



NEW ORLEANS  
**SAINTS**

**POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES**  
GREG BENSEL ✦ SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS**  
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2023 • CAESARS SUPERDOME**  
**SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES**

- The New Orleans Saints fell to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 26-9. The 26 points surrendered ended a franchise-record 11-game streak of giving up 20 points or loss, dating back to the 2022 season.
- With the loss, the Saints are now 2-2 overall, 1-1 at home and 1-1 in NFC South contests on the season. New Orleans returns to action on Sunday, October 8, when they take on the New England Patriots at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass. Kickoff is set for 12:00 p.m. CT.
- After the loss, New Orleans' all-time regular season record against Tampa Bay is now currently 39-24 and falls to currently 21-13 in games played in the Caesars Superdome.
- The Saints tallied 197 yards of total offense (70 rushing and 127 passing). Meanwhile, they surrendered 353 yards (239 passing and 114 rushing) to the Buccaneers. On the 114 rushing yards surrendered, New Orleans only gave up 3.5 yards per rushing attempt, a season-best.
- New Orleans converted 35.7% of its third down attempts (5-of-14) while allowing 53.3% (8-of-15).
- QB **Derek Carr** completed 23 of 37 passes for 127 yards.
- QB/TE **Taysom Hill** carried the ball four times for 10 yards, recorded one catch for seven yards and completed one pass for 13 yards.
- QB **Jameis Winston** replaced Carr late in the fourth quarter. Winston had one attempt that was an interception.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** moved into the Saints top-10 all time in receiving yards with a first-half reception, passing WR Quinn Early.
- Kamara finished the day with 33 receiving yards on 13 catches, as well as 11 carries for 51 yards.
- WR **Michael Thomas** led the Saints with 53 yards receiving on four receptions.
- WR **Rashid Shaheed** recorded three receptions for 33 yards and returned two punts for 45 yards, including a 29-yard runback.
- CB **Isaac Yiadom** recorded his second career interception late in the second quarter. It was his first as a Saint and New Orleans's fifth interception of the season. In total, he had six tackles, ranked third on the team (five solo, tied for a team-high) and two passes defended.
- New Orleans LB **Pete Werner** recorded six tackles in the first half. Werner finished the game with a tie for a team-high eight tackles.

- DE **Cameron Jordan** played in his 196<sup>th</sup> career regular season game Sunday, surpassing LB Rickey Jackson for the most contests played by a Saints defender and putting him in a tie for second all-time with K Morten Andersen.
- Jordan finished the afternoon with four total tackles.
- DL **Malcolm Roach** tied Werner for the team lead with a career-high eight tackles.
- DL **Bryan Bresee** recorded his first full career sack early in the third quarter. The 2023 first round draft pick finished the afternoon with four total tackles (three solo), including three stops for loss.
- S **Johnathan Abram** had his first career start as a Saint and finished with five tackles.
- K **Blake Grupe** was perfect on the day, nailing all three field goal attempts, including a long of 44 yards. All four of his kickoffs sailed through the end zone for touchbacks.
- LS **Zach Wood** played in his 102<sup>nd</sup> career game, moving him into a tie with DL Bruce Clark, LS Justin Drescher, WR Joe Horn and RB Wayne Wilson for 51<sup>st</sup> on the club's all-time games played list and added one assisted special teams tackle.
- P **Lou Hedley** punted four times for 162 yards with a 38.8 net punting average, with a career-high three of his punts dropping inside-the-20-yard line.



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**SAINTS HEAD COACH DENNIS ALLEN**

(Opening statement) “We got our ass beat today. Unacceptable. Obviously nobody's happy about it and we have to be better. I think we weren't converting third downs offensively, which was a challenge. I don't think we got off the field defensively. Third downs I thought our tackling was not very good, particularly in the first half. We have to execute better. There's a lot of dirty hands that are involved in that performance. Obviously, it starts with me, so I've got to make sure that we put better product out there on the field next time we show up.”

