



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS LOS ANGELES RAMS
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2019 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the loss, the Saints' 2018 season comes to a close in the NFC Championship game. The Saints fall to 1-2 all time in Conference Championships.
- The Saints' loss moves their all-time postseason record to 9-11 and moves their home playoff record to 7-4. This is New Orleans' first playoff loss in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome since the 1992 Wild Card Playoff loss to Philadelphia.
- The loss is Saints Head Coach **Sean Payton's** first home playoff loss. His all-time postseason record falls to 8-6, and his home playoff record falls to 6-1.
- The Saints and Rams' all-time postseason series is now tied at 1-1.
- Today's game was the seventh Conference Championship game to go to overtime in the Super Bowl era, including the 2009 NFC Championship in which the Saints defeated the Minnesota Vikings, 31-28. The road team is now 5-2 in those games.
- This game joins the 2009 NFC Championship as the only Saints postseason games to go to overtime. The Saints fall to 1-1 in such contests.
- Rams' K Greg Zuerlein's 57-yard game-winning field goal in overtime is tied for the third longest field goal in NFL playoff history, and second-longest against New Orleans in the playoffs (Graham Gano's 58-yard field goal in the 2017 Wild Card Playoff game).
- Including playoff games, the Saints' defense finished the season with 27 takeaways, the team's most since 2009.
- Playing in his franchise-record 14th playoff game as a Saint, QB **Drew Brees** finished 26-of-40 passing for 249 yards, two touchdowns, and one interception. Brees now has 408 career postseason completions, surpassing Dan Marino for sixth place all-time. Brees' 249 passing yards also breaks a tie with Marino, giving him sole possession of seventh place all-time with 4,759 postseason passing yards. Brees' two touchdown passes give him 33 career postseason touchdowns, surpassing Marino for sole possession of sixth all-time.
- With touchdown passes to TE **Garrett Griffin** and QB **Taysom Hill**, Brees threw a touchdown pass to nine different undrafted free agents this season, including the playoffs, which is the most in the common draft era (since 1967). Brees connected with 14 different players for touchdown passes this season, which is the most in NFL history.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** totaled a postseason high in receptions and receiving yards, finishing with 11 receptions for 96 yards. Kamara's 11 receptions ties for the most by any running back in a conference championship game with Jerick McKinnon, who had 11 receptions for Minnesota in the 2017 NFC Championship.
- With 31 yards on 9 carries, RB **Mark Ingram II** moved into first in club history in rushing yards in the regular season and postseason combined, with 6,284, surpassing Deuce McAllister.
- WR **Ted Ginn** finished the game with three receptions for 58 yards, including a 43-yard catch on the Saints' final drive of regulation, his longest reception of this season (regular season and postseason).
- K **Wil Lutz** converted 3 field goals and 2 extra points, moving into second in franchise history with 32 postseason points scored, surpassing Morten Andersen.
- TE **Garrett Griffin** scored a touchdown on his first career postseason reception. His five-yard catch capped a Saints' 8-play, 68-yard first quarter drive. Griffin

became the 19th different player and 16th Saint teammate to catch a postseason touchdown from Drew Brees in Brees' career

- QB **Taysom Hill** became the 20th different player and 17th Saint teammate in the postseason to catch a touchdown pass from Drew Brees on his third quarter two-yard touchdown reception.
- WR **Michael Thomas** recorded 4 catches for 36 yards and moves into a tie with Devery Henderson for second in Saints' history with 31 postseason receptions.
- Playing in his second career playoff game LB **Demario Davis** led the Saints with 14 tackles, recorded a pass defense, a tackle for loss, and his first career postseason interception, picking off Jared Goff on the Rams' first drive of the game. Davis' only other interception of his career came as a member of the New York Jets, intercepting Drew Brees in Week 9 of the 2013 season.
- CB **P.J. Williams** finished with a career postseason-high eight tackles, adding one pass defensed.
- DE **Cameron Jordan** recorded an eight-yard sack of Jared Goff on Los Angeles' first drive of the fourth quarter, and now has a club-best 4.5 postseason sacks in his career. Jordan finished the game with three tackles.



