

Another non-winning season for the Dolphins after falling to 49ers 27-13

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The Miami Dolphins took the field on Sunday and were hoping to pick up more than just a morale victory. Unfortunately, the Dolphins were unable to do so and fell to 5-8 on the season, essentially eliminating them from playoff contention. The loss also means that the Dolphins will post a 4th straight season at or below .500 after winning the AFC East in 2008. And getting to .500 would require them winning their next 3 games....this, after losing 5 of their last 6.



Photo Courtesy of Dolphins.com

Give the Dolphins credit, they played hard and definitely put a scare into the 49ers through most of the game. Heck, they only trailed 6-3 at halftime. But, the 49ers eventually played like the 49ers and the Dolphins again showed that they lack the playmakers to win games against good teams. A crucial fumble by Marcus Thigpen in the 3rd quarter proved to be the turning point in the game, as it set the 49ers up inside the Dolphins red zone and allowed them to stretch their lead to 13-3. The Dolphins aren't built to come back from 10 point leads, especially against excellent defenses, like the one the 49ers have. The teams exchanged scores, but the 49ers sealed the deal on a 50 yard run by quarterback Colin Kaepernick to make it 27-13.

What I liked

Ryan Tannehill – Tannehill's stats weren't great, as he only posted a quarterback rating of 74.1 for the game. But, he's starting to use his legs to pick up yardage and first downs. He looked very good in the first half, despite not getting much help. The 4th quarter drives where we saw incompleteness after incompleteness cannot all be pinned on him. His receivers, simply, weren't open. Tannehill finished the day going 17 of 33 for 150 yards and 1 TD. He did not turn the ball over, which is progress, especially against a very good 49ers defense.

It is almost impossible to evaluate Tannehill this season, because the team around him lacks talent. Some people point to the Dolphins ineffectiveness in the red zone as something Tannehill must improve on. I admit, he does need to continue to get better in that area. BUT, look at the Dolphins first scoring drive and you'll see what I mean. The Dolphins have the ball, first and goal at the 7. False start....False start. Now it's first and goal from the 17. After a couple of plays, including a sack that saw Jonathan Martin get, literally, run over, the Dolphins were forced to kick a field goal. Is that lack of red zone execution Tannehill's fault? No. Yet his stats will show that he failed to convert that drive into a touchdown.

Dolphins Offensive Line – It's sad that I have to put this in as a like, but the truth is that the 49ers and Aldon Smith, only sacked Tannehill twice in the game. Considering how good their defense is, that is a lot better than I expected. Jonathan Martin struggled in the first half, but did better in the second half against the best pass rusher in football this season. This was a tough spot for Martin to make his first start and all things considered, it could have been worse.

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