(On the struggle to be consistent offensively) “Obviously, primarily it goes to execution. It's frustrating because we're going to have to score points to win games. So far, it hasn't been good enough. So we have to figure that out.”

(On the play-calling and execution) “I think there's...when you get beat like that, you have to look at it all. If you just said it was all on the execution, then that would look like a cop out, right? So, I think we've got to be better a lot of areas.”

(On Derek Carr's shoulder during the game) “Not during the game, I didn't. He got a little sore there at the end. But there's probably a couple of throws where I felt like it might have come up a little bit short and I don't know that that was relative to the to the shoulder or not.”

(On the momentum for a bit in the second half) “We felt like we had a little something there and look... we had some drives and we had got a little momentum, a few things going and then for one reason or another, we kind of stalled out. We have to get...that has to be fixed because we have to be able to get down in the red area and we have to be able to score touchdowns when we get down there.”

(On being able to get off the field defensively on third down) “That's frustrating. Especially when you get them in longer yardage situations. I thought there was way too many times where (the) quarterback was just running around, running around, running around and buying time. It's hard to hold up in coverage for that long so we got to be better.”

(On the fumble near the end of the first half) “The point was there, get the ball just off the goal line. That was all we were trying to do get the ball off the goal line to where we could just take a knee and get out of the half. That was the plan there. Obviously, we can't have a fumble in that situation. I thought that was a huge play in the game.”

(On the officials call where they ruled on the interception that Isaac Yiadom was on the one-yard line) “I don't know the answer to that.”

(On if he felt like Carr was ready in hindsight) "I don't think there was anything in there that made me feel like you know he can't play. Did he miss some throws? Yeah, he missed some throws. Is it relevant relative (to today's game) or related to the shoulder injury? I can't tell you that. I thought we had some opportunities in the game and I don't think we took advantage of all the opportunities that we had."

(On when in the week he had decided on Carr starting) "I thought probably when he kind of went out Thursday and was able to get with the trainers and throw the ball a little bit and said he felt good. Then obviously, Friday the way he came out and threw the ball around. I didn't see anything on Friday to tell me that he wouldn't be available to play. So, kind of wanted to see how he felt on Saturday after getting a little bit of work and then make sure on Sunday."

(On how choosing Carr as the started affected the game plan) "I don't think that was a major factor in the game plan. I mean, obviously we want to get the ball to Alvin (Kamara). I thought there were some plays to be had with him. But look, overall, we didn't move the ball well enough, we didn't score enough points, we didn't stop them enough defensively."

(On the offensive identity as a concern) "It's a concern. We have to, as coaching staff, we have to do a better job of figuring out what we're going to be able to do, what we can do well and we got to be able to go out and execute those things. Because right now we're not scoring enough points and we know that and we know we have to be better at that. We'll get back and work hard to try to figure out what we can do better and how we can how we can put some points on the board."

(On how they fix the offense) "Well, let's go back and watch the tape and let's see where we made our issues, where our challenges were and what we can... Try to figure out what we can do better. It is hard to say coming right off the field. There's been some things that we've done well, I just don't think we were consistent enough."

(On when he starts to question the play-calling) "I'm not going there. We'll go and we'll look and see what we could have done better, all of us, coaches and players, and then we'll go from there."

(On Juwan Johnson not appearing in the game) "He tweaked his calf in warm ups. We kind of had him get out there through the player introductions and kind of see if he could go and it just looked like he was going to be questionable to be able to go."

(On losing players early in the game) "You kind of go into a game expecting to call a game a certain way and have certain players and to have a guy go out that early is challenging."

(On if he considered switching to Jameis Winston) "No, not until there at the end."

(On if he's surprised where they are offensively considering training camp performances) "Yeah, I don't know if I'd say I'm surprised. I think we all knew it would be a little bit of work in progress. I'm a little concerned that it hasn't been better than it's been. It has to get better and it's our job to fix it."

