

Sidelined by an injury that could have ended his career, Miami Dolphins Quarterback Dan Marino isn't worried. Characteristic of the winning attitude that has made him the team's star performer, he knows...

This Too Shall Pass

By JUDY DiEDUARDO

OCTOBER 10, 1993. WE WERE GLUED TO THE TUBE WATCHING THE 6'3", 220-POUND Marino step out of the pocket as he launched a pass to running back Terry Kirby. The score? 10-7 Miami. There was one minute and eight seconds left to play in the first half and the Dolphins were marching toward another touchdown. The division-leading team was on a collision course with the Super Bowl and the fans could feel it.

Then suddenly something went very wrong. As if gravity had momentarily failed the golden boy from Pennsylvania, Marino did the two-step of his career — burning a tear in his Achilles tendon. Not only will he sit out the remainder of the season, he will watch from the sidelines should the Dolphins glean Super Bowl glory.

If ever there was an athlete who could champion misfortune with optimism, Marino has done it. But more than overcoming his career's biggest hurdle, Marino has proven that, both on and off the field, he has the heart of a winner.

I caught up with him at Dolphins Training Camp where he talked candidly about the past, present and future of the sport's most prolific quarterback.



PBI *The NFL record book is beginning to read like your personal biography. Of all the records you hold — passing yards, most touchdowns thrown, Most Valuable Player — which one most impresses you?*

MARINO Holding the NFL record for Most Consecutive Games Started At Quarterback is probably the most significant. It's something I take a lot of pride in because I knew that every week I could help the team win.

PBI *Your injury has changed all that.*

MARINO Yea, it sure has. But injuries happen — this is a violent game and it's only a matter of time before something serious happens. Now that it has, I just have to deal with it. Although it's not a career-ending injury, it's serious enough to keep me off the field for the rest of the season. But I focus on the fact that this *will* pass and I *will* heal. I'm 32 years old and I have a lot of football left to play. What is hardest to deal with is not being able to play right now. It's depressing to think the team may be going to the Super Bowl without me.

PBI *So how do you deal with that?*

MARINO I help the team in whatever way I can — during meetings, on game day. It means a lot to me to contribute in any way.

PBI *These are difficult times for you. Who in your life is most supportive?*

MARINO My dad. He's a great guy who has worked hard his whole life. We've always had a great relationship based on mutual respect. He's always told me to make the most of anything — to take what's positive and be realistic about the rest. And that's what I'm doing.

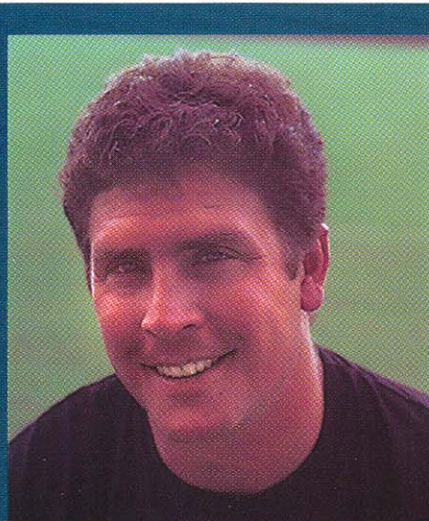
PBI *How do you separate your personal achievements from those of your teammates'?*

MARINO This is a team-oriented game. It's not like golf or tennis. You want to be successful statistically but the team always comes first. Sure, there are a lot of individual records that I am very proud of — like touchdown passes in a single season. Although I'm at the helm of the team I'm still just a

part of it. My success is the team's success.

PBI *While your injury certainly earmarks this past season, 1992 was an exciting year for both you and your team — earning your first division title since 1985. To what do you attribute the Dolphins' success?*

MARINO The defense played a lot better and we had some new people



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join us. We played well and unfortunately we didn't get to the Super Bowl. Although, I think we could have. Since then, we've gotten some new players and the attitude here is very positive.

PBI *Don Shula took you as his first-round pick in the 1983 NFL draft. Did you feel more pressure than pride?*

MARINO For a college player to be drafted by the NFL? It was a dream come true! It was something I always wanted to have happen.

