



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS AT TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS SUNDAY, DEC. 7, 2025 • RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- The Saints defeated the Buccaneers 24-20 on Sunday, improving their overall record to 3-10 and 41-27 against the Buccaneers. They return to action on Sunday when they host the Carolina Panthers at the Caesars Superdome at 3:25 p.m. CT. The contest will be regionally televised on FOX (locally on WVUE FOX 8).
- New Orleans snapped the Buccaneers three-game winning streak in the series, tied the season series up at 1-1 and brought the Saints divisional record to 2-2.
- The victory also gives them a 20-11 record in the series in games played in Tampa Bay and a 16-9 record for games played in Raymond James Stadium.
- QB **Tyler Shough** finished 13-of-20 for 144 yards through the air with one interception to go with seven carries for 55 yards rushing and two touchdowns on the ground, including a career-long 34-yard rush for a score. Shough executed the first fourth quarter game-winning drive of his career, when with the score tied 17-17, he drove New Orleans down the field 53 yards on nine plays, ending with a 13-yard rushing touchdown. In addition to the rushing touchdown, Shough completed three-of-four passes for 36 yards.
- It was the first time a Saints rookie QB rushed for two touchdowns since Archie Manning on 10/17/71 vs. Dallas and the second time overall. The 55 yards rushing are also the most in franchise history by a rookie QB.
- Rookie RB **Devin Neal** added 19 carries for 70 yards and his first career touchdown to go along with one grab for 14 yards.
- With Neal and Shough accounting for 125 yards rushing, it was the highest total by a Saints rookie group since RBs Alvin Kamara and Trey Edmunds accounted for 154 yards rushing and two touchdowns at Buffalo on 11/12/17.
- TE **Juwan Johnson** posted four receptions for 38 yards.
- TE **Foster Moreau** added one catch for 16 yards. It was his 150th reception of his career.
- WR **Chris Olave** recorded three grabs for 30 yards.
- WR **Devaughn Vele** added three receptions for 40 yards including two key third down receptions late in the fourth quarter.
- The Saints defense surrendered only 301 total net yards, including 122 net passing yards and forced Tampa Bay in three-of-13 on third down and two-of-seven on fourth down, forcing them

off the field in five fourth down attempts.

- LB **Demario Davis** totaled seven stops (four solo)
- LB **Pete Werner** posted three tackles and his fifth pass defense of the season, setting a new career-high.
- CB **Alontae Taylor** added two stops, two pass breakups and his second interception of the season for the Black and Gold.
- CB **Kool-Aid McKinstry** led the Saints defense with seven tackles (six solo) and his 10th pass breakup of the season, extending his career-high.
- DE **Carl Granderson** recorded six stops (four solo), two tackles for loss and a pass defense.
- DT **Nathan Shepherd** had five tackles (three solo) and two quarterback hits.
- DE **Cam Jordan** added a tackle and pass defense. Including postseason contests, Jordan played in his 250th career game on Sunday, surpassing Ted Washington and Chris Doleman for eighth all-time in NFL history among defensive linemen.
- LS **Zach Wood** played in his 145th game on Sunday, surpassing LS Kevin Houser for 17th all-time in Saints history.
- On special teams, WR **Mason Tipton** returned the opening kickoff 54 yards to set up a short field and six-play, 45-yard touchdown drive to open up the contest.
- Five Saints draft picks from the 2025 NFL Draft started today's game, including Shough, Neal, LT **Kelvin Banks Jr.**, CB **Quincy Riley** and S **Jonas Sanker**.



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NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS HEAD COACH KELLEN MOORE

Opening Statement

"Alright, fun game, fun battle. I thought just our guys' mindset and the way they prepared this week – obviously, when you've only won a couple games during the season there is a lot of adversity you face, and so for our guys to come out and have the energy and the physicality that they played with, I thought was a credit to our guys. They are a special group – a group that keeps playing and all three phases, I felt contributed to this game, back and forth. So, it was a really challenging game for both teams and so it was big for our guys to come away with a win."

