



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## GREEN BAY PACKERS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2024 • LAMBEAU FIELD

- New Orleans fell to Green Bay 34-0, pushing their record to 5-10 on the season. The Saints will return to action next Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup> against the Las Vegas Raiders in their last home game of the season at Caesars Superdome. Kickoff is scheduled for noon C.T. and will be aired regionally on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 locally).
- Rookie QB **Spencer Rattler** got the start for New Orleans and finished 15-of-30 for 153 yards and added five carries for 28 yards on the ground.
- TE **Foster Moreau** led New Orleans in receiving yardage with two grabs for 33 yards (16.5 avg).
- TE **Juwan Johnson** added two receptions for 27 yards.
- WR/KR **Dante Pettis** was efficient in the return game again for New Orleans, adding two kick returns for 70 yards (35.0 avg). Offensively, he added two receptions for 31 yards.
- LB **Demario Davis** played in his 112<sup>th</sup> game as a Saint and is now 38<sup>th</sup> all-time in Saints record books for games played, surpassing G/T Andrus Peat.
- Davis had a game-high ten tackles (six solo), pushing his season total to 114. It marked the fifth time in his previous seven seasons that he has reached at least 110 stops and the ninth time in his 13-year playing career.
- LB **Pete Werner** added nine stops (three solo).
- DT **Khalen Saunders** posted four stops, one tackle for loss and a career-high two passes defended.
- With his assisted special teams tackle Monday night on kickoff coverage, DB **J.T. Gray** has a career-high and team-leading 25 special teams tackles on the season. He is the first Saint to reach 25 since Saints Hall of Famer and current vice president of player development Fred McAfee had 30 in 2005.
- DE **Cameron Jordan's** played in his 224<sup>th</sup> career game Monday night, tying him for 15<sup>th</sup> all-time among NFL defensive linemen with Ed (Too Tall) Jones, Jerry Hughes, Carl Hairston and Kevin Carter.

- Jordan added five stops (three solo) and one tackle for loss.
- P **Matthew Hayball** was effective in pinning Green Bay deep, punting four times for 159 yards including three downed inside the 20-yard line.
- LS **Zach Wood** played in his 130<sup>th</sup> career game on Monday night, moving into a tie for 27<sup>th</sup> in NFL record books on the club's games played list with LB Joe Federspiel.

## **NEW ORLEANS SAINTS INTERIM HEAD COACH DARREN RIZZI:**

(on the game) "Yeah guys obviously an extremely disappointing night. We came in here with a plan on how we thought we could win the game and we really didn't accomplish any of those goals. We obviously lost the turnover battle, which is number one. Number two we really felt like we had to have a fast start to the game because that is something they had done very very well, and then the last thing was to win the line of scrimmage. We didn't do that on either side of the football. We didn't obtain that, coaches or players, so naturally very disappointed in the overall result. Surely not what I expected in the least, but we had a lot of self-inflicted wounds in the first half. For two weeks in a row we only had 14 or 15 plays again in the first half and dug ourselves a hole, and couldn't get off the field defensively and couldn't convert and continue to sustain success on offense. We played a little bit better in the second half, but listen you come away with no points you have zero chance to win the game. Overall like I said, just a disappointing day. We have to look to rebound with a short week here so it is going to come quick like I just said to the team. We have to make sure we lock back in and get ready to go."

(on if New Orleans was flat tonight) "I think we did it to ourselves in a lot of ways. I mean we had them in third and long two different times in the first quarter and jumped offsides on both of them to give them a third and short situation. Our goal was to get these guys into some third and longs. That is something they hadn't done a great job with and when we did get them finally into those situations we didn't and offensively we obviously turned the ball over twice. Again, we had some self-inflicted. We jumped offsides a couple times. A lot of it we did to ourselves. There were some spurts, they were short spurts unfortunately, where we did some good things, but overall just not good enough. I am still very very proud of our effort. It wasn't a competitive game, not by the score whatsoever, but I didn't see a lack of effort or anything like that on the field."