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SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

(Opening Statement)

“Obviously it’s a disappointing way to lose a game. It’s frustrating. Just getting off the phone with the league office. They blew the call and... Man there were a lot of opportunities though. That call puts in first and ten. We’re on our knee three plays (and kicking a field goal) and it’s a game changing call. That’s where it’s at so it’s disappointing. Credit the Rams. They made enough plays though. They won the game. The kicker made some big kicks. But for a call like that not to be made. Man, it’s just hard to swallow and then to get a phone call. So what do you do? You get back up. You start going to work. This will be a tough one for these players. For the coaches. Again the Rams did a great job. It was a well-fought game. Hard-fought game, but... Any questions?”

(On what kind of explanation the league gave him in regards to the no call for pass interference)

“It was simple. They blew the call. It should never have not been a call. They said not only was it interference, it was helmet to helmet.”

(On if he called the league office or if the league office called him)

“We spoke initially. Then I called to follow up. First thing Al (Riveron) said when I got on the phone. They messed it up and... But we went to these league meetings. We sit as an ownership group and we don’t further evaluate the replay system. It’s just too much at stake. Listen, it’s a hard job for those guys because it’s happening fast, but I don’t know if there was ever a more obvious pass interference call that, here it is the NFC championship game. Tough one to swallow.”

(On the explanation he was given by the field official)

“The normal, “hey we talked, they arrived at the same time.” That kind of thing.”

(On play-calling adjustments since playing them previously as well as Josh Hill’s injury)

“A little bit. Look, we knew the last seven weeks this team had really shifted defensively to more of zone principles. It was a lot more zone coverage. It’s some brackets. But his concussion affected us some and yet and it’s part of the in game process of us dealing with it.”

(On the defense’s ability to make big plays to stop teams at the end of the game)

“They played well. Our team played well, well enough to win the game. We should have (won).”

(On how he will get over this situation on New Orleans’ final full offensive drive of regulation)

“It’s tough to get over it. My problem with it was, I just don’t know. If we were playing pick-up football in the backyard, the team that threw the foul... I mean it was as obvious a call... And how two guys can look at that and arrive with their decision. It happened though so, you can’t dwell on it. We will probably never get over it. The truth is some of these losses like this (are impossible to get over). One like that, it’s too bad.”

(On what he says to the team after a loss like that)

“It’s disappointing. Man I was proud of these guys. This is a... It’s been a great season. It’s a great group of guys that’s worked extremely hard. And you come off a tough loss like we did last year and fight back and put ourselves right in this position. Right there in position inside the ten-yard line to go to the Super bowl. I’m proud of every one of them.”

(On dealing with a situation like this, especially considering people like Ben Watson’s career finishing on a game like this)

“Listen there’s a finality to the last time this team plays together. So that’s part of it.”

(On whether he worries about how people view the NFL after a call like that)

“Next question.”

(On the missed opportunities in the first half)

“Those two red zone possessions, we ended up with field goals. We will obviously pay attention to all of those.”

(On what He saw during Drew Brees’ overtime interception play)

“Well it’s hard to see on field level. He got hit as he threw it.”

(On his opinion of whether replays should be included on plays like the third-and-ten play on New Orleans’ final full drive of regulation to see if there is a foul on a play)

“We all want to get it right? I mean we have the technology where we... We have plenty of technology to speed things up. Look I’m on the competition committee. So hopefully that provides a voice. Man I hope no other team has to lose a game the way we lost that one today. We were in position. Like I said, being right there on the ten-yard line. Whatever yard line. Be on a knee for three plays (and kick a field goal). It’s disappointing.”

(On the difficulty of dwelling on the third and ten situation in New Orleans’ final full drive of regulation when going in to overtime)

“It’s difficult but we shifted gears and here we go.”

(On his choice to pass on the first down during that final full drive of regulation)

“It was a run to begin with. We got a zero blitz out of it. That’s a good question. I’m sorry. I thought you were talking about overtime.”

(On if the pass on first down was a check by Drew Brees in-game)

“It’s kind of a built in play that handles some of the zero blitz.”

(On what was said to Sean McVay after the game)

“Oh yeah. Listen afterwards, I congratulated him. He’s a great young coach. (He’s) Someone I consider a friend. There’s a lot of close relationships to guys on this staff. Those guys did a great job.”



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QB DREW BREES

(On the controversy surrounding the third-and-ten play on New Orleans' final full drive of regulation today) "Yea, that's tough to swallow. I think there were plenty of times throughout the season there's calls that go against you, go for you, or they miss, or they didn't. Obviously in a situation like that where it seemed like everybody in the world saw it, it's tough."