(On the scramble touchdown by QB Tyler Shough)

"That was a big time play by Tyler [Shough]. [A] pass play on first down, trying to get ourselves an opportunity – they did a good job jamming the receivers so we kind of got caught up and it got a little messy on the backside. So, for him to scramble and make a play like that – it seemed like there are scrambles a lot of times on the touchdowns against these guys on film and lo and behold another one showed up."

(On changing things on the fly due to the weather conditions)

"[During the] second half for sure, the rain was substantial. It reached a point where it, obviously it was going to impact the game much more – first half was off and on. I thought it was good for us to get the first possession of the game, to have the ball right there, right before it rained because we knew the rain was coming quick. So, that was a big drive for us and then I thought our guys ran the football really well in that second half. I thought it was a good response by our guys, and the physicality showed up."

(On beating both teams that are tied for first in the NFC South division)

"Our guys have faced a lot of adversity this year. They've grown a lot as we've gone through this journey. So, for our guys to keep battling, keep giving ourselves opportunities like this – I think division games are important, no matter what. Every single year it's important, you play these guys multiple times every single year. There are going to be big battles in the future years too. So, every opportunity in the division game is huge."

(On how QB Tyler Shough played)

"I thought resiliency was awesome. [He had a] really good first drive for us. I thought we got stuck there for a while, much of the second quarter was a little lethargic there, and we weren't executing at a very high level. So, then for our guys to respond in the second half, certainly with the run game but then making plays when he had to. [He had] some big third downs. I thought [Devaughn] Vele and 'CO' (Chris Olave) made some big time third downs, Juwan [Johnson] made some third downs in there. It seemed like there were timely plays by those guys."

(On the stops on fourth down)

"Just [a] credit to our defense, big time. Fourth downs – big time, big time plays whether it's the run game or the pass game. [In the] run game [had] big time stops – 'Grando' (Carl Granderson) made the big tackle for loss. Kool-Aid [McKinstry] on the sideline, there is the play where there is a catch,

and he is physical at the catch point and makes it a bobble catch. So, credit to our guys they made some big time plays."

(On his thoughts about RB Devin Neal)

"Devin [Neal] was awesome, really cool to see him go out there and play the way he did. Really lead that run game, the physicality he played with, the finish that he played with. Then even on the third downs – I thought the check down completion, he makes a play there and get a first down, that was huge in this game."

(On how physical the run game was in the second half)

"Yeah, just proud of our guys [and] the way they played. The resiliency, not everything is going to be perfect in a football game, you just keep battling, keep going through it. I thought that drive to start to start the second half was really really important for us and the way it was pretty much a run every time and they came off the ball and made some plays."

(On a game like this being important for the QB Tyler Shough's confidence)

"These are great opportunities for him to learn. You're going to play on the road, a really good opponent – this opponent is going to be battling all the way until the end. Then the weather, obviously, became a little bit of a factor so we had to face that. I thought his resiliency was really special."

(On if they considered challenging the fourth and short call)

"Yeah, it was a little bit of a tricky thing because initially we viewed it the way it came in – it looked like it was being reported as a first down, so we tried to go tempo. In the reverse scenario to try and make sure we can snap the football fast because it initially looked like it was a first down, then they pulled it back and it turned into fourth and one. Then we weren't able to get the replay there, so that was a little bit of a challenging situation for us. We weren't able to get it done."

(On the issue with the call)

"[We] assumed it was a first down, went tempo because obviously [it] felt like it was close either way, then it got pulled back to a fourth and short. We weren't able to get the camera just because we were already in tempo and so usually TV is going to go right to the live action in most scenarios. So, a little bit tricky."

(On the interception thrown by Tyler Shough)

"[They were] just not on the same page [Tyler Shough and Chris Olave]. Obviously, something for those two guys [to] work through. They can get it done."

(On winning this game)

"It's a good win for our guys, it's awesome. Again, for our guys to be battling, playing December football – still playing meaningful December football. Maybe in a little bit of a different way than you'd hope. Obviously, I think our guys are battling for each other, they're playing for each other, they want to win all these [games]. I thought just the way our guys responded for four quarters was really special."

(On celebrating in the endzone during the touchdown in the fourth quarter)

"I got down there pretty far, yeah."

