When/Where: Sunday 1:00pm Cleveland, Ohio -Cleveland Browns Stadium

Opponent: Miami Dolphins **Current Spread:** Browns -2.5

Based on early weather reports Cleveland Browns Stadium could be a bit sloppy on Sunday when the Browns play host to QB Chad Henne and his Miami Dolphins. If the current forecast holds true this match up on Sunday won't likely be determined through the air. Rather, this contest could very well turn into a mud-fest that would hinge on simply winning the line of scrimmage and holding onto the ball.

No matter what the weather has in store, the backdrops for the game will remain the same. The permanent disdain for all things Miami that most Clevelanders have adopted since "King" James' departure will have the crowd buzzing and the stadium rocking.

The game will also bring back 2010 Cleveland Browns offensive coordinator Brian Daboll back to town. In his first year with the Dolphins, Daboll holds the same title he held in Cleveland and will lead the Dolphin's offense of Sunday. So if the offense brings a familiar feel you will know why.

Let's get into the game breakdown.

Miami Season Snapshot

Miami has started the season 0-2 but they are far from a bad football team. They faced Tom Brady and the Patriots in week 1 and the up and coming Houston Texans in week 2. Even though they fell short in both games, they were in each and they just didn't make enough plays at the end. Starting off the season with two losses against teams who are expected to be in the playoffs and who have started the year a combined 4-0 is not something that should cause people to write them off. They have good talent and still have the opportunity to have a good season.

Expectations on Game Day

Offense- As I said earlier, the Dolphins offense is coached by Brian Daboll who last year at this time was calling plays for the Cleveland Browns. Coaches tweak a little here and there in order to fit their personnel but in general you will see a lot of the same formations and plays that he

used in Cleveland. Coach Daboll will show various packages and use multiple formation shifts in an effort to create favorable match ups and also to get the defense to show coverage.

Some examples of formations I have seen them use so far this season include your typical pro set formation, a 3WR formation with a TE, no FB and vice versa. They'll also utilize an unbalanced line, they bring in extra offensive tackles on one formation and I have also seen them go to an empty backfield formation flexing the RB out as a WR.

They use a lot of different formations to run the ball while using two different RBs. Most football fans know Reggie Bush and they use Bush in various roles. Bush is a RB who is more productive catching the ball than running it but he will be do both and his explosiveness always makes him a threat.

In week 2 the Dolphins started using rookie Daniel Thomas to run the ball because he is fully healthy and is a better pure RB that has both size (6-1 228lbs) and speed. Due to the fact that Thomas was doing really well (18 carries 107 yards), the Dolphins basically failed to get Reggie Bush in the flow of the game and stuck with the hot hand.

Expect coach Daboll to find a way this week to get both players adequate touches. Bush is too explosive of a player to keep the ball out of his hands. The Dolphins should come to Cleveland with a better understanding of how to get both RBs the ball after suffering through some learning curves last week.

Up front expect the Dolphins to use a power man vs. man blocking scheme. They have a big, physical line that isn't shy about trying to impose their will. If the weather is sloppy expect the Dolphins to rely on their big line to get movement so they can pound the running game.

In the passing game the Dolphins have a big, strong armed QB in Henne and a very big, physical WR in Brandon Marshall.

Henne is a QB who can physically make any throw. The knock on Henne is that defenses can get him to force throws. He has a little bit of Derek Anderson in, him meaning at times he makes

really poor decisions on where to throw. That leads to interceptions and in previous years it has snowballed on him, creating turnovers in batches.

Consistency is something Henne struggles with throughout a game. He can look good for a while then turn around and throw picks on back to back series. So far this year he has been better at controlling the damage. He has only thrown one pick in each game and in previous years he would tend to throw them in bunches.

Running for first downs is an aspect of his game that has helped his team keep drives alive and wear defenses down by keeping them on the field. The Browns need to be aware of his scrambling, especially when they are in man coverage, because he has shown he will tuck it and run to move the chains.

In the early part of the season WR Brandon Marshall has been special. He is 100% healthy to start a season for the first time in years and looks like the physical specimen that earned him his respect around the league. He has already caught 13 balls for 218 yards and 5 of those catches have gone for 20 plus yards.

