



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

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NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS SUNDAY, SEPT. 26, 2021 • GILLETTE STADIUM SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- The New Orleans Saints defeated the New England Patriots 28-13 on Sunday, Sept. 26, improving their record to 2-1.
- The win improves New Orleans' all-time regular season record against the Patriots to 5-10. It also improves its record at Foxborough, Mass. to 4-5. With New Orleans never having won a contest at Gillette Stadium in two tries prior to Sunday, the win on the third attempt marks the 57th facility for the franchise to win a game.
- The win improves Coach **Sean Payton's** record against New England to 2-2, all of the games against Patriots Coach Bill Belichick. That gives Payton at least a .500 record against 64 of the 83 coaches he has faced and against 25 of the 31 teams he has faced.
- Payton has 154 career victories (regular season and postseason), surpassing **Steve Owen** (New York Giants) and moving into a tie for 22nd with Steelers Coach Mike Tomlin.
- The Saints currently have a streak of 307 regular season games without having been shut out, dating to a 26-20 win at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sept. 6, 2002 at Raymond James Stadium, the longest running streak in the NFL.
- Saints special teamer **Andrew Dowell** recorded the first blocked punt against New England since Dec. 6, 2015 vs. Philadelphia when Eagles safety Chris Maragos came in untouched and blocked a Ryan Allen punt that was returned for a touchdown by Najee Goode.
- Quarterback **Jameis Winston** made his third start as a Saint on Sunday, completing 13-of-21 passes for 128 yards and two scores. In his only start against New England on Oct. 5, 2017 as a member of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, he completed 26 of 46 passes for 334 yards, one touchdown and zero interceptions. The win Sunday marks the 18th team Winston has defeated in his career as a starter.
- Quarterback **Taysom Hill** carried six times for 32 yards and one touchdown.
- Running back **Alvin Kamara** tallied 118 total yards and one score.
- Receiver **Marquez Callaway** scored his first career touchdown on a 7-yard connection from Winston. Callaway led all Saints receivers with four receptions for 41 yards.
- Linebacker **Demario Davis** appeared in his 147th career regular season game Sunday.
- Safety **Malcolm Jenkins** intercepted Mac Jones' first pass attempt of the second half and returned it for a touchdown, Jenkins' seventh career interception returned for a score. Jenkins' five pick-sixes since 2014 ranks first among NFL safeties and tied for second most in that time period with Janoris Jenkins.
- Safety **P.J. Williams** recorded one interception, setting up a Saints touchdown before halftime.
- Cornerback **Marshon Lattimore** secured his first interception of the 2021 campaign to seal the victory.



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NEW ORLEANS SAINTS AT NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2021 • GILLETTE STADIUM NEW ORLEANS SAINTS QUOTES

HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

Q: Is this the formula for you all to win this season, defense, special teams, efficient offense?

SP: Yeah, listen, I know this, just being in this league long enough, sometimes that formula has to change. We felt like going in that we wanted to effectively run the football. Obviously ball security, playing in here, is a must when you consider their record at home. But I think it's too hard to say each week. I mean, it's going to vary based on the opponents. I thought we did a handful of the things we were trying to do. We're going to look at the tape Monday, I'm sure it's not going to be perfect, then we'll make corrections.

Q: You talked about turnovers earlier in the week. How much did you hammer home that point to Jameis Winston in particular? SP: Well, to everyone. When you're 108 and 7 at home when you win the turnover battle, that's significant. Obviously, that's a testament to their program. We're mindful of it every week, but it had to be something that was put in our heads every day. I thought we took care of the football. I thought that was important.

Q: On the touchdown throw, did Jameis know there was a flag coming or is that a decision –

SP: I don't think he knew there was a flag coming. I think it was that complete or incomplete. We'll look at the tape. We were a bit fortunate there. Marquez (Callaway) made a play. Kind of a hold-your-breath moment.

Q: Before that last touchdown drive you put together, the offense hadn't really had much going in the second half. When you were going into that drive, what were you hoping you guys accomplished there? SP: Look, naturally it was to possess the ball. I mean, momentum had shifted. They had just come off a score. It was a one-score game at that point. A field goal even really was going to give us some breathing room. It was to change the field position as much as anything. I felt like we played with a positive field position for a large part of the first half, and even into the early part of the second half. But when you start a drive like that, you're thinking about making first downs. You're not in just a four-minute run-the-ball mode. You know you're going to have to throw it as well as run it. That was a significant drive.

