



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

NEW ORLEANS SAINT AT ARIZONA CARDINALS SATURDAY, AUG. 10, 2024 • STATE FARM STADIUM SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- New Orleans moves to 1-0 in the preseason after their opening victory against the Cardinals at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Az. The Saints return to action on Sunday, Aug. 18 when they play the San Francisco 49ers at Levi's Stadium. Kickoff is set for 7:00 p.m. CST. The game will be aired nationally on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 in the New Orleans area).
- The victory was New Orleans' second straight victory to open a preseason. It is the first time New Orleans has won their opening preseason contest in back-to-back seasons since the 2013 and 2014 campaigns.
- The win improved the Saints preseason record against Cardinals to 6-1.
- New Orleans converted their two fourth down attempts to extend drives, while the defense stopped the Cardinals offense on three fourth down tries.
- The New Orleans offensive line surrendered only one sack, while the Saints defense recorded four quarterback takedowns on the Cardinals.
- QB **Derek Carr** got the start and completed two of six passes for 12 yards in short work.
- Second-year QB **Jake Haener** relieved Carr for the rest of the first half and finished 9-of-13 for 107 yards with a long completion of 58 yards to WR **A.T. Perry**.
- Rookie QB **Spencer Rattler**, a Phoenix, Az. native, played the entire second half and finished nine-of-17 for 70 yards. He led the 12-play, 56-yard game-winning drive for New Orleans that ended with a 37-yard field goal by rookie K **Charlie Smyth**. He also added a third quarter four-yard rushing touchdown.
- RB **Jamaal Williams** was effective in the first half for the Black and Gold, totaling six carries for 20 yards while adding one grab.
- RB **Jordan Mims** led the Saints with 38 rushing yards on ten carries.
- Perry led the Saints in receiving with four receptions for 85 yards (22.3 avg), including the 58-yard grab from Haener.
- Rookie TE **Dallin Hooker** was effective in his NFL debut for New Orleans, adding three grabs for 24 yards.
- Making his Saints debut, LB **Willie Gay** posted five tackles (three solo) and one stop for loss.
- LB **Monty Rice** led the defensive unit with seven solo stops.
- Free agent acquisition LB **Khaleke Hudson** recorded six stops and a half-sack in his Black and Gold debut.
- LB **Anfernee Orji** added six tackles (three solo).
- DE **Carl Granderson** in limited action added one solo stop and split a sack with DT **Nathan Shepherd** in the first quarter.
- Rookie CB **Kool Aid McKinstry** posted three solo stops and one pass breakup tonight in his Saints debut.
- P **Lou Hedley** punted four times for 187 yards with three punts downed inside the 20-yard line, for a 41.8 net. Rookie **Matthew Hayball** punted three times for 159 yards (53.0 gross avg.), including a game-long 61-yard boot.
- Saints Kickers **Blake Grupe** and Smyth finished a perfect three-of-three on field goal attempts and Grupe made the only PAT. Smyth made the game-winning 37-yard field goal to put the Saints ahead 16-14 late in the fourth quarter.



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Saints Head Coach Dennis Allen

Opening statement:

“It’s a win. There’s certainly a lot of things we have to clean up, but ultimately we were able to get a win in an NFL game. I thought there was a lot of things we have to clean up offensively but I thought two two-minute drives, being able to go down and execute ended up being the difference in the game. I also thought our offense when we gave up a touchdown to start the second half, I thought our offense responded, going right back down the field and answering. I thought those were positives, I thought early on in the game we did some good things on defense. I thought early we were able to get some pressure on the quarterback a little bit and we minimized points allowed in the game. I thought later in the game, I felt like there were some things that we could’ve done better and executed a little better.”

On his thoughts on QB Spencer Rattler in the second half:

“I thought he executed with poise. I thought he made some plays. I thought he was able to create a little bit with his feet when things didn’t go exactly how you wanted it to. I thought he did a good job, I thought (QB Jake) Haener did well. I thought he came in and executed his job. I was pleased with what we were able to accomplish there with those two players. We’re going to go back and we’re going to look at the tape and we are going to make the corrections that we need to make. There’s some things we have to be better at, but I thought overall for our first preseason game and this being Spencer’s first shot out, I was pleased with what I saw.”

