

Dolphins Gameplan: Keep Tannehill alive.....

Written by PhinNation

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The Miami Dolphins loss last week at home put their season on the brink. After losing 4 of their last 5, the Dolphins are as close to earning a top 10 pick in the draft, as they are to making the playoffs. If the Dolphins can pull off an upset on Sunday and a few other things happen, we might be able to entertain the possibility. But, the Dolphins' task at hand is a very large, physical, and stingy one. The San Francisco 49ers are currently the #2 seed in the NFC, have an exciting young QB at the helm, and have the stingiest defense in the entire NFL. Considering the Dolphins troubles on offense recently, it's going to take a near-perfect game from the Dolphins to pull this one out.



Photo Courtesy of Dolphins.com

To make matters worse, the 49ers are not exactly going to be happy this week after losing last week to the St. Louis Rams in overtime. So if you were hoping this might be a trap game for the 49ers, the Rams ruined that hope. The 49ers want to hold onto the #2 seed so that they can claim a bye in the first week of the playoffs. The Giants and Packers are closing in on them, so they need this game. The Dolphins will certainly get their best effort on Sunday. So what do the Dolphins have to do to have a chance? Here's our gameplan, which doesn't include praying this week....but that doesn't mean it won't help!

Keep Tannehill Alive

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Out of all of the weeks this season for the Dolphins to lose starting LT Jake Long, this might have been the worst possible scenario. The Dolphins have practiced with rookie Jonathan Martin at left tackle and veteran utility man Nate Garner at right tackle. Martin should feel comfortable on the left side, since he played there in college and protected Andrew Luck's blind side. Well, he'll feel comfortable until the game starts and he has to somehow block Aldon Smith. Aldon Smith, for those of you that haven't heard, has 17.5 sacks through 12 games this season. He had 5.5 sacks in just one game. HE can destroy the Dolphins' offensive gameplan single handedly.....and he's probably eager to get his shot to take on a rookie LT and a backup RT.

The key for the Dolphins will be to keep Tannehill from getting killed. I say that figuratively, but they need to give the kid enough time to find an open receiver and deliver the football without a defender in his face. I think the Dolphins coaches realize what a challenge this is going to be. So, I expect them to adjust their playcalling accordingly. Use more 3 step drops and get rid of the ball quickly....Call some screens and draw plays to slow down the pass rushers and keep them off balance.

If Martin can rise to the challenge against Aldon Smith, it should give the confidence to play well for the rest of the season. If Martin can show that he could be the long term answer at left tackle, it could help the Dolphins make their decision regarding Jake Long this offseason. However, if Martin struggles for the next 4 games, it could go the other way. What no one wants to think about is what would happen if Garner or Martin got hurt? The Dolphins offensive line is not deep whatsoever, so keeping these guys healthy is crucial for the remainder of the season.

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