



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

CHICAGO BEARS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023 • CAESARS SUPERDOME GAME NOTES

- With the Saints improving to 5-4 and taking over sole possession of first place in the NFC South, their next contest will be at the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday at U.S. Bank of America Stadium followed by a Week 11 bye. Kickoff is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. CT. The game will be regionally televised on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 locally in the New Orleans area)
- The Saints improved their all-time regular season record against Chicago to 18-13, extending their winning streak against the Bears to seven games, the longest by the Saints currently against an opponent.
- New Orleans won the turnover battle against Chicago 5-0, with the takeaways leading to ten points. S **Marcus Maye** had his second interception of the season and CB **Paulson Adebo** had three takeaways, recording two interceptions and a third quarter forced fumble/fumble recovery. The three takeaways were the most by a Saint since S Sammy Knight's three interception in the 2001 season opener at Buffalo (9/9/01). Adebo now has a career-high five takeaways on the season, his first two fumble recoveries and four interceptions, setting a new career-high. With three pass defenses on the afternoon, Adebo has a career-high 11 passes defended on the season. Adebo also finished with seven tackles in the contest. The final takeaway was a fourth quarter fumble recovery by LB **Pete Werner**. New Orleans' five takeaways were the most by New Orleans since five interceptions in the 2020 regular season finale at Carolina (1/3/21).
- The New Orleans offense finished seven-for-14 (50.0%) on third down attempts.
- The Bears were held to only two touchdowns on four red zone trips and after the Saints gave up 14 points in the first half, they gave up only three points in the second half, keeping the Bears out of the end zone.
- The New Orleans offensive line did not surrender a sack for the first time in 2023. The offensive line has given up only two sacks in the last three games.
- QB **Derek Carr** completed 25-of-34 passes (73.5 percent) for 211 yards with two touchdowns, zero interceptions and a 108.8 passer rating. With the two touchdown passes, Carr moved into a tie for 35th all-time with former Bears signal-caller Jay Cutler. Finishing the day with 37,343 passing yards for his career, Carr moved past QB Donovan McNabb for 28th all-time. Carr now has

3,408 completions for his career, tying Andy Dalton for 23rd all-time (total tabulated prior to Carolina's 3:05 CT contest against the Indianapolis Colts).

- Carr evened his record as a starter against the Bears to 2-2.
- Carr had an eight-yard touchdown pass to WR **Chris Olave** and a two-yard touchdown pass to QB **Taysom Hill**. Olave led the team in receiving with six receptions for 46 yards. Hill became the first player to have at least ten career rushing touchdowns, passing touchdowns and career receiving touchdowns since QB/HB Frank Gifford. Overall, Hill led New Orleans in rushing with 11 carries for 52 yards, had four receptions for 13 yards and tossed the three-yard go-ahead touchdown in the fourth quarter to TE **Juwan Johnson**. Hill's 20 receptions on the season are a career-high.
- Johnson had his most productive day of the season with five receptions for 29 yards, including his first scoring grab of 2023.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** had nine carries for 26 yards and caught four passes for 44 yards. With his four receptions, he surpassed Thurman Thomas for 23rd all-time among running backs.
- WR/RS **Rashid Shaheed** recorded three receptions for 22 yards, returned two punts 20 yards and brought back a kickoff for 24 yards. Shaheed now has 1,054 all-purpose yards after the first nine weeks of the 2023 season.
- Three Saints had an interception, the first time New Orleans had finished with three picks in a contest since September 26, 2021 at New England.
- LB **Demario Davis** led the team with ten tackles (eight solo) and a fourth quarter sack/forced fumble.
- DE **Cameron Jordan** made his 200th career start, the second Saint to ever start 200 regular season games, joining QB Drew Brees, and posted a season-high seven tackles (four solo), a stop for loss, two QB hits and a sack. Jordan's sack on QB Tyson Bagent marks the 47th different player he has dropped in his 13-season career.
- DT **Khalen Saunders** finished with five tackles (two solo), as well as seeing extensive action as a goal line blocking fullback.
- CB **Marshon Lattimore** finished with three tackles (two solo). Lattimore now has 301 career solo tackles, surpassing the 300 solo stop mark in his career.
- K **Blake Grupe** finished one-of-two on field goal tries, including a career-best 55-yarder and made both PAT attempts. All five of Grupe's kickoffs sailed into the end zone for touchbacks.
- P **Lou Hedley** punted four times for 164 yards with a 41.0 gross/net punting average and three dropped inside-the-20-yard line, including a fourth quarter punt that end out of bounds at the Chicago two-yard line.