Q: Was Taysom Hill on that drive, specifically considering what you wanted to accomplish, an in-game decision right there? SP: Well, look, later in the game like that, you're going to get a loaded box. There's one way to lighten it a little bit, remove somebody, then directly run it with your quarterback. Part of that was to combat some of the heavier fronts.

Q: Your team is coming back home now. How would you say they handled this past three or four weeks? What did you learn about this team during this time? SP: Look, I thought we've handled it well. Shoot, everyone at TCU, Texas Stadium, the hotel we were at, there were a lot of people that were fantastic and very supportive of us. It's obviously a challenge when you're not on schedule at home. But I thought we handled that part of it well. I thought we had a good week of preparation leading up to this game. It will be good to get home tonight finally, kind of get back to our facility.

Q: Have you liked the aspect of all of y'all on the road together? SP: Yeah, look, it is what it is. I think starting off the season, relative to how training camps are, I think as challenging as it was for everyone, there is an element where you're focused on football, you're at the hotel, there aren't a lot of distractions. We got to keep getting better. We'll have a chance to do that again this week. We'll be back a little bit more to a familiar circumstance.

Q: The defense has been playing really well for a few years now. What have you really liked about the way they've set the tone in a couple of these games now despite having two rookie starters, newcomers? SP: I thought we tackled in space well today, number one. I thought we affected the quarterback. When it became a little bit more one-dimensional, obviously it's a little bit more difficult to consistently generate the rush. Thought we kept the ball in front of us. Yeah, I'm sure when we watch the tape there will be some things that stand out. But I really thought we tackled well.

Q: Did you feel like you guys cleaned everything up on the protections that you wanted to this week? SP: Yeah, look, that's a week-to-week thing. For the most part I thought up front we blocked them well. Terron [Armstead] went down early on. We jumped right in. James [Hurst] got in. But we were able to run the ball. I think that was important.

Q: Did you all see something on the blocked punt that y'all thought you might be able to get to one? SP: I can't say that for sure. I think it was more of a by-product of probably really good effort and technique. That was significant. I thought all three areas, all three phases, did a good job. We had a handful of unique situations come up. I thought we handled them well.

Q: Have you changed your mind-set at all (indiscernible)? SP: We still are smart about the reps. I don't know how many total snaps, but we talk about it between each series every series.

Q: On the last drive, Deonte Harris made two really big catches. One of them moved the chains. How crucial was he in keeping that going, eating up the clock there? SP: Yeah, look, in order to do that you have to convert a third down or two, a third-and-six or seven, third-and-five I think it was, I'm not sure. He had a big conversion though on their bench. That was significant I thought. Later came back, we had another underneath pass to him. That was a big drive.

QB JAMEIS WINSTON

Q: What was the mind-set going into the last drive? You kind of struggled the three preceding drives. JW: Finish. That was simple. Just finish and get the win.

Q: When you're playing across from a defense that's having the type of day y'all did today, does that affect how you approach some of these situations, not putting the defense in a disadvantage position is probably going to be enough? JW: Yeah, we just knew that we just had to protect the football. We were going to come out winning this game. I think we ran the ball really well. I think our defense played really well and we protected the football. That's the formula to win a game in the NFL.

Q: How often did you hear that message this week from you and just the whole team about that turnover ratio in New England? JW: I mean, I think it was our key to victory. We knew we had to come in and do that, and we did that. That's why we won.

Q: Can you talk us through your decision to throw the TD pass to Marquez Callaway even though you were kind of wrapped up? JW: That was all God. I felt zero. I checked it. That was all God. Like, I was trying to throw that ball away. Marquez went up there and snatched it, so... Touchdown, good guys.

Q: What was the message to you after that throw? Don't do it again but good throw? JW: If you are throwing it away, make sure you throw it away. I said, Coach, that's all God. Can't get in the way of God's plan (smiling).

Q: Did you know it was a free play or were you just going for it? JW: No, I did not know it was a free play.

Q: On the last drive, how clutch was Deonte Harris, especially on the third down play, to keep that drive going? JW: He was excellent. He created some separation, got open. It was delivered to him.