(On any update for OL Asim Richards)

"We'll see, he has an ankle [injury]. He wasn't able to return, we'll get the update tomorrow."

(On the thought process behind the 34-yard rushing touchdown by QB Tyler Shough)

"The longer one was a read option play where we're using some motion to create some lead blockers for him. Used the play a couple [of] times, he pulled and he was – it was really a special run by him. I mean, for him to open up and run away from some people – it was really a big time play."

(On running similar plays)

"Similar, very similar. We used a few read option plays for him this game. [A] couple different variations but certainly showed up a number of times this game."

(On QB Tyler Shough's ability to run and if it helps open up plays)

"I think it's a big part, especially when you play (Head Coach) Todd [Bowles] and the way Tampa is going to play defense. He does a phenomenal job stopping the run. I can't remember how many times I feel like we've played Tampa and it's been really really brutal to try and run the football. So, big time credit to our guys. I thought Tyler [Shough] having that ability to run the football obviously played a factor into it. Big time plays by our guys."

(On four-minute offense)

"Yeah, the four-minute offense is obviously big - it's not all run game. There's going to be hard third downs in there – you've got to get conversions. I thought our guys did some really good stuff. We've got to bleed [it] down a little bit – obviously, we would have loved to have one more first down and finished things off the right way. But, credit to our defense – they responded really well and to get that fourth down stop was big time."

(On EDGE Carl Granderson)

"Yeah, big time. Two tackles for loss – game ball worthy. Big time plays. I thought our guys were relentless. Baker [Mayfield] made some big time plays on third down using his legs and I think that's the challenge when you play these guys is [that] Baker can make those extended plays and that showed up in the game. That was the challenge for our guys – our guys, just to keep battling, was cool."



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QUARTERBACK TYLER SHOUGH

(On winning against a divisional opponent)

"This is why you play football, to come in here in the elements, with all your boys, with all your teammates, and we fought really hard. I was really proud of the O-line just kind of chugging along the whole way. It was a really good job in protection. The defense was making huge stops. I think we did a better job of being a little bit more complementary and I was just proud of all of our guys. It kind of took everybody, so it was just a lot of fun. That's the thing that kind of resonates with me right now – it was just a lot of fun, and I think it just shows kind of how we are as a team."

(On HC Kellen Moore's reaction in the locker room after the win)

"He was awesome. He was his usual self. What we love about him is he's the same dude win or [lose]. Obviously, it stings a lot more when you lose, but at the end of the day, you look back on how you can get better, how you can improve, and the same thing with a win. So, it was hard-fought, but a win is a win, and it's awesome being there with all the guys."

(On his go-ahead rushing touchdown)

"We were getting Taysom [Hill] on their linebacker for maybe a pylon wheel shot, and it kind of got all muddied up at the end, so I was just trying to get out of there and make a play. I just saw green grass and went for it. It was a really good job of just driving the whole way down the field getting down there. Stuff like that happens and I've got to go for it."

(On if he feels like making plays with his legs opens up opportunities for teammates)

"One hundred percent. I think any time we can be balanced throwing the ball [and] running it, as well, and then it opens up – they did a really good job. Devin [Neal] ran his butt off, and all those guys kind of came in and stepped-up big time, especially just because the grass was so beat up. Running in that was tough for those guys, and they were getting dirty yards and I was really proud of them. They played their butts off."

(On how it was playing in rainy conditions)

"You sank a few inches into the grass quite a bit, so it was pretty rough. It was part of it. That's why you do it, and everybody was prepared, so it was a lot of fun. There's no excuses. We got out there and we've got to drive the football."

(On leaning into run game in rainy conditions)

"Especially when it's pouring down like that, it's tough to hang onto the ball when you're throwing it like that, and especially when you're driving. They did a good job switching [the footballs] out when we could, but yeah, you've got to get those dirty yards and then throw it when you need to, and it's just part of it."

(On his growing confidence as a rookie quarterback)

"One hundred percent. Every single practice, every single week, I feel my confidence growing more and more – just the ability to go out there [and] put points on the board in any way we can, so there's

a lot of plays that we can look at, and I can look at, and continue to continue to grow with, but we're just really proud of everybody, especially against a defense like that in those conditions to kind of turn out a win."