(On the pass rush) "Yeah, wasn't very good today. Wasn't very good last week. It needs to be better."

(On if the pass rush is the style of the team or self-imposed) "I thought there was times we were back there on the quarterback today we couldn't get him on the ground. So let me look at the tape, I'll try to see what the issues were. But I did think that there were some times we got some pressure and

made him run around a little bit. But I thought tackling was probably the thing that we did worse today, thought it was one of our worst tackling games. We had a third down and chucked the ball down to the back in the flat we're going to be able to get off the field force field goal in the red zone, miss a tackle or goes to the first down, then they end up scoring a touchdown on that on that drive. They hit 83 (Deven Thompkins) on a pass down the field and he made two or three guys miss, that created a big explosive play. I didn't feel like we tackled very well today."

(On if changing the play caller is too drastic a measure) "I don't I don't think we're even going to go down that road right now."

(On restarting the evaluation if Carr looks back and determines his shoulder was affecting him) "Yeah, potentially. That's kind of a hypothetical question right now. We'll see how he got out of the game and then we'll go from there."

(On the trouble in getting Chris Olave involved) "That's hard for me to answer right now. I'll watch the tape and see exactly what was going on. But we've been getting a lot of guys in the game and we ended up having to chuck the ball down probably more than we would have liked to. We will look at and see."

(On the offense in third and short situations) "Well, look, it's just depending on how the defense is... typically, most defenses when it's third and shorter, you're going get some single high safety guys are going to be down on the line of scrimmage and trying to take all the underneath stuff away and there's some opportunities down the field."



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**SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES**

**DE CARL GRANDERSON**

(On bouncing back after today's loss) "We are looking to far into the future. We are taking it one game at a time. The last two weeks we are 0-1. We have a short-term memory. We are going to turn it around and preparing to be 1-0 for the following week."

(On Tampa Bay's third down success) "I think Baker (Mayfield) has pretty good mobility. He was extending plays. It's more of a knock on our techniques. We weren't staying in our gaps. They are going to take advantage of it when you give a mobile quarterback those lanes. We have to be more gap disciplined."

(On looking forward to next week) "There are teams that are 0-14 and they have to look forward to the next one. You have to play it. Fortunately, we are 2-2 and not even 0-4. Even if we were 0-4, you can still be 13-4 at the end of the year. We are focusing on going 1-0 every week. It's a blessing every opportunity we get to take the field. Your film is your resume. Today we didn't (put) out what we wanted to on film. We have a bunch of more opportunities to do that and I believe that we will."

**WR MICHAEL THOMAS**

(On the offensive struggles) "That's something where we need to watch the film and correct the mistakes."

(On if they thought they'd be more explosive in the second half) "Of course. That was non-negotiable that we have to go out there and get things going. We knew what the assignment was. We just came up short and failed to execute."

(On the red zone struggles) "We need to have a little bit more sense of urgency and figure out ways to get better. We have to have a sense of urgency always. We have to have a high level of focus. This is our opportunity to fix our mistakes. Sometimes things don't go our way, but we have got to find ways to get better."

(On the frustration level) "It's very frustrating. We don't prepare to lose. No one in this building does. Our coach gives us our assignment and we know exactly what we have to focus on week in and week out. He also tells us whoever makes the least mistakes is going to win the game. That's true. We made a couple of mistakes. We can't turn the ball over against a team like that. We just have to find ways to get better. Guys have to make more plays. As leaders, we take ownership and accountability for it."

## **DE CAMERON JORDAN**

(On getting more turnovers) "It's frustrating that we aren't getting more turnovers. I think we are collapsing the pockets. We are getting hands on the quarterback, but they are not becoming sacks. With the pressures, they will come. You just have to keep on drilling. You have to keep on hitting. You have to keep on giving more. At the end of the day, it's not about what we've done, it's about what can we give."