(on C/G Erik McCoy) "He tried to come back and play and just felt like he wasn't going to be able to function, like he normally functions. So that is why. It had nothing to do with the score. It doesn't matter what the score was. He was going to come out. He tried to come back, but he just wasn't feeling full strength in that arm."

(on QB Spencer Rattler) "Listen, there were some good moments, but just overall you can't turn the ball over like I said. You saw some flash plays. I thought he made a couple of really good plays, but then he made a couple of really bad decisions. But like I said we didn't help him, but we didn't help him much. So I think it was an overall team situation. We dropped some passes. We dropped some balls on him which could have helped us and made the overall game look a lot better and maybe make his performance look better. So I will have to watch the film and re-evaluate it, but we missed some pass protections in the first half. The fumble in the first half we blew a pass protection so a guy comes free so the whole play kind of gets blown up and we make it worse by turning it over. So it certainly wasn't all on him."

(on the fumble near halftime) "Yeah what happened there was if you go back and watch the play both covering officials ruled the clock stopped. I had asked the covering official if the clock was going to remain stopped. I got a yes and I turned back to talk to the offensive coaches to talk about our plan there and what we were going to do there at the end of the half and then they decided that they had fumbled the ball forward and it just wasn't communicated to me that the clock had restarted. We lost some precious valuable time there. So that is what happened."

(on needing the defense to play well) "I would say this, it doesn't matter who is playing. We have to do a better job of stopping the run. Naturally I think we gave up 190 yards rushing on five and a half yards a carry so regardless of who is playing on offense and regardless of who is out there it just isn't good enough. We dressed the 48 guys that we dressed. We aren't going to make excuses. You guys know me well enough by now. We aren't going to make excuses about that. We didn't perform well enough. As I just said to the players we can allow excuses to creep in, and we all know the guys we are missing. I got it, but we had 48 professional football players out there today just like they did, and they didn't play very well; and we didn't coach very well. The whole thing just wasn't very good."

(on missing so many guys on offense) "Well, certainly if there are different pieces out there the game might look a little bit different naturally. I understand the question, but at the same time we will evaluate that. If there are balls we thought should have been caught or protections that should have been had, things like that, that's not going to be on the quarterback. It is not all-encompassing. Sometimes it certainly can be skewed. Like I said I

thought he (Rattler) had a couple of good passes, but he also made a couple of poor decisions. Those will get evaluated on an individual basis.”

(on RB Kendre Miller) “I think the way the game played out we dug such a hole. I think we had a plan for Kendre coming in. We got into a lot of two-minute drill and things like that and so I think that is why you saw more of Jordan Mims there because just the way the game played out. We got out of a lot of regular down and distance situations. Once we got into a three-score situation we had to be in a little bit of two-minute mode so that is why you saw all those guys get reps there, Jordan, Jamaal (Williams) and Kendre.”

(on if RB Kendre Miller isn't ready for two minute offense) ”No, I am not saying that. Our game plan for this particular game didn't play out the way we wanted it to.”

(on being physical) “I think defensively some of the old problems that we had maybe earlier in the middle of season kind of crept back. We had done a really good job on run defense in the last couple of games particularly versus the Giants and the Commanders, but these are some of the things that we saw prior to that game. Some of the runs, some of the missed tackles, some of the yards after contact. Listen, Josh Jacobs is a phenomenal player. I am not taking anything away from him. He is one of the best guys in the league at yards after contact. Overall, their entire rushing performance is not a good formula for success for us. Anytime a team rushes the ball 37 times at 5 and a half yards per carry like I said it doesn't really matter who is on the other side of the ball. It is not going to be a good formula. We have to find a way to get that corrected.”