- LS **Zach Wood** played in his 107th career game on Sunday, moving him into a tie with S Gene Atkins and LB Pat Swilling for 41st place on the club's games played list.



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(Opening Statement) “Hard fought win. None of these are ever easy in our league and for anybody that ever thinks that you got an easy one, you are waiting to get your ass beat. So it was a good win for us. We're excited about the win. Moving forward and getting ready to go play Minnesota, so I'll take your questions.”

(On the defense) “I think the takeaways were outstanding. (There) Wasn't a lot good that I saw defensively, but the takeaways were outstanding and that's a difference in the game. It is credit to our guys to go out and take the ball away. We talked about punching the ball out this week, we got a nice top down punch out. Some of the things that we emphasize were good to see. We still have to start faster defensively. So we have to figure that out. We have way too many mistakes early on in the game and that has to be better.”

(On what the defense wasn't doing well) “Just not being in the right spot, not getting aligned properly. Just sloppy crap.”

(On if he considered changing the defensive approach to bring more QB pressure) “No I wanted to play better. We brought some pressures. I thought that the Paulson's interception was on him (Tyson Bagent) was under pressure. It's easy to want to pressure but it's harder to pressure when everything's second and fourth, third and three, third and two. You don't have a lot of pressures on your call sheet necessarily in those situations. You have to create a little bit some longer down (and) distances and you get a chance to be a little bit more aggressive. But, all that being said, five takeaways put us in good position and we were able to get 24 points today, which is enough to get the win.”

(On the decision to accept the holding penalty in the second quarter) “I think in that situation, it was going to be fourth and two, and quite honestly, I thought they'd be aggressive there and and go for it. I thought, well, we can back them up and hopefully get him to be more a fourth and longer yardage situation, force them to have to kick the field goal. It did not work. We did not get it done. But that was the thought process behind it.”

(On the offensive drive at the end first half) “Well, wasn't a lot of time there. We had a couple of plays to try to get the ball down the field, obviously the last play of the half we're really trying to get the ball down the field and I guess Derek (Carr) got a little bit of pressure there and we felt like he had to get rid of the ball. So we didn't really get a chance to get the ball down the field. But look, there wasn't there wasn't a lot of time there to get chunks in yardage.”

(On Lou Hedley punting to the three-yard line) “No, that's huge. The field position there was huge. The way that the game gets played on the two or three yard line is totally different than the way the game gets played on the 20-yard line. And so that was a huge play by him, backing them up we were able to get off the field there and change the field position.”

(On Taysom Hill and his performance) “I thought he was really good. I thought our plan to utilize him was good and I thought he was effective when we utilized him. But they kind of had a little bit of a plan to try to load it up to stop him. But it's just the stress of every single play that it could be the one that pops. Really at the end the day for us to be able to close the game out like that down there inside the red area was big.”

(On the decision to punt instead of attempting to kick the field goal in the fourth quarter) “All those options go through your mind. But I felt like trying to pin him down. Obviously, that's a long field goal and the percentages of making those aren't necessarily great and so, the thought process was, let's pin them down there in that situation and see if we can create some field position get the ball back in good field position for the offense.”

(On his thought process to not kick the field goal) "Every minute of the game changes the thought process in terms of what you're thinking, in terms of your aggressiveness, whether you're going to go for it, kick the field goal, or try to plot them and pin them deep. Those are your three options and we chose to try to pin him down there."

