is just simply that good. Dolfans around the world should be pumped for this move; we have finally gotten our Alpha receiver, as offensive coordinator Dan Henning likes to call them. The Miami Dolphins have not had a receiver like this since the days of Paul Warfield and the Mark Bros. Marshall said it best in today's press conference, he is truly in a league of his own. If Marshall can put his past troubles behind him, the Fins have not only found their number one receiver for the next couple of years, they have found themselves The Beast.

On behalf of Finheaven.com and myself I would like to thank Sam Monson and the staff of Profootballfocus.com.

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