

Marino's return dooms Bills

By STEVEN WINE
AP Sports Writer

MIAMI — With Dan Marino back in the lineup, the Miami Dolphins instead used their running game and defense to shake a slump and beat the Buffalo Bills.

Bernie Parmalee and Terry Kirby scored on acrobatic runs and Miami clamped down on Buffalo's injury-depleted offense for a 23-6 victory Sunday.

Miami, the preseason favorite in the AFC, broke a three-game losing streak and moved into a tie with the Bills and the Indianapolis Colts atop the AFC East. All three teams are 5-3.

"The urgency of winning was extremely important, but it should be like that every week," Marino said. "That's the lesson we've learned the past two

weeks." Marino missed both games with hip and knee injuries.

The victory was Miami's first over Buffalo at Joe Robbie Stadium since 1990.

"It's about time," Dolphins owner Wayne Huizenga said. "They won an important game that they needed to win to stay alive." Bills defensive end Bruce Smith said.

Miami's losing streak amid high expectations prompted criticism by fans and the media, much of it directed at Don Shula. The 65-year-old coach celebrated Parmalee's go-ahead touchdown in the third quarter with uncharacteristic animation, running along the sideline in celebration.

"I've been coaching a long time," Shula said. "Despite what some people have said the last

couple of weeks, I put everything into it. I work hard and do the best job I can do. Nothing I do is contrived. It's me. What you see is what you get."

Marino completed 20 of 35 passes for 232 yards with no touchdowns. His biggest plays against the AFC's best defense were a pair of handoffs. Parmalee scored on a 20-yard run in the third quarter to break a 6-6 tie, and Kirby added an 11-yard touchdown dash.

Both runners dived over a pylon to score.

Parmalee rushed for 83 yards and Kirby 60. Miami converted 10 of 18 third-down situations and had an advantage of nearly 13 minutes in time of possession.

The Dolphins' domination made their losses to Indianapolis, New Orleans and the New York

Jets that much more galling.

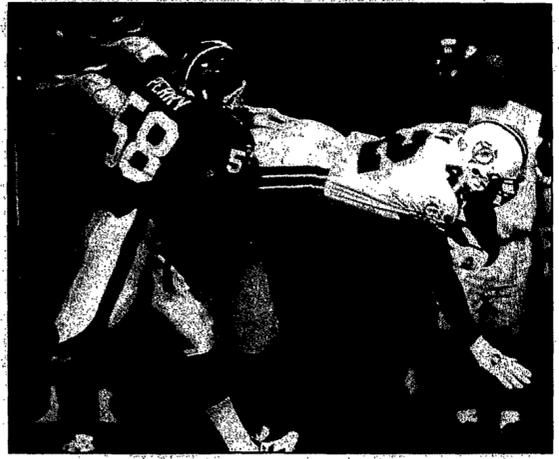
"This team should be 8-0," Marino said, "but that's in the past."

Buffalo assistant head coach Elijah Pitts fell to 0-2 filling in for head coach Marv Levy, who is recovering from surgery for prostate cancer.

"I feel bad for Marv," Pitts said. "I feel bad for me. I feel bad for the team."

With Thurman Thomas and Andre Reed sidelined by hamstring injuries, the Bills offense sputtered. Eight of their 11 possessions failed to produce a first down.

"We struggled. We missed those two guys," Pitts said. "We thought we could run the ball some on Miami. Nothing worked. We couldn't run it; we couldn't mix it up."



Miami's Terry Kirby (42) dives for the end zone as Buffalo's Marv Levy (5) tries to push him out of bounds.

Panthers make Pats third victim

HOWARD ULMAN
AP Sports Writer

FOXBORO, Mass. — You can still call the Carolina Panthers an expansion team if you want to. Just make sure you also call them winners. And history-makers.

The Panthers became the first expansionists to win three straight games, beating the New England Patriots 20-17 on John Kasay's 29-yard field goal at 7:08 of overtime Sunday. And they tied an NFL record for wins by an expansion team, already matched this season by Jacksonville.