(On if it was halftime adjustments that caused the turnovers) "I think it was guys making plays, which was awesome to see. Paulson's (second half) interception was a great play by him. He played it exactly how he is supposed to play it. Marcus Maye's interception coming across the middle, hell of a play. Adebo's punchout was, it was beautiful to see. I think it was really just our guys making plays. First interception, I thought Paulson did a hell of a job on. Read it perfectly, was in the right spot, saw the quarterback, made a good break, and then went up high part of the ball. The runback sucked (laughter), but the interception was good."

(On if he was disappointed with the consistency of the defense) "Well, look, I think overall, both sides of the ball I would have liked to see us be a little bit more consistent. I thought offensively, in the first half, I thought we moved the ball really well and there was consistency in what we were doing in the first half. Not quite as good in the second half. It's something that we got to go back and evaluate the tape, make the corrections that we need to make and then move forward from that. But I have seen more consistency out of the offense in the last month. That's been good to see."

(On the Bears' quarterback scrambles) "There's a way that you have to rush a quarterback. If everybody just tries to go and win their one on one battle, then there's no structure to how you're rushing this guy and that's how quarterbacks escape. So we have to do a better job of understanding the rush plan and do a better job of making sure that we're all working together in the rush plan so when the quarterback does try to escape, then we have somebody there to get him down. So that has to be better, because that stinks right now."

(On if there was a correction made to fix the QB scrambles) "We talked about it."

(On if there were halftime adjustments) "Halftime adjustments are over freaking rated. Alright? Stop. Okay? Play better; coach better; execute; do your job. That is what it is about. Okay? So that's what the communication was at halftime. We did not come in there and just change the whole frickin game plan. Are we haven't done it any week up to this point. What we've done is we've called better calls, and we've executed better and we need to start doing that early on."

(On Paulson Adebo) "Well, I think he's always had good instincts. Two years ago, I think, what he had three interceptions a couple years ago, not as much last year. Last year he was fighting through some injuries and stuff. He's healthy this year. I think overall from a secondary standpoint, I think our guys have done a nice job of technical football."

(On the penalties coming down from previous weeks) "I think probably a little bit both. A little bit of both. I think our guys from a technique standpoint have been doing a little better."

(On Chris Olave having the first touchdown) "That was awesome to see, made a great catch in the endzone was a huge play for us and a big confidence builder for him I think. It was good to see him come back and respond and yet I think there's still more out there for him. So we're going to keep pushing him and keep pushing him to get the best out of him. I think there's more there and I'm excited about seeing it."

(On Olave's maturity off the field) "He's (an) extremely mature kid. He works his tail off. I'm glad he's on our team. I think he's going to be a big part of what we do as we move forward. He's an explosive weapon and he's going to be a big part of our football team."

(On if he was surprised by the lack of separation by the receivers) "I guess I have to go back and kind of look a little bit and see kind of where we were at. You're talking about us offensively being able to create some separation? I thought we did some nice things in the passing game. But without really seeing the tape, I'll decline to comment too much on that."

(On the Chicago's quarterback's performance) "[He played] way better than I wanted him to. I thought he did, honestly, with the exception of the turnovers, I thought he played really well. I thought he operated their offense extremely well. Obviously you could see him get into some checks and adjustments on the line of scrimmage based on what we were doing and showing. He looked like he

was poised in the pocket never really panicked. Took off when he needed to. So I was highly impressed with what I saw out of him.”

(On Taysom Hill making history) “I think that's pretty impressive. Right? Half the guys in a locker room would have no idea who Frank Gifford is. I think that's pretty impressive.”

(On the play progression that resulted in the touchdown pass from Hill to Juwan Johnson) “Well, look, I think everybody executed their job on that play. We're actually trying to get Bink [Khalen Saunders] a touchdown in the flat there and they did a nice job, but he actually took two in coverage, which allowed Juwan to get open in the back of the end zone. Taysom went through his progression, found Juwan and when you when you execute and you do the things that you're supposed to do, generally you get good results.”



