



NEW ORLEANS
SAINTS

POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES
GREG BENSEL + SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS ATLANTA FALCONS
THURSDAY, NOV. 22, 2018 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the win, New Orleans Saints starts the regular season 10-1, giving the franchise their 12th double-digit win season in franchise history with seven having taken place under Head Coach Sean Payton.
- The Saints return to action on Thursday (11/29) in AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas when they face the Dallas Cowboys. The game will air on FOX and the NFL Network at 7:20 p.m. CT.
- Today's win gave the Saints a 10-1 record through the first 11 games, the only better start for the club would be their 13-0 start in 2009.
- With the win today, the Saints run their winning streak to ten games, giving them their second-such win streak, second to a 13-game winning streak to start the season in 2009.
- The Saints currently have a streak of 267 regular season games without having been shut out, dating back to a 26-20 victory at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on September 6, 2002 at Raymond James Stadium, the longest running streak in the National Football League and the fifth-longest all-time.
- The Head Coach-Starting QB duo of Sean Payton and Drew Brees opened their 185th game together tonight, moving them past the Don Shula-Dan Marino combination for second place in NFL history.
- The Saints defense held the Falcons to 12 yards rushing in the first half.
- The Saints defense recorded a season-high four turnovers and a season-high six sacks.
- The Saints outrushed the Falcons 150-26.
- QB **Drew Brees** completed 15-of-22 passes for 171 yards, four touchdowns and a 111.9 rating. Brees played in his 260th career game today, moving him into a tie for 32nd all-time in NFL record books with Nick Lowery and Julius Peppers. Brees has 3,135 passing yards in 2018, marking his 15th 3,000-passing yard season, moving him out of a tie with Tom Brady and in third behind Peyton Manning (16) and Brett Favre (18). Brees' five-yard touchdown pass to Keith Kirkwood made the undrafted rookie him the 51st Saints player to record a touchdown catch from Brees. Brees has now thrown a touchdown to 66 players overall in his career. Tonight's game marked Brees' 157th multi-touchdown game and his 35th four touchdown pass game, tying him for first in NFL history in the latter category with Peyton Manning. Brees also has tied an NFL record by throwing a touchdown pass to 13 different players this year, tying Matt Ryan (2016).
- RB **Mark Ingram** played in his 101st career game today. Ingram finished with 52 rushing yards on 11 carries.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** finished the game with a team-high 89 rushing yards on 14 carries.
- WR **Michael Thomas** finished with four catches for 38 yards.
- WR **Austin Carr** recorded his second touchdown as a Saint, hauling in a 12-yard touchdown pass from Brees.
- WR **Keith Kirkwood** recorded his first touchdown of the season and of his career, hauling in a five-yard touchdown pass.
- WR **Tommy Lee Lewis** scored the first touchdown of the game and his first of the season, catching a 28-yard pass from Brees.
- TE **Dan Arnold** recorded his first career touchdown, hauling in a 25-yard pass from Brees. Arnold finished the game with a team-high 45 yards on four receptions.
- DE **Cameron Jordan** started in his 123rd consecutive game tonight, having never missed a game, moving him past RB **Fred McAfee** for sole possession of 29th on the club's all-time games played list. Jordan has 67.5 career sacks with his two takedowns tonight, moving into a tie for fourth with DE Will Smith (2004-12). Jordan finished the game with two sacks, four total tackles and three hits on the quarterback.
- DE **Sheldon Rankins** recorded his seventh sack of the season, taking down Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan for a seven-yard loss.
- DE **Tyler Davison** deflected a pass by quarterback Matt Ryan, which was then intercepted by LB **A.J. Klein** for a six-yard return. Klein's first interception of the season.
- LB **Alex Anzalone** forced a fumble just before half, recovered by S **Vonn Bell**. Anzalone finished with six total tackles.

