



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS AT SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2021 • LUMEN FIELD
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- The New Orleans Saints improve their record to 4-2 and put them in sole possession of second place in the NFC South leading into Sunday's NFC South matchup against the 6-1 Tampa Bay Buccaneers at the Caesars Superdome with a 3:25 CT kickoff. The game will be broadcast on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 locally).
- Saints improve their all-time regular season record against the Seahawks to 9-6 and get their third consecutive win against the Seahawks dating back to a 25-20 overtime win at home on October 30, 2016.
- The Saints improve their record on Monday Night Football to 24-22, 17-8 under Head Coach Sean Payton. Payton's overall record on prime time to 35-16. Both New Orleans' and his record improves against Seattle in prime time to 2-1.
- Payton now has a 5-1 regular season record against the Seahawks, 3-1 at Lumen Field.
- With 156 career victories (regular season and postseason combined), Payton has now moved into a tie with Pittsburgh Steelers Head Coach Tomlin for 21st all-time in victories.
- The Saints currently have a streak of 310 regular season games without having been shut out, dating back to a 26-20 win at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on September 6, 2002, at Raymond James Stadium, the longest running streak in the National Football League.
- The New Orleans defense surrendered only 219 yards and ten points and had a season-high five sacks. It marked the third time since Payton became head coach in 2006, that New Orleans surrendered ten or fewer points and had at least five sacks, occurring vs. Atlanta in 2020 and on September 25, 2006 in a 23-3 win over the Falcons to celebrate the reopening of the Superdome.
- The New Orleans Saints had their longest scoring drive of the season. This drive was 19 plays for 86 yards and accounted for a total of 10:16.
- New Orleans improves their road record to 3-1 in 2021 with their third straight road victory. Their 23-5 regular season road record since 2018 is the top winning percentage in the NFL (.821).
- Linebacker **Demario Davis** played in his 150th career regular season contest on Monday, having never missed one. He recorded a total of 10 tackles (7 solo), 4 tackles for loss, 2 sacks for the third time in his career and a pass defense that was almost an interception on fourth down on Seattle's final offensive play.
- Davis has 1,048 career tackles, needing 2 more stops to reach 1,050 for his career.
- Punter Blake Gillikin punted six times for 284 yards with a 47.5 gross punting average and 44.3 net with four punts inside the 20-yard line, including one downed at the Seattle one-yard line.
- Defensive back J.T. Gray and linebacker Zack Baun tied for the team lead with two special teams tackles apiece, both of Gray's stops being solo and Baun, one solo and one assisted.
- Strong safety Malcolm Jenkins finished with six tackles (three solo) and a sack on Seattle's final offensive possession.
- Running back Alvin Kamara tallied 179 total yards from scrimmage with 20 carries for 51 yards and ten receptions for 128 yards and one score.
- Kamara reception total of 351 for his career is now the second highest by an NFL player in his first five years passing Ladanian Tomlinson in the contest, only seven behind Roger Craig's 358.
- Kamara is the fastest in NFL history to reach 3,000 rushing and receiving yards in just 66 games.
- Kamara now has 351 career receptions and has surpassed Lance Moore for sixth in receptions for New Orleans Saints all-time. Kamara's 51 rush yards Monday Night

moved him into the top five rushing leaders in Saints history with 3,759 yards, surpassing Pierre Thomas.

- Kamara had first half career highs with 8 receptions for 109 receiving yards.
- Kamara became the first running back with 8+ receptions and 100+ receiving yards in the first half of a game since Brian Westbrook in week 13, 2004 against the Packers.
- Cameron Jordan recorded his first sack of the season in the 3rd quarter against Geno Smith. Jordan surpassed Steve McMichael and is now tied with Robert Porcher and Ryan Kerrigan for 44th all time in sacks with 95.5 career sacks. Seattle signal-caller Geno Smith is the 38th player Jordan has sacked in his career.
- DE Tanoh Kpassagnon recorded his third sack of the season and is now tied for the team lead with three with Davis.
- Saints QB Jameis Winston now has a 2-1 record against Seattle, where he's completed 69-of-107 passes (64.5%) for 666 yards with five touchdowns, and one interception. Winston has a winning mark against six of the 28 teams he's opened a contest against. Starting his first Monday night football contest since 2017, having split two in the past, Winston improved his record on Monday nights to 2-1.
- Winston made his sixth start as a Saint, completing 19-of-35 passes for 222 yards and one score. He carried eight times for 40 yards (5.0 avg.) Winston engineered a fourth quarter game-winning drive, where he completed two passes for first downs, helping set up a 33-yard field goal by K Brian Johnson with two minutes left.

HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

(On the outcome...) "It was a good win. Obviously, always a tough place to play on the road, dealing with the noise. I thought our defense really played well after the one explosive [play] early on. We knew it was going to be one of those games that field position was going to be important, ball security was going to be important, and I think preparing in our mind for what we thought the weather was going to be like, maybe it wasn't quite that . . . I never heard of a bomb typhoon, but that kind of gets your attention. For the most part I think we handled the weather. (The) Kicker did a great job. I thought the special teams and kicking game, we did some good things, too."

(On Alvin Kamara's play...) "Do you remember two years ago? Well, two years ago it was kind of a back-and-forth, low-scoring, not much. And in the two-minute drill, we hit him on a screen that put us up, and that was pretty significant. It was Teddy's (Bridgewater) first start, and you're always wanting to get the quarterback going a little bit. They play a lot of zone, and even in the single-safety zone they are really going to be into the hook areas deep, and I thought Jameis (Winston) did a good job, especially in that two-minute drill. That was significant when you can score like that and then start the half with the football. But (we) received a lot of soft zone in that I was asked at the end of the half, why Alvin so much? A lot of that was based on the depth of the underneath coverage. So Jameis was smart enough to keep dumping it to him. Typically (in) a good two-minute drill, there is always an underneath throw or two to the runners, and this was no different. Then it tightened up a little bit more in the second half."

(On the defense bouncing back after giving up a long touchdown early...) "Yeah, listen, man, they're competitive. We knew kind of it was going to be that type of game. I thought, there were a couple drives where they got extended a little bit because of penalties. We knew that crew was calling the most coming into this game, by far, both on offense and defensive fouls. And sure enough, I don't know what the totals were, but there were a lot of fouls called. And that was kind of on par with where they're at. They're first of 17, so we'll get a chance to look at that."

(On if he got an explanation on roughing passer...) "His was not roughing the passer. It was a helmet-to-helmet on the pass rush. So I don't think anyone was looking for that, and Shawn [Hochuli] explained it, and certainly I wasn't looking for it, either. But that's what the foul was."

(On if New Orleans tried to get Seattle to jump on a late field goal attempt...) "No, no, no no. We were fortunate, though. But it wasn't like a hard count or anything."

(On if, because of the tight officiating, he was concerned by the flare-ups between D.K. Metcalf and Marshon Lattimore...) "Yeah, because you don't want to bring 140 people to Seattle from New Orleans and lose because it gets away from you. Everyone's counting on everyone. And I get it. You want to be competitive. I think that's a sign of a team that eventually you know how to win, and to win, and to win, and to win, and that becomes everything. That's becomes everything. More important than anything else, it's leaving with another win. It's a young team. We're still preaching that message, but pretty soon you expect it. But then there's certain things, I've been in tight playoff games where personal fouls like that (cost). Everyone's counting on

you, no different than ball security, really. We're counting on, you're holding the ball. Everyone's counting on you."

(On his reasoning during the last drive for handing the ball to Alvin Kamara on third-and-10...) "Yeah, well, look. We're right outside the cusp of field goal range, and I knew we'd be getting a soft zone, and I knew we were getting kind of an edge rush defense up the field, and so it was a little gap scheme, a little power scheme, and the idea was maybe to get seven yards and get infield goal range. That honestly was what I was thinking. I knew it was going to be a soft zone, and we felt like the way the ends were rushing, that's different than a screen play, just a gap scheme that would be in the gun. I think that was important, too."

(On adjusting his game plan due to shifting weather...) "We worked all week on a plan, you know, we worked all week on what we like in the run game, what we like in the pass game, and as you get closer to the game, I think you go through in your mind how the game might unfold. We had a playoff game here in '13 where it was windy, wet, and so you just have to pay attention to the now and the present. I can't speak for last night's game, but that seemed damp and windy. This ended up being a little bit better than [that]. As a coach, you prepare for, you're telling them, and so I think overall it was a little bit less of a factor that I would have thought based on what I saw on the weather forecast."