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QB DEREK CARR

(On back to back wins) “That is why we play the game. Being able to make corrections after a win (is easier than after a loss). We were able to string together two wins in a row after the terrible feeling that we had before the Colts game. Seeing the fruits of the conversations and the hard work payoff is a good feeling. We still have room to improve and need to do some things better, but to see us going in that direction is what we want to see.”

(On the fast start and slow second half) “We won. At the end of the day, we won. This is professional football. Everyone is into numbers and fantasy football, but sometimes the defensive backs make plays or the defense gets in there. They made some plays in the second half early on that we didn’t make, but I’m not overly concerned or thinking it’s not fixable. They made plays at those moments when we came out in the second half to make it not feel as good as the first. I am fully confident in our group coming in tomorrow, especially after a win, to focus on what we can do better and get ready for next week.”

(On the importance of getting Chris Olave involved) “Look, we’re all human. We go through stuff. There is change. He’s getting to know me and things go as players and in our personal lives. Sometimes you can be doing everything right and things don’t go your way. He’s still making big plays for us and making tough catches. To see him have a touchdown and a couple big plays for us was good. Like I have been saying since I got here, some days it’s going to be that way. Whether it is Chris, Mike (Thomas), Rashid (Shaheed) or Alvin (Kamara) getting the ball a lot in a given game, I am just going to read the play and try my best to make it happen. It just happened to go that way for Chris today, but it was good timing I think.”

(On the maturity of Olave) “He has been unbelievable. He has handled everything with such class. Every time we come to work he’s texting me, facetimeing me saying, “I got you on this” or, “I like this route”. To see him be able to compartmentalize is really unbelievable. He’s a young player. Again, sometimes in this league, we don’t give young guys a chance to grow, develop, and go through their process. I think he is going to be a tremendous player for a long time, and the city of New Orleans should be very happy to have Chris as one of their starting wide receivers. He is the ultimate pro, he loves football, is a great teammate, and does anything you ask of him.”

(On the turnover differential) “It’s one of those things. I could maybe force a tight window throw here and there, but at the end of the day playing with this defense, I know over time if I can take care of the football that the turnover differential will turn into wins. You always see at the end of the year, the teams at the top have a big takeaway differential, and the teams at the bottom do not. I just want to be as efficient and clean as possible. There will be games that are tight. When they are tight, I have got to take care of the ball and give us a chance. When I need to make that throw, I will make that. There were a couple times today where I did not have to do that because I know what is happening on the other side of the ball. The ultimate goal is to win the football game and it takes all three phases playing together. I am just trying and doing that to my best ability to help DA (Dennis Allen) and those guys out.”

(On Bears’ game plan resulting in quiet day for Michael Thomas) “There was a few opportunities, but some plays where he was featured, they had a certain coverage. I know Mike, and that was probably a frustrating thing for him as a player. Hopefully, he knows they were doubling him in the red zone which led to Chris and Juwan’s (Johnson) touchdowns. Just his presence and who he is helped us win this game today. It won’t be on the stat sheet or show up in fantasy points, but just his presence and who he is helped us win today.”

(On the last play before half) “We wanted to get as much as we could and try to set up a field goal. But I saw how they were playing with a sideline defense, so I just wanted our guys to go and thought we would have to throw the Hail Mary. With all the guys on the sideline for them, there would be less people in the end zone. It wasn’t something we talked about. We ended up trying the Hail Mary but they got pressure and I had to check it down. “

(On the offensive line play and allowing zero sacks) “They have been unbelievable. There are always things they want to clean up, but I am trying my best also to not take sacks because that hurts the team at the end of the day. Some people may not like it when I have to “dirt” a ball, but we just have to make the right plays. Our offensive line is doing such a great job and allowing me to go through progressions and move defenders. The first play of the game I had time to move a guy with my eyes and that was not anything that me and Chris (Olave) did special. That is a credit to the offensive line allowing us to play that way.”