(On a lingering feeling going into overtime) "No, it didn't, it didn't. Listen, you're going to play ball. Just like you would throughout the season when something like that happens, whether it goes your way or doesn't. You move on to the next play. You can't let it bother you. So it had no bearing in overtime. At least not for me."

(On interception being his last play of the season) "It's tough. I thought we had a chance to go down and get points, get a touchdown."

(On playing for the fans and the team this season) "We love the Who Dat nation. We love the city of New Orleans. We love being able to play for them because that is what we do. We play for them. They provide such an unbelievable atmosphere here within the Dome. This Dome symbolizes a lot more than just football and there's a great connection there. We love our fans and they were awesome today. They have been awesome every year since I've been here. (They are the) Best fans in professional sports."

(On the endings in both last season in the playoffs and this season driving the team forward) "It has to drive you. Let's dive into this game some more. There were plenty opportunities for us offensively that we did not take advantage of. It was a hard fought game on both sides, credit to them. They're a great team, with a great staff, and so we knew this was going to be a battle. We knew it was going to come down to the wire. We felt like there were some more plays that we could have made. So regardless of the call or no call, I felt like there were other opportunities for us that I wish we could've taken advantage of."

(On pressure on the offensive line) "They are a great pass rushing team, so they are going to get after you at times. You just want to be able to avoid negative plays, right? You want to get the ball out, get completions, positive plays, move the ball, and move the chains. Unfortunately, you get hit and the ball flying up in the air is a tough way to give the ball back to them in overtime."

(On difference in officials taking it away rather than a team) "You feel like that was something out of your control. And I like to focus on the things I can control. There were plenty of things that I have rehearsed the game in my mind that could (have) kept a drive alive here, or could have got points here. There are always those moments after a game, win or lose, where you felt like there was some opportunities. A game like this every one of those would have counted."

(On field goals in first two drives) "It's not like we were inside the five (yard line). I felt we got a good drive, getting points, which was good. After getting the turnover, I think it was three plays, and then we kicked a field goal. We would have liked to get something going there, kind of closer, potentially gotten a touchdown. Credit to their defense."

(On digesting the controversy surrounding the third-and-ten play on New Orleans' last full drive of regulation) "That's a good question. There's nothing we can do about it. So it's unfortunate."

(On the environment on the field after that) "I have to focus on my job and focus on the things that I can control. When something like that happens, it is on to the next play. Defense is going out there to try and stop them. Now obviously the game is overtime, and now we get the ball, let's go down and do something with it."

(On if there were any momentum shifts during the game) "It was back and forth. I never felt like it was. We jumped out 13 nothing and so we got the momentum at that moment. It was hard fought after that, hard fought, back and forth."

(On if he was impressed by Jared Goff's poise) "They played well. They played well."

(On the most special part of this year's team) "(There were) So many parts. Just the way we were able to come together. Bringing in some new guys, both from the draft and free agency that played critical roles for our team. Their productivity and their leadership, and their put-togetherness. We like to work and we like to have fun. We had a ton of fun this year. It stings right now and it will probably for a while. But as we look back on the 2018 New Orleans Saints, it was a special team, it was a special year. It's hard right now."

(On if turning 40 years old, not knowing how many more chances are left makes the loss harder) "Yes it does."

(On feeling positive for a return to the Saints) "I feel pretty positive."

(On Benjamin Watson and the close of his career) "That's one of the more sad parts about today for me. An incredible teammate he's been. A leader. A mentor. A friend. Really unfortunate. He was sick earlier in the week, and it looked like appendicitis. And trying to put together a game plan and not knowing if he's up or down. It just played out that way. We were all locked in on practice and putting together the best plan we can. It would have been great to have him out there with us."

(On if they guarded Michael Thomas differently) "There were some differences. Some times when he was getting doubled. They were playing more zone now than when we played the first time. I think it was just, call it the playoffs, and just everyone is just elevating their game a little bit. Everyone is playing a little tighter."

(On the reason why he feels positive returning) "Because I feel like I will."

(On players' displeasure with officiating and replay system) "Uh, I'm not sure."

(On processing the loss in this manner) "It's never going to be a perfect game. It's never going to be perfectly officiated, for example. There is a lot happening out there and it happens very, very fast. You could talk about a solution potentially being replaying certain types of penalties. Maybe ones that you say are pretty black and white in regards to whether it was or wasn't. I do not know how far that will go. Obviously, if they were replaying pass interference or whether someone was hit early before the ball even got there, then I'm sure that would've been reviewed today. It would have been found that it was a PI (pass interference), but it wasn't."