Marshall uses his 6-4, 230lb frame to pin DBs and get up after high balls and he is a physical runner after he catches it. The Browns DBs need to not only be conscience of Marshall in coverage but they need to make sure they get him to the ground once he gets it or else he will have another 200 yard game as he’s done in the past.

The other WRs are Ohio State graduate Brian Hartline, who is the starter opposite Marshall and who has gotten off to a respectable 83 yard, 1TD start and the savvy slot WR Davone Bess who is actually second on the team so far with 134 yards. When talking about the passing game you have to be sure to remember Reggie Bush who has more yards receiving than rushing at this point in the season. Bush will catch balls both from the standard RB alignments as well as being flexed out and lining up as a WR. Be on the lookout when he is in the game.

The Dolphins as a unit have passed the ball almost twice as much as they have run it but I actually expect them to try and be balanced on Sunday. This is their first game of the season on the road and I am sure they will try and eat up some clock and create an edge in time of possession. Weather once again will be factor on their run-to-pass ratio.

Defense- The Miami Dolphins have one of the most respected defensive coordinators in the game on their sideline in Mike Nolan. Nolan's defense was ranked 6th in the league a year ago and he returns almost all of his starters in 2011. They have been bitten by the dangerous Tom Brady in game one and a slow start by their offense in week 2 but they are a big physical group and can get after the QB.

The Dolphins play a base 3-4 scheme with a two gap front. The DLs are big and powerful so running on them can be difficult. They have two good, young outside LBs with Cameron Wake being the better of the two. Wake has a sack in each of the first two games and he can pile up sacks in a hurry. On third down or clear passing situations the Dolphins bring in the current, active NFL sack leader Jason Taylor to provide additional pass rush. In this situational role Taylor has gotten off to a good start in 2011 registering a sack in limited playing time.

The secondary is young, aggressive and they excel in man coverage. Therefore the Dolphins don't have a problem blitzing you on any play. The defense as a whole brings multiple blitz packages and relies on their young CBs to hold up in man coverage.

Don't let the fact that they only have 4 sacks on the year fool you. In week one the Dolphins played Tom Brady and blitzing him and his spread sets pose a real challenge. In week 2 they did a much better job of getting pressure on Matt Schaub, getting 8 QB hits and 3 of their 4 sacks.

You can expect a strong physical defense on Sunday that will have the same mentality most teams will take against the Browns this season. The Dolphins will try to smother the run game so the Browns become predictable. They will blitz Colt McCoy all day and make the second year QB beat them. If Colt starts showing them that he can handle the pressure and is getting the ball to his "hot" reads then the Dolphins will start dropping 7 and playing the coverage game.

I think with Brian Daboll coaching Colt McCoy last year, Mike Nolan will have pretty good idea of how to bother the young QB, so look for an aggressive plan to attack McCoy.

Browns Season Snapshot

The Cleveland Browns evened their record at 1-1 with a win on the road in Indianapolis last week. The young Browns continued sound play on defense and found a way to score points early and that allowed them to play with the lead. First year Head Coach Pat Shurmur did a good job of making some adjustments on offense with the integration of screen passes, and he made an adjustment on defense by swapping the DEs side to side.

The Browns committed a lot of penalties and 'young' mistakes in week 1 and they seemed to correct many of those on the road in week 2. Here are some things you may see from them in week 3:

Expectations on Game Day

Defense- The Browns will continue to deploy their base 4-3 defense in week 3. In weeks one and two the Browns played a solid, physical, and aggressive base defense without a lot of bells and whistles. I expect them to do the same this week.

One key to watch for on Sunday is how the Browns defense reacts to Reggie Bush. When Bush is in the game take note of what the defense does when he goes in motion and when he lines up as a WR.

Based on the damage Bush can do I am expecting to see a safety on Bush in the sets where coverage is needed. If the Browns are playing zone they may not pay too much extra attention to him when he is flexed, but if he motions out of the backfield expect either a LB to walk out with him or a safety to drop down on him. This decision will go a long way in determining how much of an effect Bush will have on the game. I think T.J. Ward in particular can do a good job of neutralizing him as much as possible, but if a LB is going to be relied upon it could be a big day for Bush catching passes out of the backfield.