(On the impact of his running plays)

"My mindset is to get it done any way I can. That's why you play football. I'll kind of continue to look back, [see] how we can continue to grow as a team and an offense, but I think we all played well together, and that was a lot of fun."

(On capitalizing off the opening kick return from returner Mason Tipton)

"It was great. It was a great feeling just driving down the field, operating our game plan, playing fast, playing clean. And that was our whole message – whenever we were slowed up, we had the penalties, and I think it was self-inflicted wounds. We can look back, and it starts with me... clear communication, getting everybody lined up, getting everybody's feet set. We look back at it, and that's when we had those drives stall out. I was proud of how we came out of the gate hot and we've just got to continue to sustain that the whole game."

(On miscommunication with WR Chris Olave resulting in an interception)

"Yeah, I just thought he was going to keep going and convert it, but ultimately, it's my fault. We'll get to a better play and that's on me – just a miscommunication, and that's part of it, but I was really proud of him – all of those guys – running routes, staying friendly in some of their zones, winning versus man [coverage]. He did a great job all game and we'll kind of continue to develop that chemistry. Ultimately, it's on me."

(On his 34-yard run resulting in the touchdown)

"We ran it previously in the game and tried to circle it, with Juwan [Johnson] wrapped around. I knew if we got that look again and there was a seam [that] I was going to try and hit it, so I just kind of blacked out at that point, to be honest."

(On the defense getting the final stop to end the game)

"It was huge. That's the worst feeling as an offense when you have a game in your hands like that, and you can run it out. We knew what we were doing. I thought (Devaughn) Vele was open. It kind of got tipped, and it was an awkward play. Looking back, if it's close at all, you could just slide there and run the clock out as much as we could, so it's a tough bang-bang, play, but I think it just kind of shows the resiliency of our defense. Their mindset it's unbelievable. They're showing up. They're on the field way too much, so they stepped up big at the end."

(On if beating the two teams vying for the NFC South division title gives the team a sense of confidence that they're close to competing with their division rivals again despite being eliminated from the playoffs for this season)

"The thing I'm learning every single week playing in the NFL is it's anybody's game – it doesn't matter the record, it doesn't matter who you're going against. These are going to be some of the greatest guys you've ever played against on their defense and they've got a really great scheme, so we've got to be prepared for the challenge. That's my mindset. We can beat anybody. Whenever we're stalling out, we're beating ourselves. I think that's why you play the game. Knowing just how close we had been on some of those losses – now we can kind of flip it on its head and keep producing those big plays and get those wins."

(On the performance by RB Devin Neal)

"He's one of the best running backs I've ever played with just from a mindset standpoint with his knowledge of the game – protections, running the football, getting north and south. He's such a great pass catcher, as well, so I think he's just like an all-down back, and obviously, I'm really close with

him off the field so I have complete trust in him. We were talking to each other all game like, 'Hey, we're going to win this thing. Me and you, let's put it on our backs and go out and win it. Talking to the O-line – let's put those drives together.' It was just a lot of fun and I'm really proud of him."

(On if it means anything to get to showcase his abilities during his rookie season)

"I really care about what the guys in the locker room think of me, and my coaches. So, for me, I want to instill that belief that we can win every single game because we can. However we can get it done, I just love playing football... I said it last week – this is why you do it. There are going to be highs and lows with everything, but for me, it was just a great win to be able to go out there with all of the guys."

(On if his objectives for his rookie season are just to go out and win)

"Yeah, that's our goal every week. We've got to go out there – and we know what we can put together as a team – and just keep getting better. Keep getting better and the wins are going to happen."



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DEFENSIVE END CAMERON JORDAN

(On the team's five fourth-down stops)

"Whatever it takes to win – is that what it was? I love that for us. Whatever it takes to win. I've been saying all year – we know that it has to be on defense, but also, our offense showed up today in a big way. What did they score – three touchdowns? We will take it – I love that we came out of here with a win."