(On thinking in the moment "How the heck to do you miss that call?") "Well, being that it happened right there in front of the person being the one to make that call, everyone in the stands, and everyone watching at home on the TV. Yea, that makes it even more difficult. In the moment, you obviously yell and scream 'How did you not see that?' But again, once you come back, it's like, there is nothing we can do about it. It's on to the next play."

(On how tough it is to get to this point and not having many more chances given his age) "It is true, this is tough. Each one of these is unique and special. I am not getting any younger. Some days I feel like it."

(On the process for telling wife, kids, family) "My mind is not even there right now. So this is all still pretty fresh. Just going to take a few days to let it all settle in. Talk with my teammates, my coaches, and I plan on being here next year and giving it another run."

(On advice for the fans on this loss) "I think you have to with anything that happens, whether you're the one playing or you are the one so invested, which I know our fans are in our team and in the season. You can go one of two directions. You can either go in the tank or you can find a way for this to come together for our good. That's the mindset I take and I think that's the mindset we took last year after that loss in Minnesota. And I think you see the result of what happens when you take that approach. We turned that into good, we turned that into something positive, and it brought us together as a team and strengthened us. I hope that this will too."

(On if anything rushed back from the 2009 NFC Championship) "When we went to overtime, I thought, 'Oh, here we go again.'"

(On thinking "If we did it once, we can do it again") "Absolutely, without question."

(On changing overtime rules after 2009 NFC Championship game, will they change the rules and start reviewing calls) "Who knows, potentially? That seems to be the direction that things are

going. We see what they do in the NBA now, different than what they've done. In college basketball and obviously college football as well. That will constantly evolve as they try to make this game better and they try to make it as fair as possible."

(On being able to give a not so reasoned take) "Being that it would have worked in our favor, I think it's easy to sit here and criticize or say that it should exist. I think because of this, as a result of this, there will be a lot of talk about potentially reviewing penalties or game-changing type penalties. Just like all the reviews that go up into the booth with anything inside of the two minutes. Maybe that's something that will happen in regard to certain penalties as well that are game-changing type penalties, like obviously that one was today."



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SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

WR Ted Ginn Jr.

(On how the game ended) "It didn't end how we liked it. I felt like we were the better team, but we came up short. Words can't explain how we feel right now. The guys and I in the locker room will go back to the drawing board."

(On the controversy surrounding the third-and-ten play in New Orleans' final full drive in regulation) "It's not going to change what happened right now. They should have come down and overturned it like they do everything else. It is what it is. We have to take this one on the chin."

(On his big fourth quarter catch on second-and-12) "It was a big-time moment and I was trying to make a play for my team. Drew (Brees) threw it up and put trust in me and I came down with it."

RB Mark Ingram

(On how he is feeling right now) "I can't say any words."

(On the team's feeling going into overtime) "Go win it. Go win the game"

(On being one game from the Super Bowl) "We deserved it, but we didn't finish it."

WR Tommylee Lewis

(On the third-and-ten play on New Orleans' final full drive) "I saw the defender coming. He got up under me. I got up looking for a flag and didn't see one. It was a bad call."

(On if he thought he would see a flag) "There was no question in my mind. I got up and popped up and looking for a little yellow flag on the flag. I didn't see one."

(On how long it will take to get over it) "I'm not sure. I don't know."

(On what the intention was with the play) "It was a wheel route with me out of the backfield. I was trying to outflank the defense."

DE Cameron Jordan

(On losing the game in that fashion) "Without going into bashing the referee because I don't know what he saw, maybe he doesn't know what he saw. Maybe the lights were too bright for him to see. You have to put it on the defense. We had a chance to get out there and we had an opportunity to get them out of field goal range in overtime."

(On the yardage they felt they could give up in overtime based on Rams kicker Greg Zuerlein field goal range) "We knew that we were defending the 42. They have a good field goal kicker. At the end of the day, they ended up winning."

(On how hard it is to accept this defeat) "We had control for all 60 minutes and we ended up losing in the final overtime. Words can't describe it. We were defeated at the end of the day, so we don't have the right to complain about the what ifs, the couldas, the shouldas. At the end of the day, we needed to take the field and create a big turnover."

