



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## DENVER BRONCOS VS NEW ORLEANS SAINTS, THURSDAY, OCT. 17, 2024 • CAESARS SUPERDOME SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- The Saints fell to the Denver Broncos 33-10 on Thursday night. New Orleans returns to action next Sunday against the Los Angeles Chargers at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, Calif. Kickoff is scheduled for 3:05 pm C.T and the game will be regionally televised on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 locally).
- Rookie QB **Spencer Rattler** got his second start of his NFL career tonight. He finished 22-of-35 for 172 yards, while adding 28 rushing yards on three carries (9.8 avg.), including a 28-yard carry.
- In the fourth quarter, **Jake Haener** entered the game after Rattler suffered a hip pointer injury and went three-for-four for 38 yards and threw for a 12-yard touchdown pass to WR Cedrick Wilson Jr.
- RB **Kendre Miller**, in his season debut and led the Saints in rushing with six carries for 36 yards and added two receptions.
- Wilson seeing his most extensive action at wide receiver as a Saint, finished with six grabs for 57 yards, including the touchdown catch from Haener late in the fourth quarter.
- WR **Mason Tipton** finished with six catches for 45 yards, while fellow rookie WR **Bub Means** rounded out the wideout trio with three receptions for 37 yards.
- TE **Foster Moreau** was effective again for the Saints offense at tight end. Moreau hauled in two receptions for 38 yards, including a 32-yard grab.
- LB **Demario Davis** played in his 200<sup>th</sup> career game and finished with seven tackles (five solo).

- Fellow Mississippi native, LB **Willie Gay Jr.** finished with two tackles (one solo) and one forced fumble/fumble recovery. Gay now leads the team with two fumble recoveries on the season.
- DB **Jordan Howden** led the team with eight stops (four solo), receiving a start.
- P **Matthew Hayball** punted six times for 267 yards (44.5 gross avg), including three downed inside the 20-yard line.
- K **Blake Grupe** drilled a field goal of 35 yards and made the only PAT. Grupe has made all 11 field goal attempts on the season for a club-best 51 points and dating back to the 2023 campaign has made 17 consecutive field goal attempts. Grupe also had one special teams tackle.
- DB **J.T. Gray** finished with one special teams tackle, increasing his team-high total to 14 on the season.



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(Opening Statement) “We have one (major) injury update to make you guys aware of. Paulson Adebo looks like he has got a broken femur. Then (Marshon) Lattimore’s got a hamstring and Nick Saldiveri a shoulder. Those are the three where (those) guys weren’t able to come back into the game. You look at this game and there was nothing complementary about the game. In particular early on in the game, we weren’t able to get anything going offensively. Defensively, we allowed them to have too many long drives. Therefore, the first half, I think the time of possession was out of whack. It kind of got a little more balanced up as the game went along. I think that’s been a challenge for us. I think we’re not winning the line of scrimmage on either side of the ball. That’s a challenge for us right now. We have, obviously, a few days here before we have to play again. We’ll go out to L.A. next week. We’ve got to find a way to put our guys in the best position to have some success, and we’ve got to find a way to play better football. That’s been disappointing. Obviously, look, injuries play a part in it, but we’ve got to find a way to play better.”

(On what contributes to a lack of success in the game) “Look, I think as coaches and as players, we have to do a better job. We have to do a better job throughout the week of preparation. We’re making mistakes that we shouldn’t be making and allowing guys to get free. Again, part of the run game is that we have to do a better job at winning the line of scrimmage. That’s where it all starts. We have to do a better job of getting off the blocks, and we have to do a better job of tackling. I guess as coaches and players all alike, we’ve got to figure it out.”

(On if he’s concerned on the team’s buy in) “No, look it’s hard when you lose five in a row, and then when you look at all the injuries on top of it, it makes it a lot more challenging. I think our guys are fighting, yet the results aren’t showing.”

(On the process leading up to the game and his evaluation of it) “I think it’s still got to improve. Again, I get it, we have to play better. I think guys are trying. I think guys are working. We’re dealing with a lot of injuries right now. That’s not an excuse. I don’t want anybody to misconstrue that as an excuse, but it is an issue for us. I think all of us are trying to fight through that.”