Kasay nearly won the game in regulation, but his 39-yard field goal attempt hit the left post with four seconds to play.

The Panthers (3-5) got two touchdown passes from rookie Kerry Collins in a 17-point third quarter that gave them a 17-3 lead. But Curtis Martin's two short scoring runs in the fourth quarter, the second with 52 seconds left, sent the game into overtime.

Carolina got the ball first in overtime and punted. But the Patriots (2-6) couldn't move beyond their 10-yard line, forcing Pat O'Neill to punt from his end zone.

O'Neill, whose poor punts had given Carolina excellent field position on its three other scoring drives, kicked a 31-yard line drive. Eric Guliford's 9-yard return gave the Panthers the ball at the Patriots' 32.

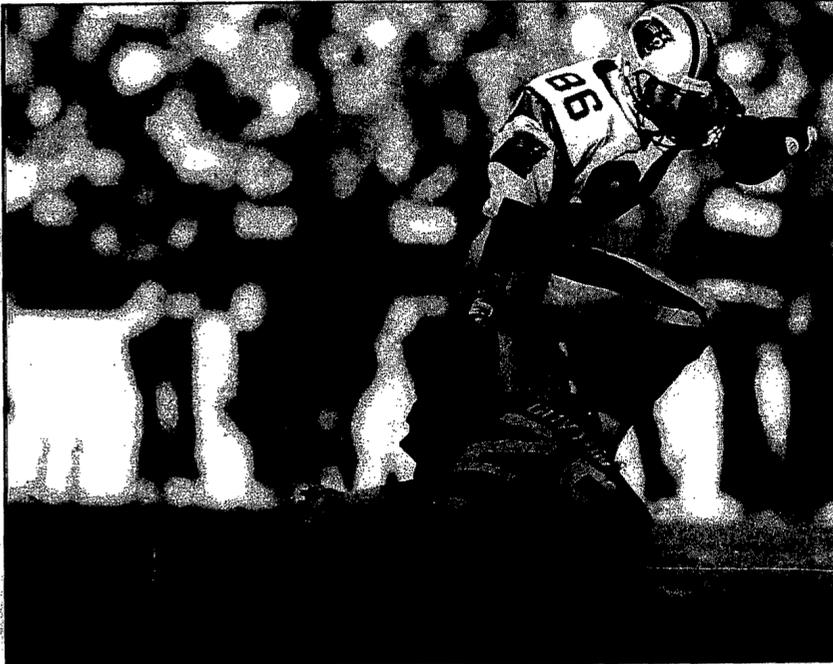
Derrick Moore carried four times, gaining 20 of his 119 yards and setting up Kasay's winning kick.

The Panthers, who used excellent defense to beat the New York Jets and New Orleans, played their most complete game of the year.

Collins, in just his fifth pro start, completed 25 of 44 passes for 309 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. Carolina had averaged just 261 total yards per game before Sunday.

Browns 29, Bengals 26

Zeier, a rookie replacing the benched Vinny Testaverde, completed 26 of 46 passes. He led Cleveland (4-4) on a 90-yard



Carolina wide receiver Willie Green dances through an attempted tackle by New England's Myron Guyton en route to a second-quarter touchdown.

drive that culminated in a 17-yard TD pass to Andre Rison. Earnest Byner's TD run with 2:51 left gave the Browns a 10-point lead.

Cowboys 28, Falcons 13
At Atlanta, Deion Sanders, who joined the Cowboys as a free agent after finishing his baseball season, had a quiet day at cornerback and caught one 6-yard pass at the Georgia Dome.

Saints 11, 49ers 7
At San Francisco, the Saints (2-6) took the lead on Mario Bates' 11-yard touchdown run and a 2-point pass when holder Tom Hodson passed to Wesley Walls. Their defense picked off two passes by Elvis Grbac, playing for the injured Young.

Cardinals 20, Seahawks 14

Lorenzo Lynch intercepted a tipped pass and returned it 72

yards to win it for Arizona (3-5). It was a sudden finish to the sloppily played game in which Seattle's Sam Adams block a 28-yard field goal attempt earlier in overtime.