On what the quarterbacks looked like under pressure:

“I thought both of them made plays, I thought both of them did some good stuff. Both of them led two-minute drives. You can never get enough of that type of situational work and I think in particular for those young guys to be put in those situations I thought both of them responded well.”

On OL Taliese Fuaga getting reps and his first impression of Fuaga:

“They need to play. Those guys need to play, they have not established themselves yet and so they need a ton of reps, so that was the thought. It’d be hard for me to say right now. I’m going to go back and look at the tape before I get too in-depth on it. I think it’s much more difficult to evaluate where you’re at the offensive line position than it is for me to tell you how I think the quarterback looked.”

On his comfort level with K Charlie Smyth on the last kick:

“I think in that situation at the end of the game like that, we would’ve kicked it from 60, depending on how much time was left in the game and whether I thought what the down and distance was and percentages, so it’s kind of a hypothetical. I felt good about him hitting the distance, I wasn’t worried about that at all. I thought it was awesome, his first kick in an American football game. For him to knock it through like that and in a pressure situation was cool to see.”

On Rattler handling the two-minute situation:

“I thought he handled it well. There’s a lot of things that we’re going to go back and look at and say we have to improve here, we have to be better here, this would be a better decision. Ultimately he took our team from our end, drove it down to their end of the field, and put us in position to kick a game-winning field goal. I think that’s the job of the quarterback, right? That was good. Now where do we go next week or the week after? How do we improve? That’s what’s key now.”

On QB Derek Carr getting snaps:

“We’ve got so many new things on offense. We’ve got a new scheme, a new play caller, some new pieces on the offensive line, we need to play, so that was the thought process. We need to play and I don’t think that’s really too unique. I saw (Chiefs QB) Patrick Mahomes started so I guess if (Chiefs

Head) Coach (Andy) Reid thinks it's okay to play your starters in the first preseason game, it's probably not a bad idea."

On if offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak will be calling plays from the booth all season:

"That's to be determined, so we'll get back and talk about it. What we liked, what we didn't like then go from there. I think it's whatever makes him the most comfortable. Honestly, it's really what fits our team the best. We started off last year with (defensive coordinator) Joe Woods in the press box and then somewhere during the season I thought our guys needed him on the sideline so we brought him down on the sideline. I think that's always something that you're looking at evaluating. In particular when you have new pieces. We'll look at it and see what we think and whatever we do next week may not be what we do the following week. We just have to keep evaluating that."

On the replay on Rattler touchdown:

"The guys upstairs did a great job. The thing about replay that's challenging is you have to make sure that you've got clear and obvious evidence. When I'm watching it on the big screen as they're looking at it, I'm saying to myself I think it's a cross, I think the ball is on the inside, but I can't tell and it wasn't until they got to the next view when you piece it all together it certainly looked like the ball crossed the plane. I thought our guys did a good job of saying that they felt like it was in, so we got the challenge."

On his initial takeaway from WR A.T. Perry's night:

"I think there were some good things, obviously the one explosive pass at the end of the first half that set us up in scoring position that was a huge play in the game. I'd probably have to go back and look at the whole thing. How'd he block? How did he get aligned? How well was he getting open when the ball didn't go to him? Those are all of the things, it's easy to look and see when he hits somebody on a double move in the two-minute that's a big play that's obviously important. I think that I have to look at it, but that certainly was a big play."

On the new kickoffs:

"I don't know what I thought. It just looked like a kickoff to me. Other than that they got aligned in a different spot, it didn't look a whole lot different to me. The uniqueness of it is I do feel like there's one level when you're blocking and one level on your defense. I think when you're really talking about defensive football, you don't really want everyone on one level because if you're all on one level and they crease it, it becomes a big play. I think that's just going to be something that we're going to continue to look at and evaluate throughout the course of the preseason. I don't know what everybody is going to show or not show or what you could do differently. I think you're going to even get into the early parts of the season and you're going to have to be able to adjust. I think the teams that adjust the best have the most success."

On the Saints defense's tackling:

"I'd say overall, I thought it was pretty good. There were a couple plays that lacked what I would be looking for. I think when you get into the first preseason game, really from a defensive perspective, I'm looking at effort and guys swarming the ball. Playing the right way. It's not as much about were they executing the scheme exactly right or were they executing the technique exactly right. I want to know if they're going to play football. I want to know if they're going to play a physical brand of football and play with great effort. I'd say overall, I thought it was pretty good and yet, I can think of a half dozen examples in my head right now where there is going to be some tough coaching tomorrow. That's just part of it."



