



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS MINNESOTA VIKINGS
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the loss, the Saints 2019 season comes to an end in the NFC Wild Card Playoff Round. New Orleans falls to 9-12 all time in postseason play, and their home postseason mark drops to 7-5. In playoff games against Minnesota, New Orleans falls to 1-4 all-time.
- For HC **Sean Payton**, the loss drops his postseason record to 8-7, and his home postseason record to 6-2. Against Minnesota, Payton's postseason record drops to 1-2.
- With the loss, the Saints fall to 4-6 all-time in the Wild Card round and 3-3 in Wild Card games played at home. Payton's record in Wild Card games falls to 3-2 and 2-1 at home.
- The loss is the Saints' second postseason overtime loss, moving New Orleans' all-time record to 1-2 in postseason games that go to overtime.
- Offensively, New Orleans racked up 324 total yards, including 227 passing yards and 97 rushing yards. 227 passing yards and 97 rushing yards are the Saints' lowest totals in both categories since passing for 184 yards and rushing for 95 yards Week 13 victory at Atlanta on Thanksgiving night. 227 passing yards is the lowest total in the Saints last 12 postseason games, since passing for 189 in the 2009 Conference Championship against Minnesota.
- Defensively, New Orleans held Minnesota to 362 total yards, including 226 passing yards and 136 rushing yards. The Saints forced one fumble, coming on the Vikings' opening drive of the game, and recorded three sacks of Minnesota QB Kirk Cousins, their ninth game this season (regular season/postseason_ with at least three sacks.
- New Orleans held Vikings RB Dalvin Cook to 94 yards on 28 carries and extends their streak to 43 consecutive regular and postseason contests without allowing a 100-yard rusher, the longest running streak in the NFL.
- Appearing in his 16th career postseason game and 15th as a Saint, QB **Drew Brees** finished the game with 208 passing yards, one touchdown, and one interception on 26-for-33 passing. With 26 completions today, Brees now has 434 career postseason completions, surpassing Ben Roethlisberger (422) for fifth in National Football League record books. With 208 passing yards, Brees surpasses John Elway (4,964) for sixth in NFL record books with 4,967 career postseason passing yards.
- WR **Michael Thomas** finished the game with seven receptions for 70 yards. Thomas' career postseason totals move to 38 receptions and 493 yards, surpassing Devery Henderson for second in postseason club record books in both categories (Henderson stands at 31 postseason receptions for 464 yards).
- RB **Alvin Kamara** carried the ball seven times for 21 rushing yards, and now has rushed for 173 yards in his five career postseason appearances, surpassing Deuce McAllister (161) for fourth in club record book. Kamara scored his third career postseason touchdown, and second career postseason rushing touchdown, on a four-yard carry with 9:23 to play in the second quarter.
- QB **Taysom Hill** becomes the first player in NFL playoff history to finish with at least 50 passing yards, at least 50 rushing yards, and at least 25 receiving yards in a single postseason game.
- Hill recorded his second career postseason touchdown reception, on a 20-yard pass from Brees with 10:37 to play in the game. Hill finished the game with two receptions for 25 yards and the one receiving score.

