



Loss actually might be good

Getting blown out by the Patriots was a learning lesson that could benefit the Dolphins in the long run

The Dolphins came into this game with all the momentum. They had won four games in a row, many of them in dramatic fashion, but I felt this was the next test for the Dolphins. This had the feeling of a play-off game — a young team in Miami that you didn't know if they could pass the test going up against a team that was battle-tested that had won many games like this in the New England Patriots.

I was also concerned that Bill Belichick had an extra three or four days to prepare for this game. He obviously went back and studied the tape of the Arizona and Houston games and he thought there was a vulnerability in the Dolphins secondary and he was going to exploit it and did that in a huge way.

We couldn't cover Randy Moss. He was a man among boys out there. Wes Welker looked like he was looking for revenge, and he got it. Kevin Faulk kind of got lost in the storyline but he had a big day against us and then there was Matt Cassel. The growth in that guy from the guy the Dolphins played against the first time two months ago to now where he threw for over 400 yards was striking. He was magnificent and the 48 points up on the board says it all.

And while it was great for the Dolphins to put up some big offensive numbers, it was not the kind of game they wanted to get into with a team like New England where it's "we score, they score." We don't have the arsenal or firepower the Patriots have with Moss and Welker and were never going to trade them touchdown for touchdown.

Coming into this game, I thought the Patriots were battle-tested. You look at the cast of characters that have been in a million games like this, big games where the



The Dolphins had problems with Randy Moss all day, and this 8-yard touchdown late in the second quarter was just one example.

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And I think it was a reminder that while it's one thing to learn how to win games like this, the other thing that came into clear focus is that this team needs more firepower. It's lacking in some areas. You know, you put their (Patriots) guys on a scale in certain areas, playmaking ability and it represents where we need to get to. Who am I talking about? I'm talking about a Randy Moss, a Wes Welker, a Kevin Faulk, guys who are very talented and have done it in important moments in big games.

Looking ahead? I would caution anybody to not fall into the trap of saying, "Oh, St. Louis, that's a W, we're going to go to Kansas City, that's a W." This team is not there yet. It's going to be a scrap, it's going to be fourth-quarter battles and they're going to win some and going to lose some. This team still is a work in progress and they're just not talented, nor are they good enough just to whatever because they're playing some 2-8 teams or whatever that they're going to roll 'em.

By no means is this thing done. Hell no. The Dolphins are 6-5 and I was thinking about this coming in here. In 1970, it was Don Shula's first year here and my first year in the league. We bounced along and were 4-4 after eight games and all of a sudden we got a hot set of dice and took it right off the sheet, winning our last six games, and made the playoffs. And I think there might be some parallels between this team and the whole remake that Don Shula was trying to go through in 1970 and, ya know, can they get a hot set of dice? Could it happen? Hell yeah and it starts with St. Louis next Sunday.

stakes are high, and I thought that's what this game brought and the Dolphins weren't ready for it. This is a young team where you wondered, could they handle prosperity, which they did in winning some close games the last few weeks? Then you wonder, can you win a playoff atmosphere kind of game? You have to learn how to do that and sometimes the learning comes in getting your ass kicked. And, make no mistake about it, the Dolphins got their asses kicked. It's a bitter, sour feeling in this locker room, but for a young healthy team, as crazy as it sounds, it's something you have to go through and it actually might be good for this team.

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