PBI *In the middle of the 1983 season, you stepped in as a rookie quarterback for the Dolphins. Miami's offense was in last place on the NFL passing list and had a 3-2 record. Your team went on to win the AFC Eastern Division Championship and you finished as the top-rated passer. What were your thoughts that year?*

MARINO It was an unbelievable time for me. To have been given an opportunity is one thing but to

be ready for it is another. I was ready and had been for a long time!

PBI *Off the field, you are as zealous about helping others as you are about helping your teammates. Tell me about the Dan Marino Foundation which you founded to benefit south Florida youth charities.*

MARINO I'm in a unique position to help others. I don't do more than anyone else does but, through people and corporations I'm involved with, I can help raise a lot of money. That's one of the reasons why we started the foundation — as a vehicle through which we could channel that money to worthwhile causes.

PBI *Your celebrity golf classic is touted as one of the best in the country. Why?*

MARINO I don't know how it compares to other events but I do know that we have a lot of fun. And having fun while helping others is the best combination.

PBI *Tell me about the program you started last year — Touchdown for Tots.*

MARINO For every touchdown pass I threw, various corporations would donate money. Of course, now, this pertains to any Dolphin because I'm not playing. Last year we raised \$150,000 and this year I think we'll do even better.

PBI *I understand that you have recently purchased some property in Jupiter and plan to live there. Why the move?*

MARINO You know, I've always had a dream of living in a house on the beach. But right now, it's just a piece of property. Besides, we wouldn't be able to move up there because of my work. For a while anyway, it would have to be a place for weekend family getaways.

PBI *You grew up in Pittsburgh and opted to stay there and play for the Panthers because of your strong family ties. You went on to guide them to three consecutive 11-1 records. Was it a difficult decision for you to move to south Florida?*

MARINO Not really. I went to high school and college there and I think

it was good for me to move on. Coming here was the very best thing I could have done.

PBI What were your aspirations as a child? Did you dream of becoming a quarterback?

MARINO I've always had a desire to be a professional athlete. Terry Bradshaw, quarterback for the Pittsburgh Steelers, was my idol. He was great as was the team.

PBI Did you emulate his style?

MARINO When you're little you emulate everyone's style! I think everyone has their own natural way and ability. And as you mature you develop your own way of throwing the ball and playing the game.

PBI You and your wife of eight years, Claire, have four children: Dan, seven, Michael, five, Joey, four and Alexandra 20 months. Are there any future gridiron greats in the family?

MARINO I'm not sure I want my kids to play football. It's a tough game. They know that daddy is quarterback for the Miami Dolphins but I don't think they realize the whole picture — the public aspect, the amount of attention that is given each week to me and the team.

PBI Do you and your boys play football in the backyard?

MARINO We play a little T-Ball together but at their ages, they are interested in soccer and dodge ball!

PBI Do you think about the day when you retire?

MARINO Yea, I do. I think about the day when I won't be doing something I've been doing every fall since I was a kid. It's hard to imagine.

PBI Who's your favorite football player?

MARINO Well, I'm not the one to say "Dan Marino" but I am my favorite!

PBI What do you consider your greatest achievement?

MARINO I've had a lot of fun but, quite honestly, I don't know if I've achieved it yet. I suppose it takes more than 32 years to strike true greatness. I guess that gives me a lot to look forward to. ♦

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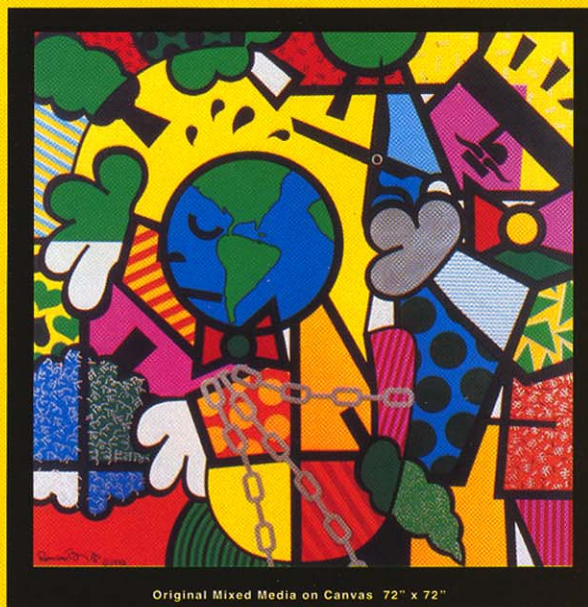
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