

The Miami Herald

November 13, 2013

Circulation: 164,332 / UMV: 1,186,691

SPORTS

MIAMI HERALD WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2013 | 1101 S.W. 10TH ST. | MIAMI, FL 33135 | www.miamiherald.com

Johnson, Knaus are a duo difficult to derail

By Adam H. Beasley

MIAMI — The Miami Dolphins' offensive line is a duo of two players who are difficult to derail. They are the offensive line, and they are the offensive line.

Heat blows out Bucks

By Adam H. Beasley

MIAMI — The Miami Heat's offense, James Harden to pass the ball out of a double-team defense.

Beckham searching for a suitable site

By Adam H. Beasley

MIAMI — David Beckham and a possible partner will be looking for a suitable site for a new stadium in Miami.



MIAMI — James Harden is seen in action during a game against the Milwaukee Bucks at American Airlines Arena.

DOLPHINS Fans voice disgust over team

■ From letting their season tickets go unused to paying for a banner calling for Jeff Ireland's job, Dolfan disfavor is at its peak.

BY ADAM H. BEASLEY
abeasley@miamiherald.com

Has there ever been a worse time to be a Dolphins fan?

No, insist many of the heartiest Dolphins diehards. It might be hyperbole, but right now, they feel worse than after the 62-7 playoff loss. Than after Don Shula was replaced. Than even after 1-15.

"It has really never been worse to be a Dolphins fan — not even close," said Miami-based publicist Tadd Schwartz, a longtime Dolphins backer. "The team used to be the pride of the city. Now we're the butt of all jokes. Literally — we're on late-night TV."

The past month has been embarrassment cascading on top of embarrassment. The bullying saga has depressed morale. But so have losses in five out of six games, capped by Monday night's defeat at the hands of the previously winless Buccaneers.

And Dolphins fans are, in near unanimity, disgusted.

Matt Infante is an ardent Dolphins fan with a wide following on Twitter. If he's not the official spokesman for Dolphin Nation, he's

Fan displeasure rampant

• DOLPHINS, FROM 1D

close.

On Tuesday, Infante changed his Twitter avatar to a picture of the Dolphins logo with a paper bag superimposed over the porpoise's head.

"Not sure if [Monday] night's loss was rock bottom. But this is the lowest this franchise has been since the Marino era," Infante said. "Only positive to come out of this will be the organizational cleansing that should come as a result."

As this point, that appears likely.

Team owner Stephen Ross late Monday promised changes to the organization, and if that means changes in personnel, general manager Jeff Ireland seems the most likely candidate to go.

Multiple sources in the extended Dolphins family believe Monday night's events — first Ross' lack of public support over the bullying scandal, and then the humiliating 22-19 loss to Tampa Bay — perhaps foreshadow Ireland's eventual exit.

However, it is unlikely that any major move will be made before Ted Wells finishes his review of the organization.

Dolphins CEO Tom Garfinkel, with the franchise for just a couple of months, has been thrust into a near-untenable situation. One of his top priorities: finding a way out of the current morass.

"I think we recognize that there's a lot of dedicated and passionate fans ... who are not satisfied by the results on the field," Garfinkel told the Miami Herald on Tuesday. "To be clear, no one has higher expectations for us than the owner, the front office, coaches and players. Steve Ross has routinely expressed his de-

BULLYING SCANDAL

Dolphins postpone meeting with Martin

BY ADAM H. BEASLEY
abeasley@miamiherald.com

The Dolphins have agreed to postpone their meeting with Jonathan Martin until after he speaks with NFL investigator Ted Wells, the team announced Tuesday.

Dolphins owner Stephen Ross had planned to meet with Martin on Wednesday.

"Ted Wells and the National Football League have asked that we delay our meeting with Jonathan Martin until they have the opportunity to meet with him first," Dolphins CEO Tom Garfinkel said. "Out of deference to the process, we will cooperate with their request. We look forward to meeting with Jonathan directly as soon as possible."

Martin's meeting with Wells, who is leading the inquiry into the Dolphins' bullying scandal, is scheduled for Friday, ESPN has reported.

On Monday, Ross spoke in sympathetic tones of Martin, who has accused his teammates of mental and emotional abuse. Ross said he has been in contact with the offensive lineman via text message.

Ross said he planned to sit down with Martin with an open mind. He characterized the trip to meet Martin in California as a fact-finding mission.

"There are so many things that are being said and everything like that; I'm not going to deal with speculation," Ross said. "I'm going to meet with Jonathan Martin, face to face and hear what he has to say and then I'll deal with it from there, if I can. So much has been said about a lot of different things — he said, she said and everything."

sire in being the best in class."

Added Garfinkel: "Our fans should know we're working to get better."

Many have already spoken with their wallets. Each of the past three Dolphins home games had a smaller crowd than the one that preceded it.

The Dolphins are so worried about the attendance for Sunday's game against the Chargers, they've reached out to season-ticket holders who skipped the previous game to encourage them to attend.

That's what happened to William Quigley, who identified himself as the owner

of six seats in Section 449 at Sun Life Stadium. Quigley, a 50-year-old landscaper from Davie, passed on the Bengals game, and told his account manager why.

"I explained I was not happy how the team was playing and didn't want to get home on Halloween and a work night and be aggravated with another loss," Quigley said. "I also offered the tickets to several customers and employees and no one wanted them."

The Dolphins sales employee then asked if he planned to attend the next game — and if not, what the team could do to change his

mind.

"Start winning and managing the team like a football team," Quigley responded.

This is no fair-weather fan. Quigley estimates he has spent \$50,000 in the past eight years on tickets, parking and merchandise. But unless the Dolphins make wholesale changes, he's dropping his season tickets in 2014.

Before he jumps ship, Quigley might want to catch Sunday's game against the Chargers, if for no other reason than it is bound to be a spectacle of angst.

Before the game, there will be a plane flying over Sun Life Stadium with a banner demanding Ireland's job.

It's a stunt organized by Roger Paul, who raised the necessary \$1,000 from similarly disaffected Dolphins fans last week. It only took him an hour to do so.

"Obviously, the banner itself is not going to elicit a response," Paul said. "It's a way for some of the fans to vent."

Adam Silverstein, a writer from Boynton Beach, has owned a season-ticket package since 2007. That's the year the Dolphins had the worst record in football, a preview of his hard times to come.

Like Paul, he has lost confidence in Ireland to find talent, and the only reason he doesn't sell his tickets is because he would take a huge loss.

Silverstein plans to save himself the money (and the heartache) in 2014 unless one of three things happens: 1. The Dolphins make the playoffs; 2. They win nine games; or 3. They fire Ireland and find a capable replacement.

"The fans are simply becoming more disillusioned with each passing day," Silverstein said.