(On Taysom Hill’s impact and versatility) “Today we got so much man coverage. Usually we do not get much man coverage and when we do, it is a good play for us. That is not just us, that is across the league. There were playing some man and that is when Taysom got his touchdown wide open. He has been so good in his role here for so long. Back when I was watching from afar and Drew (Brees) was playing quarterback, I used to wonder why they would take Drew off the field. Then I got here and it was like, “I see why. This guy is pretty good”. He is great at what he does for us. He is the ultimate competitor, a great friend, and has been amazing to me since I got here. I celebrate him every chance I get, because guys like him don’t come around all the time. A guy that can go from tight end to running back to blocking on special teams to punt return to playing quarterback to playing receiver. That just doesn’t happen. He is one of my favorite teammates and the ultimate competitor”.

(On Khalel Saunders attracting attention in red zone) “Hilarious. I have played with my fair share of good players in skill positions, but I have never seen someone attract that much attention on a play. Him and Michael Thomas attracting double teams today. They attract attention and now I have to put #99 in that category too”.

QB TAYSOM HILL

(On if he has heard of Frank Gifford) “I’ve heard because the stats guys told me about these stats. I have heard of him. Yes, of course.”

(On joining him in the record books) “I look back at my career and I certainly didn’t think it would have gone the way that it has. It’s overwhelming when I hear things like that. I have a lot of gratitude to be with this program and play with coaches that are creative enough to give me the opportunity. It is really a whole lot of gratitude.”

(On the touchdown pass to Juwan Johnson) “They zoned it off. We were trying to get (Khalel Saunders) in the flat. He was covered. We were trying to get Foster (Moreau) on the backside. He took two and Juwan (Johnson) was running free in the back of the end zone. It was just a progression-based play. It worked out.”

(On if he expected two defenders to be covering Saunders) “I don’t know. He tracks a lot of eyes and a lot of attention. Even in the run game, they are worried about where he is because they don’t want to get hit by him.”

(On Saunders’ difference in energy when it’s coming to him) “I don’t know. We had a fair amount of stuff with him in this week. I think he was more concerned about where he was lining up. Are we shifting right now? What are we doing? He is a great teammate. The thing I love most about him is his energy. Anytime you get him in the huddle players feed off that. That was certainly the case.”

(On the creativity lately) “I feel like the first quarter of the season we have been so close. You look at a few drives and it was a penalty here killed the drive. I think what we have seen is that we have had penalty-free drives. We have had the ability to keep the chains moving. As you alluded to, it gives you a lot of confidence. As a play-caller, we also have a lot more opportunities to call more plays on the call sheet. The creativity that you are alluding to has always been there. We have been sustaining drives, which builds a lot of confidence. We have been a confident unit the last few weeks for sure.”

(On if he feels like this is his best season) “I don’t know. Personally, I don’t get caught up on what the stats are and what I’m doing. At the end of the day, we are just trying to win football games. We are trying to take advantage of every opportunity that I get and hopefully I can contribute to winning football games.”

DE CAMERON JORDAN

(On how start number 200 felt) "Like I should have had three sacks and only left with one. There is always room for more. I think the way our DBs got greedy this game that there would be room for some left over. Demario Davis finished the game for us. I thought I was getting a sack. He got a sack and even better, he got a (forced) fumble. He sealed that. We love to see 56 in his super mode. He started off preaching saying that this game was necessary. He meant each and every word. That is how you come down with it. I have nothing but high praise the way our DBs decided to start jumping routes. Paulson (Adebo) was coming out like a thief in the night. That man was picking everything. It is impressive to see a defense go out and get a win like that after the first half. There was 14 points put up on us the first half and that's unlike us. I'm still upset about that part, but the second half was great."

(On if he can categorize the slow start) "We emphasized fast start the whole week, so it couldn't have been what we preached. They were doing some unorthodox quicks that was working. We had the quarterback escape the pocket a couple of times. Those were probably their longest rushes of the game. That is something on the D-line that we put on us. We are emphasizing each and every day to eliminate that."