Q: How excited are you to be getting a chance to come back to New Orleans? What have you learned about this team the past three weeks? JW: Man, I'm more than excited to be able to prepare to play a team in our home stadium. I think we all excited for that. We're excited to get out of Dallas, excited to come home, man. We did it for this city. We knew we needed to get a win. We knew everybody was going to be coming ready to represent anyway. It would be a better taste in our mouths and in the city for us to come up and get a good win in Foxboro.

Q: You played in this league awhile now. Can you put into context what it means to come into this stadium with that head coach on the other side? Not a lot of teams come in here and win in this place. JW: Yeah, you know, I'm playing for my head coach. Our head coach, he has a lot of accolades as well. Again, we definitely revere Coach Belichick, he's definitely a Hall of Fame coach. I'm happy we were able to come in as a team, defense dominated, offensive line did their thing, dominated the line of scrimmage, AK (Alvin Kamara) had a heck of a day, we made plays in the patting game when we needed to. Taysom (Hill) stepped up huge. (Indiscernible) on that last drive.

We played Saints football. That's how we're playing right now. We protected the football and got a great win. We're excited, man, to come back home and let other teams feel the wrath of our fans.

Q: Communication was a big key this week, the protection. Seems like the offensive line, they were able to step up and continue to protect you. How did you feel your communication was better this week and the protection from the offensive line? JW: I think we did a better job communicating. Yeah, an incredible job, Landon (Young) coming in filling in, James (Hurst) being resilient. We're going to see the details on Terron (Armstead). We would love to have him back at speedily as possible. These guys have been resilient. Every week I say I got the best offensive line in the whole league. For two weeks we lose Erik McCoy, Cesar (Ruiz) and Calvin (Throckmorton) come in, they pick up the load. They did an excellent job today. Then we lose Terron today early. James Hurst picks up the load. It just talks a lot about that room, how important it is for those guys to have continuity and be together. I'm just happy those guys were able to persevere today.

Q: Obviously people know you have the big arm, the ability to go vertical. You said 'Saints football'. Is that now efficiency and physicality up front? JW: Saints football has always been efficiency and physicality up front. Those are the only things I knew, so... That's all I know. They win up front and they play tough. That's what we did here. I think the best thing it's so challenging to win in this league. Any way you do it, you do it to the best of your abilities. Obviously, I know I got to get better at the quarterback position, and I'm continuing to do that. But I'm happy we got this win.

SS Malcolm Jenkins

On his pick-six: "They actually ran the same play I believe a couple of drives earlier, and Demario Davis made a good stop. They were trying to sneak the tight end on the back side and I ended up getting picked actually by my own teammate. So I just rushed up to my coverage and the ball got tipped up in the air and I was able to come down with it."

On the defense's potential: "I think we're finding out that we are the strength of our team. And we're going to have to play big in order for our team to have success. That's just the identity and the formula that seems to be working for us. We're real stingy on defense, we take the ball away, we give our offense opportunities. Then when we get our special teams contributing as well like they have. We're going to be hard to beat. We think the heart of our team is going to be is on our defense."

On the difference of the defense from last year: "I think last year on paper we had the potential to be good. This year we know we're good. So the thing for us is, how do we consistently put out the best versions of ourselves week-in and week-out? That's what we're trying to get to. We know how good we are, from an individual personal standpoint to a unit standpoint. Our challenge is how do we show up with the best versions of ourselves every single week? Because our team is going to need us to do that."

RB Alvin Kamara

On getting nine touches in the first 13 plays and if the Saints were setting a tone early by establishing the run: "Yeah Sean (Payton) said it earlier in the week, he wanted to win the running battle. He didn't care, he wanted to protect the ball and win the rushing battle. I think we came out and went run heavy and it stuck throughout the game."

On the increase in his touches to start the season and how he accepts that role: "I'm cool with it. I have always said that whenever the ball comes to me, however it comes to me, I will take advantage of the touches. I think the thing is just making sure they are quality and good looks and I think that when the situation comes for it, they are the right calls. But I am fine, I am good. I am healthy and I am seeing everything well so I feel good about the touches."