I believe the Browns will pay special attention to both Bush and Brandon Marshall and make other players make plays. If the Browns are successful at that then expect the defense to have an effective day. If not it could be a big stat day for either guy.

Offense- The weather will play a big role on Sunday on how the Browns offense chooses to attack the 3-4 defense of the Dolphins, which will be their first look at a 3 man front this season. If the weather permits, we might see the first instance of Colt McCoy running multiple spread sets which we seemed to see a lot during preseason.

In week 1 Tom Brady torched the Dolphins by going into spread formations which spread their 3-4 out and changed the Dolphins defensive personnel packages by adding DBs and subbing out LBs and DL players. This slowed down the blitz packages and therefore slowed the pass rush.

Colt is no Tom Brady but the same tactics have been used of late to spread out teams who use the attacking 3-4 defense. That causes those defenses to lose the unpredictability that makes playing against them so tough. You don't have to spread and throw deep so I am really onboard with that philosophy. If Colt can spread them out and throw short accurate passes it will definitely slow the rush down.

The Browns may not choose to go the spread route and the weather may not even permit it, but Tom Brady and his 517 yards proved that it is a viable option.

Regardless of what formations they use expect McCoy and the Browns coaching staff to continue the trend they started in week 2 by using the short passing game to get Josh Cribbs and Greg Little involved early.

The TEs should also be a factor in the passing game. The Patriots TEs caught a combined 13 balls for 189 yards and 2 TDs. The Texans TEs also accounted for a TD in week 2. Watson and Moore should continue to be key targets.

In the running game this may be the week that Hillis finds his groove. The Dolphins seem like a good team to run those pulling guard power plays that I saw the Browns run last week against the Colts.

The key to being able to get the guards free will be controlling the nose tackle, but if that can be done, this is the week we see Hillis's yards per carry go over 4 like it was in most games last year.

This week the line should be battling big-on-big and not dealing with small quicker players like the Colts had. The penetration that the Colts produced seemed to create clusters in the backfield. The bigger DL of the Dolphins will be harder to move but should be a bit easier to get to when the guards pull and create more space for Hillis to read and cut.

Other things of interest in the running game will be watching Josh Cribbs and Greg Little blocking down on the OLBs of the Dolphins. Look for the two WRs to use motion across the field and then come back with a few crack-backs trying to enable Hillis to get to the edge on some outside runs. It is always exciting watching the tough WRs ear hole LBs in the run game.

One more issue that will be paramount in the run game is ball security. We all know Peyton Hillis has a history of putting the ball on the ground and if the weather is an issue it will be even harder to hold onto the football. The Browns must do their best to secure the ball and not turn it over.

I am interested to see how the offense steps up to the physicality of the Dolphins defense this week. I think these Dolphins are the toughest and most physical defense that the Browns have faced so far this year. It should provide a quick glimpse of how this offense will respond to the bullies on our block in the AFC North. Will we choose a power against power approach or do we have the skill to dissect them? We'll see on Sunday.

Key Matchups

C Alex Mack vs. NT Paul Soliai- I know it is hard not to follow the ball when watching a live broadcast of a football game but if you can find time on a couple of plays, tune your eyes on the battle that will happen in the middle of the line of scrimmage this week.

This match up between Soliai of the Dolphins and the Browns center Alex Mack should be a

sight to see. Mack has turned into one the best centers in league and Soliai is having a great start to the 2011 season. The winner of this battle will go a long way in determining the effectiveness of the Browns offense and the Dolphins defense.

LDE Jabaal Sheard vs. RT Marco Colombo- If the Browns are going to rattle Chad Henne they will need pressure from their front 4. Jake Long, the LT, should do a good job of taking the Browns RDE Jayme Mitchell out of the game and so the outside push will rely on Sheard getting by Colombo which can be done. Watching the Dolphins game against the Texans, I saw Columbo break down a few times and I expect the rookie Sheard to have some success in this match up.