(on being eliminated from the playoffs) “I never felt like that. Since the day I took over we were on a seven game losing streak. It would have been easier for a lot of players and veteran guys especially to checkout and I never felt that. To be honest with you I thought it was a great prep week. We had a great walk through last night. I felt like we were locked in. We just didn't perform well. Sometimes in this league it is going to happen where you don't have a good performance. I never felt like our guys are looking down the road and not giving effort because of our playoff status. I never felt like that one time during this time I've taken over. I didn't feel that tonight. I feel like we got outcoached and out-executed. That's the way it is.”

(on finishing the season) “This counts for one loss. That's what it counts for. We have to go back to doing the things we have been doing well this last month or so and understand that is how we are going to climb back and come back and try to get a win this week. Listen, we have a lot of younger players playing right now, which is no secret. So to be able to evaluate those guys from the quarterback right on through all the rest of the positions. So there are a lot of guys out there that are playing for something. I have not witnessed one time, we have made plenty of mistakes, but effort wasn't one of them. I have never felt like that and in my mind that wouldn't be any different this coming week.”

(on if there is any progress with Derek's hand the last couple days) “Yeah there was. He actually started to get some grip strength back and functionally back in the hand, but it just wasn't good enough again for this week. The players' day off this week is going to be Christmas Day. We will be in shortly tomorrow, and then Christmas Day will be the day off, then we will resume practice again Thursday so it will be a couple more days to see where he is at, but there was an improvement this week. It certainly was a better week than the previous one. So we will kind of play it and see where he is come Thursday.”

(on DT Nathan Shepherd pre-game) “He had a very unique situation. We were at the hotel and about to leave and come over here and he was dealing with something with his eye. He got down here and was able to see the doctors and the trainers and it was just a situation where he had pain in his eye and he really couldn't wear his contacts or see very well so we made the decision, it was a last minute thing. I just found out as we were getting on the buses to come down here. Just an unfortunate situation so we made a decision because we had a couple of defensive tackles who were going to be inactive anyway and so we made the decision to activate somebody else because he wasn't going to be a full go. He had some problems seeing and he had some pain in his eye.”

(on if that is something that can linger into next week) “I was told by the medical staff that it should be short term, but it was certainly unfortunate timing for tonight.”

(on WR Marquez Valdes-Scantling not playing) "It was more about the injury. The illness definitely prohibited him from the rehab process and definitely prohibited him from practicing and so we just with the whole equation there felt like it was in his best interest not to play tonight because he missed a lot of practice time because of both."

### **QUARTERBACK SPENCER RATTLER:**

(on what he took away from the game) "Just an embarrassing, embarrassing loss. I put it on myself. I played not good at all in my opinion, I just didn't have any answers. Got to go make more plays. Protect the ball and just got to be better."

(on his turnovers) "I've got to throw the first one away quicker on the screen and then, you know. Second one trying to make a play. It was a clean setup, just got to feel that corner sinking off and progress or just run it."

(on losing C/G Erik McCoy and OL Lucas Patrick) "Yeah I mean it's tough seeing guys go down. Erik, Lucas, especially Lucas you know, there at the end in junk time. You never want to see any of your guys go down. Credit to him for trying to come back and battle. Credit to the whole O-line for battling. Everybody on the offensive side battling all night. We didn't just lay down and quit. Just an embarrassing game."

(on slow starts to games) "I mean we've just got to figure it out. We've got two weeks to figure it out. At this point, just go out there and try to make plays and try to get a win. Personally, I haven't gotten to get a taste of a win starting any games. Hopefully we'll be able to. I know these guys in this locker room. This team is not just going to lay down and quit. We're going to come back to work and just grind and finish this season out, but it's tough. It's a really good team that we just played. They had a great scheme."

(on just trying to go out and win) "I think that's the biggest thing. Leave a good taste in fan's mouths. In our mouths. Finishing out the season. We've got to get right this week. I put that on myself. It starts with me. I've got to come to work and expect to play at a high level. If you told me a couple days ago this is what it was going to look like today, I would have said you're crazy. We had a great week, but this is a great lesson for learning for us as a group. Our leaders, I know they will keep preaching the right message. As a young guy, I keep following along and try to be one of those leaders as well."