Lions 24, Packers 16
The host Lions (3-5) got three Scott Mitchell to Herman Moore touchdown passes and 167 yards rushing from Barry Sanders. The Packers (5-3) appeared to be driving for a touchdown late in the game, but Brett Favre gave up the first fumble by Green Bay's offense this season and Chris Spielman recovered.

Oilers 19, Buccaneers 7

Cris Dishman picked off two passes by Trent Diller, whose Tampa Bay-record 138 consecutive passes without an interception was snapped. Al Del Greco kicked four field goals for

host Houston (3-5), which had the ball for 41:51. Tampa Bay (5-4) lost its second straight.

Eagles 20, Rams 9

At Philadelphia, William Fuller and Andy Harmon had two sacks apiece, leading the Eagles (5-3) to their fourth consecutive win.

Colts 17, Jets 10

At Indianapolis, Eugene Daniel picked off a pass on the final play of the first half and returned it 97 yards for a touchdown. That was all the Colts, 5-3 for the first time since 1977, would need.

Steelers 24, Jaguars 7

At Pittsburgh, Neil O'Donnell doubled his season total with two touchdown passes and the Steelers (4-4), with new starters at nine positions, dominated the Jaguars (3-6).

Chicago finds jinx more than bearable

By RON LESKO
AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS — It all started in Detroit's Tiger Stadium Oct. 5, 1970. In only the third week of Monday Night Football, the Chicago Bears lost by two touchdowns.

The jinx was on.

A quarter-century after their first appearance, the Bears have devolved into one of the NFL's worst Monday night teams. Even the great Chicago team of 1985 made the only misstep in its Super Bowl Shuffle on a Monday night.

The Bears' 26 losses on Monday nights are five more than any team, and the eight-game losing streak they bring to the Metrodome against the Minnesota Vikings Monday night is the longest skid in league history.

Unlike the rest of America, the Bears don't seem to be ready for some football on Monday nights.

"We've been so bad over the last few years," said coach Dave Wannstedt, 0-4 on Monday night since taking over in 1993. "But as I told our team, the reason that we haven't played well on Monday night has nothing to do with it being Monday night, or has nothing to do with who we play or where we play or the weather that we play in."

"It's been very simple. We haven't blocked well enough and tackled well enough to win on Monday night."

They usually aren't even close.

Until their 27-24 loss to Green Bay Sept. 11 — they trailed 24-7 in the first half — the Bears had lost their previous seven Monday night games by an average of nearly 20 points. Chicago hasn't won a Monday night game since beating the Vikings 34-17 at the Metrodome Nov. 11, 1991.

Even the dominating Bears

teams of the mid-1980s struggled in the prime-time spotlight. From 1985-88, Chicago was 52-11 overall, but only 5-6 on Monday nights.

"Our media seems to make a big deal out of it, but the guys on the team haven't paid too much attention to it," quarterback Erik Kramer said.

The oddsmakers apparently have.

The Bears (5-2) were tied with Green Bay for first place entering the weekend, and were the highest-scoring team in the NFL at 29 points per game. Yet they still are 3 1/2-point underdogs against Minnesota (3-4), which has scored more than 29 points only once and has the league's 26th-rated pass defense.

But the Bears believe this game, against a team with a two-game losing streak and an injury-plagued offense, gives them an ideal chance to end their drought and show the country why they believe they can contend for the NFC title.

"We're excited about the opportunity to be on Monday night," Kramer said. "That's a reflection of the league thinking that we might be a good team. Hopefully this is our chance to show it."

In contrast, Minnesota is unbeaten in four Monday night games since Dennis Green became coach in 1992. That includes two wins at Chicago's Soldier Field.

It is crucial for the Vikings to keep their Monday night streak alive, or their playoff chances will be slim, even with half the season to go. A players-only meeting last week, in which unspecified individuals were singled out for selfish play, seemed to create a more upbeat atmosphere.

