



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS AT CAROLINA PANTHERS
JANUARY 3, 2021 • BANK OF AMERICA STADIUM
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the win, the Saints close the regular season with a record of 12-4, marking three consecutive seasons of at least 12 victories for the first time in franchise history. New Orleans joins Kansas City as the only two clubs to finish with at least 12 wins in each of the last three seasons.
- With the win, New Orleans sweeps all three NFC South opponents this season, making them the first NFC South team since the 2002 NFL divisional realignment and the division's formation to finish 6-0 in divisional matchups.
- With the win, New Orleans improves its record against Carolina to 27-25 all-time and 14-11 at Bank of America Stadium. The Saints have swept the Panthers in back-to-back seasons for the third time in franchise history, joining the 200-01 and 2010-11 seasons.
- With the win, New Orleans concludes its 2020 road slate with a record of 6-2, marking the first time in franchise history the Saints have won at least six road games in three consecutive seasons.
- Offensively, New Orleans amassed 347 total yards, including 157 rushing yards and 191 passing yards. The Saints averaged 5.2 yards per carry, marking the fourth time New Orleans has averaged over 5.0 yards per carry in the team's last six games.
- With one rushing touchdown in the game, New Orleans becomes only the tenth team in NFL history to record 30 rushing touchdowns in a single season, also extending their franchise record for rushing touchdowns in a season.
- Defensively, New Orleans set a season-high with five takeaways, recording five interceptions in a single game for the first time since doing so in a 27-3 victory at the Phoenix Cardinals on December 22, 1991. The Saints defense surrendered just seven points, their third lowest point total surrendered this season. Carolina amassed 320 total yards, including 74 rushing yards and 246 passing yards.
- With interceptions by Malcolm Jenkins, Grant Haley, Marshon Lattimore, PJ Williams, and Ken Crawley, the Saints recorded their sixth game this season with multiple interceptions, tied for most in the NFL with Miami. New Orleans also joins Indianapolis as the only teams to record multiple games with at least three interceptions this season.
- New Orleans' defense recorded three sacks in the game, moving their season total to 45 quarterback takedowns. New Orleans' defense has recorded at least 45 sacks in three consecutive seasons for the first time since doing so from 1997-2001.
- New Orleans' defense extends its streak to 19 straight games without allowing 300 yards passing to an individual player, second to Pittsburgh's 26 among active streaks.
- For HC **Sean Payton**, the victory improves his record against Carolina to 16-12 all-time and 8-6 on the road. Payton is now 2-0 against Panthers first-year Head Coach Matt Rhule.
- QB **Drew Brees** passed for 201 yards on 22-of-32 passing and three touchdowns, marking the 175th three-touchdown game of Brees' career. Since joining the Saints in 2006, Brees has recorded three or more touchdown passes in 150 games. The victory is Brees' 150th as a member of the Saints, including regular and postseason games.
- Appearing in the 287th game of his career, Brees moves into sole possession of 16th place on the NFL's all-time games played list, breaking a tie with P Shane Lechler.
- TE **Jared Cook** recorded four receptions for 43 yards and his seventh receiving touchdown of the season, joining Jimmy Graham as the only tight ends in Saints history to record at least seven touchdown receptions in two seasons. Coming into the game with 501 career receptions, Cook now stands at 505 receptions in his career, and moves into a tie with Dallas Clark and Frank Wycheck for 16th all-time in receptions by a tight end. Cook finishes the season with 504 receiving yards, marking the eighth time in Cook's career he's finished with at least 500 yards receiving.
- DE **Trey Hendrickson** sacked Carolina QB Teddy Bridgewater on the game's opening drive, marking the tenth game this season Hendrickson's recorded at least 1.0 sacks. Hendrickson moves his season total to 13.5 sacks, tied for sixth most in a single season in club

record books with Charlie Clemons (2001) and Rickey Jackson (1992).Hendrickson also added a quarterback hit.