(On if he’s ever experienced so many injuries) “No. I don’t know what that number is in terms of amount of missed time for guys and critical pieces to our team, but it’s the nature of the game that we play.”

(On if there is any trend leading to injuries) “I don’t think we’ve been able to put our thumb on one individual thing that’s caused these things. I think it’s kind of one of those years.”

(On if he could see issues at the line of scrimmage coming from performance in training camp and early in the year) “I don’t think that’s something that as we went through the course of training camp and everything that I felt was going to be a major issue for us, but it’s become that. It’s become that really over the last two or three weeks. Each and every week, it’s kind of gotten a little bit not as good.”

(On if the line of scrimmage issues are fixable with current personnel) “I think it is. I definitely think it is. We’ve got to get back to the fundamentals and technique.”

(On if injuries can be demoralizing) “It can be. It certainly can be, and that’s something we have to be able to fight through. That’s the tough part of our league, seeing things like that. It can be difficult, sure.”

(On why Spencer Rattler left the game at the two-minute warning) “He got, I think maybe, a hip pointer. At that time, I didn’t want to leave him in there. I wanted to put Jake (Haener) in. I didn’t want to risk him getting hurt any further.”

(On the biggest problems Rattler faced in the game) “I think just the pressure. They sent a lot of pressure at him, gave him some different looks, things that we kind of – not maybe the exact certain looks – but they did a lot of the things that we expected they would do. I think we had some opportunities in the passing game, and we dropped a few balls. Certainly, the sacks were an issue, and part of that’s protection, part of that is him being able to get the ball out. I think there’s a combination of things.”

(On his quarterback plan going forward) “I certainly wouldn’t put all of this on Spencer Rattler, for sure. I think there’s a supporting cast around him that has to play better. I think we will evaluate the tape. We’ll look at it and see what we need to do. Then, we will have a plan moving forward.”

(On if Derek Carr and/or Taysom Hill could be back next week) “I think it’s possible. I think it’s probably more likely that Taysom (Hill) would be ready before Derek (Carr), but we have ten days. Let’s let that play out a little bit and see where we are out there.”

(On the sequence before the end of the first half) “We shouldn’t have taken the timeout is what we shouldn’t have done. We had two plays to try to see if we could create something. Then, after having a couple of checkdowns and some pressure on the quarterback, it was like let’s take a knee. Let’s get out of the half. Let’s regroup and come back. We’ll get the ball to start the second half. Initially, the thought was can we get a chunk play and have the opportunity to create something? If not, then let’s get out of the half.”

(On who called the timeout before the half) “I’m not sure exactly who called the timeout, to be honest with you. I’m not sure if it was called on the field or not.”

(On Bo Nix’s performance) “I think the big play was the short yardage toss play where they had the numbers over there. It was a good play by them, a good design. That was probably their biggest play. I felt like we had a few times where we had free runners on the quarterback, and he’s athletic. He made a play. He made us miss. That was certainly something we were aware of and probably need to do a better job of managing that.”

(On managing player frustration) “You have to stand up and lead. That’s what you have to do. You have to stand up and lead. That’s what I have to do. That’s what our coaches have to do. That’s what the leaders on our team have to do because we’re the only ones that can get us out of this. Nobody – it’s not like we’re going to have a draft in the middle of the season. Nobody’s going to be coming in here to be the savior. We’re going to have to do it ourselves. Hopefully, we’ll begin to get some guys back because, look, early on in the season, we played good football. I know this team has it in them. I have two tapes that show me that this team has good football in them and has got good coaching in them. Right now, we’re not playing that way, and obviously, there’s a multitude of reasons why. We’ve got to figure out how to get back to playing that type of football because I’ve seen it done. I’ve seen what it looks like.”

(On if Paulson Adebo’s injury requires surgery) “I think he’s going to have surgery tonight.”