(on missing so many players) "It's part of the game. This was a tough loss. Obviously, having a lot of new pieces in there, a lot of different guys, but our expectation is to try to get it done with anybody. Throughout the week, I'm confident in my guys always. Everybody. None of them lay down and quit. They all fight hard and that's what you've got to respect about them. We've just got to get it done."

(on moving forward after being eliminated from the playoffs) "I think Double D (Demario Davis) said it perfect to us right now. You've got to play for something bigger than the scoreboard. You've got to play for something that means more. Play for your pride. Play for your teammates, your brothers. You don't want to go out there and lay down and I know these guys won't. I know we'll get back to work after Christmas and try to shrink together a good week. It's a short week, so we've got to get a win in the dome."

(on the impact of the weather on the game) "I don't think the weather affected us. I think we came out in pregame and felt good. I think we got outplayed. We got punched in the mouth. Plain and simple."

### **GREEN BAY PACKERS HEAD COACH MATT LaFLEUR:**

(on the game) "I was really proud of our guys tonight. We talked about playing a complete game for four quarters, and I felt for the most part we did what we needed to do. Obviously, it's hard to shut out an opponent in this league, and from what I was told that was the first one this season, so I was really proud of our defense. It was big of Zayne Anderson, a guy like him to step in his first start and he gets a pick. And really on short notice with Evan (Williams) going down. I think it was on Saturday's practice... Really cool to be able to give Mark Murphy a game ball on his night. Have a lot of respect for Mark and how he leads this organization and how he treats people. I think he does it the right way. He's first class all the way. Obviously, I'm forever grateful to him for giving me this opportunity to stand in front of you all. So, it wasn't a perfect game, but it never is, so that's always fun for us as coaches to be able to get after these guys a little bit. There are some things we can clean up, and we have a big test next week to go on the road on a short week with the holiday is never easy. Especially going into Minnesota. It's one of the tougher places to play against a team that's playing as good as anybody in the National Football League, so we have to flip the script here pretty quickly and get on to the Vikings."

(on how quickly they move on to focus on Minnesota) "You move pretty quickly, and our guys over the last two days our assistant coaches definitely have been getting ahead just in that down time. Basically, after our walk through yesterday and then you have all day today to study the tape just so that you can kind of hit the ground running tomorrow morning."

(on making the playoffs and how if the team is trending in the right direction) "Yeah, I would say so. What's really cool is you are getting contributions from a lot of different people. I think that is usually the mark of a good team. You have to stay healthy and continue to build on what you've done. I love the energy of our group. Our guys show up ready to work, willing to work every day, and we have to continue to push one another to be at our best because this is the time when you need to be playing your best ball."

(on Jordan Love taking care of the ball and taking what the defense is giving him) "Yeah, he did a great job. I think it was on our second drive. It was like a 20-play drive or something like that. On one of the plays in particular, we didn't block anybody up front and just his ability to hit a check down is just things that keep you on schedule. That gives you a chance to stay ahead of the sticks. It's little plays like that that make a big difference, and I think he's playing at an elite level right now."

(on the Packers taking care of business against a short-handed opponent) "Yeah, I mean we did what we needed to do. Certainly, they were definitely short-handed on the offensive side of the ball. Obviously, when you don't have a lot of your star players available, that makes it difficult. But I think, if you look at how they've been playing defensively, especially over the last five weeks, that's a stingy group and they are tough to go against. I thought we came out of the gates the way we needed to. We weren't getting a ton of explosive plays. They make you earn it. They can challenge you. I thought they did a good job of playing off of some tendencies they may have had on tape. I know Joe Woods, I have a lot of respect for him. I think he's one of the better coaches in this league, and he was keeping us off balance quite a bit."