(On Adebo's day) "I think he is a heck of an athlete. He decided to jump all these routes and be amazing today. He was everywhere. Our DB's did such a great job. A major shoutout to Paulson Adebo out of Stanford, which just doesn't feel right."

(On the turnover ratio this season) "As long as it means equivalent to more wins. At the end of the day we are going to be judged by how many wins and not how many takeovers we have. So, if we have 75 sacks at the end of the season and we don't have enough wins to get to the playoffs, then what does it matter. If we have 45 interceptions and don't make the playoffs, then what does it matter. If we have three interceptions and we make the playoffs and have a chance to go to the Super Bowl, then that's all that matters. At the end of the day the way these guys are playing and how our defense showed up in the second half, then that is how you get a win."

(On getting a sack with Matt Ryan in the building) "I started my day by hitting Matt (jokingly on the field pregame). I saw him on the sideline and gave him a quick pop. Just a little jolt. Just to say "Hey, I miss you" We went from there. Then I got a few pops on (Tyson) Bagent. We got a couple of hits on him early. We wanted to make him a pocket passer. It sort of stinks as a rusher because you are trying to hit this turn and throw yourself down and sort of play this game of don't let him escape the pocket. Then, he escapes the pocket and you get yelled at. It is what it is. That's a game that we were brought into. It wouldn't have changed with Justin Fields in there because we know that he is just as elusive of a runner. It is onward and upward."

CB PAULSON ADEBO

(On how it feels to have a specific role in the victory) "It feels great. I would not be able to do it without my teammates. Obviously, rush and coverage seems to go together. Everyone is saying great play, but the fact of the matter is our pass rushers are doing such a great job throughout the duration of the game making the quarterback uncomfortable."

(On the interceptions) "I was just trying to read the quarterback's eyes. I was trying to be aggressive on the ball. We've been harping on trying to get takeaways."

(On when he knows he has a shot at an interception) "I think just being a playmaker and reading the quarterback's eyes. I'm seeing when his hand comes off the ball and just trying to jump the route and make a play."

(On the punchout) "It's also something we have been harping on. Coach has been harping on attacking the ball. We are just trying to see the ball and punching it so it will come out. I'm glad I was able to."

(On if he tried to bait the quarterback) "I think it is just great play calls. The coaches are just putting us in the position to make plays. Depending on the down and distance, I feel like they had us in a good call. We just needed to execute our technique and make a play on the ball."

(On building off this game) "You just try to take one game at a time. You just try to get locked in every single play. There are some things that I have to fix and there are some things that we have to fix as a defense. I think we just need to move forward and stay as focused as possible and let the good games carry over."

(On if he feels locked in the last few weeks) "I try to be locked in every week. The results were good this week. Obviously, I need to go look at the film. Sometimes, it feels better than it is. Sometimes it feels worse than it is. I just try to have the same approach every week and try to put my best foot forward."



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(On the overall game today) “An update on Khari Blasingame, he is in concussion protocol. We will see what that bodes for this week, but obviously, it is going to be tough to get back out there for him. Just hope he’s okay and hope he’s doing fine. Overall for the game, I thought we took the ball, decided to take the ball with the coin toss there. The guys did a really good job of taking the ball down the field. I thought the first 15 (scripted plays) were really good. Obviously, we scored a touchdown there. That was excellent. We got a four-and-out on defense. Then, had that one interception from there. Really in the first half I thought our offense did a good job operating. We got some good yards in there from a bunch of different ways. Running the football was a big goal for us today, and I thought we accomplished that goal. Stopping the run was also a big goal for us, and I thought we did that as well. When you look at the third downs in the first half for the defense it wasn’t good. They were five-of-six. Didn’t do a good enough job on that. Came back in the second half, and they ended up 7-of-14. I thought we did a good job with that, adjusting. The players did a good job of executing to give ourselves a chance to win in that situation there. Really the story of the day is just takeaways. It is hard to win (losing the ball). The League is pretty even in most spots. It’s hard to win when you have -5. Again, that’s a whole team thing. It’s us protecting it, protecting the quarterback, getting it on defense and us doing a better job of taking the ball away on D. That is really where the story was. I loved the fight of the guys at the end there. (The) Defense gave us a chance there at the very end with those stops we had and with the missed field goal they had. With that I will open it for questions.”

