

Phillip Livas a hidden gem?

Written by Josh Evans
Saturday, 13 August 2011 15:45

LIVAS MAKES STRONG FIRST IMPRESSION



When the discussion came to talking about who would be the Dolphins punt and kick returners this upcoming season, the popular names were Reggie Bush, Davone Bess, Clyde Gates and Kory Sheets. Perhaps the main returner for the Dolphins this upcoming season might not have even been on people's minds, until last night.

Undrafted rookie Phillip Livas, from Louisiana Tech, took the field Friday night and made an instant impact and gave the Dolphins' coaching staff something to think about moving forward

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during the preseason. The 5'-7", 179 pound rookie returned 3 kickoffs for 84 yards and 3 punts for 90 yards, which included a 75 yard punt return for a touchdown that sealed the Dolphins 28-23 victory over the Atlanta Falcons. It was the first punt return for a touchdown by a Dolphins player since 2007 when Ted Ginn Jr scored on an 85 yard return against the Eagles in Philadelphia.

Yes it is preseason and this was the first game, but what Livas did on the field Friday night has to be very encouraging to the Dolphins coaching staff. At this very moment, Livas is still considered a long shot for the 53 man roster, but if he plays as well the next three preseason games as he did last night, there is no doubt he will likely make the team. The Dolphins would likely have to make a tough decision at wide receiver and perhaps keep up to six receivers on the roster to fit Livas in. Brandon Marshall, Davone Bess, Brian Hartline and Clyde Gates are locks to make the final roster. Roberto Wallace appears to have control of the 5th receiver spot at the moment over Marlon Moore. Livas probably wouldn't have much impact in the passing game, but his ability on special teams might be too much to pass up when it comes down to final cuts. If Livas was the full time returner, it would allow players like Bush, Bess and Gates to concentrate on being just offensive players.

Livas does have his college career to back up the hype of being a return specialist. In four seasons with the Bulldogs, Livas returned a total of 8 kicks and punts for touchdowns, which tied the all-time NCAA record. He also owns the school record for kick return yards in a career with 2,758 yards.

Is Livas just a one game wonder, or is he potentially another hidden gem found by GM Jeff Ireland? The rest of training camp and preseason will be telling, but Livas is certainly off to a good start.

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