(On Rashid Shaheed going on Injured Reserve) “Look, it’s another playmaker. We’ve got our rookie quarterback out there with some backup players on the offensive line playing in front of him and two primary receivers are out of the game. That’s another challenge that you have to overcome as a young player (Rattler). He’s (Shaheed) an explosive element to our offense. He’s an explosive element to our team and special teams. That’s a big loss.”

(On the approach in the next few days) “Here’s the approach - the approach is we’re going to come back in on Monday, which would be a Thursday night kind of schedule. Monday’s going to be like a normal day after the game schedule. I want guys to get some rest. I want guys to get some recovery. I want them to get their bodies back. The guys that are injured are going to be spending the weekend in here getting themselves healthy. Then, we will start planning for the Chargers. I think over the next few days, I know for me and for the coaches, I think we just have to look at everything that we’re doing and where we’re at and how we can help our guys be better. That’s what we have to do as coaches.”

(On if he’s going to be in the office more than what he would be for a schedule after a Thursday night game) “No, but we’re going to be working. It’s easy to work remote now. I’m going to see my son in Savannah.”

(On Kendre Miller) "I thought he played well. I thought the plays when we handed him the ball, I thought he did some good things. I wished he would have caught the ball over the middle, but I was impressed with what I saw out of Kendre. I think that's a guy that can help us."



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(Opening Statement) “I thought it was a good team win. We did a lot of things well tonight that we statistically talk about. You are always adjusting and getting used to the short week schedule when you are at home and on the road. We talked all week about a fast start. I thought they handled the mental part of it. It’s really easy to complain on a short week and pretty soon no one cares. I thought our preparation for those two days were good. I didn’t want to go through all the stats with them. First half leads fair better for those teams. For me I know I wasn’t going to tell them that we were 5-0 with the lead and 0-5 when we didn’t have one. That’s the last thing I wanted to mention to them. I thought we ran the ball well of course. Defensively, we had pressure. They are nicked up. I told Dennis Allen to get healthy. They have a good football team. A lot of their players right now weren’t able to play. Overall, I’m pleased how we played.”

(On not feeling sorry for teams in the NFL) “No. It’s just the business we are in. You just play. You have injuries. It’s really the truth. No one outside the building cares. At the end of the day, they want to see the end result.”

(On receiving the game ball) “It’s just two days of prep and we are here. So, not a lot of sleep. It keeps your mind off it because there are so many things that you have to get done. My big concern was just not having enough rest, so I slept today for a while. I came over here early just to get started going through the game plan again. It meant a lot. There were a lot of moments here. You get to see a lot of old players that were here and to be with this team and this ownership group. It’s the reason that you miss it. The one year out. You miss relationships and making memories. It’s like I told them a couple of weeks ago. (Patrick) Surtain’s interception right in front of our bench. There will be a time that I won’t remember his name and I’ll be having apple sauce out of a straw, but I’ll remember that play. That part about being around young people and having a chance to be a part of their journey and coach them is a pretty good job. I’m thankful for it. It was kind of emotional.”

(On driving up to the building) “This building has changed over the years. One time I think I was an assistant with the Cowboys we played here and the locker room used to be where you had to walk across the field. I had never really been in the visitor’s locker room here. It’s all been renovated. Anytime they have a Super Bowl here there has been modifications. I’m glad that I was here early, like six hours before the game early. I had plenty of time to grab some coffee. I think (about) what happened here and I’m going back to 2005 before any of us have arrived. A lot changed with this city and more than any player and any coach from 2006 and on that it was bigger than football. There were schools and hospitals not opened. There were a lot of things up in the air. So you appreciate those people that came when they didn’t necessarily had to. That was a unique time. None of us were prepared for that. We were all anxious and excited about our new job opportunities, but none of us understood what it would mean and how big it would become. That part of it is different and kind of special.”

(On honoring Drew Brees) “When the schedule came out, it was the night that he wanted to come in. They have the Saints Hall of Fame and then they have the Ring of Honor. He was being put in the Hall of Fame. It was good to see him. A few of us went over really quick to the Hilton and just thanked him. We were all kind of underdressed in our travel sweats. This is a city that dresses up a lot. It is always good to see him. I feel like I see him quite a bit. He has been to our practices. Anytime you see that whole group even pre-game yapping at us was fun.”

