

## DOLPHINS D-LINE MUCH IMPROVED



Injuries to an NFL team are never meant to be a good thing, but one has to wonder if the recent season-ending injury to defensive lineman Phillip Merling has improved the Miami Dolphins. Merling's nightmarish offseason had the Dolphins searching for answers at the defensive end position, but I believe the Dolphins have done a great job at filling the position Merling left vacant when he was lost to a season-ending achilles injury. You see, the Dolphins have answered back at Merling's injury by signing two quality seasoned veterans. Both players have played at strong levels in their careers and both have had better numbers than Merling did last year. The players I am talking about are the Dolphins most recent acquisition, Marques Douglas and Charles Grant.

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Marques Douglas is a ten-year veteran who has been extremely sufficient throughout his career. His numbers alone do the talking, registering 435 tackles, 20.5 sacks and seven forced fumbles in his career. Douglas, regarded as a good run stuffer, played last year for the number one defense in the NFL at a high level and helped the Jets reach the AFC championship game. Marques finished his season at the Jets with 64 tackles, 1.5 sacks and a forced fumble. He also has a past with new Dolphins defensive coordinator Mike Nolan, after stints in Baltimore and San Francisco. Douglas' signing did not surprise me one bit. The Dolphins have had him on their radar all offseason, and when Merling's injury was announced, his name was the first I thought about as a replacement. The Dolphins signing of Marques Douglas is a move I really like. The Dolphins have not only stolen a player from their arch nemesis, the New York Jets, but they also found a seasoned veteran that can groom and help rookie Jared Odrick. I give the Dolphins an A+ for this extremely underrated move.

Written by Roberto Yanes  
Thursday, 29 July 2010 17:00

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The next move the Fins made to sure up their D-line was signing Charles Grant. Grant is a player who has played at a high level in his career, but due to injuries and off the field issues, his play has taken a bit of a step back. He has posted some real nice numbers in the past, registering 423 tackles, 47 sacks, one interception, and 16 forced fumbles. Last year, Charles helped his team reach the Super Bowl registering 44 tackles, 5.5 sacks and a fumble. Unfortunately, Grant did not play in the Super Bowl due to a season-ending injury in which tore bicep, causing him to miss the playoffs. Aside from coming off a season ending injury, Grant has a four game suspension looming due to a failed drug test in 2008. The suspension has yet to take effect as it has been caught up in court after Viking players Kevin Williams and Pat Williams filed a lawsuit against the makers of the supplement in question.

Another thing to point out about Grant is that at the age of 31 he will be making the switch to a 3-4 defense. This will be the first time in his career he will be making the move after playing his entire career in a 4-3 defense. The transition should not be a problem. The Saints were a team who often used three-man fronts and that should help Grant make the switch tremendously. The signing of Grant has plenty of question marks. He must prove he can still play in this league, remain healthy and earn a roster spot, but this is a very low risk, high reward signing. What I like about this signing is that Grant was given an incentive based deal. Incentive based deals keep players motivated and can help him overachieve. Then there is the fact that Grant is a veteran and has shown he can produce at a high level in this league. You add all those things together and you have no reason to believe that come opening day Grant will not be on the field.

## Roberto's Fin Fridays

Written by Roberto Yanes  
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The signing of Douglas and Grant are great in my opinion. While it may seem that the Fins took a step back, I actually believed they have improved their defensive line. They have added to two very solid veterans to their D-line who bring depth, experience and have proven they can produce. Both players combine for 858 tackles, 67.5 sacks, one interception, and 24 forced fumbles. If Grant and Douglas can perform anywhere close to how they did last year for their former teams, the Fins have found themselves two key additions late in the offseason. Add Starks, Langford, Odrick and Soliai in to the mix and Dolphins D-line could be darn nasty this season.

*Roberto Yanes has been a member of FinHeaven for six years and goes by the name FinAtic8480 on our forums. He lives in Miami and has been a hardcore Dolphins fan for over 10 years.*

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