(On the play of Demario Davis...) "Man, I just love the way he leads and plays with enthusiasm. He's really developed into not just run but pass as well. He's someone who has good instincts, can close the cushion on a run or a play in space. He tackles well. He's playing well, and I'm sure when we look at the tape tomorrow, we'll see a lot of good efforts. That was a good hard-fought win. It's tough."

(On the last defensive sequence of the game) "Obviously, when you get a sack in a final drive like that, it is significant. I don't know what the numbers are, but as soon as they're off-schedule, and you can sit at the sticks, it is tough to be a quarterback. It's one of those things you're always wanting to avoid. I thought it was going to be a low-scoring game. We thought about going for it early on. We kicked our first field goal, I think they did the same thing. Points were going to be at a premium tonight. I do not know what the charts say. We just felt like points were going to be important."

K BRIAN JOHNSON

(On his thought process with this being his NFL debut) "Not to think about those things. Not to overthink things. I've just got to go out there and do what I have done plenty of times before. That was kind of my mentality coming into this game."

(On what it was like pregame) "It was tough trying to see what the wind was doing because it was changing constantly throughout pregame and the game itself. Just sticking with my plan that I had going into it, and really focusing on hitting my ball and hitting good contact that will cut through the wind that's giving to be whatever it's going to be out there. Rain, I'm not as concerned about rain as I am wind. I'll focus on the wind more than the rain."

(On if it makes a difference going from one end zone to the other) “I didn’t really notice too big of a difference in one end zone or the other because it was a pretty consistent wind pattern across the whole field. It wasn’t anything too crazy.”

(On how he feels knowing Wil Lutz will most likely return) “I’m looking to take advantage of the opportunities. Some rookies, especially kickers and punters, it takes a year or two to really get into the league. You kind of find your niche. I’m just looking to take advantage of the opportunities I’ve been given.”

RB ALVIN KAMARA

(On if he thought he would have as big of an impact as he did) “I did not know what to expect. All I know is what we game planned for and what we did during the week. Every game has a life in of its’ own self and the flavor of this week ended up getting a lot of touches.”

(On if he enjoyed playing in Seattle) “It’s cool, it’s definitely a nice environment. Every time we come up here, the weather is bad but other than that, it’s cool.”

(On the Seahawks’ effort to stop the run tonight) “They’re a good front, don’t get me wrong. They play hard, the whole defense played hard, but we knew up front it would be a tough game to run the ball. Sometimes you get teams where you line up and you feel like you know what they’re doing. Those are the teams that play the hardest because they do what they do so well. They have Bobby (Wagner), Carlos (Dunlap II), Poona (Ford) in the middle, and a gang of guys. Jamal (Adams) is out there, and they are making plays, coming up, and hitting. You have to stay true and try to stay ahead of the chains. You can’t be discouraged when you get two yards and three yards, it’s going to come.”

QB JAMEIS WINSTON

(On if the game played out the way he thought it would) “Yeah, we wanted to win and that’s what happened. It played out just like we wanted.”

(On how nice it is to lean on running back Alvin Kamara) “I can talk about how great of a player he is and how helpful he is to this offense just in general. (Alvin) is one of the most dominant players in this league so it’s always exciting when you put the ball in his hands and watch the things that he does.”

(On finding Kamara open on the touchdown pass after he initially dropped the snap) “It was a great call and I’m happy that he was able to get in there.”

(On getting offensive linemen Terron Armstead and Erik McCoy back in the lineup) “It was good to get in a rhythm and get (Erik and Terron) back. Those guys are leaders on that line so it’s good to see them have a great game and stay healthy.”

(On the weather conditions) “It wasn’t that bad. It was just a great game. They played good football and we played some good football so it was definitely a tough game.”

(On if they were trying to get more deep passes in this game) “I wish we could’ve hit a few. Like I said, we’re going to continue to get better. I was happy to have Kevin (White) up. He was open on a few of them. Like I said, we’re going to continue to get better and get healthy in that receiver room and just keep working.”

(On getting Mike Thomas back soon) “Absolutely. Absolutely we can’t wait for Mike to get back. But it was good to have (Tre’Quan Smith) back out there playing at a high level. I’m happy that he was able to get in the groove a little bit.”