(On QB Tyson Bagent and the turnovers) “I’m going to have to look at it. What I saw out there was they play man coverage. That’s what they do. They’re a tight coverage there. We were throwing it into tight windows, and we have to do a good job with our decision-making. That’s where it is. Again, I’ll look at the tape and see exactly what they were doing. Getting that stuff to the first, that’s the No. 1 job of a quarterback – protecting the football.”

(On if there were opportunities to win at the end of the game) “We made stops on downs on defense. We had time. We still had time. We still had time, and the guys were still fighting and battling, and because of that, we made it a game at the end. I really believe we had a chance at the end there.”

(On the difference in the defense from the first to the second half) “Just the third downs. The reason they kept those drives. We were protecting the run great. We were tackling good. We were doing all those things well. During that first half, the only thing they had on the plus side was the third downs. Like I said, they had five-of-six, and I believe two of them were in the red zone. That’s what we needed to get corrected. We made the adjustment. They did a nice job.”

(On QB Justin Fields’ status): “Yeah. He’s day-to-day. We will find out more tomorrow. We’ll see where it is. He started throwing, which is a positive. We’ll see where it is in terms of his functionality.”

(On if he hopes Fields will play Thursday): “We’ll see where it is. We’ll see.”

(On how the team handled the week with many outside distractions): “I would say really good. Obviously, if we would have won the game, I would have said great. It’s not great because we lost. Our guys hung together. They always do. They practiced well. They came out ready to play today. Again, if we get the ball right, we would be great today. That’s where it is. The guys were physical. They finished every play, and they played our style, which is the style we want to play.”

(On CB Tyrique Stevenson’s injury): “We will see where he is. I know it was a lower leg injury. We will see where he is tomorrow.”

(On the key to the run game being successful early in the game) “Again, they shift their front a little bit here and there. It’s an overload on that one side we were running to the whole time. My hat’s off to them. They made the adjustment, and it wasn’t as effective as it was. Again, I thought we did a really good job over the course of the day running the football.”

(On Bagent’s play) “(Bagent) had some really nice plays. It wasn’t just the QB scrambles. There was a disconnect from the runner a couple of times where he kept the ball on those. That was cool to see him on the edge there and also the keepers. He had some waggles and boots where he got on the edge and had a chance to go run-pass option. He did a good job with that.”

(On the plan for defensive end Montez Sweat): “Just play (Montez Sweat) on the third downs, play him on in the two-minute. Again, my hat’s off to the defense. They did a really nice job at the end of

the half during that two-minute situation. (The Saints) still had some time (left), had some timeouts. Our guys did a really good job with that.”

(On how he thought Sweat played) “He looked good. He had a couple of good pressures there. He is getting his feet wet, different style of defense, different style of terminology. For him to come in and play that many plays was cool.”

(On getting Sweat’s extension done yesterday) “It’s extremely important. Ryan (Poles) and his staff did an awesome job working through that and getting that done in a timely fashion. We’re all excited. When you add a pass rusher to your defense and to your franchise, that’s a big deal of us going into the future.”

(On how close they are to being where they want to be as a team) “This is evidence we’re very close. Being -5 in the turnover margin and keeping it that close, the ability for us to show our style. Our style is to run the football, stop the run, be physical. We just have to get the ball right.”

(On Bagent’s experience): “In terms of his operation and knowing the offense and operating the huddle, getting in and out of the huddle, for a guy to come in there as a rookie like that, it was pretty impressive when you think about it. He’s had really good moments in the starts that he’s had. He has got to learn. The most important thing Tyson can do now that the performance is over is to learn from his performance and to get better. To partner up with the coaches, the offensive coordinator and myself and look at those plays where he needs to improve and look at the good plays. There are a lot of good plays out there that he had in the first half, first quarter today. He has to build off of both of those things.”