- RB **Ty Montgomery** carried the ball 18 times for 105 yards, the second highest rushing total of his career (162 yards on December 18, 2016, as a member of Green Bay) and marking his second career 100-yard game. Montgomery's second quarter rush of 36 yards was his longest run since September 30, 2018, when he recorded a 43-yard rush against Buffalo as a member of Green Bay. Montgomery added one reception for two yards.
- WR **Emmanuel Sanders** finished with nine receptions for 63 yards and one touchdown. Nine receptions marks Sanders second highest total this season (12 on October 12 vs. Los Angeles Chargers). Sanders finishes the season with 61 receptions, marking his seventh career season with at least 60 catches.
- Appearing in his first game of the season and first game as a member of the Saints, CB **Grant Haley** recorded his first career interception, picking off Carolina QB Teddy Bridgewater with 9:41 to play in the third quarter. Haley finished the game with a team-leading six tackles, one pass defense, and the interception.
- CB **PJ Williams** recorded his first interception of the season and fifth of his career, picking off Carolina QB PJ Walker with 4:22 to play in the game. Williams finished second on the team with five tackles, one pass defense, and the interception.
- CB **Ken Crawley** recorded his first interception of the season and second of his career, picking off Carolina QB PJ Walker with 2:23 to play in the game.
- QB **Taysom Hill** rushed for 41 yards on seven attempts and one rushing touchdown, moving his season totals to 87 rushing attempts for 457 yards and eight rushing touchdowns, all career highs. Hill added one reception for five yards.
- DE **Cameron Jordan** started his 145th consecutive game, dating back to the 2011 season finale against Carolina, surpassing Wayne Martin (September 9, 1991 to January 2, 1999) for the most consecutive starts by a Saint. Jordan finished the game with one tackle and two pass defenses. Jordan's first pass breakup, coming on the game's first offensive play, was the 50th pass defense of his career.
- Starting the 175th game of his career, S **Malcolm Jenkins** recorded four tackles, one pass defense (the 125th of his career), and one interception. Jenkins moves his season total to 10 pass breakups for the seventh consecutive season and three interceptions, which matches his career-best set in 2014 and 2016.
- WR **Marquez Callaway** finished with three receptions for 51 yards. Callaway's two games vs. Carolina resulted in his two highest receiving totals of his rookie season, after he caught eight passes for 75 yards in New Orleans' first matchup with the Panthers on October 25.
- WR **Austin Carr** recorded his first touchdown reception of the season and third of his career on the first play of the fourth quarter. Carr becomes the 11th Saint to record a touchdown reception this season.
- LB **Demario Davis** entered the game with 995 career tackles and recorded the 1,000th tackle of his career on a takedown of Carolina WR Curtis Samuel with 6:59 to play in the fourth quarter. Davis finished the game with five tackles and added one pass defense. Davis finishes the season with a team-leading 119 tackles on the season.
- CB **Marshon Lattimore** recorded his second interception of the season and added one pass defense. After starting the season with three pass breakups in his first eight games, Lattimore finished with eight pass breakups in his last six games, including at least one in each game.
- Appearing in his 190th career game, P **Thomas Morstead** moves into sole possession of fourth place in club record books, surpassing DL Frank Warren (1981-94). Morstead averaged 41.8 yards per punt on five punts, including one downed inside the 20-yard line.
- K **Wil Lutz** converted both of his field goal attempts, connecting from 33-yards and 48-yards. Lutz finishes his fifth NFL season 23-of-28 on field goal tries. Lutz's miss on the Saints' first extra point attempt of the game was his first miss on an extra point this season.
- The Saints extend their streak to 304 regular season games without being shut out, the longest such running streak in the NFL and fourth longest all-time. The streak dates back to September 6, 2002 when New Orleans defeated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 26-20 at Raymond James Stadium.

Saints Head Coach Sean Payton

In light of what happened right before this game with players going on the COVID-19 list how has the team addressed this to prevent an outbreak before the playoffs?

“Look, what’s more important right now is how we played tonight. There’s league protocols that we’re following each step of the way. And I was proud of how we played tonight. A lot of guys had to step into some positions they hadn’t played, and that was a good team win.”

But how concerned are you that with a long season, some of the players are possibly going lax with protocols?

“I’m not going to talk about COVID tonight. We’ll talk about the game that we played. I was proud of these guys, kind of go from there.”