(On what you can learn from a game like this) "In a game like this, there was an opportunity in the third quarter where the defense took the field and there was a three and out. You have to be able to do that every time. If you don't allow points to be put on the board, then they can't win. We let points go (on the scoreboard) in the first half. That's on us. We had hands on a collapsing pocket on the quarterback (Baker Mayfield). The collapsing pocket wasn't getting him down. He was able to get the ball out however it may be. He made some great plays worthy of him being a former number one overall pick. Kudos to him. I think there was significant pressure on him. We just have to go back to the film and see what happens."

(On third downs) "I think that the first half when you limit a team to minimal points you have to take advantage. I think that end zone interception should have been a touch back, but nobody cares about coulda woulda shoulda. You leave it up to humans and there will be human error. At the end of the day, we have to find the way to win the games you are supposed to win."

## **S TYRANN MATHIEU**

(On getting things going on defense when the offense is struggling) "For the most part, it's a pressure that you invite. Obviously, we take great pride in helping our offense out. I feel like for the most part that the games are tight and then defensively we miss a tackle or give up a touchdown. Now, we are looking at two score game. I think defensively we have our fair share of responsibility."

(On the frustration of the loss) "It's tough. Obviously, these are two games we feel like we should have one. Coming into both of those games I felt like we were the better team. It's the NFL, so you have to find a way to show up and minimize your mistakes. Defensively, we have to find a way to take the football away and execute. Obviously, those guys executed better than us."

(On Baker Mayfield's ability to escape) "The last three weeks we have been playing quarterbacks that aren't stationary. They are guys that can move the pocket and find rush lanes. We just have to do a better job defensively. We are playing tight coverage on the back end, so those guys are going to have more time to hold the ball. Last week at Green Bay (Jordan) Love was able to extend some drives with his legs. We just have to find a way to match that coverage and match that front and play well enough for four quarters."

## **QB DEREK CARR**

(On if he was 100% today) "I don't think anyone is 100% after week one. There is no excuse for us playing the way that we did today. We have to be better and we will be better."

(On if the shoulder injury affected some throws) "I don't know if it is that or me trying to get more practice reps. Whatever I have to do, then I'll do it. I just don't want the shoulder to be an excuse for the way that we executed today."

(On the biggest detriment today) “There’s a couple of things that we talked about as an offense. Obviously, you know how I am. I keep a lot of those things in close. I felt like the second half we came in with the right mindset of how poorly we did in the first half. This is what we are going to do and this is how we are going to do it. We just need to play consistently right now. It’s too inconsistent as far as the standard that we set for ourselves. The inconsistency is not going to get you a lot of wins in this league especially against a good team like that. We have to get it right and right now. Yes, there is a lot of football ahead. Yes, there is a lot of games. Our focus is right now. We have to fix it now.”

(On if he is surprised by the offense struggling like this through four games) “Yes, very, but we will get it right.”

(On what hasn’t clicked for him so far) “You know me. I keep them conversations and corrections in close. For me, I can say there are a couple of things that we have talked about that we are addressing, are going to work at and get better. It’s not like we don’t know. We are locked in We are focused. We have got to get better, but we have got to get better faster at this pace.”

(On what he expects from the leadership this week) “We are going to bring it. We are already talking about it. Fresh after you want to address...how was the week? How was the game? All of the things that we talked about. I expect us to come ready to work.”

(On having Alvin Kamara back) “Absolutely, Alvin is an unbelievable player. I just wish I could have gotten it to him in different ways or better. He is fun to watch play.”





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**BUCCANEERS HEAD COACH TODD BOWLES**

(On the defensive performance) “They played great and did a heck of a job punching the ball out right there. We didn’t play well Monday night, and we wanted to come back and regain ourselves. A lot of guys stepped up for injured guys. A lot of injured guys played and they played well as a group and as a team. I thought it was a great team win for us.”

(On Mike Evans’ injury) “Not yet. (Mike Evans) just tweaked it (hamstring) right now. We will see how serious it is or isn’t once we get out of here and once they run some more tests on it. I thought the guys that came in, stepped up – (Deven) Thompkins, Trey (Palmer), (Rakim) Jarrett – all those guys stepped up in the decision.”

