

The Pre-Season Determines Who Makes the Team

The NFL starts keeping score the second weekend of September. The four games played prior to that date are considered the pre-season. You would think there is little importance to pre-season games, but think again. Case in point – last night’s exciting 31-30 Panther win over the Miami Dolphins.



Trailing 14-0 early in the game a goal-line fumble stopped the Dolphins from extending the lead to three touchdowns. Three long field goals helped the Panthers to close the gap to 14-9 at halftime. Very late in the game the Panthers scored to take the lead for the first time and were successful on a two point conversion, to take a 31-24 lead. All they had to do was run out the clock; the Dolphins had other ideas, scoring on a 56-yard pass to trail 31-30. A two point conversion could win the game for the Dolphins. Their conversion attempt was batted down at the goal line and the crowd went wild. The Panthers ran out the final minute and victory was assured.

Pre-season games can be exciting and *are* critically important. Positions on team rosters are won and lost based on performance in practice and pre-season games. Injuries can cost a player the entire season, as happened with the Panthers leading receiver. New plays are tried out. Everyone gets into the game to show what they can do. It is all part of preparation for when the score is kept.

How we live our life is also important. Choices made can be life-threatening, career-ending, and determine our eventual destination. Our preparation for the future is critically important.

When does it count? All of our life is preparation for the moment we come to the Father. Thanks to Jesus taking on our sins, the score is 0-0 when we meet God. Because of God’s forgiveness, what really matters is our commitment to be on His team. God is the General Manager, selecting those who make His team.

How have you readied yourself for the start of the season? Have you conditioned yourself, exercising and stretching yourself for best performance? Have you studied the playbook, using the Bible to understand the coach’s plan for how He wants you to play? What kind of teammate are you – are you willing to help others? Are you supportive of others in the locker room? When you talk to the “press” (speaking publically), do you give credit where credit is due? What kind of example are you to the children, and others, who look up to you? Do you live your life as a “credit to the game,” avoiding the temptations that derail so many promising careers?

Our life here on earth *is* the pre-season. It is only through God’s grace that we could be selected for the team. All we can do is heart-felt preparation and commitment. Will you be ready for the opening whistle?

Scripture: *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14).*

Question: Have you prepared yourself through a commitment to be what God wants you to be?

Prayer: Dear Lord. You give us opportunities to prepare ourselves to meet you. We want to be a permanent member of your team for all eternity. Amen.