WR Brandon Marshall vs. CBs Joe Haden/Sheldon Brown- It is pretty clear so far this year the Browns don't have any intentions of shadowing any one WR with CB Joe Haden so containing Marshall will be on both CBs' shoulders. In order for the Browns to win this game they can't afford big plays over the top of the defense by Marshall, so Haden and Brown MUST keep Marshall in front of them and make tackles.

In coverage Haden will hold his own as long as he remains calm and focused. Even though Haden is only 5-11, his 32 ¾ arm length helps him out when covering bigger WRs. Brown needs to hold up and use his incredible knack for popping balls out to contain Marshall.

Guards Jason Pinkston/Shawn Lauvao vs. Carlos Dansby- In order for the Browns to move the ball on the ground, the guards will have to do an effective job of getting to the second level of the Dolphins defense and blocking Dansby.

Dansby is a big LB with speed so he can give guards nightmares with that combination of attributes. He also will shoot creases in the blocking scheme and basically track down running plays from the backside before they even get started when teams are trying to run outside. The Browns need to account for him on every running play.

T.J. Ward vs. Reggie Bush- Ward has the athleticism to make tackles in the open field against Bush and this will be a key factor in containing the explosive player. If Ward's caught over-pursuing and whiffs on tackles the Browns defense will pay in a big way. Getting Bush on the ground and keeping him from making big plays will be a huge factor in the defense getting

off of the field on third downs.

Browns RT vs. Cameron Wake- Colt McCoy can't be running for his life on Sunday and I trust in Joe Thomas to do his part on the left side, so whoever plays RT for the Browns needs to contain Cameron Wake. If Wake is in our backfield all day the Browns won't be able to have any type of effective offense. The musical RT position will continue on Sunday because Tony Pashos is back at practice but who knows who will actually play.

This match up will be key to the confidence of QB Colt McCoy. If he starts hearing footsteps he is likely to get happy feet and not make it through his progressions, and that will not be good.

Demetri Patterson vs. Davone Bess- Bess in one of the best slot WRs in the game and is more explosive than most. He is second on the team in yards receiving and the targets should continue this game.

So far this year Demetri Patterson has been an unsung hero in the Browns defense. Check back in the mental files from game 1 or 2 and tell me if you remember even hearing the names Jordan Shipley or Austin Collie? Patterson has done a GREAT job of shutting down slot WRs in the first two contests. If he can do it with Bess it will have a similar effect of shutting down Reggie Bush on third down and will get the defense off of the field. Patterson is proving to be an excellent pick up by Tom Heckert.

Prediction

I know some say it is a cliché, but the Dolphins are not your typical 0-2 team. They really pose a challenge the Browns have yet to face when you look at that big physical defense. And if the weather is wet and sloppy and the field shrinks, I really do think we may have trouble dealing with the Dolphins. You don't necessarily think imposing when you hear the words South Beach but this team can be imposing and, make no mistake…. they will be physical.

I think the overall size of the Dolphins including the offensive line will be key in this bad weather contest and a win last week against a Kerry Collins led Colts doesn't soothe my soul to the point

I think the Browns are the automatic pick.

With all that being said, in the end I am picking the Browns to win a close game on Sunday. I am not picking them because the Browns will win in the trenches or even play a lot better than the Dolphins… I am picking the Browns to win for one reason….. Special Teams!

I know I don't have a special teams section in the preview which is something I will consider in the future, but if the weather is a factor then scoring points will be difficult. That means the longest standing Brown, "Bad Weather" Phil Dawson, will be the difference in this game along with Josh Cribbs and the punt return team.

Bad weather will make it harder to kick away from Cribbs and if you put the ball in his hands enough he will inevitably make a big play. I have also seen Phil Dawson make 45 yard FGs in blizzards so I have no question in my mind he will be better on Sunday than Dan Carpenter, who by the way, had a kick blocked in week 2.

As I finish up I want to leave one final message for the Madden cover man….Peyton squeeze the damn pill! Your ball security almost single handedly made me pick the Dolphins in a sloppy game this week. If you don't find an answer to your fumbling you will start losing the coaches' faith….. Get a grip on it...literally.

In closing, I undersand that I am 0-2 so far in the pick department so what the hell do I know….but for all the Browns fans sake, I hope I get my first win on Sunday and the Browns get their second…Enjoy the game and …Go Browns!

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