(On the loss being out of our control) "Was it out of our control? We let them get close to us. We

ended up having a 13-point lead at one point in time. You can't ever let your foot off the gas. To their credit, they fought the entire game and ended up winning."

LB Demario Davis

(On the third-and-ten play on New Orleans' final full drive) "It was pass interference, but we didn't get the call."

(On why they were the better team today) "They won. We lost. They were the better team today."

(On not stopping Jared Goff at the end of the game and in regulation) "You have to give him credit. He made the plays."



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RAMS HEAD COACH SEAN McVAY

(Opening Statement) “I can’t say enough about our team’s effort today (We have) so much respect for Coach Payton and the Saints, they are a tough team. I have never coached in an atmosphere like that, ever. It was so loud, and we had some communications issue from the start. We dealt with big time adversity and it personifies what type of team this has been throughout the course of the year. We fell behind and just kept competing, kept swinging. It wasn’t always perfect, but we made enough plays and then I think really the overtime period personifies what this team is all about. Defense gets a turnover Jared (Goff) makes an unbelievable play to (Tyler) Higbee to be able to even get us in under 60-yard field goal range and then Greg “the leg” (Zuerlein) delivers in a big way. I am just so happy for these players, for these coaches, but a lot of respect for the Saints. We are excited about getting a chance to move on and play in Atlanta. Wow.”

(On if there are words for the feeling and emotions he has right now) “I don’t think so. I think right afterwards its surreal, you’re so happy for these players but I have a real big headache right now from yelling all day today. These guys just kept swinging. We’re going to enjoy this for a day or so and then have a couple of weeks to prepare for either the Chiefs or the Patriots. It’s an unbelievable opportunity, what a blessing it is to be able to do this and see the people succeed that you care so much about, guys like Andrew Whitworth and so many of our players. This was a special day, for sure.”

(On Jared Goff taking control of the huddle in this atmosphere) “That is what you love about him. That’s what we’ve said all along, and those kinds of things are things we are not really exposed to as coaches, but to his teammates those are the guys that really know. The communications that goes on in the huddle and having to deal with ‘can you even hear what I’m saying?’, but being able to command those, guys, have them believe in what we are getting ready to go do. I thought the drive at the end of the first half, Brandin Cooks makes a great catch, then Todd (Gurley) makes an unbelievable run to be able to punch it in. That got us a little bit of momentum. Obviously, the first drive we had coming out of the second half wasn’t ideal but like we said, guys just kept fighting and Jared’s (Goff) mental toughness was a big part of us being able to win that today. With these elements, that’s a great defense, I thought Coach (Dennis) Allen and the Saints defense did an outstanding job of slowing us down today. We made enough plays to be able to win it as a team and that is what you love about this game.”

(On the drive to end regulation play) “I’m really happy (with it). I thought Josh Reynolds, what an unbelievable catch over the middle that he made, gets a catch and run. Robert Woods makes a big-time conversion where he ended up winning on an inside breaking route versus a man pressure. If he keeps his feet he is a guy that is going to end up scoring, but I thought our team’s composure right there, you couldn’t hear anything, for Greg (Zuerlein) to be able to deliver that kick to be able to send it into overtime was outstanding. I thought the two-minute management by the offense and by Jared’s leadership as a whole and the end of the first half and then at the end of the game was instrumental in the outcome. That was big time by those guys.”

(On the calm confidence leading up to this week in preparation) “I think you said it, it’s the confidence. That confidence is earned throughout the course of the week by the way they prepare, the way they plan and the way they practice. We have a lot of respect for the Saints, but there was an expectation, there was a belief that we were coming in here not just to compete with them but to come win the football game. We knew it was going to be a great challenge but the guys stayed the course. It took more than 60 minutes of football like we thought but they got it done and I think that just personifies the mental toughness and also the belief and the expectation that we expect to go win football games because of the players that we have in that locker room.”

(On Todd Gurley getting off to a slow start and the decision to go with C.J. Anderson more) “It was really just a flow for the game. I thought Todd’s run from the five (yard line on the two-minute drive was outstanding. What personifies Todd is this is an MVP caliber player and he just kept fighting, kept supporting his teammates and he is going to have an instrumental role in our game against whoever we play, whether it be the Patriots or the Chiefs. Today, that was just the feel for the flow of the game that we had, not anything against Todd (Gurley). C.J. (Anderson) did a nice job, but I thought they did a good job as a whole slowing down our run game and we just had to grind some things out today but Todd is a special player and couldn’t be more impressed with the way that he handled himself and then he ended up making a big time play that ended up in us winning that football game today.”