- Hill finished as the Saints' leading rusher in the game with four rushes for 50 yards, including a long carry of 28 yards coming with 4:35 to play in the game. Hill's 50 rushing yards is a new career-high, including both regular and postseason games.
- Hill became the first player other than Drew Brees to complete a postseason pass for the Saints since January 6, 2001 (Aaron Brooks finished 30-of-48 for 295 yards in a Divisional Round loss at Minnesota). Hill finished the game with the one completion, a 50-yard pass to WR Deonte Harris.
- WR **Deonte Harris** recorded one reception, the Saints' longest reception of the game and his longest reception of the season, on a 50-yard catch from Hill with 10:09 to play in the second quarter. The reception set up Kamara's four-yard touchdown rush, the Saints' first touchdown of the game.
- Harris also averaged 33.3 yards on four kickoff returns, including a long return of 54 yards and averaged 11 yards on four punt returns, including a long return of 17 yards.
- In his first postseason game since the 2016 season, TE **Jared Cook** finished with five receptions for 54 yards. Cook has caught at least five passes in each of his four career playoff games, and recorded at least 50 yards receiving in three of those four games.
- In his third game with New Orleans, CB **Janoris Jenkins** forced a fumble by Vikings WR Adam Thielen on Minnesota's first drive of the game, his first forced fumble of the season. Jenkins finished the game with eight tackles, one quarterback hit, half a sack, and the forced fumble.
- S **Marcus Williams** finished the game as the Saints' leading tackler, finishing with 10 stops, the most in any of his five playoff appearances.
- Playing in his fourth career postseason game, DE **Trey Hendrickson** recorded his first career postseason sack. Hendrickson finished the game with five tackles, one quarterback hit, one pass defense, and the one sack.
- DE **Cameron Jordan** finished the game with one sack, coming with 2:54 to play in the game. Jordan has now recorded at least one sack in five of his nine career postseason games and has 5.5 postseason sacks. Jordan finished the game with three tackles and added a quarterback hit.
- After recording two tackles in his first five career postseason games, LB **AJ Klein** has now recorded 15 stops in his last two playoff games, including a personal playoff-high eight tackles today.
- Playing against his former team, RB **Latavius Murray** finished the game with 21 yards on five carries, his fewest rushing attempts since recording four on Thanksgiving night at Atlanta. Murray added one reception for four yards and has caught at least one pass in each of his four postseason appearances.
- K **Wil Lutz** converted 2-of-3 field goal attempts, connecting on a 29-yarder with 9:56 to play in the first quarter and a 49-yarder to send the game to overtime with seven seconds to play, the Saints' final points of the season. With two made field goals, Lutz becomes the club's all-time leader with nine field postseason field goals made, surpassing Garrett Hartley's eight postseason field goals.
- Lutz also went 2-for-2 on extra point attempts, finishing the game with eight points. Lutz has now scored 40 points in the postseason in his career, surpassing Hartley (39) to become the club's all-time leading postseason scorer.



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

**MINNESOTA VIKINGS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
NFC WILD CARD PLAYOFF
SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON**

Opening Statement:

“Obviously, (it was) a difficult loss. I felt, really, at the end of the day, that they made a few more plays, enough more plays than we did. It took us a while offensively to get going. I think that they did a handful of things to, kind of hinder us in the running game. We finally gained a little bit of momentum in the second half. I thought that defensively we held up. Tip your hats to Minnesota; they deserved to win. It’s always difficult when it happens in the playoffs. There is no follow-up game, so you go from there.”

(On if he received an explanation regarding the last play and if he felt there was offensive pass interference on the final play) “I really didn’t see any officials (after the game). I saw Mike (Zimmer) and we chatted for a little bit. I saw some of the other players that we coached in the Pro Bowl and congratulated them. They (Minnesota) did a good job. They played well.”

(On if the Viking defensive line did anything different today) “It was a little bit more of a run front on early downs. They played some jam and some things to make it a little bit more difficult. Like I said, I did not think that we particularly ran the ball efficiently enough in the first half. I felt like we found a few things in the second half to begin hanging our hat on. We had a handful of minus plays. Our third down numbers at the half, I think we were one of four. We struggled in protection early, obviously. The time of possession in the first half and the amount of snaps that you have when you are struggling on the third downs that we’d ended up....you felt like there weren’t a lot of snaps to begin with in the first half. I thought that they did a good job on the third down plays. We needed to do better. It was a fairly low-scoring-type game throughout. Look, they made more plays than we did.”

(On Taysom Hill’s production today) “He is a good football player. He enjoys playing. He does a lot of things well. He competes. He had the fake punt, actually. He does a number of things. He is an asset for us. He is a great teammate. He made a lot of plays.”

(On the Minnesota zone stretch play that gave the Saints defense problems at times) “It’s one of their core plays. The runner, Dalvin (Cook) is something. He can move your defense with that wide zone and some of the play actions that come off it. I thought that we fit it pretty well at times. Other times, if you’re not on top of it, or set the edge properly, or fit it properly, he is talented enough (where) it is not a five yard miss, it becomes a bigger play.”