On Taysom Hill being used in a "closer role" in the running game: "I don't think it is a closer role I think it was just Sean going in and pulling some more tricks out of his hat. You know Taysom Hill is always ready. He ran the ball well and we closed it out, it was a good win."

QB Taysom Hill

On the team's performance: "I can tell you, the mind-set is just to win. I think sometimes it is easy to get caught up in the numbers, but you've got to play the game and play the situation. Throughout my career, it's the team that manages the situations the best that wins the game. It's all about winning and if the defense is creating turnovers like that, it's what you do."

On what the team learned about itself being on the road the last three weeks: "I think we proved that we can handle a lot of chaos. If you play in the NFL long enough, you are going to have trials, you're going to have different things that come up. What shows a good, resilient team is how you handle chaos and difficult situations. This goes from the top down, from management to the equipment guy, our trainers, everyone is all in. We have a really resilient team that knows what it takes to know how to prepare to play a football game no matter where."

On the team's confidence in putting together long drives at the end of the game: "Absolutely. That is a tough deal in the NFL when you've got these heavy defensive fronts and you can put together a drive like that. I don't remember what the time frame was – eight-or nine-minute drive, something like that, and you can go and score. That creates a lot of energy and momentum for us as a team, as an offense, so that's huge. It was great drive."

PATRIOTS HEAD COACH BILL BELICHICK

BB: Give the Saints credit today. They were certainly the better team. They just did a better job than we did in every area and deserved to win. We've just got to play more consistently. We've got to play with more good plays out there and not as many that aren't good. That's what we have to do. We had some chances, but in the end, we just couldn't get it done. It's disappointing. There's no magic sauce here. Just have to go back to work and do better.

Q: We saw after the first punt, after Deonte Harris, after he had the 25-yard return, that Jake Bailey put an emphasis on keeping the ball away from him, whether through the end zone or at the sideline. Was that something you had as an emphasis coming into the game, or did that change after that first punt return? BB: Of course we weren't trying to give him return opportunities, no.

Q: What happened with the special teams today? Allowing a blocked punt, kickoff out of bounds. How disappointing is the special teams performance today? BB: We've got to be better in every area, including special teams.

Q: What have you assessed about the offensive line the first three weeks of the season? BB: Again, just today we were inconsistent in every area. We've just got to do a better job. Go back and look at the film, make some corrections. Obviously, New Orleans has a good defense, but we've got to move the ball better than we did today. Play better in the defense. Play better in the kicking game.

Q: Have you had a chance to see James White at all either at halftime or after the game? Just how is he hanging in there? BB: Yeah, I saw him at halftime. We'll see.

Q: The wind -- how much was the wind a factor? We saw a kickoff go out of bounds. We saw the time-out at the end of, I think, the first quarter maybe to make them kick to the open end there. How is that a factor in the decision-making or the game today? BB: It's about what it was in Miami and Washington.

Q: What did you see on Mac Jones' interceptions? BB: Well, probably the same thing you saw.

Q: Losing James White, did that have a domino effect in terms of what you wanted to do with the game plan going on after you lost him? BB: We have contingency plans for everybody. Unfortunately, that's part of the game. Everybody has to have a backup. Brandon (Bolden) stepped in there and Damien (Harris) and J.J. [Taylor, and those guys are all good players. They'll get in there and compete.

Q: What did you think of just kind of the beating that Mac took in terms of maybe how he bounced up all the time or also just concern going forward that those hits take a toll and maybe he gets a little bit more -- I don't know if gun shy is the right word, but it's a lot to take. BB: When you're having to throw every down, it's never a good position to be in. We don't ever want to be in that situation.

Q: The Bucs are next on the schedule. What kind of challenge do they pose next week and the return of Tom Brady? BB: Obviously, they're a good team. Right now we're just focused on New Orleans. Look at the film, make the corrections on that, then we'll move on.

PATRIOTS QB MAC JONES

Q: Mac, I just wanted to ask you how you felt. You obviously took a lot of hits today, how you're feeling. I was just curious what prompted taking the knee brace off, if you could just share any of that or why you did that. MJ: My body feels good. Obviously, it wasn't our day. We didn't play as well as we wanted to. On the knee brace, I just slid and it kind of came loose, so I just took it off.