Considering the timing of all this, how challenging was this week just, no preparing for as far as game plan?

“Well look, there are a lot of moving parts, it’s happened to other teams. I was real proud of how some guys stepped up, Ty (Montgomery) has been working at receiver really, for the last three weeks. He came over, he’s played running back before Tony (Jones Jr.), we elevated from the practice squad. We had a number of moving parts on defense because of injury and COVID. And you know it was impressive to see those guys perform tonight.

You actually ran for more yards in this game than your average on the season without your primary runners. What did you see as the reasons that you’re able to have so much success running the ball today?

“Look, I think we’re playing well up front, we’re blocking the perimeter well. That’s part of what we want to be able to do. Obviously there’s an element that begins to allow you to control games a little bit more. I didn’t know, but there’s one element relative to the running game. But, I think one of the bigger challenges, on a short week, or in this scenario, is your protections. And Carolina is a team that’s got a lot of exotic looks, they give you a lot of different third down looks. So, that becomes a little bit more of a point of emphasis. And look, Ty (Montgomery) was fantastic tonight. I mean, he played exceptionally well and I’m proud of him. I’m proud of a number of the other younger guys that stepped in.”

How big of a luxury is it when you’re in this weird situation that you’re able to plug a guy like Ty (Montgomery) in there who’s had so much experience in this league and at running back?

“Yeah, it’s a credit to him. We had to, we had a little cram course yesterday. And, you know, everyone understood it was going to be a little longer practice, guys knew that **In light of what happened right before this game with players going on the COVID-19 list.**

How has the team addressed this to prevent an outbreak before the playoffs?

“Look, what’s more important right now is how we played tonight. There’s league protocols that we’re following each step of the way. And I was proud of how we played tonight. You know, a lot of guys had to step into some positions they hadn’t played, and that was a good team win.”

But how concerned are you that with a long season, some of the players are possibly going lax with protocols?

“I’m not going to talk about COVID tonight. We’ll talk about the game that we played. I was proud of these guys, kind of go from there.”

Considering the timing of all this, how challenging was this week just, no preparing for as far as game plan?

“Well look, there are a lot of moving parts, it’s happened to other teams. I was real proud of how some guys stepped up, Ty (Montgomery) was, you know, been working receiver really, for the last three weeks. He came over, he’s played running back before Tony (Jones Jr.), we elevated from the practice squad. We had a number of moving parts on defense because of injury and COVID. And you know, it was impressive to see those guys perform tonight.

You actually ran for more yards in this game than your average on the season without your primary runners. What did you see as the reasons that you’re able to have so much success running the ball today?

“Look, I think we're playing well up front, we're blocking the perimeter well. That's part of what we want to be able to do. You know, obviously, there's an element that begins to allow you to control games a little bit more. I didn't know, but there's one element relative to the running game. But, I think one of the bigger challenges, on a short week, or in this scenario, is your protections. And Carolina is a team that's got a lot of exotic looks, they give you a lot of different third down looks. So, that becomes a little bit more of a point of emphasis. And look, Ty (Montgomery) was fantastic tonight. I mean, he played exceptionally well and I'm proud of him. I'm proud of a number of the other younger guys that stepped in.”

How big of a luxury is it when you're in this weird situation that you're able to plug a guy like Ty (Montgomery) in there who's had so much experience in this league and at running back?

“Yeah, I mean, look, it's a credit to him. We had to, we had a little cram course yesterday. And everyone understood it was going to be a little longer practice, guys knew that. And his versatility is unique. And that's something we were very fortunate to have today.”

Was Ty (Montgomery) in the receiver room all season or has he been in both throughout the year?

“Well, he started training camp in the running back room. And eventually, we moved him to the receiver room with some injuries that we had. So, he had been predominantly with the receiving room. Yeah, after training camp. And then a day or two ago, we switched him back.”

Five interceptions. Defensively, you stopped the Panthers on some down situations, just your overall impressions of the defense today and the kind of job they did?

“Yeah, listen, we dropped three. That was, anytime you turn the ball over like that, or take it away like that, you're going to win a lot of games. So, again, we want all those key statistics that you always hear us talk about, that really tend to gravitate to winning and losing. And we were able to do that.”