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Saints Quarterback Derek Carr

On what he wanted to accomplish this game:

“Play as much as we could. No one told us how many plays or anything like that. Really just hearing (Offensive Coordinator) Klint (Kubiak) communicate, having those conversations, all those things and then you want to win. Anytime you get a chance to put the jersey on. I've always said this, it's just such a blessing to be able to play in an NFL game, preseason, regular season or not. You're just always thankful for those moments. Being able to go out there and play, and then they're like, 'hey, you guys are done.' You get so excited and then all of a sudden it's over in 10 minutes, and that's what's tough about the preseason. I thought communication wise, there'll be things to correct and all that, but it was just nice. It's a new voice. Hearing that, new for our guys. It was good to finally get to do that in a live situation.”

On what he thought on the operation with Klint Kubiak:

“I think he's a great communicator. I thought he was very clear and that stuff matters. I just thought he did a great job communicating with us. Even when I came out, I was listening and hearing what he was saying. The reminders, all those kinds of things that are going to come up only in game situations. All those things were pretty cool and you see why he's such a good coach. Not just what we thought about him, but during a game, the reminders and the things that he can remember for the quarterback is pretty cool.”

On the difference in communication with a coach on the sidelines vs. in the booth:

“Absolutely, I think Klint and (quarterbacks) coach (Andrew) Janocko have such a great relationship. It's like if I'm talking to Janocko, it's like talking to Klint. It is different. I'm used to the play caller being on the field. Going to him thinking this, or what about this, or I'm seeing this I know when it's this, let's do that. Those conversations are kind of still in between, but at the same time I thought it was clean. I don't know if he's going to be up or down every time. I don't know. It's different, but it's also at the same time you just come over and do your thing and then there's one voice talking to you. It's Coach Janocko, so I don't know if one way is better than the other but I thought it was good today.”

On if this was the first time having an offensive coordinator in the press box:

“No, not the first time. It's been some years since I've had that though.”

On if the preseason is frustrating due to limited reps:

“Yeah, because there's things that we've been working on where you're like, 'oh, but I don't want to show this' and then he's like, 'yeah, I don't want to show this either,' so then you get down to it and you're running the basic stuff. Like I said, to get out there and play, you still have to execute and you still have to try and make it happen no matter what. We were laughing on the sideline right before I was going out and the quarterback coach said, 'I'll let you know who's playing nickel.' You don't gameplan for these or anything like that. That part is hard and that's the weird part about preseason, but at the same time it's like, I get to get hit again. You get all that, throw a ball, see the coverages from someone else. Try and use the keys and things that you use against somebody else, so that stuff is positive. Of course we want to go down and score, and everyone feels good, and you come off and root for the young guys. At the same time, you understand what it is.”

On what he thought of the young guys tonight:

“I thought they did awesome. Yeah, there's going to be things that they have to clean up but who cares. I always tell those guys to let it loose because what an opportunity it is for you to just cut it

loose and figure it out. I had the same thing with (former NFL QB Matt) Schaub. I was in a great situation where I could just go out there and let it rip and I learned from mistakes. The communication from both of them as they come off, I just listen to them talk and the way they see things. If I have a helpful thing that has helped me, I'll help them. But if not, I just try and let them play. That's their time, gamedays are for the players, so in that moment you're kind of a coach. You just try and get out of the way, let them play but if you see something, try to help."

On seeing Spencer Rattler in the two-minute situation at the end of the game:

"It was awesome. He's done a great job. Him and Jake both have done a great job, we had one in the first half too, of that drill all camp. To see them operate that, Jake going down and getting us points, much needed. Obviously, we needed them. Then Spencer going down getting us points to win the game, setting up (K) Charlie Smyth, which was awesome. It was his first kick. Seeing that operation as a quarterback, that's your favorite time. Play fast, go throw the ball, find completions and try to win the game, so it's awesome."