- LB **Demario Davis** recorded his third sack of the season, taking down Falcons signal-caller Matt Ryan for a seven-yard loss.
- CB **Marshon Lattimore** recorded his first force fumble of the season, recovered by CB **Eli Apple** for a two-yard gain. Lattimore finished the game with five tackles (four solo) and two passes defensed.
- CB **Eli Apple** recorded a team-high ten total tackles (eight solo).
- CB **P.J. Williams** recorded his first career sack, creating a ten-yard loss. Williams finished with six total tackles (five solo).
- S **Marcus Williams** recorded a strip sack, forced fumble and recovery on quarterback Matt Ryan for a four-yard loss. Williams finished the game with five total tackles.
- S **Vonn Bell** finished the game with seven total tackles and a fumble recovery.
- K **Wil Lutz** nailed a 22-yard field goal and converted four extra points. Lutz has made 20 consecutive field goals for the second time in his career, tied for the second most consecutive in club record books with his streak from 2016-17 and one by kicker Morten Andersen from Nov. 24, 1985-Oct. 5, 1986.
- P **Thomas Morstead** punted three times for 144 total yards (48.0 avg.) with a long of 56 yards.



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SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

(opening statement) "Happy Thanksgiving to everyone. Obviously, when you play on this day and you have the night game, it's not like you have the whole day at all (for enjoyment). You are really getting ready for the game. I'm proud of the way that our guys played. Obviously, the turnovers were significant, the rushing yards (were significant). All of the things that lead to winning or keep you from winning were on display tonight. I am proud of our defense. I thought that we ran the ball well. It was a good win, a good division win."

(on the defense getting better each week) "It is good news. We played some good offenses. Cincinnati's a good offense. The Eagles are a good offense. I feel like we're playing a complementary game relative to time of possession, third downs, all of those things. Tonight was no different."

(on why the defense was effective getting multiple turnovers tonight) "A lot of it is effort. We had four of them; one right down on the half-yard line."

(on the rushing defense tonight) "It certainly helps when you can hold an opponent to twenty-something yards. It helps when you know what's coming, if they are one-dimensional. That was the case tonight."

(on the defense gaining confidence) "I think that we are constantly talking about improvement or going the other way. I think that you can think it and you can want it and hope for it, but you have to, at some point, demonstrate it. And when you do that then there are actual moments where you can see a young player gain confidence because maybe he covered a kick the right way, maybe he fit the run the right way and he believes he can do it; and he starts doing it over and over again. I think that we are playing better and better. We still have work to do. It's encouraging."

(on the improvement of the red zone defense) "It's significant, I thought, just to hold them to a field goal after our turnover was a big possession."

(on the four players who were not drafted having touchdowns tonight) "I did not realize that. I do not think we really pay attention to it. We're focused on the opponent and the plan, who's healthy, how are we going to get guys involved. I think one of the things that they do well, let's ask them to do those things. Obviously, Drew (Brees) is someone who is very confident in the preparation and confident in the players around him. There is a lot that goes into that. All of a sudden you have a few big plays like we had tonight."

(on the depth of the team on offense) "It has been a lot of different players (contributing), tight ends. You are always hoping to stay healthy, and yet we don't live in that world in this league. That is encouraging (that we have options). I'm excited for those guys that received opportunities. We will keep working to get better."

(on having success running up the middle) "Sometimes it's a six or seven-hole play that cuts up, sometimes it's outside. I thought that we played well up front. Right from the start we ran a simple power scheme for a nice gain. I think credit Atlanta; and I say that because they are dealing with a lot of injuries on defense. They are playing without a lot of guys that have really been the heartbeat of that defense, captains, Pro Bowl players, guys that we actually had a chance to coach last year. Those are big losses (for them)."

