

COMMENTARY: HENNE IS IT FAIR?

Written by Matt Kent
Monday, 08 August 2011 11:26

WHO'S TO BLAME?

He has been booed by fans but backed by his team

Is the Miami QB getting a fair shake?

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The Boos in Miami are not really about Henne they are about frustrated fans

In Miami these days it is not easy being a Dolphin fan. Last week I was watching ESPN's Mike and Mike and Mike Green was on with Skip Bayless who was filling in for Mike Golic. They spent a segment of the show talking about Chad Henne and the treatment he was getting from the fans. They talked about how the team is in such a poor state and that the fans are mad. As most of us know by now Chad Henne had a poor outing during a night scrimmage and the fans voiced their displeasure by not only booing, but also chanting "We want Orton". This prompted Coach Sparano to say it "makes me sick" when asked about the fans reaction, and also Henne to confess that it hurts. Then this past Saturday the team scrimmages and Henne is lighting it up and playing much better leaving the same fans cheering. So this prompts the question, has this been fair to Chad Henne? Has he gotten the full benefit of the doubt and how much of it is his fault?

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Actually I can make a strong case for both sides of this debate. On one side I can say that Chad Henne has been put in a situation where the offensive line has never been a consistent or solid unit during his time. Along with that the running game has also been inconsistent and not really able to dominate a game in a way that it takes the pressure of a young quarterback. The management and team has really not done a good job of putting great talent around Chad Henne the way that the Jets have put great talent around Mark Sanchez in New York. Sanchez has had some horrible games but the rest of the team has been able to recover it for him. So it seems that Chad Henne has been asked to make things happen without really the right tools to do it. But that is only one side of the story.

On the other side of this debate is that actually Chad Henne has not looked comfortable as a starter. He has looked confused as to where to go with the ball, passes are late, and the open man often finds the ball sailing over his head or in the dirt at his feet. Henne is constantly checking down and really has not made the throws he needed and the team needed when the plays were there. This leaves a leadership void. He like the rest of the team has been widely inconsistent in his own execution of his duties. So I can say that if he had made those throws, and been consistent, the pressure would not be so great and he has earned the criticism he gets.

But in the end, I actually blame the management of the Miami Dolphins. Yes and specifically Jeff Ireland, Wayne Huizenga, Bill Parcells and now Stephen Ross. The problem here is that the fans have had it with this team. Henne is just the recipient of years of frustration over blown drafts, poor free agency, and bad decisions by this team when it comes to delivering a competitive NFL product. It has been drafts bringing the likes of John Avery, Eddie Moore, and Ted Ginn and passing on the Drew Brees, Anquan Boldin, Randy Moss, Matt Ryan type players that are out there. It makes it worse when that everyone was spoiled with decades of high quality football. The Dolphins were in the division race every year, in the playoffs almost every year, and when they lost star players they reinvented their whole identity a couple times over and just kept on winning. It was an awesome thirty or so years to be a fan of the Miami Dolphins. Then when the legendary Don Shula retired it started to wobble and when Jimmy Johnson left the wheels came off and have been off every since. But what REALLY burns us Dolphins fans is that on top of that we then had to watch New England Patriots build a dynasty and no matter who comes and goes they just seem to be able to do it over and over again. Everyone was sure when Charlie Weiss and Romeo Crennel left it would be the end. When Mike Vrabel left and Teddy Bruschi left it was all over. Yet they keep plugging in players and seem to have a way of signing the best free agents on the market, and roll into every draft with two or three first round picks. How do they do that? The Jets have caught on to a formula and not only have put together a Super Bowl contending team, but also now seem to be the destiny of choice for star players looking for a new home. But they made the moves they HAD to make. They needed a QB so they moved up in the draft and got one of the best rated QB there was. When they needed Wide Receivers they went and got Braylon Edwards and Santonio Holmes last year. Need a running back? How about they pick up Ladainian Tomlinson. This year need

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another Wide Receiver? How about Plaxico Burress? And those Patriots they needed a Wide Receiver and all they did was sign Randy Moss who set NFL records with them, and this year they sign Albert Haynesworth and Chad Ochocinco. Oh yeah and they drafted Ryan Mallet. And the Miami Dolphins seem content to take no risk, make no big moves, and do nothing to change its fortunes. Why can this team not pull the trigger on playmakers? At least go down swinging and try and make this thing better. Oh and by the way, before the nay sayers criticize the Haynesworth and Ochocinco moves, just a reminder that no one thought that Moss was a good move for New England and that Braylon Edwards was a good move, or that Sanchez was a good pick. But they were good moves and they were moves that allowed those teams to contend and get better and get closer to the Super Bowl which makes other players want to come and be a part of. Winning breeds winning.

So the fans have had it and now it is getting rubbed in their faces when they turn on their TV and the talking heads of sports are now mocking the team they love. And the fans of our most hated rivals can gloat and strut and we have nothing to defend ourselves with. Its has been embarrassing starting with "Harbaugh Gate" where the team let it out that they were recruiting a replacement coach, only to fail, only then to prop Tony Sparano up in front of the cameras in a sham of a love fest that frankly, he didn't even look like he believed. Then there was the whole draft. Players like Ryan Mallet, Mark Ingram were on the board and we passed for yet another offensive lineman. That was followed by the whole Kyle Orton fiasco when much like Sparano, Henne is propped up in front of the media with the label of this is "our guy" when it was known by every person on the planet that the Miami was not happy with its quarterback play and that they wanted Kyle Orton instead. So this now the once proud franchise has become an embarrassment. And people are sick of it. They have survived Wannsteadt and Fiedler, Ray Lucas, Cam Cameron and Ted Ginn & his family, the gimmick of the Wildcat in replace of a real offense, the drafting of Pat White and John Beck, a 1-15 season, losing season after losing season, a local icon in Jason Taylor run out of town and then invited back, and more bad personnel moves that are so bad that the fans know they are bad and the "Experts" who run this team don't.

So when you hear the fans getting angry, booing, and it makes coaches "Sick" and players "hurt" just remember that they are booing this team at the top. They are letting you know that its not that they do not like Chad Henne, its that they do not like that they are losing the Super Bowl before the season even starts because they know the team is counting on a miracle to happen. That their aspirations are pinned to a hope that some diamond in the rough will surface and save the team from more embarrassment and more losing seasons. They are saying to you Stephen Ross and to you Jeff Ireland enough is enough and we are showing a vote of no confidence in the direction of this team. Times are hard and money is tight and they give more than they can afford every year and they deserve better.

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