On Charlie Smyth's reaction after the game-winning field goal:

"I hope someone has a photo of the most awkward high-five I've ever received in my life. I went to give him five and I don't know what it was. I'm lucky I didn't break my hand. He was juiced and rightfully so. He just told us, and I didn't know this, he hadn't kicked a football like a year ago. He had never kicked a football. To go out there and kick a game-winner, even though it's preseason, who cares? That's something he'll remember forever. That's pretty awesome."



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Saints Quarterback Spencer Rattler

On his first NFL game and it being in his hometown:

“Yeah, it was a fun first game. We could have done a lot more things cleaner and made it easier for ourselves. We kept it tight until the end and you couldn’t have asked for a better finish in a two-minute situation.”

On his touchdown run:

“They played good defense on that play. Unfortunately, we had a false start the play prior that would’ve been a touchdown for my guy (Saints TE Dallin Holker). The next play they covered it well and created.”

On controlling his emotions in the game with his family and friends here:

“It was awesome to be back and see everybody, obviously. My mom is a second grade teacher out here, all her students came out and a lot of my friends and family, it was fun. I thought I handled it well, sitting out that first half. Really getting to see and watch every play and see the flow of the game then go out the next half and play ball.”

On the game-winning kick coming from a first-time kicker:

“It’s funny, because he said just set me up and I will knock it in. I said, I got you. We have been practicing these two-minute situations everyday. We have been doing good at them, it is good to get a live rep of that and we executed it.”

On his touchdown run:

“I knew it was a DB tackling me, so I knew I could give him a little shoulder and get a yard or two to get it in. I didn’t even know I reached it, but it was in so I’m happy about that.”

On the first game operating a new offense:

“We had zero issues with the operation. The operation went super smooth. We could have had better execution here and there, that is what first games are for to work those kinks out. First live game I was happy to go in there and play ball, put my foot on the gas and come out with a win.”

On accomplishing his goals for tonight:

“My goal first was to win, distribute the ball with no turnovers, use my legs if I needed to, and I thought we did that.”

On his throw to Saints WR A.T. Perry:

“The defender made a good play on it, but let’s be honest I like taking shots so it was good to get a shot up early.”

On what he demonstrated to the Saints coaching staff tonight:

“I’m just controlling what I can. We happened to be in that two-minute situation and I wanted to play my best ball along with the group. The guys did well and we went down and executed.”



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Saints Quarterback Jake Haener

On how the procedure to remove a cancerous growth on his right cheek went:

“Good. I’ve got a lot of stitches going on. Thirty two stitches they had to do. It was a little deeper than they thought but everything worked out good. Everything is taken care of and I don’t have to worry about it anymore.”

On whether the growth has been completely removed:

“They got it all out. It didn’t spread to my nerves. They’re all fired up about that. They had to go a little deeper. Just got it taken care of and they stitched me up good. They didn’t want me to practice all week, but you kind of have to when you’re in a role. So we had to get it done, go out today and just cover it up. The stitches should be out on Monday.”

On the throw to Saints WR A.T. Perry:

“Not bad for a guy with a weak arm. I just had to step up in the pocket and give my guy a shot and I think I got it down there pretty good.”



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Saints Defensive Back Rico Payton

On your first NFL action:

“More than anything I feel blessed to play my first NFL game. I give all the glory to God. My coaches did a good job of preparing me for this game. On top of that, we got a great DB room full of veteran leadership. They turn me up, so I know I have to play up to their standards.”

On what it means to be in the NFL:

“During the national anthem, I got really emotional. I just took it all in. I’m just blessed to be in this position. Once I got into the game, I was just staying calm. I just got busy doing what I do and just went out there and was myself.”



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Cardinals Head Coach Jonathan Gannon

Opening statement:

“On the injury front, nobody came out of the game, so we looked pretty clean. That is always a good thing. I thought we battled. I told them that I liked our effort and our enthusiasm. I thought that the violence and motor was pretty good. Hitting was on display I thought. As always, the most important thing for us right now is that we have to learn. Obviously, we are not enthused about a (loss) but we did some good things. We have to clean up some execution, and play a little bit better in all three phases to win a game but they will be ready to go next week.”

On the offside penalties that lead to the Saints game winning drive:

“That is disappointing. We have to stay onside and play within the rules.”