(On if it was just heat of the moment between him and Tre’Quan Smith on the sidelines) “No, just communication. We had to get on the same page and that’s it.”

(On if there was something that happened on a specific play that led to that interaction between him and Tre’Quan) “No, we were just communicating. Everyone gets to talking. I just wanted it to be me and him. That’s all.”

(On when he decides to run with the ball rather than pass) “I’m always trying to pass. I’m always trying to look down the field and get a completion. It’s not really second guessing, I’m just feeling the situation and assess the coverage to see if I can get the ball down the field and then take off and run.”

(On if he wants run to be the last resort) “Absolutely.”

(On if it takes awhile to get back on the same page with a receiver if they’ve been gone for a while like Tre’Quan Smith has) “I think it’s a feel. This is his first game back. Tough environment to play. Just making sure that everyone hears the play correctly and everyone is on the same page. In terms of talent and execution, he’s just an incredible receiver, so it’s good to get him back. It’s good to get him good experience against a tough defense.”

(On the Seahawks double teaming Alvin Kamara in the second half and if that means other guys will have one-on-one opportunities) “Yeah, we just have to win on the outside and we will. They had a great gameplan in the second half of doubling (Alvin Kamara) and we’re going to have an answer for that.”

LB DEMARIO DAVIS

(On defensive performance) “We take a lot of pride in our defense. We’ve got to be able to play complimentary football. We have a very high standard for our group and there’s no other way that we would take it. Defense on the field with the game on the line. We get excited and we play with a lot of energy in those situations.”

(On the defense getting sacks) “That’s a credit to the cover guys. We can take away the first read, and he has to hold the ball. Credit to the D coordinator and the d-line having a good rush plan for us. And then guys just executing their job. It’s fun to play on defense when you know that all you have to do is do your job and it’s going to work. Guys did their job. I think we were getting pressures early on, but we weren’t getting them to the ground, we’ve got to find a way to get him on the ground. They have a good offensive line. Geno (Smith) was making his reads and doing a good job, we just have to execute there.”

(On guys getting chippy with players on the other team) “Well, first of all, we want to be fundamentally sound. Penalties in between the whistles that’s one thing. But sometimes guys want to be tough on the field and talk after the play, and this is the most physical sport there is. You got seven seconds to be as physical as you want to be, you got to prove it between the whistles. I’m never going to be the guy to talk after the whistles and doing extra because at that point you’re just trying to bully someone. I’ve always been the guy that’s going to bully the bully. And teammates appreciate it when you have their back like that. I try to stay pretty level headed between the whistles and while I’m on the field but I’m always going to have my teammates back, and I think they appreciate it, and it gives them motivation.”

DE CAMERON JORDAN

(On closing out close games) “I think that a game like this, where things are close, things get a little uppity towards the end, it builds confidence to close it out the way we did. In my mind it wasn’t as close as it was, I think that our defense played with a lot of speed, intensity, and the right mindset all game, albeit that one play, or explosive, that they had. DK Metcalf.”

(On getting Marcus Davenport back) “As we get healthier and healthier every week it’s going to become even more abundant. Yes, Marcus (Davenport) came back I was excited. We’ve had enough adversity, I’m getting more and more excited for the next d-lineman coming back. I don’t want to talk about it until it’s there. It’s like trying to open a Christmas present too early, you’ve got to wait your turn.”

(On what this win means going forward) “I hope it’ll just be the win. Other than the confidence we get for the defense finishing out like this. As we get further away from here I hope it tallies up more and more wins. At the end of the year it doesn’t matter how close we came, it matters about the win column. As we try and get to our goal, we have to get more and more W’s (wins).”

HEAD COACH PETE CARROLL

PETE CARROLL: We've come in here a number of times here and really had very similar results that we're not getting the game when we have chance to get the football game that's out there for us. And it's really difficult. Because we're so close to winning games and we haven't been able to do it at home, for sure. Which is a real shock to me. It's a shock that we're not able to do that. But we're still trying to get these games finished properly. And that means you don't make the mistake that give them a chance. You know, you kick the ball, you don't make the penalty. You know, you don't eat the football for losses when you're in the right positions and stuff. So there's things that we can really fix. And we're just a -- it may not look like it from the outside, but from the inside, it feels like it's really close. So we're going to keep hanging and battling. Really good play by our defense tonight throughout the night. And we had this sequence before the half that we just -- it was -- it was a shame. It was a shame that we gave them that. It didn't have to happen and there was a couple things that we needed to do that didn't get done. I mean, you -- everybody could see it, cover the running back. And, fortunately, you know, our guys are hanging together. And they're talking right and they're looking at each other in the eye and they're -- they want to keep battling to make this thing come together. And that's what we're going to keep doing.