(On if each fourth down stop feels like it could determine the outcome)

"Of course – everything is on the line. That's what gets players excited. When you're on defense, you're like, 'Man, put it on me, put it on us.' You see Carl [Granderson] make a tackle, you see 'Shep' (Nathan Shepard), you see [Davon] Godchaux, you see Jonathan Bullard, you see Bryan Bresee doing what he's supposed to do upfront so others can come off the edge and do what they're supposed to. It takes a team effort. You see Pete Werner coming down hill. Shoot, I thought 'Double D' (Demario Davis) had that last little third-and-1 [or] fourth-and-1 or whatever it was. I was like, 'I know he got that.' He came up like he knew he had it because that's just the way they were in flow. I wish I would have gotten the interception, though. I tipped it and I just didn't see it... I felt it before I saw it."

(On the team's ability to stop the run in the last matchup, and if that deterred the Buccaneers from running inside)

"Partly based on the last game – we knew we were advantageous towards our rush, as well. I said at the beginning of the week that Baker Mayfield was getting the ball off as fast as he's ever been. Call it a shoulder injury? I don't see it. So, barring that, he is playing at an extremely high level. It's up to us to make him uncomfortable. Even the hits, you saw how resilient he was and able to get some yards. But, we knew we could stop them over the middle – we knew we could have our way on the edge as far as pass rush. We just had to put the game plan together – I think it came out almost good. I say almost good because he had two or three escapes – one explosive, and you want to eliminate those from the game plan."



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RUNNING BACK DEVIN NEAL

(On the connection he has with QB Tyler Shough)

"We kind of just play off each other in a weird way. Like we have that connection, especially off the field. I think that helps on the field as well. I remember saying to him and a bunch of the other offensive guys, 'It starts and ends with us.' I think coming out of that half, it was big for us to get the ground game running, and I think we did that. I think it's going to come down to who can do it the best, especially with the elements [being] what they were. So, it was really cool to see how we were staying ahead of sticks, being efficient, and just playing, winning football."

(On QB Tyler Shough's mobility and if that opens up running lanes for others)

"I think it could be a part of it. I'm not 100% sure, but I just think him as a player – he's very versatile. And everyone kind of counts out his wheels, but he takes two – whatever it was – 20-plus-yard touchdowns. And that's another part of his game that's very underrated, and that people are, I think, hopefully, they're starting to notice that. He deserves to be in this league. He deserves to be a starter. He deserves to get all the recognition that he deserves because he's a really well-built quarterback, and he's really good in this league, and you can just see him keep growing with more confidence and taking over the team, taking over the huddle. And those are things you want to see out of your quarterback. So, it's been really cool to watch [him] continue to develop. And there's still things we've got to clean up, and we know we got to be better, but there was no better feeling than coming to the locker room and winning this game today."

(On the emphasis that's put on a quarterback to make plays in the fourth quarter)

"Yeah, not necessarily over emphasized. But I think there's another [level of] confidence there, that when the defense makes a pivotal stop, that they have the confidence that our offense is well ran, and that we're going to be efficient, that we're going to do the right thing, and we're going to stay ahead of sticks and ultimately win the game for the team. I just think that just continues to build on the confidence of the entire team, and that's why we're in this position now to where we can continue to fight, continue to battle, and hopefully continue to win down the road."

(On what he was thinking on the third down conversion prior to the game-winning touchdown)

"[To] make a play, honestly. Make a play [and] get the first down because I knew how big that moment was in the game. And I'm just glad Tyler [Shough] saw me in time – had enough trust in me. And that's another thing I said earlier, is our connection. He just has a natural feel. It's like the pockets collapsing, let me dump it down to my running back, and let's just make a play – whatever happens, happens. And I'm glad he trusts me in that situation. And, ultimately, I was glad I was able to make a play for the team in a very pivotal moment."

(On if he has to adjust his run-style due to weather conditions)

"I wasn't really slipping and sliding, per se, but the one thing that's obviously the most important is ball security. It's wet, especially a team like that who has two-plus guys that have multiple forced fumbles throughout their career – some of the best to do it in the league. So, it was definitely a focus for us. We're talking about it each time we're going on the field. Ball security. Ball security. And, yeah, that's the one thing you definitely have to focus on, even more than normal."