(On if there was a thought to remove Drew Brees and play Taysom Hill more at quarterback because of his mobility) “No, not at all.”

(On if Drew Brees’s thumb injury contributed to his fumble) “I don’t think so. I would have to ask him or you would have to ask him. I think that he has recovered from that.”

(On if Minnesota did just enough with their run game to keep the Saints off-balance) “I thought that they ran the ball better than we did. We felt like that was going to be an important number. We felt like the third down number was going to be important. He (Cook) is an explosive player. I thought that, defensively, that was a hard-fought game. Both defenses, I thought, played well and hung in there. Down the stretch, here you are in overtime, they made a few plays right there at the end that, obviously, were significant.”



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SAINTS QUARTERBACK DREW BREES**

(On emotions after the loss) "It was a hard fought football game. We played (a) really good team today and obviously, they came to play. At the end of the day they just made more plays than we did. I loved the way that we fought in the fourth quarter, and we really didn't play our best football until that point. We put together some good drives during that time and we put ourselves in position to win, but unfortunately, they just made a few more plays than we did."

(On the Vikings' ability to execute) "Looking back there was probably some bigger play opportunities that we missed on whether they got to me before we had a chance at it. We had a hard time staying on the field there early on and missed a couple of those drives by not really getting it going. That is a great defense, a well-coached defense and so you can understand at times it is going to be a battle and you play the field position game, which we did. I'd say special teams played well and gave us some opportunities. I did feel like in that game we were starting backed up a lot. They were making us march the field, but again, (we) didn't play great for the first three quarters. It didn't feel like we could put drives together and play with tempo until the fourth quarter did things get cranked up."

(On the interception) "We were trying to catch them off guard and felt like Teddy (Ginn Jr.) was making his way over the top and could make a nice play."

(On knowing the realities of keeping this group together) "That is the league we are in and the world we live in. There's always changes and so we're very much so starting over. I'd say that we have incredible culture here and a great foundation built. We know that there's a stable group of guys that'll be here for a long time so then you always spend your offseason finding other pieces, complementary pieces. Whether it be through the draft or free agency you never know how that's going to shake out. Bottom line's I know the environment of whoever comes in from the draft, or free agency, or whatever. I know what they're coming into and the type of culture that we have and the locker room that we have. It is one that is fun. We work hard but we play hard and we have fun together. We love each other and this is the result. We will a lot of games and guys play for one another. We love coming to work together here in this locker room."

(On decision to return another season) "I'm not making any comments on that, other than I've told you guys this over the last couple of years, I've always just taken it one year at a time and kind of reevaluate each offseason and find the things I want to get better at and move on."

(On the heartbreak knowing the end is closer than some other guys) "You invest so much into and have invested so much into it. You understand that these opportunities are few, so yes it's disappointing when you're not the one holding up the trophy at the end of the year is disappointing."

(On the process to digest everything this season) "I evaluate every season kind of the same. I look at all of the great things that we were able to accomplish. I look at how guys grew and how we grew as a team. You begin to envision the things you want to do

in the offseason and the work that you want to put in. Think about how you can start rebuilding it all.”

(On if defensively Minnesota showed anything different than what was on film) “No. Again, we didn’t capitalize on some big play opportunities when we had the chance. At the end of the day when you add them up, they just made more plays than we did.”

(On Minnesota’s defensive ends) “They are two of the best defensive ends in the league, especially the pair. You cannot just focus on one and oh by the way, they have some good interior guys and good pressure players at the linebacker and safety positions as well. You have to have a plan for all of those guys. I think we understood that it was going to be a battle and there are times where their going to get you. Let’s get the ball out and try to avoid a negative play, which we did. Give yourself a third and manageable and try to sustain the drive, try to get something going and wear them down. You walk away from a game like and that and say there was so much of the game plan that we tried to call. We didn’t possess the ball for enough time until the fourth quarter.”