(on if the team has talked about the Super Bowl) "No, not at all, only because there is so much football here. It's a division opponent. In our league, rivalry is not a good word for it. You have two teams that have a long, storied history of playing each other. They've been in what was the NFC West for a while, now it is the NFC South. We've always had good, competitive games, tough games. We're way, way, way shorter-focused right now, rather than extended like that. And I think that that has served us well. Every week I hear someone say, 'They're getting ready for the tough stretch of

their schedule. Shoot, all of these games are tough, starting with trips to Baltimore, trips to Minnesota, the Rams. The focus for us is the next game. We play a week from now. We will be on a normal week schedule. People ask about tickets. It's always, 'Text me the week of (I say).' I couldn't tell you who we play three weeks from now. That is the way it should be. We were focused on this game and now we will have to get ready to play a real good Dallas team who is playing well, who is really playing well in the last three weeks."

(on if he ever felt comfortable that the defense was in control) "Two weeks in a row we played teams that we have tremendous respect for their firepower and their ability to score. When you play those teams, I don't know that you ever quite get comfortable because I have just seen it happen and I have been a part of it in one playoff game in San Francisco. I was very comfortable when they were checking the ball down and throwing underneath, with the clock being on our side. We were concerned about the quick-strike plays with their skill players. I thought that we handled that well. Just like last week, those teams can score fast."



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FALCONS HEAD COACH DAN QUINN

(Opening Statement) “I told the team, (it’s) the most challenged we’ve been over the last three years. It can be frustrating and confusing for sure. The storyline was pretty simple though at the end in terms of the ball(game). I thought the team played hard and the energy was right, the fight was right, but we didn’t play well in terms of our execution and certainly our ability to create takeaways and take care of the ball. If you looked at the final, I thought they were able to stop the run and we did not do a good enough job defensively to make that the factor in the game. I said we needed to finish drives in the end zone and we had three turnovers in the red zone. For us what’s next is a long weekend. We’ve got to reset and we’ve got work to do to play like we need to play and how we’re capable of playing. At the end of the day, (there’s) a lot of work for us to do to get our game right. It’s a pretty simple storyline.”

(On three lost fumbles in red zone) “When you have one it feels like a lot, but when you have three down there, I thought that was the real story of the game. We knew that would be a factor coming in, and it was.”

(On regrouping after Saints score 17 straight points) “Well I thought we had a chance and then we figured a two minute at the end of the half to see if we could go and then have the ball again to start the half. So as poorly as we’d played early on, I knew we really had a chance to get right back in the game defensively, excuse me, right back in the game starting with the ball. Not scoring on the opening drive I thought that was a setback for us. We said we were going to be aggressive on fourth down. I think we ended up with six of them on the night, four out of six. Not being able to get our run game established that adds to the (lack of) balance. I thought our play action plan, what we needed was going to be right but when we didn’t match that in our run game, I thought that was one of the real factors they were able to control the clock some with their run game. I thought that, along with the turnovers, was the real story of this game.”

(On Saints’ play action tonight) “Yes, they definitely took some shots to the seam and the big touchdown, I think their first touchdown pass, was one that we see quite a bit of the time. At the end of it, it wasn’t the pass game that did us in today. I don’t know what they ended up throwing for but on a day where he (Drew Brees) throws for under 200 yards is usually ones on the other side that you sign up for but what you don’t want are four touchdown passes.”

(On not being able to establish the running game) “It made it challenging for sure. I knew they would play well against the run and we would have to have some passes to try and open up the run game, especially on the play action side of things. I thought that part of it went according to plan. What didn’t was the ability to convert some of those runs. We knew we would have to have some passes to set up the run in this game, but they played so well against the run but not to get that part going was a factor in this game.”

(On offensive line problems) “We’ll go back through it (film) hard and look at it. (We will) See if there is a change that needs to be made and will. Nothing will stop us from what we need to do to get the job done. Not saying we will, but it’ll give us something to take a look at.”

(On not playing Deadrin Senat tonight) “He actually played a little bit better against Dallas but it was more of a factor of how many pass rushers we could get up and get going. He’s been up for about 15, 16 snaps and we wanted to add the fullback back into it. It was just a coaching decision on what we thought would be the best to win the game. It was no stretch on him. I told him that too from a performance side of things.”



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SAINTS QB DREW BREES

“Let’s do it, go ahead it is Thanksgiving. Happy Thanksgiving everyone! I have family waiting.”