Q: I know you always want to score, but on these long drives that you have, how hard is it to just take three when seven is right there? MJ: I think it just goes back to execution. I can do a better job just sticking to my reads and being patient and letting things develop. I didn't do a good job of that today. We'll get better, and we've made it a point of emphasis. Today it didn't show, but we're going to just flip the page and continue to work and try to find ways, whether it's creativity or whatever. It's really not my job to call the plays. Josh (McDaniels) is going to do a great job coming up with ways to improve that. I know he will because he's a competitor just like all of us and we're all wanting to score points. It's not like we're all happy with just kicking. We want to score as much as we can.

Q: Obviously, it was a tough day, but to have comforting words from your teammates maybe coming up to you after interceptions, how much does that maybe really soothe out that you have their support even if it's a bad play? MJ: I think interceptions are a part of the game. You obviously don't want to throw them, and sometimes they're bang-bang plays and sometimes they're things you can control. I just have to learn from those errors. Everyone did have my back. It seemed they were very supportive. For me, I've worked a lot on just playing the next play, and I felt like I wasn't lingering or thinking about the last play at all and neither was any of our team. Yeah, we can definitely get better there, and I appreciate everyone supporting me, and I've got to get better. So I will.

Q: Can you speak to the role that James White has had in helping you get accustomed to this offense? And what impact did his departure from the game have on the game itself, and as a team, if you're going to be without him for any long period of time? MJ: I think James is a great player, but he's also a good person. He does everything right all the time. It seems like he just goes about his business. He comes into work every day. It's not like he's cutting any corners short because he's an older player and knows it all. He continues to work. That definitely sucked to see him go down. We're all behind him 100 percent, and he's a team leader, and he's a great team leader, and he's a great Patriot. We all want to be, if we can, like James. He's a big role model for me. I hope he's OK, and thoughts and prayers to him and his family.

Q: On the third-and-one handoff to Brandon Bolden before the half and a couple of the other red zone runs, were those called runs in the huddle, or are those plays that you kind of get a little bit of an option there? MJ: In the red zone, I think just improving throwing the ball. I need to just improve that. When I have a chance to, I need to take what they give me, but also take some chances. A lot of the plays, I could have stuck with them instead of changing them or whatever, and I'll get better at that. We'll improve the red zone. We have to improve. We've got to put points on the board. We can't just continue to not do that. We've just got to flip the page on today and learn from it, watch it, and just identify the problem because you just have to fix the problem and try and find ways to make that better.

Q: Taking the cue on flipping the page, this happens fast. You'll make the corrections and then turn the page. Along those lines, have you ever had any contact with Tom Brady, and what are your thoughts on the Buccaneers coming to town as you flip that page? MJ: I think we're just going to focus on learning from the tape. I think that's most important. It definitely stinks to lose, but you can learn from it, and it definitely eats away at you when you lose, but you've got to learn and move on. That's what a lot of the older guys were telling me, just keep my head up. Obviously, no one likes to lose here, and the Patriots have done nothing but win for a long time. We've got to get back to that. It just happens through everyday grind, every day work, and not focusing on the results. Play each play. Play each day one day at a time. If we can do that, then I think we'll see progress, and we'll just go from there.

Q: Was there anything that the Saints did that forced you to hold on to the ball a little bit longer than you would have wanted? And was there anything you could have done differently

on that first interception? MJ: No, I think, obviously, they have a great defense, the Saints do. They did what they did. But it's more about us and me just executing our plays. I can do a better job of that. I don't like to assume anything. I just like to watch the tape and look at it from a bird's eye view and don't be emotional about it. Just look at it and learn from it and then flip the page. I'm sure there's plays I left on the field. I know there are. And I'm sure that the offense as a whole, we can all play better together, and we will.

Q: What missing with the connection of the timing with Jonnu Smith? MJ: I think Jonnu has done everything right. He's out there running. He's out there blocking, doing what he's supposed to do. Me and him, we're not always going to have perfect days. Nobody is. I think it's more about just getting that connection in practice and the timing. That comes with reps. We've kind of been together for a few weeks now, and we've just got to keep growing and turn the page on some of the bad things we did but also learn from them. There's always good conversations that come out of bad plays or bad days or bad games. You just have to talk through it and look at it through a positive lens. That applies with everybody on the team, so I think that's what we'll do.