On QB Clayton Tune’s performance:

“Good command and he played fast. I thought he made some throws in there too. Some guys stepped up and made some plays. I thought he was aware of what was going on out there, making correct decisions and he made some plays.”

On what he hopes WR Marvin Harrison Jr. got out of his first game:

“His routine of what it looks like when he leaves the hotel, gets on the bus, gets here and warms up—all of that stuff. We ended up being backed up there, so there were some different plays because I wanted to see him touch it a little bit but he’s good to go. He’ll learn from today too.”

On if he was encouraged by the defensive performance:

“Yeah. I wasn’t pleased with the end of the two-minute (situation.) That was a communication issue on the coaches and myself. We have to get that cleaned up because it led to points there. I thought they hung in and battled. The field position wasn’t in our favor early if I remember right. We battled and made some stops, so that was good to see.”

On what he saw from DL Darius Robinson:

“He looked good. I thought he looked good. I need to watch some tape on that but I saw that he made one play in there. I saw him get pounded on a double and they didn’t move him, so he looked good.”

On his impression of QB Desmond Ridder in the first half:

“You’d like to get some first downs, but that’s just not on the quarterback. That’s on everybody. He’s not blocking for himself and he’s not running routes for himself. I think as a whole we have to do a little bit better.”

On RB Trey Benson:

“I thought he ran it in there (well). I’m sure he’ll have a lot to learn from. I thought the first couple of carries he was seeing it a little bit, then I thought he stepped on the gas a couple of times as he got riled up and got going.”

On Cardinals LB Xavier Thomas’s performance:

“I thought he played (with a)high motor and high effort which is really good to see. I saw violence out there and I think he rushed pretty good. He was definitely back around the mix. He caught my eye. He will have a lot to learn out there too. It was good to see him riled up and playing.”

On if he was impressed with S Dadrion Taylor-Demerson's play and likes the progress he's made throughout camp:

"I do. He is one that has been under the radar. He is doing a really good job. He is playing fourth down too. I thought he was in the right spot most of the game. I saw him have a couple of violent hits. I thought he did a good job."

On his takeaways from the the new kickoff rule:

"I can't wait to watch the tape right now. We got it out a couple of times. One popped on us a little bit. It was interesting to see them kick it through there on the last one. It was good. We will have a lot to learn from off of the tape."

On what he saw from the defense against the Saints starters:

"I thought we had a pretty good stop in the run early. I don't remember it being second and two too much. There was one drive that I thought it was second and two or second and one. It's hard to play defense like that. I thought that they didn't stay ahead of the sticks so we were able to get them in some third downs. I think the first third down they completed. Then we came back and got them off the next third down, so we were just trying to get into that known pass. For what was being called today, I thought they did a pretty good job of man-on-man and winning some one-on-one's."

On his evaluation of the offense's play against the Saints defensive starters:

"That's who they are going to play against so it's great for them and their evaluation. We're going to play against really good players week in and week out. Who can win their one-on-one, who can do what they're coached to do (and) who can win plays. That is a good tool for us to look at tonight."

On the offensive line in the first half:

"I thought we were a little leaky a little bit in pass pro. It seemed like 'Des' (QB Desmond Ridder) was off the spot a little too much and a little too quick, but I thought the run game looked pretty good. We got the run game going a little bit. We had that one hold. I know he got that (inaudible). It got called back so we've got to play penalty free on the back side. We're going to play physical and violent and we have to be able to move people on the line of scrimmage and get our backs going."

On how he thought the coordinators did today:

"If you rewinded to a year ago, I felt like they were better. Just with the communication and what is being communicated, I thought that was streamlined a lot better today. The operation of everything. Knowing that the menu is the menu. We didn't have everything up but we had our stuff up. I thought they did a great job."



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Cardinals Quarterback Clayton Tune

On his comfort level on the field:

"I definitely felt more comfortable. I felt like I was seeing the defense and (I was) confident in the game plan so I felt like I was seeing it well and playing on time."

On the touchdown at the end of the fourth and if he hoped it would have been the game winner:

"It's kind of mixed feelings. Hindsight is always 20/20. Maybe it could have been short there and run some time off the clock but at the same time you also want to score. I really wasn't worried about it."

On the aspects of his game that went well today:

"I just felt like I was seeing the defense really well. I had a good idea of what they were doing. It felt like I had a plan pre-snap and post-snap I was able to confirm that plan."