(On the energy from the home crowd) “I love it. It was awesome, they were amped up and the defense fed off it. The defense played tremendous today against a really explosive offense, got four turnovers, which was a huge stat in the game. Just the energy and the emotion on Thanksgiving Day, it was great.”

(On how this team is built to win) “When the defense plays like that and we are getting five yards a rush, like we did today, those are all great things. So, for me as a quarterback, it is still about managing a game the best way that I can. When there are opportunities for big plays, we make them; convert third downs, we got to possess the ball so we can put together good drives and go score points and play that complementary brand of football.”

(On the collection of young talent on the Saints roster) “Well, each week, especially the last three weeks, you have seen just the level of confidence, growth and maturity out of some young players, on both sides of the ball. They are stepping into roles, getting significant playing time and really having to contribute in a big way. They just have to continue to get better and better. I think their confidence is building with that too and I feel like we are just scratching the surface.”

(On the young defensive players on the Saints roster) “They are playing with a ton of confidence and swagger and just a belief.”

(On throwing four touchdown passes to four undrafted free agents tonight) “I have heard that stat, I love that stat. That is actually one of my favorite ones. It says a lot about them. It says a lot about taking advantage of the opportunity and stepping up when we need it. We are down some receivers from the beginning of the year until now and these guys have had to step into these roles and do some things that maybe weren’t expected. It is just a growth process, it is fun to watch the grow and gain confidence and build chemistry, which typically takes time, but they have been thrust into this role. Especially on a short week, this was a challenge; you start playing and thinking about matchups; these are all things that I think keep me up at night. As I’m thinking from play to play, it’s about moving the ball and finding that matchup. With young guys stepping up and making the play and having those four guys, Austin Carr, Dan Arnold, Tommylee Lewis, and Keith Kirkwood, right. All of them to play the way they did, to each get a touchdown on Thanksgiving Day with all of their family and friends watching at home is pretty cool.”

(On Dan Arnold’s touchdown) “It was a great catch, he had just a seam route and beat the other guy. It was one of those where you put it out in front of him and he’s a big target, so he went up there and pulled it down and really made a great play. He had told me earlier, he said he wanted to make up for the one that happened at the goal line on third down where the guy knocked it out. He said ‘I should have never let that guy knock it out of my hands’. So, he held onto that one.”

(On winning two games in five days) “This is a challenge obviously. Going into the Philly game we knew we were going to play three games in about 11 days. So, Philly, Atlanta and then we go to Dallas a week from now. That’s tough to do, so guys need to be really diligent with getting their bodies ready to turn around in four days and play and now obviously, turnaround in seven days to play. I think guys have just stayed very focused, very diligent, we had a good plan this week for how we were going to come out and play this game and now we got to plan and get ready to go to Dallas.”

(On the teams’ confidence level) “Listen, it is fun, we are having fun. We enjoy being around each other, we enjoy going to work. We work hard. We understand that it is the preparation during the week and it is the work during the week that allows us to go out and play this way, and play with that confidence that we are playing with. It is fun to find different ways to win. It is fun to come out and the defense has four turnovers and you have four undrafted guys catch touchdowns, right. That is fun, it has been a while since any of that stuff has happened. So, you just keep finding new ways to win,

you keep finding guys who step up and make plays and you begin to envision how this thing is going to look next week and the week after and just as we continue to build on what we have established.”

(On the teams' confidence level going into their second game against Atlanta this season) “Well, we felt like we go into every game feeling like we want to run the ball, we want to be balanced. We got a nice lead early in the third quarter, but knowing how explosive they are, they can score at will. For us it was about possessing the ball, controlling the clock, getting points and touchdowns when we could. At the same time when we can rush for five yards a pop and I think we had about 31 rushes for a buck fifty, something like that, so that is really good rushing yardages.”



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SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

LB Demario Davis

(On stopping the run tonight) "One of our main goals is we have to be great against the run. We have to be effective against the passing game on first and second downs. We have to get off the field on third down. We have to be good in the red zone."