(On the aggressive offensive play calling) “We wanted to be a lot more aggressive. We were trying to take what they gave us. If they crowded for the run, we threw it. If they tried to take away the pass, we ran it. It was a good balance with that.”

(On preparing for the Saints QB whether it would be Derek Carr or Jameis Winston) “No, because the scheme is the scheme. They both can throw the ball pretty well. We kind of knew what the offense was with (Alvin) Kamara coming back. It’s a very talented group over there. We know we have to see them again.”

(On being 3-1 going into the bye) “It’s great to come back with a win. Again, it’s only the first quarter of the season. 3-1 is good, better than 1-3. We have to get some guys nursed up. We have to scheme some things up, iron some things out there, but we are morphing into kind of a physical tough team that’s hard to beat. We just have to continue that without the mistakes.”

(On the performance of Baker Mayfield) “Tough. He made some throws – long ones and short ones. He made some throws. He stayed away from sacks for the most part, almost gave away a pick, but it came incomplete. We did not count that one. He played a heck of a ballgame. Baker is tough. He fits in here. He understands the offense very well. The guys love to play for him. He works for us.”

(On his concern with the hit Mayfield took early in the game) “You’re always concerned when your quarterback gets hit. He’s tough. He got up, and he fought it out. He’s got two weeks. Hopefully, he can heal up and a lot of other guys, too.”

(On the penalties) “Definitely, always too much for our liking, but they fought. They weren’t going to play a perfect game. There were some penalties that happened that they called that we can’t do anything about, but we can get better at that going forward.”

(On the intensity of this NFC South matchup emotionally) “I thought the older guys did a great job all week, trying to keep things under wraps. Tristan (Wirfs) is not old, but he’s a vet and has played down here along with Lavonte (David), Devin (White), Baker (Mayfield), Mike (Evans), Chris (Godwin). Those kinds of guys did a lot of good things, not having the young guys worried about making mistakes and looking back. We made a mistake; we played full speed. They played through them, and we came out on top.”



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**BUCCANEERS PLAYER QUOTES**

**QB BAKER MAYFIELD**

(On the first half play where he was almost injured) “It was pretty scary to be honest with you. Just getting pinned down was a scary moment; and, obviously, a late hit kind of on top of that. Luckily, it wasn’t worse than it was, so thank God for that.”

(On the game plan to attack the Saints defense) “Yeah, just take advantage of one-on ones (and) just trusting our guys. I think you saw that throughout the game. Obviously, it was unfortunate to lose Mike (Evans) during the game, but our young guys are playing well. I think you saw that first hand. Chris (Godwin) stepped up in a big way. I still need to get him a touchdown. I underthrew him right before the half. It was just a bad throw on the interception; and, on that late fade ball right before we scored to DT (Deven Thompkins), just trying to get into the end zone. Everybody is playing well.”

(On his good play this season) “It’s a great team. Everybody is on the same page. Everybody is doing their job. It comes down to little details when you’re playing against a good team like that. Obviously, you would like to have that one throw back today. That was a physical error. That wasn’t anything mental. It was just a bad throw. We can correct those.”

(On what this does for the team’s confidence to be 3-1 entering the bye week) “It’s good for us. An early bye...it’s going to be a grind down the stretch for us, but looking at how we are at injury-wise, it’s coming at a good time. Momentum-wise, having a good division win against a good, physical opponent, this couldn’t have come at a better time for us.”

(On how the team adapts to find a way to move the ball after an injury happens) “It comes down to everybody paying attention in meetings, practice, the next man up mentality and everybody being on the same page when it comes down (to it). Everybody is on the same page no matter who is in there. You have to know your job and do it at a high level. Our young guys did that at the same time today as our veterans.”