Q. What did you tell your team in the locker room just after the game now?

PETE CARROLL: I told them stuff that really pertained to kind of how we've been talking about. We got to get our finish together and we got to do the right things at the end of the game. Kind of like I'm saying to you. It's -- it's -- there's no -- this isn't rocket science. You got to finish the game right and do right at the end. And that's how you become a good finishing club. And we're not right now. There's a lot of things that you can do so you don't put yourself in those close games and close finishes, as well. But when you get there, you got to do the right stuff. And we haven't been able to function the way we needed to. We talked about hanging together and staying connected and making sure that everybody's, you know, on the same page. And do this together the right way.

Q. You guys got that great start with a touchdown early. Were you surprised it was that tough going the rest of the way offensively?

PETE CARROLL: Well, they're really good. And they made it hard on us. We didn't run the ball as well as we wanted to. We stayed after it, kept trying and working it. I was hoping we would pick it up more so in the second half. I think we rushed for, like, 90 yards or something like that. These guys allow 70 yards a game rushing, 70-80 yards a game. They're really good at it. But we needed to stay with it and we did. But not as effective as we needed to be. I wish we would have gotten more done off of the run. We weren't able to do that. Play passes and movement and stuff. But -- yeah, what else?

Q. You mentioned eating the football for losses. Geno being at quarterback, do you attribute that to just not being in there often?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, I do. Yeah, that's just not being comfortable with the situation. We reminded him, it was -- the time we were on the 23-yard line or something like that -- in great shape and we take a big loss. We just got to find a way to get the ball out and get it going when we're in trouble. It's easy to say, go play quarterback and figure it out. I love Geno and he's busting his ass to do everything he can to help us. But that's the kind of decisions that you make that keep you in the games and give you a chance to win.

Q. How frustrated are you that some of the same mistakes at the end of the game that have hurt this defense this year --

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, really frustrating. Really frustrating. We're not cleaning it up. We had a great sequence at the end of the game. We sacked a guy to give the ball back to the offense. But we hit him late. And so -- I haven't seen the play yet, so I don't know what it looks like. But that's the play that you don't do. You make the proper decision not to put yourself in that situation. We get off the field and everybody is going crazy, and they're kicking the ball to the 35 or something instead of getting a whole new start. That play looked like a 25-yard penalty when they marched the thing off. And so, you have to make those choices and the guys have to be clear thinking and not put us in harm's way. Gerald had his taunting thing over there that we can't -- this is the new game. You can't do anything aimed at another player. And I didn't see that one, either. But I was told what happened. And that kind of stuff is going to lose games for you. And they add up.

Q. Going back to that sequence at the end of the first half, what happened on Kamara's touchdown? It looked like there was nobody within several yards of him.

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, the whole sequence, we were just out of whack with covering him. There was five different calls in there, different things that happened when we had him manned up. We had some -- we needed to get it done one way or the other. And we tried, tried, tried. We didn't get it done. The second half, the guys made the adjustments, and everything was fine. And we were sharp at it and it wasn't the same thing anymore. But just in that sequence, we couldn't stop it until they got to the end zone with the calls that we made.

Q. (Question concerning the missed field goal by Jason Myers.)

PETE CARROLL: No, I think he just missed it. The flight wasn't the same on it. He just didn't hit it quite right. He's a great kicker. We love what he does. He's one game -- look what he did last week. And he's going to win games down the stretch here. And it's just unfortunate. He took it really hard. And, he knows.

Q. The 53-yard try in the fourth quarter where he's kicking into the open end of the stadium, how much consideration was there to punt there?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, there was some. But we felt he kicked the ball far enough. Had a good attitude about it. And, it was a tough kick for sure. The night was not as difficult as we thought, the cyclone bomb or whatever it may be, it didn't go off. That didn't happen. I didn't think it was that big of a factor.