(On the penalty for spike) “You know you only have one play. It’s the difference of knowing you only have 21 seconds and a timeout versus 11 seconds and a timeout. That is a big deal. You’re thinking we have one play right now and we’re going to call a timeout and then run out the field goal team out there. Versus we get a play that all of sudden gets us within striking distance, you take the timeout and now you have two shots at the endzone or something like that. That was costly.”

(On ending with the fumble) “The fumble was extremely frustrating because there was a miscommunication about what we were doing. The ball should’ve been out of my hands and all of a sudden that wasn’t the route that was thrown and now I am trying to throw the ball into the dirt to avoid a sack. Right as my hand’s going back, he kind of gets a piece of my arm and that ball comes out. I’m really disappointed in that. It never should have happened.”



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MINNESOTA VIKINGS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2020 NEW ORLEANS SAINTS PLAYERS

TE #87 JARED COOK

(on the losing in heartbreaking fashion the last three years) "I haven't been here the last three years. I do feel for the pain that the other guys who have been here. It doesn't feel good not getting this win."

(on the offense's lack of rhythm this afternoon) "Absolutely. That is exactly what it was. The defense got us the ball early. We got three points out of it, which was good. The defense kept us in the game. They held them to 20 points (in regulation), which is pretty good. We just fell short offensively."

WR #19 TED GINN JR.

(on today's game) "The goals that we have for the season fell short. We just have to go back to the drawing board and keep this brotherhood together. We need to stay alive and stick with each other and get after it next year."

(on the offense today) "They made some key plays down the stretch that hurt us a little bit. It was a back and forth game. They came out with good energy. It's a playoff game."

(on losing in heartbreaking fashion the last three years) "You just have to move forward and keep fighting as a team. That's all that you can really do. If we fall short and understand why, then all we have to do is work on the little things. We just have to stick with it."

QB #7 TAYSOM HILL

(on the game today) "I think they made a few more plays than us during the game. We struggled on third down early (in the game today). I felt like they were running the ball well and controlling the time of possession. We certainly put ourselves in position to win at the end of the game. We needed to make some bigger plays throughout the course of the game."

(on why the offense couldn't get into a rhythm today) "I think we struggled on third down. It was tough to get drives started. It was hard to get that first down and get things going. I think that was our Achilles heel today."

(on losing in heartbreaking fashion the last three years) "It's as difficult as you can imagine. It is certainly disappointing. We had a great season and we had a great team. It hurts to go out like that."

(on the game he had) "It's a team game. I think they were forcing our hand. They were doing everything that they could to take away Michael Thomas and a few other guys. So, there was an opportunity for me to step up and make some plays. At the end of the day, it's all about doing whatever you can to help your team win I've had that mindset all year."

T #71 RYAN RAMCZYK

(on the offensive line's play) "It was crushing for us. We didn't play our best game and I didn't play my best game. Collectively, we just didn't get it done. I wish we would have had a better game today. ."

(on if he saw this coming from the offense today) "We just did not get into a rhythm right away. It was a slow start. We got a couple of drives going there at the end. It just wasn't enough today."

(on why their defensive ends were successful) "They are both very good defensive ends. They are great at rushing the passer."

S #24 VONN BELL

(on the toss plays) "That's how their offense works. They did a great coaching job trying to get to the edge. We just have to get to the edges. We will look at this film. We have to swallow it and just keep on getting better."

(on the final play of the game) "He pushed off. You can't do anything about it."

(on if he expected the league to review it) “I guess so. That’s what happened last year. It came down to the end. We will let New York handle that. We are just going to keep getting better and growing as a team. We will keep on building.”

DE #94 CAMERON JORDAN

(on failing to reach the ultimate goal) “We had larger dreams than this game. The season we put together had us poised to make a run through the playoffs.”

(on digesting the disappointment) “I’m just focused on the now. After a loss like that, I’m fighting back. We had key plays negated. We have to find a way to win.”

(on their ability to run the ball) “I don’t know where they finished. As a defense, we wanted to do certain things. We want to hold their explosive plays and limit their run. We knew they were going to come in here and run and stretch with the toss. We didn’t do enough.”