"This is a game we need, and we have enough talent in this lockerroom to beat anybody," middle linebacker Jack Del Rio said.

Nebraska gains top spot as Frazier bolsters Heisman bid

By RICK WARNER
AP Football Writer

BOULDER, Colo. — He doesn't have huge passing numbers and he only runs about nine times a game. Still, Tommie Frazier might be the best player in college football.

After Frazier led Nebraska to a 44-21 victory over Colorado that boosted the Huskers to No. 1 in the polls Sunday, his teammates began pushing the senior quarterback for the Heisman Trophy.

"Tommie Frazier is a phenomenal player," center Aaron Graham said. "He's got to be No. 1 in the minds of a lot of Heisman voters. The thing I like so much about him is the fact he's got this competitive fire that pumps you up every time you look at him."

Frazier displayed that fire Saturday against No. 10 Colorado, passing for a career-high 241 yards and two touchdowns. He also rushed for 40 yards and one score.

"I think he has a really good chance at the Heisman," said wingback Jon Vedral, who caught one of Frazier's TD passes. "He put up the numbers; now we'll just wait and see what happens."

Nebraska (8-0), which had been No. 2 all season, overtook Florida State (7-0) for the top spot in The Associated Press media poll and USA Today-CNN

AP Associated Press



The Top Twenty Five teams in The Associated Press college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through Oct. 28, total points and previous ranking:

Rank	Team	Record	Pts	Pv
1.	Nebraska (23)	8-0	1,501	2
2.	Florida St. (31)	7-0	1,498	1
3.	Florida (2)	7-0	1,417	3
4.	Ohio St. (6)	8-0	1,412	4
5.	Tennessee	7-1	1,299	5
6.	Northwestern	7-1	1,216	8
7.	Michigan	7-1	1,180	9
8.	No. 10 Notre Dame	7-2	1,042	12
9.	Kansas St.	7-1	1,038	14
10.	Colorado	6-2	850	7
11.	Kansas	7-1	833	6
12.	Penn St.	6-2	829	16
13.	Texas	5-1	764	15
14.	Southern Cal	6-1	759	13
15.	Washington	5-2	554	17
16.	Alabama	6-2	544	18
17.	Texas A&M	5-2	512	19
18.	Arkansas	6-2	487	7
19.	Oregon	6-2	457	10
20.	Syracuse	6-1	354	21
21.	Auburn	5-3	330	11
22.	UCLA	6-2	328	24
23.	Texas Tech	5-2	307	22
24.	Virginia	6-3	302	20
25.	Oklahoma	5-2	172	23

Others receiving votes: Virginia Tech 72, Baylor 20, San Diego St. 20, Stanford 18, Iowa 11, Toledo 10, Army 1, Clemson 1.

Frazier will be the main reason.

Always a dangerous runner, he has worked hard to improve his passing accuracy after completing only 46 percent in his first three seasons directing the Huskers' option attack. This year, Frazier has increased his completion rate to 55 percent and already matched his career high with 13 TD passes. He also has run for 408 yards and 10 touchdowns.

"In all my years of playing and watching college football, Tommie is the best quarterback I've seen," Colorado cornerback T.J. Cunningham said. "It was a pleasure playing against him. He's a strong competitor."

Both of Frazier's TD passes against Colorado came in the first half, a 52-yard strike to Clester Johnson and a 7-yarder to Vedral 10 seconds before halftime. He added a 2-yard TD run with 2:46 left in the game.

"He's a great player who really holds things together," Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said. "He's very tough. He broke some tackles, took some real shots and showed lots of poise. He's the difference-maker."

Frazier's leadership has been especially important since Sept. 10, when star running back Lawrence Phillips was suspended for attacking his former girlfriend. Phillips rejoined the team last week and is scheduled to play Saturday against Iowa State.

coaches' poll. Florida State didn't play Saturday.

"We're not worried about anything, just the next opponent," Frazier said. "If we win out, there's a good chance we'll win (the national championship)."

If the Huskers capture their second straight, national title,

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