(On the Saints offense being on the Chicago side of the field for the entirety of the fourth quarter and having a chance at the end of the game): “Yeah, we always do think we had a chance. Just one takeaway on defense to give ourselves a short field or put ourselves in scoring position, or a kick return or punt return, whatever that might be to really flip the field. Because of the turnovers they were playing around mid-field most of the day. That happens sometimes. That’s called sudden change. Our defense did a great job of rising up to the occasion on most of those occasions during the course of the game, getting a three-and-out, making them punt, stopping them on downs. This gives our team a chance.”

(On the offensive line penalties): “You go back and look at those. Obviously, the false starts are the false starts. We have to clean those up, but the holdings you have to look at them. Sometimes it happens when you extend plays on the perimeter. When you’re extending plays as a quarterback, it happens sometimes. I’ll look and evaluate all those penalties and see what we think.”

(On an explanation on the facemask on Velus Jones Jr.) “It was a facemask. He grabbed it.”

(On learning from penalties like the facemask): “You just cannot do that. We’re pro football players and coaches. We know we can’t grab the facemask”

(On deciding to challenge the spot early in the game) “Upstairs, Harry’s [Harrison Fried] upstairs, and we are always looking at it. I thought it was spotted short to begin with. We looked at it on replay. We had enough time. It was early, so we just threw it. We had a good look at it. It was overturned. It was good by the league.”

(On what Fields brings to the team) “The experience factor. Him playing all those games. Certainly, the experience factor. He’s operated in this offense. He’s had some good weeks prior to this in the Washington game. He’s had some good weeks this year. We’re excited to get him back when he comes back. The QB runs are viable there too, the perimeter’s getting under attack more. That’s what he brings.”



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

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(On the difference between his play during the first three quarters to that in the fourth quarter) “I thought that I did a good job of controlling the game. I thought that we did a good job of controlling the game, managing the play clock, especially with the atmosphere that they always tell you about when you come here to play the Saints. I thought that we managed that well. I thought that we took advantage of a lot of things. Really, it just all comes down to myself in that last quarter, being able to do a better job of taking care of the ball better. Coach talks about it every single day how important it is to take care of the ball; and I didn’t do a good job of that. So, that’s basically just me there in that last quarter.”

(On the interceptions in the final quarter) “I think it was good on their part (and) bad on my part. It was tight coverage. They made a couple of really good plays. Hats off to them. Once again, I probably just have to go somewhere else with the ball. That’s on me.”

(On if the offense was stalling and he was trying to force a play) “Yeah, I think that it was all on me forcing a couple of plays there. You can’t afford to take plays off in the NFL because it can come back to bite you. You have to be sharp on every play.”

(On five turnovers today, yet still close to winning the game) “I thought that our team played extremely well, which is why it’s so embarrassing, just because it’s one score game. (And) to lose the turnover battle by that amount, it’s embarrassing. It’s part of the game. I am just looking forward to building and learning from this experience.”

(On his thoughts on his play during the absence of Justin Fields) “At the end of the day, I thought that I did a lot of good things. I thought that (there is a lot to work on) at the end of the day. I am blessed beyond measure. I can’t believe the position that I am in. I had an extreme amount of fun with all of the guys having my back the way that they did. For me going forward, nothing changes. I will continue to prepare as if I am starting every game. I am looking forward to it.”

(On if he knows what to work on moving forward) “Of course, repletion, the mother of all learners. The best way to learn is to be thrown into the fire, so to speak. I take a lot out of this experience.

(On how to bounce back on Thursday if he has to play) “I think there is only one way to, and that is just to continue to do what I have been doing preparation-wise, I think that is the only thing that there is to do. I don’t really know what else I would do. (I need) to just do what I’ve been doing preparation-wise, and do a better job of taking care of the football.”

(On the reason for the interceptions) “I think that I was late on the one to (Darnell) Mooney. I think that I was on time on the one to Tyler (Scott). It was good coverage, (but the ball was) a little bit behind him, which is all me.”