(on how bouncing back from this) “Ask me that at the beginning of next season.”

LB #56 DEMARIO DAVIS

(on if he thought they would win in regulation) “I think the mentality in every game is that you are going to win the game.”

(on the disbelief) “It’s disappointing every time you set your goals and you don’t reach them. I think at the end of the day that it’s the end of a chapter and not the end of the book. There are chapters in the game and in life that aren’t the best. It is all how you respond to it. You keep going. We have responded the right way before and we keep having to do so.”

(on the length of time it takes to process the loss like today’s loss) “I think that everybody responds to things differently. I think that every situation is different. You have to process the emotions. From a mental standpoint, you have to deal with it. It hurts. There is no way around it. It hurts for a long time. There are dark days and dark times. They hurt. Eventually the sun comes out. At the end of the day, this is a child’s game that we get to play. Every team except one has this feeling. At the end of the year every team in the league has this feeling except one. I think you have to keep it in perspective. There are a lot of people dealing with worst things in life than losing a football game. I think the first part of it is keeping it in perspective. In a game where you put everything into it at the start of the year to achieve your goal and not to hit it, it hurts. There is no way around it. There is nothing that you can do about it. You have to deal with it, but you have to realize that it is the end of a chapter and not the end of a book. You take it day by day. Keep putting one foot in front of the other.”

(on making sure that the window of this team stays open for another opportunity) “Every opportunity is different. You have to maximize the opportunity in the moment of the opportunity. This isn’t a continuation. This was a great year that we put together. It’s singular. It stands alone. It’s not a continuation of other years. It was an opportunity. That window of opportunity closed. It is gone. That is why it hurts because you aren’t going to get that opportunity again. No one can predict the future. No one knows what is in front of us. It is not what happens to you in life. It is how you respond to it. I do not know when that good will come and when that next opportunity will be there, but I know it’s coming. I know at the end of the story I’m out on top. That’s my mentality with life. Whether I win a championship or don’t win a championship, I’m already a champion because of who I serve. I think that’s my mentality. I try to stay positive in tough times like these even when it hurts.”



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VIKINGS HEAD COACH MIKE ZIMMER**

Opening Statement

“Good team win today. I thought we played well in all three phases. Started out rough, we fumbled early in the ballgame, but we were able to hold them to three. Lots of ebbs and flows across the ballgame, but I am just proud of my team for how they fought and the way they competed. It is good to see.”

(On no one thinking the Vikings could win this game) “It’s good. It is always nice to keep on playing. You know I have a ton respect for the New Orleans Saints, Drew Brees, all the players they have, for Sean Payton, he does an unbelievable job here. We were just fortunate to win the day. Yeah, it does feel good to be doubted and to be able to come up with a win.”

(On the pass to Adam Thielen in overtime) “We talked about how we didn’t want to leave anything in the bag. We had a chance to go down to score and win, and that is what we were trying to do. That is a play we have used before. It was a great throw by Kirk (Cousings) and a great catch by Adam. You have to take your shots when trying to win a playoff game.”

(On if he knew Marshon Lattimore was not in the game when they passed it to Thielen)

“I didn’t know. They might have said something upstairs. I either didn’t hear them or was talking to someone else or the defense.”

(On having everyone healthy on offense for the first time in a while) “Yeah, it was good. I thought Dalvin (Cook) ran the ball really hard today. The offensive line I thought they did a nice job protecting. They have some great players on the defensive line. The way he runs the football, with the acceleration to get through the seams and the cracks, and the physicality he runs with. He made some great runs today.”

(On Cousins getting the game ball for today and what this game meant to him) “I gave two, but he did get one. You know, they say he cannot win a playoff game, but he has only been in two, so he is 50%, which is better than a lot of people. I thought he played really well today. He took good care of the ball. He made good decisions when they had some heat on us, so he had to make some great decisions. It is good. He has to go out and prove it again next week, like we all have to.”

(On Kyle Rudolph using his size on the touchdown) “Yeah, he is awful good in the red zone, and made a great catch. He has always been a great team player, and for him to get the winning catch was big.”