In situations like today, how aware are you of the other games that are going on? Are you aware of all of that stuff?

“Yeah, obviously, the game you're paying attention to is Green Bay, Chicago. You're not paying attention to it (until) second half at some point, the scores are rotating on the scoreboard. So, periodically with a lead you look at it. That's about it.”

I know you always talk about how much the postseason is like a natural drug and how much you enjoy it and making another run at it. Just your general thoughts about, indeed trying to make another run at it with this group?

“Yeah, we're excited. We're excited to have that opportunity. We always know it's going to be competitive in each of the rounds. With seven teams this year, there'll be a lot of good football games next weekend. And again, we feel like we're fortunate enough to be in the tournament. And that's all, when you start the season, you start with winning your division, and then the best seed you can possibly get and kind of go from there.”

Do you guys start working on the Bears, like on the way back from this one? Does the process after the game change at all? Will you still do the same?

“No the process, the only thing you wait on right now, Saturday or Sunday, of course, and then you set your schedule up accordingly. And it's not unusual that you play a team already that you might play in the playoffs. Sometimes it's a divisional team, sometimes. Maybe someone in another division, but that'll begin right away.”

The whole Saturday, Sunday thing, that's just out of your hands, and in terms of who will be available to play and all that. I mean, how much thought are you giving right now to that?

“Well, if you're asking do we get a vote in it, we wait and see what day they give us.”

Obviously you'd like one day over the other right?

“Yeah. Alright, thank you.”

Saints QB Drew Brees

On a where he feels the teams rhythm is going into the playoffs: “I think it was really good. I mean, really, for us as a team, I mean, especially down the stretch here, you're playing for so much each and every week. And, obviously, we've endured a lot throughout this season with injuries and having various guys down at key positions throughout. Obviously, we were dealt kind of a crazy hand with the running backs situation going into this game. But, man, says so much about our team, the way that we've been able to respond. And also I think we've been able to see a lot out of young players that now are playing more pivotal roles for us. And so as we kind of go into the playoffs here, I think, obviously, we wanted to end the season continuing to ascend. And I think for me, just continuing to feel healthier and more comfortable each and every week coming off my injury. I know we get Mike Thomas back, I think the last three weeks being down have been great for him. And we'll just take it one step at a time here. But bottom line is we know that in order to play our best, in order to achieve the goals that we want to achieve, we've got to have the same approach each and every week with our preparation, with our work habits and everything we do. We don't just show up and play. We put that time, effort and sense of urgency in throughout the week, so that we can get the result we want on Sunday's.”

On Ty Montgomery's impact with the running back room being out due to COVID-19: “Yeah. “Listen, a testament to him because honestly, it wasn't until Saturday morning that we realized that we were going to be out all the running backs and Ty had a significant role as a receiver in this game just like he did last week against the Vikings at receiver. And so all of a sudden, it's like hey, switch gears, Ty is now running back, Tony Jones you're coming up from practice squad running back. And, alright, here's the receivers that now are going to be up to kind of fill this role that Ty had as a receiver and you can just imagine all the kind of moving and shaking and chess pieces that kind of need to be flipped around. And then you kind of go into the gameplan and just making sure that everybody's comfortable with what we're doing, but can't say enough about our coaching staff to be able to do that and also Ty and the job that he did.”

On what he saw on the touchdown pass to Emmanuel Sanders: “Yeah, honestly, I'm trying to try to remember that one (laughter). Help me out. Yeah, I'm seriously having a blank here on Emmanuel's touchdown. I remember Jared (Cook's), I remember Austin (Carr's). I just know we were trying to get Emmanuel at least eight catches in this game (laughter). So down the stretch, you're just trying to feed him. Obviously, he's always a great matchup and a guy that you're trying to feed the ball to. But for the life of me, I am not visualizing his touchdown right now. I'll think of it as we keep talking here.”

On how cognizant he was of the other scores with two other teams competing for the number one seed in the NFC: “Just shut it off. Just shut it off, play ball. Know if we take care of our business, maybe those pieces fall into place maybe not, but regardless, just control what we can control. And yes, I do remember the Emmanuel touchdown now. Yeah, it was a nice little check play action. He kind of found a little soft spot in the middle of a defense and we were able to fit it in there. But that was good scheme, good play call and good execution.”