On if having a plan for the ball helped his ball placement versus last season:

"I think being more decisive helps you throw the ball better. When you know where you're going with the ball you're able to throw it with anticipation."

On how he approaches the position battle at quarterback:

"I'm not really thinking about it, but I'm not actively avoiding it. I just focus on improving my game each and every day and focusing on what I can do."



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Cardinals Running Back Michael Carter

On how he played tonight:

“I wish we would have won. It's all a learning experience. These are just great moments to learn from, and personally, I feel like I did pretty good. I had some help, of course. Overall, I think it's most important to have fun today.”

On going into a week with joint practices:

“Joint practices are fun. I don't know who the Cardinals did it against last year, but my experiences have been great. I'm excited to go compete against someone else. I think it does turn it up a notch a little bit because everyday's an evaluation. You always want to put your best foot forward and show what you got.”

On the state of the running back room after the game:

“I stopped caring about that a long time ago. It is a crowded room, but I was in a crowded room in New York. All of these experiences that I've gotten, they all lead up to right now. The younger me probably wouldn't know how to handle the situation as well. It's a fun room though, I wish you guys could see it. There is literally no bad blood, there's no animosity top to bottom. Everyone helps each other, and I think that's what makes it special.”



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Cardinals Safety Dadrion Taylor-Demerson

On how he would summarize his first training camp and first game in the NFL:

“We have really good veterans - JT (Cardinals S Jalen Thompson), Budda (Cardinals S Budda Baker), Joey (Cardinals S Joey Blount), and Trel (Cardinals CB Kei’Trel Clark). All the guys around me, I’m constantly asking them questions. If I mess something up in practice, they can relate to me. Like, ‘hey, I did this, so you don’t do this.’ So, just come in, learn and come in with an open mind. We have really good guys that play here, and learning from them is only the way I can elevate my game. I’m so thankful for those guys. And then when running to the ball, you show your teammates how much you care about them by running to the ball. So, when the ball is in open space, it’s my job to get it done.”

On if his first NFL game felt quicker than college:

“No. Our offense has done a lot of things during training camp that you usually don’t see early on. You can usually see it in the game. Coming off last season, there’s things that the team needs to work on, and we worked on those things during training camp. So going out, the game honestly just felt like a normal game. It was not that fast. Once you get going in the flow, you get the speed of the game. And I’m a good player, so I’ve been prepared for this moment. I wouldn’t say it was crazy fast, but it also was a new experience getting out there. And all my techniques here are so simplified. There’s some things I did bad, and some things I did good. You always want to come out with a win. All we can do is go to Indy (Indianapolis) next week and stack another day.”

On how eager he is to have a joint practice against another team:

“I’m excited. One of my old teammates, X White (Colts WR Xavier White) is a receiver there, so I get to go compete against him again. You have to be comfortable going there and not too anxious about what could happen. And like I said, we have a good group. We have a great team. So it will be a really good experience to see where everyone is at with another opponent again next week.”

On how preseason reps are beneficial for younger players:

I feel like it’s really good. It’s kind of like when you’re in college and you play the first game at a big university. But, preseason is where all the guys come in and get a chance to make a first impression. I’ve literally been preparing for this moment my whole entire life. I can’t even explain what this means to me. The whole warm up I was emotional. I was like, ‘this is insane.’ It’s a blessing to be here. It really is. There’s a lot of people in this world that would love this opportunity. All I can do is just keep uplifting myself and keep getting better as a player.”



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Cardinals Running Back Trey Benson

On what it was like playing in his first NFL game:

“It was surreal. You’ve been dreaming about this your whole life. Being out there, you’re just being blessed. Even though we didn’t come up with the win, I was just blessed to be out there.”

On young guys getting reps in the preseason and what it means for him:

“It means a lot, building that team chemistry with the rookies. We were just talking about how we were ready to get back (home) and watch the film right now. Just being one-percent better, really.”

On preparing for another week and practicing against Indianapolis this upcoming week:

“Honestly just getting one-percent better every day. I can’t wait to go home. I’m going to watch the film tonight. I’m waiting to go home and watch the film, see if I could’ve hit some runs a little differently. It was a little muddy in there today.”