(on scoring 30 points in five straight games and how they can get better) "Score every time you touch the ball. Score touchdowns. I mean, there was a lot of good things. There were certainly some things that were frustrating in the second half. Obviously, I didn't love that pseudo two-minute drive at the end of the first half. We didn't capitalize on that and had a three-and-out and had to punt. And then there were a couple mishaps in the second half. I thought they did a good job of getting (to) Jordan when we decided to throw the ball. Like I said, they played a little bit more man coverage in the second half and made it a little more difficult just to get explosive plays. But ultimately, it just was one of those where you felt pretty comfortable with a lead, and you weren't going to get too crazy, and we did what we had to do running the football."

(on pulling Josh Jacobs out of the game) "Yeah, I think, I mean he (Josh Jacobs) wanted to go back in, but there was no need for it and I actually told him at half time, I was like, 'hey, we'll give you another series in the second half, but I want to get you out. Just it being a short week' and get him ready to roll for Minnesota."

(on Christian Watson's injury) "There's some concern there, certainly. We're going to get some more testing done tomorrow and hopefully I'll have an answer for you tomorrow."

(on if Josh Jacobs's performance wows him) "Yeah, all the time. I mean, there's a lot of plays that are blocked for minimal gains and he (Josh Jacobs) just somehow keeps on going. He's obviously got great contact balance and can make you miss and can run through a lot of tackles and he's always finishing forward. He does it not only in the run game, but he's been a big weapon for us in the passing game as well."

(on the team's reaction to Josh Jacobs' stiff arm play) "Everybody gets excited. Obviously, I've got to call a play, so I can't get too excited. You just kind of like go on to the next play. I think, you get a chance, at least I do, when I go watch tape and I definitely have more of an appreciation for it."

(on Devonte Wyatt's performance) "Yeah, he's (Devonte Wyatt) done a nice job. That's obviously going to be critical movement forward. Anytime you can get a pass rush with your front forward, it allows you to play coverage and makes it extremely difficult on the offense. So, hopefully we can continue to build upon that. I think our D-line has gotten better as the season has progressed, as have many positions."

(on the status of Jaire Alexander's injury) "Just didn't feel like he's quite there yet."

(on the concern around Evan William's injury) "There's concern. I would think that he's going to be out a period of time, but nothing like long term. It's just one of those deals and it's unfortunate. I think it happened in the first play of practice and it just pulled up and I know he's bummed, because it's the second time it's happened to him. But he'll persevere and we'll hopefully get him back. Hopefully in time for the playoffs."

### **QUARTERBACK JORDAN LOVE:**

(on if he was playing conservative intentionally in the first half and if that's part of his learning process from earlier in the season) "That's every play in every game, trying to be smart and decisive with the ball and just finding those completions out there. But I think that's every play I'm trying to do that."

(on what it means to reach the playoffs) "It's big time. That's something that, obviously, the goal is Super Bowl, so that's the first step right there is making the playoffs. Obviously, this was a big-time game to clinch that spot and I'm proud of the way we came out here and handled business. It was big-time."

(on if he likes the way the offense is trending) "Definitely. I think any time you can put up that many points is a good way to go out on offense, but I still think there's a lot more points out there for us, a lot more big-time plays and still just some stuff that we're not hitting on. I think there's a lot more out there, like I said."

(on what impresses him most about their running back group) "It's a good group all around. I think everyone had a touchdown in that group tonight, so I think that's always fun when all those guys can get touchdowns and get those opportunities to get some touches. Obviously, Josh (Jacobs) is the main guy in that group and then to have Emanuel (Wilson) and Chris (Brooks) be able to come in, and they had some big-time runs tonight too, breaking tackles and just those second-effort plays, which goes unnoticed, but it's a really good group that we're going to need to lean on."

(on if Josh Jacobs still 'wows' Love and his teammates, like the long run on the first drive) "That run you talked about with the stiff arm was pretty unbelievable. I was just watching from the back and like you said, he wows me every time he's on the field and the plays he makes and just being able to break tackles, make guys miss and he might turn kind of a broken play into a big-time play like that. I thought he was going to score on that play. I think he was mad at himself that he didn't, but that was a great play by him."