On what he remembers from Saturday's walkthrough and having to rearrange so many pieces: “Yeah, like I said, man, there was some stress on Saturday just from the moment that we got in the building and realize that we're down all our running backs and fullback and let me just think of, all of a sudden those, just making sure that, alright we're shifting the roster around a little bit and then now these are the roles that these guys. I mean, a lot of times when you gameplan throughout the week you're game planning for the guys that are going to be in there so all of a sudden, guys are out, we had game planned some stuff for Ty at receiver, all of a sudden he is now in the backfield. So had ramifications in a couple different areas, fullback, running back, slot receiver. But then again, I mean, listen, this is why you practice so much right? From training camp to preseason, which we didn't have this year, to the regular season and additional reps after practice and all the stuff that you do in the event that something like this happens, you try to be prepared for it.”

On Sean Payton's job this year to get to 12-4 despite multiple injuries: “Listen, phenomenal job. He's always been such a great leader with this team, with the staff, I mean, really, in the whole building. Obviously, we were in this COVID season where there were just so many unknowns. It felt like rules and protocols were changing weekly, then combine that with the number of injuries and various situations that we kind of found ourselves in this year. And the roster having to shift and I was down for a few games. Jameis comes in and plays great, Taysom comes in plays great, you build the game plan around those guys. Defensively, having starting corners down at times and other guys coming up, I felt like DA did a great job on the defensive side of the ball and all the guys there and the entire staff. I think Sean will be the first one to tell you that, man, it's about the culture that we've created here. And it's about the staff. It's about the way the guys care about one another. But he's certainly done a tremendous job.”

Saints WR Emmanuel Sanders

On how it felt to get his eighth catch today, earning him a contract incentive: “It felt great. But I think the best part is just winning as a team, right? We were able to get the win. Obviously, we were pulling for Chicago, they didn't get it. So we got the number two seed and we're heading into the playoffs, and I'm looking forward to it. I know that the intensity is going to be turned up more, the speed is going to be faster. And we've got to be ready for it, we've got to be prepared for it, but I'm looking forward to it.”

On how important Ty Montgomery's 100 yards on the ground was: “Yeah. If you think about just Ty Montgomery in general and just what he did for Green Bay and what he's capable of doing, he was just himself today. And that's what I told him before the game. I said, ‘you don't have to be anything more than just yourself.’ And that's what he did. He came out, he prepared all week for receiver at the F position and then obviously the COVID situation hit and he had to play running back. When I found out we had Ty Montgomery on this team, I knew it was a great pickup because he just, he provides so much depth at so many different positions. I was rooting for him to get that 100 yard game in the fourth and he ended up getting it. I was extremely happy for him.”

On he'd describe Saturday's practice leading up to the game: “Yeah, I mean, welcome to, well, I would say 2020, but we're 21 now. Welcome to COVID football, right? You got to be prepared for anything. It's crazy because Sean Payton was telling us even prior to season, he said it can hit at any moment and be prepared for anything we all kind of know that. So there's really no shock with this anymore. It's like, alright, this happened. Alright, we got to, next man up mentality and I know that's what everybody says, but it's true. That's the mindset and I was just happy for the guys who got an opportunity to showcase their talents today and they made the most of it.”

On the team's ability to win games with so many guys out at different times throughout the season: “Yeah, I think that's the credit to Sean Payton. He's one of the best coaches I've ever played for and I've enjoyed just being around him and being around his energy, being around his intellect. When you go into a game and know he's the coach, he's calling the plays, that he's setting it up, it makes you feel good as a player. Makes you feel good as a receiver and it's just a credit to him. To me, Coach of the Year, obviously. There's been a lot of good coaches, but just seeing the day to day grind and how he's handled this whole COVID and handle Drew being out and Alvin been out and Mike being out and, really, all of his big time players and showcasing the will and the poise to say you know what, this is how we're going to handle this, we're not going to go into panic mode and so it's a big credit to him.”