(On the offense getting into a groove) “We were finally able to get into a groove. It’s just a matter of us getting that first drive going. The first one, I think, was a six play drive. We hurt ourselves a little bit. We were finally able to get into a rhythm. That’s when we can dial it up. The guys were on the same page. You see all the different, unique plays, but we practice those. We just have to be able to do the simple little things right to be able to get into that rhythm.”

(On scrambling more today) “There was a couple (plays) there. Early on in the game, Thad Lewis pointed out that they (Saints) are not accounting for me. That last third down right before Chase

(McLaughlin) hit the long field goal, Dave (Canales) was telling me that we just need five yards right here, so we were looking for, obviously, to convert the first down and just getting it into field goal range. Chase has been consistent for us, so just getting him into range.”

(On if he takes it personally if the defense does not account for him) “No, I don’t take it personally. I’m not the athlete that our skill players are. I know better than that.”

(On what the 3-1 record says about the Bucs) “It shows the accountability within our building, knowing when to do your job and not letting any outside noise affect us. So, now the narrative is going to flip. We have to keep that mindset even more so. We can’t change whether people are patting you on the back or talking trash about you. We’ve known all along what we have in the building. We have been saying that since the offseason. We just have to keep getting better and better. That was the first complementary football game that we’ve had. It was a good one.”

(On winning without Mike Evans in a tough division rivalry and what it says about the team) “We are never out of the fight. I think that we are a team with very strong-minded men; and just (our coaching) staff in general, they are going to put people in position to win and make plays. I just can’t say enough about our defense at the same time. Nine points against that offense as well; that’s incredible. And, they had Alvin (Kamara) back as well, so kudos to our guys on the defensive side of the ball. We just played well as a unit.”

(On putting up points against the stout Saints defense) “Today shows us that if we do the little things right, what we are capable of doing. I mentioned it after the Eagles game, that’s a very good defense as well. We missed it on that one. We didn’t do the little things right. A good defense is going to take advantage of it, but, today, it was a different story.”

(On what it was like witnessing the division rivalry) “Obviously, not having Mike (Evans) there, I think there was a little less drama, but there was still some trash talk going back and forth. You love it. It is a passionate rivalry, whether they (Saints) want to say it or not. It is a physical game when we play New Orleans.”

## **WR CHRIS GODWIN**

(On what he does and how his role changes after Mike Evans exits the game) “It doesn’t really change my role too much. I think more than anything else, it provides opportunities for the younger guys in our room. They did a phenomenal job stepping up and making the plays that came their way. It’s no surprise to us or anyone else on the team. They work their asses off, so I couldn’t be happier for them.”

(On Deven Thompkins) “DT is probably one of the more explosive people that I have ever been around. Day in and day out, he does some things that, I look at him, and I’m like....”

(On breaking the Saints streak of not allowing more than 20 points in 11 straight game) “I didn’t know that, to be honest. I guess it’s a cool thing. For us, I think it’s more important that we got the win. It’s a big divisional game, especially coming in here in a hostile environment and getting the victory. It is three straight (against them), so I think we are doing some pretty good things. It is still a lot of room for improvement.”

(On the team's confidence and leading the division) "If we were listening to everything that everyone outside of the building was saying, why even strap it up? I think the good thing about the people that we have in our building is that we are only worried about what we can control. We understand that we have to go out there and play the games. It's up to us. We have to go out and put the work in and then go out and prove it on the field. Through the first month of the season, being 3-1, I think it's a good spot. Like I said, I think we have a lot of room for improvement, but I am excited about where we are going."

(On Baker Mayfield) "He's a fighter. (He's got) a ton of resilience. I think that he has been a great fit for us. You see him making plays scrambling. He takes some big shots and pops back up. I think that he is a leader, and I think that he loves ball, and I think that that permeates through him. It's infectious for guys on the team. It makes the offensive line want to block more. It makes us want to run our routes a little bit harder and give him a chance because we know that he is going to extend the play as much as he can to give us a chance. I am happy to have him."