(On the turnovers) "That was one of the keys for us. Our goal is to create takeaways. It just goes along with the rest of our goals. If we can get those, then it changes the tone of the game."

LB A.J. Klein

(On the turnovers) "I had the pick. Alex (Anzalone) had a great forced fumble. Marshon (Lattimore) chased down and forced the fumble. You can't say enough about the effort we're playing with. I think this is going to pay dividends as we push forth into this late part of the season. Getting turnovers is a big thing for us."

(On giving up more passing yards this meeting than the last) "I think that does not tell the whole story. We made them one-dimensional. By the time the third and fourth quarter rolls around, they're in passing personnel. We still don't want to give up that many passing yards. We want less obviously. We just have to keep working at it. However, to get them into third and fourth and longs and have them go for it is big. They are taking more and more chances. It doesn't tell the whole story. At the end of the day, we have to get off the field. We got the win and we are happy with that. Go home and have some Thanksgiving dinner and move on until next week."

WR Keith Kirkwood

(On the undrafted guys performing) "It shows a true credit to this organization that guys can come in and work. Even undrafted guys can come in and have an opportunity and step up to the plate. A lot of undrafted guys stepped up tonight."

(On Drew Brees catching him up quickly on offense since he arrived here in the spring) "He's the football guru. We just follow his leadership. The way that he works day in and day out. He is the first one here and the last one out of the building. I think we all follow his hard work and dedication, which helps everyone on the team."

RB Mark Ingram

(On undrafted guys production) "We worked all week and followed our gameplan. We were on the same page as Drew (Brees). He is going to find you no matter who you are as long as you are where you are supposed to be. The testament to those guys stepping up and making the plays. If you are open, then Drew is going to find you."

(On if they are eyeing a championship) "We have an ultimate goal of being champions, of course. You can't be a champion without taking it one day at a time. I think that we've been doing a good job of that as a team. Tomorrow we're going to be in there watching film and taking care of our bodies. The next day we will have off, then the next day we'll be installing and getting ready for the Cowboys. We are just taking it one day at a time. We know that if we handle business one day at a time then we will achieve the ultimate goal."

TE Dan Arnold

(On his first career touchdown) "It was a little bit of relief to finally get it out of the way. At the end of the day, it is really special. We dialed up the perfect play. We had that play in for a couple of weeks

now and we finally got the look that we wanted.”

(On Drew Brees getting everyone involved) “It’s just his attention to detail. It comes down to very subtle movements and letting him know where you are going on a route. He’s very much a stickler in that he wants it his way. The best thing about that is that he communicates that to you. The way that he wants things done, especially to younger players. It goes to show what kind of quarterback he is.”



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FALCONS PLAYER QUOTES

QB Matt Ryan

(On how tough the loss was) “Yes, it’s very difficult. Obviously we’re disappointed with how the game shaped out tonight. I thought we did some good things offensively, but when you turn the football over four times against a really good football team that’s playing with a lot of momentum, that’s too much to overcome. We need to be better than that as we move forward. We’ve got an extended weekend here to get some rest, but also to take a look in the mirror and find ways that we can all be better and that’s what we need to do.”

(On if he saw the safety come through during his fumble) “Yes, I have to take a look at it. I didn’t know where it got tipped from. I can give you a better answer after I’ve had an opportunity to look at it.”

(On the uncharacteristic amount of turnovers tonight by the offense) “Well, I do not know where it came from. You know that hasn’t been our style up until this point. Credit to New Orleans. They did a good job of taking it away, but we’ve got to be better than that offensively. We had opportunities to come away with a lot more points than we did tonight, but when you give them the football especially in the low red (zone) when we have opportunities to come away with points, it’s tough to overcome.”