(On what went into the decision on the fake punt in the game) “Really it goes back to the confidence in the players and I know your next question is going to be then why didn’t you go for it on the fourth down (in the fourth quarter). I think more than anything it was that we needed a little bit of momentum. We felt like if the look presented itself we were going to take it. Sam Shields did a good job running an excellent route. Johnny (Hekker) delivered a ball right on the money and even though that didn’t end in a touchdown, we ended up getting some points. I thought that just gave us a little bit of life with the way that things were going. That was part of it, Bones (John Fassel) felt confident in it and I felt confident in our players ability to execute it in a big way. With the fourth down deal, we were moving the ball really well. I think our defense had played really good football up to that point. Ok, if we get it to a tie game, we feel good about the outcome being able to turn in our favor if we are able to get a couple of possessions. Ultimately, it ended up working out for us because of our players.”

(On Jared Goff not being able to do what he did today back in November when the run game did not work in that game also) “I think his ability to stay the course. They did a great job, they have been one of the top rush defenses the entire year. They were committed, they did a couple different things with their front structures, they set hard edges. They are a great defense, there is a reason why they are in the NFC championship and were the number one seed this year. I thought Jared (Goff) made enough plays, took what the defense gave him. With the exception of the turnover we had early in the game I thought the guys played really well and Jared’s leadership was a big part of that outcome. You can’t say enough about his ability to never get phased by any circumstance that presents itself. I’m really so happy for him and he did a great job of leading us today.”

(On the non-call on the Saints’ last drive in regulation) “It was a bang-bang type play. The one thing I respect about the refs today is they let the guys compete and they let the guys play. I thought Nickell Robey made a nice play. They snapped it with a quick snap and had a little wheel route coming out of the backfield. I thought it was a competitive type play and I am certainly not going to complain about the way that was officiated. I thought it was a competitive play. I thought they let the guys compete within the framework of the rules and that is what NFL football is about.”



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RAMS PLAYER QUOTES

QB Jared Goff

(On his feelings postgame) “We’re still so fresh from it. I definitely went through a ton of emotions. When the field goal went in to excited to emotional and overwhelmingly happy. I am very excited, we get to play in the Super Bowl and we deserve it.”

(On playing in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome) “It was a chaotic game. Just the way the crowd gets into the game, they definitely make an impact and they did today, but ultimately, we were able to overcome them. They are loud.”

(On having to talk to each of his lineman each play) “So, I guess I will tell you this, I would not if we had lost, but right before we went out there on the first drive my helmet went dead. The headset went dead, so I was wearing Sean Mannion’s helmet for the first drive. Throughout the second drive, it was in and out, it was spotty. So, trying to hear Sean (McVay) was difficult, we did some different things to make it easier. Trying to hear was difficult and trying to communicate was difficult, but I think once we got into a rhythm outside of those first two or three drive I felt pretty good. I think once I was able to settle in and really understand what was coming in through the helmet and being able to anticipate some stuff and then be able to be very direct with where I need to say it to, once I was able to do that it was better.”

(On putting tape over the ear holes of his helmet) “Yes, it helped tremendously. I wish I would have done it from the beginning.”

(On what he was feeling throughout the game) “The first two drives were tough. The first few three and outs when I didn’t have my helmet and then the second drive, we went three-and-out again, I think whichever one I threw an interception, they were all tough and it was disorienting. We fought through it, but it wasn’t loud enough I guess.”

(On his thoughts on the Saints today) “We have to tip our caps to the Saints and everything they did and what a good team they are. How much respect I have personally, I know we have, for Drew (Brees), and for coach (Sean) Payton, and all those guys that have been there for so long and at such a high level. It was an honor to be out there and win that game and do that here it is unbelievable, but we deserved it.”

DT Aaron Donald

(On seeing the game-winning kick go through) “It was surreal. This is what you work for, playing in big games like this and having an opportunity to be world champs. To do it with my teammates and my brothers, it is surreal.”

(On beating Drew Brees at home today) “Great team football. From offense to defense to special teams, we stuck together. We had ups and we had downs, we talked about that this week, we knew it would happen. At the end we stuck together, played together, and we finished as a team.”