On if he feels like this team has formed it's identity off of adversity and what that can do for a team: “Truthfully, I don't really even know our identity. I think that we just go into games and say, hey, look, we're going to try this, we're going to try that and if it works, then that's what we're going to go with. We got Alvin Kamara. Once he gets back, we got him at running back. We've got some running backs. We've got a great o-line, we've got a quarterback in Drew Brees, a legendary quarterback in my eyes. I just feel like we can be multi-dimensional, but at the same time, we've got to go out and execute. Whatever Sean calls, we've got to execute at a high level in order for us to make this run.”

On the importance of being in sync with Drew Brees going into the postseason: “Yeah, it felt good. Obviously, it's two plays I wish I could have back, the slant and then the back shoulder that he threw to me, but I had eight catches, well nine catches today. It felt good to catch passes and for Drew to believe in me and obviously keep feeding me, trying to get me the eight catches to get that incentive. It felt good to be out there.”

On the rarity of being on a veteran team that openly talks about Super Bowl or bust : “I've been on a team like that in '15, it was Super Bowl or bust. But truthfully, we don't even pay attention to it. We just take it one game at a time. Obviously, the end goal for everybody is to win the Super Bowl, but at the same time, we can't get there and just skip the whole process of it. So it's a process and it starts with Chicago next week.”

Saints S Malcolm Jenkins

How good was it having Trey (Hendrickson) back this week, 13 and a half sacks in total for the regular season and having the defensive front healthy?

"I mean, anytime we got Trey (Hendrickson) on the field, we're a better defense. He's been super, super productive this year. I don't know if he's leading or if he's in the second spot for sacks. But you know, that means a lot to our defense as far as production. So, happy to have him back out there, happy he's still making plays. I'm going to brag on him, because he should have been in the Pro Bowl, should have got all the accolades that come with, the amount of production he's had this year. But, a lot of guys contributed today."

Five interceptions as a team, is there a point when it sort of feeds off itself when sort of everybody wants to get one?

"Oh, one-hundred percent and it's a team thing, our offense, put up enough points to really make it one dimensional. And then, when the offense is one dimensional, you got opportunities to make plays on the football and we had multiple guys come in and contribute. And to see that production from some of the young guys was really encouraging, shows, speaks to the depth that we have, speaks to our coaching staff, and how they have young guys prepared, in a game that we needed. And so, it was exciting."

Starting your NFL career with this franchise over a decade ago, now making your way back, just your feelings about trying to make a run at another Super Bowl with this group entering the playoffs?

"Yeah, you know, with all the context that surrounds the playoffs and the game, you got to really just stay focused, one week at a time. And do what you gotta do to prepare to win one game. It's going to be a lot about, playoffs past, and the history and all that stuff. But really, all that matters is what's right in front of us. And that's this first playoff game, when we figure out when that is."

You answered about all of the picks collectively, but how cool was it to see Grant Haley get his first pick today? In the end zone?

"It was huge, we said it going into the game, we wanted to see these young players come out and play with confidence and play and make plays. Because they prepare hard. All year, they're on the scout teams, they're giving us a look. And now there's an opportunity for them to play in a game that counts and that matters, that we need as a team. And to see Grant (Haley) go out there and make a play with his little amount of experience as he's had out there, with this group, was fun. And to see so many other guys contribute on special teams, on defense, on offense. It's a fun win for us as a team."

With a lot of COVID outbreaks around the league, and in light of what happened yesterday. Do the captains have to talk to their teammates, maybe just about reminding everyone to be careful going into the playoffs, like is that something y'all have thought about?

"I mean, it's something that we've talked about all year. And we know some things are out of our control, but we want to do as much as we can to possibly give ourselves the best chance in the postseason. And, to do that you've got to have guys available. So, that's going to come with some sacrifices, being smart, pretty much isolating yourself. But, we also understand that in a pandemic, some things happen. But we're trying our best to make sure that we limit the amount of exposure we have, because we have what we want right in front of us, and we can't miss guys as we move forward in the playoffs."

Just to kind of follow up on the leadership thing, when you won the Super Bowl here, you were kind of the rookie, following the leaders in some regard. Do you remember those days? And I mean, obviously, you won a Super Bowl with Philadelphia as well. But, now kind of being the locker room leader and letting everybody know that this is kind of a different experience being in the playoffs with a legitimate chance to win at all?