(On how to move on after this week from the game) “Well, I think the mindset after tonight with the long weekend, is for each of us individually take a look in the mirror and see what we have to do better to help our team play better than we have up until this point. And that is what I am going to do. And then when we get back to work Monday, it is about going out and having the best Monday practice that we have had. But to make it any more, you know, long-sided than that, I think you cannot do that as an athlete. You have to stay in the moment. You have stay in present with what you’re doing. And that what my message would be to those guys.”

(On what the message to the players hanging their heads, specifically Calvin Ridley after his fumble) “I did not really say anything. We got the ball back pretty quickly after him – after that on the sidelines. I’ll have an opportunity to sit down with him. One thing that I have learned in playing for as long as I have, is sometimes those things are going to happen. You’re going to have nights like tonight. But what makes you a great professional is how you’re going to respond to nights like tonight and how your process, getting yourself ready to go during the week is, you know, better after having an outing like that. That’s what would be my message is to him. It’s about controlling what you can control and getting yourself prepared and doing all the things you can so that when you’re in that situation again, the result the outcome is different.”

CB Robert Alford

(On the rivalry here on Thanksgiving) “I mean, it was good. We knew it was going to be a battle, like you said. There’s been a rivalry going over decades. I mean, we came in to it looking to win, but we got a lot that we’ve got to improve from this game and just come back battling.”

(On what they did during the first half to keep Drew Brees in check) “There’s just something that we’ve got to go back and watch on film and see what we fell short at, at the end of the day. I mean, you can’t take it from him. Drew is a heck of a quarterback in the NFL. At the end of the day we fall back on what we could improve on.”

(On what Alvin Kamara did to be so successful against the Falcons defense) “Just the ways that they use him. They use him as a running back, as a receiver. Pretty much just as a dual guy. So when you studying guys like that, you have to be on your P’s and Q’s and you have to just study them down to the T and make sure that when you face him, that he gets nothing.

(On moving forward here after this game) “We’re going to move on. This team that we have here, I mean, we have a great group of guys here. We never hold our head down. As long as there’s still ball to play, we going to battle. We’re going to come back on Monday and battle our tails off against each other and come away with a win on Sunday.”

WR Julio Jones

(On putting the game in to perspective) “We have to take care of the ball better. Offensively, that’s about it. Guys, we came out. We fought. But turnovers will kill you every time.”

(On what he said to Calvin Ridley after the game) “That’s just between me and Calvin. He’ll be good.”

(On his message to the team after a game like this) “We just have to keep fighting. That’s it. We’ll see what our guys are made of. When you’re going in to battle, you want somebody to – it’s rough right now for us. You do not want guys to quit and this is the time where you get to see what guys are really like.”

(Mood in the locker room) “We know we are a better team than what we put out there today especially offensively. I can’t speak for defense. I didn’t see what they was doing out there and things like that. But I feel like defense did a great job for us today. The only thing I can speak on is the offense. I feel like we just got to do a better job at protecting the ball.”

(His take on the Saints defense and their performance tonight) “They played well. They stopped us, but, we stopped ourselves. Like I said, we gave the ball away and things like that. We just got to take better care of the ball.

(On his thoughts after not being able to score like usual through the past few weeks) “For me, it is never frustrating. I love football. I love playing with these guys week in and week out. It is just, when you do not get the results that you work hard for and things like that – I just love to go to battle for them.

LB De’Vondre Campbell

(On where the team goes from here) “We just have to keep battling.”

(What’s going on in your mind big picture) “Nah, we’re worried about tomorrow. We’re worried about next week. The only thing we can live for is tomorrow.”

(Takeaways from this game defensively) “I mean, we’re a team. It doesn’t matter how we play. Defensively we lost. We just got to go back to the drawing board and make corrections and move on.”

(On mentality to players that are upset) “Like I said earlier. We just have to keep battling. We can’t turn on each other. We a team. We win as a team, we lose as a team.”

(On the difficulty stopping the running game today) “I mean, it wasn’t difficult. They just made some plays honestly.”

(On if they were more confident playing Drew Brees due to it being the second time playing against him this year) “Man, we see him twice a year so we know him as an opponent. He’s just a great player and he made a couple great plays.”