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MINNESOTA VIKINGS PLAYERS

QB #8 Kirk Cousins

"It was a team win. When you look at it, it just felt like it was running the ball, it was throwing the ball, defense, our special teams kept giving us favorable field position where we got the ball. There were so many challenges we had to overcome with playing in the noise and a tough environment against a good football team. I'm really proud of the way that we kept playing at the end. It's amazing in this league how every game seems to come down to the last two minutes and beyond. It's a game of inches and today we found those inches. I'm so glad we're moving on."

(On being aggressive in overtime): "You just have to put a drive together. It doesn't matter how you do it. You have a mix of run and pass and I think that you approach it like you do any other drive. There's a sense of urgency, certainly, to stay on the field. But you mix run and pass and you play your normal offense."

(On the overtime pass to Adam Thielen): "Protection held up. Adam pretty much won. The ball goes up and he makes a great catch. That's a route I've run since my rookie year. Sometimes you hit it and sometimes you don't. I thought it was great to connect on that one."

(On if he feels a sense of relief after winning a big game): "I'm thrilled we won a playoff game and I just do my part. We won the game today because we played great defense, got a turnover, had good special teams, great play-calling and a great plan. We protected and ran the football. We probably had 30-40 rushing attempts. There's a whole lot of reasons we won the game. Does the quarterback play a role in that? Yes, but it was a team win."

LB #54 Eric Kendricks

(On the first drive) "We we're backed up off the turnover and we held them (to a field goal). We held them and got a sack from some pressure on that very first drive. We held them to a field goal, and I thought that was the biggest series of the game."

(On preparation for the game): "We had a confidence all week. We were going to keep it rolling and keep having fun and ball out."

(On defensive front): "It was crucial (that they set the tone). At times we only rushed four, that's what they get paid for. They're the best at what they do. They put pressure on them, they cause fumbles, they cause havoc."

(On the poise of the defense): "We were all very calm cool collected as a defense. We stay pretty calm in those situations. It's about playing the next play."

"We've played against them before. We've been in the same situation. We don't let it get bigger than us; we trust our preparation."

WR #19 Adam Thielen

(On Kirk Cousins' poise today): "We don't listen to that (external) stuff." We don't listen to that noise. We know what type of guy he is. We know his talent. We know that if you put guys around him, you can do big things because he is that talented and he's that hard of a worker. He's going to prepare every single week. It doesn't matter what someone says about him and that's who you want as your leader and your quarterback."

(On the long overtime catch): "You go make a play. Plays get cycled in throughout the year and you never know where the ball is going to go. It might not be drawn up to get that ball, but when you get the right coverage and you get man coverage, it's 'mono y mono' When you have a quarterback that trusts you and gives you a chance, it's obviously special to have a guy like that back there."

WR #14 Stefon Diggs

(On getting over this hump today): "It is definitely exciting just considering we've been on the short end of the stick sometimes. To come out here in a hostile environment which was super loud, the loudest it has been all year of any stadium. It was definitely a one play at a time type of game. To win

is very emotional. We wanted to win. We had a mindset of winning all week. We prepared like we wanted to win, like we knew we had a chance, and we came out and executed.”

(On not being given a chance to win this game): “We are kind of used to being underdogs. I kind of touched on it a little earlier in the week. A lot of the guys on the team are underdogs, coming from where they came from, school, late round, whatever. Guys are used to being behind the eight ball, so it was not a surprise.”

(On Coach Zimmer this week and his message): “He made a point of emphasis to say, ‘We have an opportunity. We need to execute at a high level if we want to win.’”

(On sideline frustration): “It’s a game. People don’t want you to show your emotion, but if you don’t show your emotion, they think you don’t care. It wasn’t anything toward my guys. It was just the coverage that I was getting. Guys were playing two guys on (me) The whole game. That’s how it is. Don’t ever get it confused with a distraction. The guys on my team know me. I’m always team first and I’m always ready and willing to do anything to get a win. People formulate their own opinion when you watch from the outside looking in. I care about my team and their opinion of me more than I care about the outside. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with showing a little frustration.”