(On if he thinks this will be the last time he coaches in this place) “I don’t think this is the last time that I am ever going to coach in this place. This was the last team I hadn’t beaten.”

(On Javonte Williams play) “He had to have been good. I didn’t see all of the numbers. We actually were going to come out early, mix in the run and the read option. Bo (Nix) did a great job. We got a penalty called on one that was an impossible penalty. He threw the ball in .5 seconds and we got called for someone downfield (illegal downfield pass). It can’t happen meaning it’s an impossibility. I thought all of that clicked. We blocked them. You get a sense right away how you are matching up. Really from the late second quarter on it was pressure. We got a lot more zone tonight from this team maybe to keep more eyes on Bo. He did a good job with his feet. Javonte had some really good runs. When you

have a night like that rushing and the time of possession, the script was flipped a little bit from last week. Fortunately from our defense, they got some rest.”

(On if tonight was the ideal offense) “We are building. We are figuring it out. I will say this respectfully to the question, we are working on how to win that game. You don’t say this is how we are going to play regardless. Based on who we were playing tonight, that what we feel we had to do to win that game. It might change a week from now. Certainly the reps our young quarterback is receiving and our receivers are receiving, we are young as a team and so that is invaluable.”

(On beating 32 teams) “It means you’ve had two jobs. Someone brought that statistic up and we were trying to guess who was on that list. Someone had brought it up yesterday or the day before. We don’t think about things like that, but I know you had to have worked at two different organizations to do it. I’m glad I am here.”

(On seeing his family before the game) “No, I would normally see my wife. My kids will come to three or four games. There were some other close friends that I knew for a long time. That was a little bit more than normal.”

(On his welcome) “I thought it was great. You don’t forget the faces, the smiles or the dialect. They were great.”

(On his kids coming to this game) “They were I think six and nine (when I was first head coach in New Orleans) and have been to over 150 games here. They’ll probably see five games a year, but this was definitely a game that they were going to come to. We used to play touch football after the games were over win, lose or draw with the kids. The problem was that the visiting locker room players would come out and you’d have to stop and wait. There were certain things that we did for families that we thought were important. They kind of grew up here.”

(On Bo Nix playing well tonight) “I had made this comment earlier when we drafted him. When you watch him play, you don’t feel like you are in harm’s way. He is tough to sack. He has good ball location. He makes a lot of plays with his feet. He has some big play opportunities. There is confidence that you get as a playcaller that allows you to be more aggressive. We wanted to come out tonight in that mindset.”

(On Saints fans that are growing frustrated with the team) “I’d start with the leadership and ownership. You guys all saw how they played earlier in the season before they got hit with the injury bug. They had two good wins in a row. There are so many games ahead of us. They will bounce back.”



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### QB SPENCER RATTLER

(On his performance in his second start) “Got to be better. Plain and simple, got to be better. I felt like we had some good things going at certain times, but just couldn’t catch a rhythm. It starts with myself, (I) got to be better, and then the group will follow. So I’ve got to set that standard and be better.”

(On tonight’s challenges versus last week) “I can’t put my hand on it right now. We’ll watch the tape, see what we could’ve done better, but just coming on the sideline and looking at the iPad, we had some stuff there. We just all got to be on the same page and at the same focus, and that starts with me. As a leader, I’ve got to be better in that area.”

(On the blind side sack situation) “They had a better play call than we did, plain and simple. They executed and split second that ball is out to Juwan [Johnson] and it’s a big play, so, I’ve got to get it off faster.”

(On the defensive pressure) “They have a really good front, a really good defense, good scheme. We moved the ball at times, but it’s a good front. They’re talented.”

(On team’s disappointing stretch) “I think you’re going to go through tough times, and we’ve got great leaders on our team. Demario [Davis] just talked to us and said ‘This storm will pass. We’ve got to all stick together.’ Just keep finding ways to improve. It doesn’t feel great right now, but if we just keep stacking days and get some guys back healthy, we’ll be alright.”