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CORNERBACK ALONTAE TAYLOR

(On getting important defensive stops on fourth downs)

"I think coming into it, we just knew that they were going to be aggressive. With those fourth-down plays, we were expecting them to go for them. So I think Coach Staley came up with the right game plan throughout the week, we communicated on the back end and throughout the whole defense, and were able to get the stops. I think we've kind of been doing that all year. Every now and then, we might lose one here or there, but I think we've done really well with getting stops."

(On his interception)

"Coach Staley making a really good call, seeing the formation and you know just play makers going to make plays and just jumped the route, knew what it was, saw it and just went for it."

(On their plan going into the last few minutes of the game with the lead)

"Man, just play sound defense. Nobody has to do anything special, put our eyes in the right place, and do our job. I told the guys that if we did that, we'll be fine, and that's what we did – flew around, everybody had their eyes in the right place, and we could've ended it there with the pick, but just getting us another down and another chance was what we were looking for."

(On Kool-Aid McKinstry's fourth down play breaking up a pass intended for Chris Godwin)

"Oh my goodness, I went up to him and told him, 'Man, I don't think you realize how big a play that was. You know, because some guys in that situation would be like Oh man, he caught the ball, first down, but he came up and finished him to the ground and gave our offense the ball in a really good situation, spot, and those guys got to do something with that. So I just told him, 'Bro, that play was huge, to me that's just as big as an interception,' and I think he started to realize that it is a big play. But Kool-Aid has been making plays all year long, so I'm super excited for him, and his growth is going into a good place."

(On how the win felt)

"Yeah, we had a blast. I kept telling the boys in the huddle, it's like being a kid again, out there in the rain. A lot of people will say that we don't have anything to play for, but I think we do. I know within this defense, we're still trying to be a top ten defense, and we're right there, so we got out there every single play just trying to earn our respect. I think that's what we're doing, and the other side of the ball, they did well today. Tyler [Tyler Shough] is running the ball really well, Devin [Devin Neal] is running the ball really well, offensive linemen blocking, guys are finding ways to get open, and Tyler just keeping his eyes down the field. Tight ends catching the ball, I think we did a really good job, especially with that kickoff at the beginning of the game with Tipton [Mason Tipton] running the ball. I think we just played complementary football today. I think all three levels played well."



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TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS HEAD COACH TODD BOWLES

(On if struggling to convert on fourth down aided to the loss against the New Orleans Saints)

"It was part of it. We couldn't get a fourth-down play. We couldn't make a fourth-down play and that's disheartening."

(On why Tyler Shough was able to run effectively)

"We misfit quite a few things. We were fine in the first half, we misfit some things in the second half and that can't continue."

(On what the explanation is to losing to a 2-10 team)

"It's a division game; they always play us tough. I said that all week. We don't look at records, we play division games -- they know us and we know them. We had plenty of chances to make plays -- coaching-wise, offensively, defensively and special teams; definitely player-wise, offensive, defense and special teams. We had situations come up where we didn't make any plays, we could've made better calls, there's a myriad of things that could've happened that we lost this ball game. [It] doesn't matter if this team was 12-0 or 0-12, it's the NFL, you [have] to show up and play and make plays or the other team is going to beat you. Our biggest thing is: we can't let one loss turn into two, because we [have] to turn around and play Thursday, and we [have] to come to work tomorrow -- as bitter taste as this is and it's very bitter for me and everybody else, we [have] to turn around tomorrow [and] not let one loss turn into two."

(On WR Emeka Egbuka dropping a few balls recently)

"It's tough, it's a concentration thing. Obviously, it's a wet ball going out there, but we [have] to come down with those catches. Those are some plays we have to make and we know he can make them."

(On if the wet conditions affected the team's performance in Sunday's contest)

"No, both teams played in it. It was backyard brawl, we knew it was going to rain. We practiced [with a] wet ball, we knew it was going to be a rainy day and you [have] to make plays."

(On which days they practiced with wet balls leading up to the game)

"[We] practiced it for two days -- Wednesday and Thursday and saw it Friday. That's a normal thing for us."