"Yeah, I've obviously got playoff experience and experience in going all the way. And for me, what's been one of the lessons I learned, especially early on, is to just be yourself the whole time. Nothing changes about the rules of the game, the size of the field is the same, the size of the football is the same. Everything's the same, whether it's the preseason, or it's the postseason. The only thing that changes are the circumstances around the game. And so for us, we need to focus just on our job, having fun, executing like we do any other game and not make it bigger than it is."

What was it like for you to see Ty Montgomery just step in and just kind of casually rip up a 100 yard game after I mean, like one carry all season?

"Yeah, I wouldn't call it casually. He's somebody who's prepared and has been a back in this league that has had success, just happens to be behind a few really good ones in this offense. So, I think everybody felt really good about Ty (Montgomery) coming in the game, knowing that he's going to be able to carry the rock and really carry that load. And yeah, rip off 100 yards like it's any other Sunday was fun to watch. Happy for him. He's somebody who grinds all year and he's able to play the role when we call upon him, he's ready. Not a selfish guy, moves around, plays different positions and for him to get his opportunity tonight was fun to watch."

Saints DE Trey Hendrickson

How did it feel to you to get back out there and especially have a sack on that first drive?

“Well, winning is the best feeling. That's what I missed last week, being with the guys and blood, sweat and tears out there. It's really special to get wins, especially on Sundays. But it's just great to be back out there with the guys.”

Were you at the game last week? Or did you have to watch from home?

“Yeah, I wanted to be on the sidelines and do my part as in like, if I could pick something up from an offensive tackle or a tight end alignment, I was going to do that for the guys.”

What's it say about this team, like, do you think your guys' identity is just that you can overcome basically any circumstance? And what does that do for a team in the playoffs, just being as battle tested as you guys are right now?

“Well, you know, I mean, we've been doing that since I've been a part of this team. It's always been that mentality of next man-up and get on to the next one, and all these kinds of things. So you can't say enough about the culture that we've created in this locker room and I've been fortunate enough to be a part of. And, like, going into the playoffs, it's good to have a win and get rolling on this thing.”

It wasn't just you coming back today, Malcom Brown was back too. How big is that for y'all? Especially on the front, going into the playoffs that y'all are healthy?

“Well, it's just another tool in the toolbox. That's how we are as a D line as long as the attack stays at a consistent level, and we wear these guys out and get after the quarterback and stop the run up front. That's what makes us special.”

Five interceptions on defense. I think the last time the Saints did that was almost 30 years ago. How much fun does it become when it gets like that, you can see guys talking a lot, just what was it like on the field, it had to be fun?

“Yeah It was definitely electric, getting after the passer, getting them to throw bad throws, and then the coverage was great, because we were getting after the quarterback all night. So, that was one of the keys to victory. And we executed and you can't say enough about our defense, playing and execution.”

Just as a teammate, how have you seen Carl Granderson come along and then especially just these last few weeks how he's been playing?

“The guy works day in and day out. It's one of those things where, I've been in a similar situation to that where you don't know what week you're going to be playing or even wearing a ball cap. And to work week in and week out with not a bone at the end of the like, light at the end of the tunnel, I guess for lack of a better word. It speaks a lot to his character and that he was prepared to win this week and he executed.”

What's the challenge of that? When you don't know when your next snap is going to come?

“Well, it's a mental game for one, and you're a team guy, and you got to be all in. But I mean, I'm telling you, like to prepare like he has these weeks not knowing if he's gonna play or not. It's something special.”

Your thoughts about making a run in the playoffs and how you're feeling about this defense entering the postseason?

“It's nameless, faceless, and we're ready to prepare for the next game plan on Monday and get after it.”

You finished with 13 and a half sacks. If I had told you that preseason that you were gonna get that many, like, did you think you could put up numbers like that?

“I've always had that belief and I surrounded myself, my family, I can't say enough about my family and my wife for all the support that they've given me. And believing in me when you kind of have to quiet the noise and just go to work. So, I really can't say enough about my family and I kept the faith and all the glory goes to God.”