(On what he’s learned through two starts) “Just to not quit. Keep going, keep battling. I know that’s said a lot, but it’s real. You don’t want to just give it up at half or third quarter or fourth quarter, no matter what’s going on. You’ve got to just keep swinging, keep punching, keep believing in your guys. Just got to be better.”

(On grace considering injuries) “No excuses for anybody, starting with myself. I’m so hard on myself and want myself to play at a high level at all times no matter what the circumstances are. We do have a lot of injuries, but it’s next man up mentality, we know that. We’ll get guys back healthy and keep getting better.”

(On specifics in his game to work on during the mini-break) “Again, I’m going to watch the tape and see what happened today. I felt like I was seeing things well today. I felt pretty comfortable back there. We just all have got to be on the same page, and that starts with me. It starts with me. If I’ve got to use my legs more, or get it out quicker, get a sense of different checks, I have to, so I can get better at that.”

(On sequence before halftime) “We just did what was called. We took two throws. I think I checked them both down to [Alvin Kamara] and we took a knee, and there was only 16 seconds left. We had two timeouts, had to go 50 yards or so, 40 yards or so. They were going to drop coverage and try to force us to check it down, so that’s what we did. Got on to the half.”

(On hip pointer) “Fourth quarter, I landed on it weird. Maybe somebody hit it, just landed on it funny. I just got up and it was a little tight. It’s one of the only spots I don’t have pads on, but should be okay.”

(On talking to Drew Brees) “Obviously, one of the best of all time. It was pretty cool to spend a little moment with him pregame. Obviously such a big deal, he got inducted into the Saints Hall of Fame today, so congrats to him. He’s one of the GOATs, and it was cool to be on the sideline with him for a minute. He had some good advice for me.”

(On message to fans) “Obviously, we want to put out a better product. We’ve got to be better, so it starts with us, but having great support always helps. With what I’ve seen, Saints fans are great every game, so we’ve got to play better and keep them there.”



## **S TYRANN MATHIEU**

(On how the defense approaches this going forward) “Obviously, it’s not going our way. We can’t pout, we’re grown men, we get a paycheck, so we have just got to continue to push forward. Life doesn’t always go your way, and I can’t stress that enough. We’ve got to find a way to stay together and look in the mirror. Are we doing the right things throughout the week? Are we preparing the right way? Do we believe in our coaches? Do we believe in the guys next to us? So, we’ve got a lot of tough questions to answer and ask ourselves, but obviously this is not the type of outcome any of us imagined. Some things aren’t in our control, but the things that are in our control, we’ve got to do a better job of showing up and trying to make a play.”

(On the state of the team and the break before the next game) “We’re not the healthiest team right now, and sometimes you just need a couple of days off to regroup. I’m hoping that this long weekend could work to our advantage, and we come back and everybody has to recommit to the group. The season isn’t over, but we’ve got a lot to figure out.”

(On team’s biggest concerns) “Defensively, if we don’t stop the run, it’s hard to play good defense. I think for most of that game, they had the momentum. I dropped a pick, and those are the plays that we have to make if we want to turn the momentum. If I catch that ball before halftime, they don’t get three points and we probably score that drive. So then, it’s a one score game, and we’re still in the game. So we’ve just got to find a way to make those plays, because I think that’s what’s really holding us back. We aren’t making those plays in those critical moments like the team needed.”

## **LB DEMARIO DAVIS**

(On the run defense falling short) “That’s the point of a run defense, and a good defense in general. You have to stop the run. But you have to look at it and figure out why that happened and make the corrections. I think what you don’t do is try to attribute it to all these other factors. I’ve been on this defense for seasons when we haven’t given up a hundred yards rushing. I’ve been here when it’s up, and I’ve been here when it’s down. Sometimes you do everything right and you get a bad result. What are you going to do, and how are you going to respond? For me, I look at them as opportunities, because I was always focused on the process, not on the results. I’ve learned it’s the process, and of course it’s tough when you don’t get the results you want. But like I said, and I say it all the time, loss is the greatest teacher in life. When I was up ten, I went right back to the drawing board, so now that I’m down ten, I’m going right back to the drawing board. And that has only served me well, and this team has always been resilient through all different types of adversity. Whether it’s been injuries, whether it’s been games not going our way, this team has always been resilient.”