(On the difficulty playing defense after the first kick return for the Saints going for 54-yards to Tampa Bay's 45-yard line)

"The very first drive when they get it on the plus-44, that's hard to do. [We] can't have that. We got a few new guys there, we may need a few more."

(On if tackling was an issue on defense)

"No, it was misfitting and overrunning a few plays and that can't happen. Those were routine plays that we overran; it wasn't the tackling; it was that we overran the short passes and then we misfit on the outside run when the quarterback got his play."

(On how he is looking to improve the run defense going forward)

"It's like we just talked about, we misfit two runs and they were two long runs. Tyler [Shough] got the run for the touchdown, and [Devin] Neal got the run down the sideline, and we didn't have anybody outside on Neal's run and Shough's we misfit. [We] can't do that, it cannot happen to be a consistently good run defense -- it's happened too many times."

(On if OLB Chris Braswell Jr. was supposed to set the edge on RB Devin Neal's 21-yard run)
"No, that wasn't him. He could have seen it better and played it..."

(On if the offensive line changes throughout the game had an impact on the running game)
"I thought we got it going a little bit in the second half. Those guys have played; that's kind of the theme for this year. We've play with injured guys and those guys got some depth, but we expect to go in there and perform when we put them in there. I'll watch the tape, I thought we had some effective runs in the second half, probably not enough, but we'll look at the tape and evaluate it."



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QUARTERBACK BAKER MAYFIELD

(On the loss)

"It sucks. It felt like we just gave it away or didn't make the plays to win it. There [were] too many mistakes, and conditions aren't an excuse, because they had to play in them too. So, none of that matters – it's just a matter of making the plays, plays that guys have made a bunch of times. Yeah, [we've] just got to execute."

(On if the lack of fourth-down success was critical to the outcome of the game)

"Absolutely – [we've] got to be able to get a yard in those short yardage-situations. Sometimes it's mentality, and you know, they're going to have a free hitter on some of those, and we're going to have to make them miss or want it more. We've just got to execute in those critical situations."

(On the final offensive play to TE Cade Otton that was stopped just short of a first down)

"Yeah, we got a choice route to Chris [Godwin]. They did a good job covering it up – having to progress back to Cade. I've just got to give him a higher ball instead of him having to, obviously, lunge forward to catch it and not be able to drop step to get the yardage to gain. Just yeah, a tough situation, but it comes back to the early downs in the two-minute drive. You've got to get it started, [and] you've got to put the defense on their heels to where we're not huddling up every time."

(On if the wet conditions affected the passing game)

"We were throwing it fine. It's just a matter of executing it."

(On what he says to WR Emeka Egbuka following a dropped touchdown pass and a few dropped passes over the last couple of weeks)

"Mek (Emeka) is a professional. Obviously, he's going to beat himself up about that. Afterwards I went up to him and told him, 'The ball is going to find you again in this two-minute drive when we get it back, so we're gonna need you.' It's just the nature of the game. Telling people to catch the ball doesn't do anything. They're not trying to drop it, so I just [told] him to pick his head up. Stuff happens – we've gotta move forward [and] gotta play the next play."

(On how to avoid getting frustrated in a tough stretch like this that the team is in)

"We should be frustrated about this loss. We should take it out on Thursday night."

(On what to work on during the upcoming short week of practice)

"Short weeks are about executing the little things, [the] fundamentals. It's not like you have a full week to game plan, to scheme a lot of things up, so it's about who does their job the best on your bread-and-butter stuff, and you've just got to execute. All the little details really, really matter on a Thursday. Some of the smallest game plans, when they're executed really well on Thursday night, you have the biggest production. So that's what we're going to look for."

(On the play of the offensive line's performance despite the injuries)

"Chukes (Benjamin Chukwuma), I thought, did a hell of a job. [Those were] his first snaps in the NFL, so I thought he did a really, really good job. Those guys got him ready. Yeah, it stinks losing Ben

[Bredeson] with the leader he is in that room up front, but 'Big Mike' (Michael Jordan) came in and played well, just as we've seen him do before. The guys ran the ball. Obviously, the conditions dictated a lot of those run plays, but they ran the ball well. We just didn't, as a skill group, make the plays that we needed to in the pass game when we needed to."

