



# Must turn things up a notch

The loss to New England was disappointing, but there's a lot of football left to be played

Well, the Patriots have won one and we've won one. It looks like we've got a little rivalry now.

I told the team after the game that we can still get to where we want to be at the end of the season. There is a lot of football left to be played. We just have to regroup a little and get going.

It is important this time of year to turn your game up a notch. I know we expect the best from our players every week, but you can reach down and get a little bit more at this point in the season. Good teams play their best in late November and December and that's what we're striving for.

We can turn it up on a notch in several areas. We can improve our special teams. We can be more consistent on third downs. We can force more turnovers. These are three crucial areas for us.

This is also the time of year when veteran leadership is most important. There is a danger of looking too far ahead or thinking about things that aren't reachable. It's important for the veterans to keep the other guys grounded this time of year.

One danger a team like ours can get into is thinking too much about the big picture. By that I mean what's happening on the scoreboard and where we are in the standings. That's not good. I'm not naïve enough to know that they don't look at who played on a Thursday night and what's happening around the league.

I stressed all week heading into the New England

Jason Allen's deflection on a pass intended for Randy Moss in the New England game resulted in an interception for safety Renaldo Hill.

Photo/DOUG BENC/Getty Images



game that this was a big game because we put ourselves in position to have a big game. If we had only won three games up until then, this wouldn't have been a big game.

The message to the players was to stay focused on the things that got us into this position. I stressed to them to be a disciplined football team, to not turn the ball over and to avoid minus plays. Well, we did some things that young, immature teams do and we have to learn from that. Our defense didn't get off the field on third down and that needs improve as well.

As we face each AFC East team a second time, it's important not to show people the same looks. That was one of our goals against the Patriots. We're not trying to

## Send Questions to Coach Sparano

From time to time, Dolphins coach Tony Sparano will be responding to your questions.

You can send us your questions for Coach Sparano one of three ways:

1. E-mail to [digest@curtispub.net](mailto:digest@curtispub.net)
2. Fax to 305-477-1346
3. Mail to P.O. Box 526600, Miami, FL 33152

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