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### QB BO NIX

(On if a short week benefitted the team and simplified the approach) “Yeah, maybe so. I thought that we have to turn some of those field goals into touchdowns, but it was good that we got points early, moved the ball early, (and) got a first down on the first play. It was important for us, and our defense played solid, as always. We played well overall. We ran the ball for a lot of yards, and that helps all the time.”

(On what it was like giving Coach Sean Payton the game ball) “It was awesome. The Saints mean a lot to him. He was there for a while (and) had amazing success. It’s tough to go back to a place where you called home for that long and you fought for, and now you are playing against. It was special. It was a great moment. I’m happy for him. I’m happy for everybody that has been a part of that organization for so long. There was a lot of guys that came over with him that we are just (as) happy about (the win). It was a good team win. Everybody contributed. Everybody was on their toes with a short week and came out prepared and ready to roll.”

(On the offense embracing his ability to run the ball) “I think it is just an added bonus. Obviously, you want to run the ball with running backs in special ways and get behind the O-line. At times, things break down and those hidden yards, I think, are really important. They get extra first downs, and they are ways of sneaking yards in. So, that was good to see, good to use, and we have to continue to do that when it’s there.”

(On if he thinks of the good plays or the ones that didn’t execute as planned) “I think about the ones that I could have had back. I think that is just competitive nature for guys. You do want to give yourself some grace at times. They (defense) are obviously trying to keep you from doing all of the good stuff. You live and you learn, and you continue to work. Nobody has ever played a perfect game, so that is why we are all still hear trying to figure it out and continue to move forward. Obviously, the most important thing is to win the game. When you beat a team like that with really good players by that big of a margin, it is really good. It is good to see all of the guys play and play well.”

(On tying John Elway and Drew Lock for most wins in a season by a Broncos rookie quarterback) “It means a lot. You’re talking about one of the greats to ever do it at our organization. It means a lot. You’re in great company. I am not finished; we have a lot in front of us, so I definitely don’t want to stop there. We are going to continue to get better as a team. I am going to continue to grow and learn as a player. Hopefully, we will continue to have wins like this.”

### LB CODY BARTON

(On the win) “It was just one of those nights where it just comes to you and you just kind of feel it. It was a great team win. It was just one of those games. It was a great team win on the road on a short week. I am happy for everyone.”

(On if he thought that he would get a second chance at scoring a touchdown) “Tonight I did. I was saying it all game. ‘It’s going to happen. I am going to get it back. I’m going to get it back.’ It ended up happening. You don’t know when it is going to happen. You just need to be ready when the opportunity presents itself. It happens quick.”

(On what it feels like to play on a defense where everyone can make a play) “Being on this defense is fun. It’s aggressive. Everyone has a chance to eat. Today, I feel like it was kind of my day. Some of

those bigger splash plays came my way. If this game were tomorrow, you don't know who it is going to be. That's kind of how this defense is. It's a lot of fun just running around."

### **TE ADAM TRAUTMAN**

(On being back in New Orleans) "Good to be back. It was weird coming back last night and driving through all of the familiar places, like seeing my old apartment which is literally a block from here. That was great. It was great to see everybody pregame. I tried to take care of that so I could focus on the game. There are a lot of people who I am still close to here so it was good, and, obviously, felt good to win like that."

(On what this win meant for Sean Payton) "It meant a lot. It probably couldn't have gone any better, to be honest. He talked about next game, but, obviously everyone knew that it meant a little something to him and we wanted to win it because it is the next game; but, we knew how special it was to him. There are 22 guys here from New Orleans. So, just doing it for everyone (was special). Getting to 4-3 was the goal."

### **RB JAVONTE WILLIAMS**

(On if this was his best game this year) "Rushing-wise, (yes). There are still some things that I can clean up and some things that I can improve on. I am just going to watch the film and get better."

(On the key to running the ball well from the start tonight) "Coach preached the whole week (to have a) fast start. That is something that we wanted to do to get on them early (and to have a) fast start."