(On if the Buccaneers should have an advantage in the rainy conditions)

"Advantage – [it's] whatever you want to look at – both teams have to play in it. I've thrown in rainy games [with] wet balls – you do it all the time. You practice with a wet ball. It's just a matter of putting more touch on the ball, letting guys run under it and going from there. You've got to lead them a lot more and trust they're going to be in the right spots."

(On team's focus before the game)

"Yeah, I thought the focus was there. It's just a matter of not doing the job when it came to crunch time and critical moments, especially on offense."



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

TACKLE BENJAMIN CHUKWUMA

(On making his first career NFL start)

"It is crazy. Charlie [Heck and] all these guys who have stepped up for an injured player – I take good motivation from them because it's crazy for them to, in one snap, [be] able to go in and play, so I take a lot of motivation from them. That's the way I was able to stay ready today because of all the motivation they have [given] me. Every player was saying, 'Ben, you got this. It's just like preseason. It's just like practice – you've got this.' I feel like everybody showed me love and I was able to play fast and strong."

(On how he felt he played today)

"I did pretty [well]. Yeah, my first ever NFL start – this is my first time going against all these elite players, so I feel like I held my [own] well."

(On how much tackles Tristan Wirfs and Charlie Heck helped him to prepare for this game)

"Charlie, from the first Falcons game when he stepped up for Luke [Goedeke], I feel like he just rewired my mind because he did that. He was able to step up for a player that got hurt, so that motivated me more to keep going. Tristan [Wirfs] was by my side, and he said, 'Ben, any questions you have, come ask me. Anything you want to learn, come ask me. Anything you find difficult, come ask me.' So, Tristan and Charlie were able to be there for me."

(On the mindset going forward)

"Just pick up on the mistakes we made and get better."

(On how his first ever NFL start felt and what it meant to him)

"Yeah, it means a lot. Like I was telling Tristan [Wirfs], two years ago I played my first ever football game, and today I'm starting an NFL game, so it's crazy. I feel like I'm in a dream."



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

WIDE RECEIVER EMEKA EGBUKA

(On the loss against the New Orleans Saints)

"[We] didn't execute. When you don't do that, it's hard to win, no matter who you're playing."

(On his dropped ball in the endzone)

"It's a huge honor to play for this team and be part of this brotherhood. I can't help but feel like I let them down today. I'm on this team for one reason and it's to catch the ball and I didn't."

(On the rainy conditions during the game)

"It's the same probably from the other people that you interviewed -- it's the same for all of us, so it's no excuse."

(On the season coming down to the wire in the division and what they are focusing on for the upcoming schedule)

"We [have] to take it day-by-day. We [have] a game coming up on Thursday, so we [have] to do our best to flush this one as fast as we can and continue to win out, that's always the goal. We're going to have to put in the work, put in the extra hours, and see to it that our goals are met."



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

WIDE RECEIVER CHRIS GODWIN

(On his thoughts on the game)

"I think we didn't play [well] enough top to bottom – [on] any side of the ball to win. They came and they played better than we did a large portion of the game. We just [have] to be better as a team."

(On staying together as a team coming to the end of the season)

"We just [have] to go to work. We [have] to go back to work – we [have] to put the work in to fix the mistakes that we made. But more importantly we just [have] to stay together, we have a bunch of great guys in here -- talented guys, experienced guys. But we just have to come together and figure out exactly what went wrong and to correct it."

(On the game feeling 'disjointed')

"I don't disagree that it feels disjointed. I can't quite put my finger on exactly why. I feel like if we could then it would probably be easier to fix it, right? But again, one thing [that] I know is that we can't miss the work, right? You can't just look at this and go, 'Oh, it's whatever.' It's not whatever. We have to correct it if we want to make a run at this thing. We [have] to get it together [and] get it done fast."

(On the rain during the game)

"I mean, it's not an excuse – they were playing in the same weather that we were, and they found a way to get a victory. So, the weather doesn't matter to us. We have to go out and figure out ways to make plays in those incontrollable."