(On keeping faith after getting down early in the game) “We are playing a good team. They are going to have their good plays, we are going to have our good plays. They are going to have their bad plays, and we had ours. They started out a little faster than us, but we stayed together, we stayed calm and focused and we came back and won by three.”

(On playing in the Super Bowl) “It is a dream. This is what you work for. This is what you are trying to do, this is what all those long hours are for, to get an opportunity to play in a game like the Super

Bowl. We did it, we have a lot more work to do, but we are happy. We are going to celebrate a little bit tonight, and then right back to work.”

LT Andrew Whitworth

(On Jared Goff's performance) “The way he (Jared Goff) played today, I mean honestly the whole game. I cannot say enough about him. His performance was amazing and to beat Drew Brees in this arena, this is one special place to play. These guys are really good here and are really hard to beat. You just cannot say enough about Jared's job today.”

(On the team's confidence coming into today's game) “I think we believed in ourselves. We believe how good we are and you know what, we are going to convince people one way or another. If we have to go try and win a Super Bowl and no one ever gets convinced, who cares. We think we are really good and think we have the opportunity to win and play at our best.”

(On playing in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome) “It was absolutely crazy. I have never played in anything louder than that ever, not even close.

(On facing adversity) “I think it shows you with all of the people out there that really jump on and off your bandwagon all year. If you look at the season as a whole, the personal adversity, the team adversity we faced throughout the season. To be 13-3 and sitting where we are with a bye, I think people slept on us and now they kind of get it. I have to give a shout out to my guy Ryan Clark, he has been on the Rams bandwagon all year, and you know what, what up RC.”

K Greg Zuerlein

(On the team facing adversity this season) “I think it just shows us as an organization that we never give up, we are a close-knit group. Whether we go through some adversity or we experience some success, we do not let that change us or affect us. We just keep on keeping on.”

(On making the game-winning kick) “In your head, it is like going back to when you are a little kid playing on the basketball court with three seconds left and he shoots and then you miss it you call timeout. You play all those situations in your head and hopefully they come to fruition and you are successful in them.”

(On being relaxed before the late field goal in regulation) “I did not think about that, I was just focusing on making the kick. I did see Johnny (Hekker) run off. I do not know what he was thinking, if we were going to fake it or not, but I appreciate his running.”

SS John Johnson III

(On when they thought they had a chance to win) “We always believe. Last time we were here we went down by 21 points, then we came back and tied it up 35-35. We never gave up confidence at all, we were in it the whole game. We just had to fight through it and fight until the end.”

(On his late game interception in overtime) “I had to have it, I did not want it, I had to have it. We won the game and that is a blessing. The ball was just hanging up there forever, it felt like I was fielding a punt. I had to back pedal for it. I saw Michael Thomas right at me, I thought he was going to knock it out of my hands, but I got it in my hands and knew I had to secure it. I did not see it get tipped, but I figured it was tipped since it was a wobbly ball, so I just had to secure it and get it.”

(On staying in the game while playing from behind) “That is playoff football. That is on the road football. The crowd is going to be in it and you are going to go down, they are going to make plays, but you just have to fight until the end.”

CB Nickell Robey-Coleman

(On the controversial play at the end of regulation) “In my mind, yes, I thought I was going to get flagged in that split second, but then I got up and they said it was incomplete. I was about to go crazy and was saying that is good. I thought that would have been a flag and they would have scored on the next play.

(On his thoughts on the game after the controversial play) “It is what it is, but you have to take advantage. You play in this league you have to take advantage. You get a break like that, you have to

take advantage of that. In this league, the door opens and the door closes that quick, so if someone is giving you a break you have to take advantage of it. Good calls or bad calls, whatever it is.”



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

LOS ANGELES RAMS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME SUNDAY, JANUARY 20, 2019 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME NFL OFFICIALS POOL REPORT FROM REFEREE BILL VINOVICH

Pool Reporter Interview with Referee Bill Vinovich
Conducted by Amie Just, New Orleans Times-Picayune/Nola.com

Amie Just: What was the reason that there was no penalty flag called on the Drew Brees pass to Tommylee Lewis?

Bill Vinovich: It was a judgment call by the covering official. I personally have not seen the play.

Amie Just: Did the timing in the game have any impact on the no-call there?

Bill Vinovich: Absolutely not.

Amie Just: In this situation, is the play subject to an instant replay review?

Bill Vinovich: It is not a reviewable play.