(on what the vibe in the huddle is when Jacobs runs with such aggression early in the game) "He definitely is the workhorse for us and he definitely brings that juice with the way he runs the ball, so I think (if) he can keep doing that, I'm definitely excited about that. Like I said before, he can do it all. He can make guys miss, run guys over, stiff arm guys, so I haven't seen anything he can't do yet."

(on what kind of confidence the recent defensive performance gives them) "A lot of confidence. We've noticed all along that the defense is a lot different this year and they've been making some big-time plays all year long,

but any time you can hold somebody to 0 points in the National Football League is pretty awesome, so like (the) offense, I think they're trending in the right direction and making a lot of big-time plays, and we're going to need a lot more of that next week."

(on how he would describe the play of the offensive line) "They're playing good. Any time you can run the ball the way we're running the ball, it obviously is a testament to the O-line, and then in the pass game, another game (with) no sacks, so they're playing really well as a unit. They're going out there and handling business. There's a lot that's put on their plate with protections and different things that we do, and they're doing a great job. We're going to need to keep leaning on them, just like I said, with the run game, but pass game they've been great."

(on if Love was OK taking the short pass to Tucker Kraft on the fourth-down play instead of the longer throw to Christian Watson) "It's one of those ones that I missed. I came out, I felt the corner grabbing Tucker, and my eyes went to Christian. And right when my eyes went over there, I felt the corner just take off running and I couldn't really tell where the safety was or if there was anybody over the top behind him, so I didn't really get a good look at it. It was definitely one that I missed. Definitely would've wished to be able to just lob a pass over the top and Christian could score a touchdown. Happy with the first down on fourth down right there, but there was a much bigger play out there that we missed, so I'm disappointed in that."

(on how Malik Willis has impressed him this season) "Malik's been awesome, you know, obviously the games he's started, came in and played phenomenal. We all know what Malik's about, we know what he's going to do when he gets in the game. Like you said, I mean, to come in – I've been there – when you come in cold, and haven't played and haven't really warmed up all game, to be able to drop a dime right there, I believe that was fourth down too, to Jay(den) Reed, that was a great play. We all know what Malik's about. Whenever he gets his opportunities, he goes out there and makes the most of them, so no surprise there."

(on how big he views the upcoming game against Minnesota) "It's a very big game. Division game and obviously we lost to them earlier in the season, so one of these games that we got to get back. We have to go win this game. We talked about it earlier, but we have to be able to beat these good teams. The Vikings are a very good team and we have to be able to go into their place and handle business. It starts with the work we put in throughout the week and get the good game plan going. We definitely owe these guys and we'll be motivated to go play them."

(on how the work week goes this week and the difficulty of preparing for the Vikings defense) "They definitely do a lot on defense, so it's one of those games you have to try to watch as much film as possible, see all the different looks and just be prepared for whatever they might throw at us. But like you said, the first game we played them, we'll go back and watch that and I'm sure there will be a lot of stuff to learn from and kind of get a bead on them. But they're a good defense, they do a good job at disguising coverages, blitzing and just bringing pressure. And obviously, generating a lot of turnovers, so it's a good test for us."

(on if he thinks they played four good quarters in all three phases) "I think, collectively, as a whole, I do think we played a complete four-quarter game, but I definitely think there's so much more out there. Especially on offense, second half, I do think we didn't take advantage of some of the opportunities we had. I think we'll look at film and there will be a lot of stuff to clean up, but I think just playing off each other and the defense, obviously having that shutout and getting us the ball back multiple times helped out. But yeah, I think we played a four-quarter game, but I still think there's a lot out there for us."

(on how they get to the next step as a team) "Like I've said before, it's being consistent. I don't think we're far off. I think we're right there. I think it might just be a missed throw here, not being able to hold up a protection long enough, I just think it's little things that you know, when we start being more consistent and dialing in on these things, the sky's the limit for the offense. We're definitely not far off, it's just little things that we can clean up. I'm sure I'll be disappointed to be able to look at film and see those little things that could've been even a bigger score on offense here for this game."