Q. Did the officials give you an explanation on Blair's penalty on the sack? Was it a helmet hit or was it just late?

PETE CARROLL: I didn't get any explanation on that one.

Q. What did you see on it?

PETE CARROLL: You guys saw it better than I did. You know more than I do.

Q. What did you see out of DK tonight? And would you have liked to have seen him more involved after the touchdown?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, we -- yes. That was an exquisite play. It was a great throw from Geno. Everything about it was perfect. And that sent a little shock wave to them, too. And they kept going at him a lot and tried to do everything they could to keep him from getting the football.

Q. The second to rotate the corners. Did you just want to try and let the competition play out there --

PETE CARROLL: Yeah. I don't have nothing to tell you. I thought those guys played well. Really well. They got challenged a few times down the field. And all in all, the defense did a really nice job tonight. They did a really good job in so many ways. And we had one situation that really screwed up. And I think they had a 20-play drive. They got some fourth down conversions. I think we were 2 out of 15 or something on third down. You know, we have made a big jump and we've turned the corner on a lot of areas on our defense. I think the defense is playing -- go back three or four weeks, we've turned it. And so, we can expect those guys to continue to play really well and be a factor and make 13 points against this -- any NFL team is remarkable. And so, I'm counting on those guys to keep improving.

Q. On that drive, Jordyn Brooks had that great pass defended where he jumped up in the air and when he recovered the fumble. Just his play tonight?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, I don't have enough to give him credit on all, other than the big plays you're talking about. But he continues to play really well. \The running game was really in hand. I don't think -- I don't think Alvin, had -- was over three yards rushing. It was a big night to slow him down. He's a great player. Was he under three? Yeah, that's a fantastic job. And that's four quarters of football against one of the best players in the NFL. And, obviously, we saw the talent in the passing game. We didn't do well there. He got us.

Q. You mentioned the running game a lot. Could you tell what broke down on the offensive line?

PETE CARROLL: No. There's nothing to tell you except for these guys are really good and hard to move. And they're really disciplined about it and our guys kept battling and clawing and scratching about it. We did a really nice job to get some other runs other than the downhill runs to complement what he did. But I need to look at the film.

Q. (Question concerning Russell Wilson)

PETE CARROLL: Let's say it this way: I've been here a long time. And if we didn't have Russell, I probably wouldn't have been here a long time. Because think of all the magic that he's created in the years. He's got numbers and stats, and fourth quarters, thises and thats, and all of that stuff. One of the winningest quarterbacks in the history of the NFL. And it will be really fun when he comes back and plays football again for us this year. And we owe a tremendous amount. You can see how hard it is. I mean, all of these games; the Rams game, the -- what was the next one?

Q. The Steelers.

PETE CARROLL: The Steelers and this one. You know, Russell's a factor. He's a fantastic, positive factor and always has been. And, I mean, those were exactly his time. That's his time. That's when he shines. And so, we miss him. And in the meantime, we're going to keep fighting and clawing, and doing everything we can.

Q. On the defensive improvements, was it one thing or just the players focusing and getting better?

PETE CARROLL: No. Line of scrimmage continues to get better. Everybody's really comfortable with what we're trying to get done. The corners are playing more consistently. Kenny has adjusted some stuff to help them. And they've really taken off with it. And, we've had good fortune to have most of the guys out there. We didn't have Darrell tonight. It would have been nice to have him. They've just turned the corner. You've already seen this story. Look at the third downs, guys. The third downs in the last month, okay, it's a month of third downs. It was two conversions and 10, two conversions and 15 or something like that, and then five and 15, and then two and whatever it was tonight. That's fantastic play. Nobody's playing better than that. Nobody's doing better than that. And so, that's going to give us a chance. And we'll have a chance to have a great surge in the second half of the season. And, really, the second half starts Wednesday.

Q. Did Darrell have a setback pregame or something like that?

PETE CARROLL: No, he didn't have a setback. He just didn't turn the corner. And he was -- it was such a positive kind of return with, all the good news that he wasn't hurt seriously. But his neck still was sore. And it just didn't -- it didn't go away. So he had a real stiff neck that he couldn't shake yet. He's really frustrated by it. Because he feels pretty darn good, but he just didn't have his mobility and it wasn't -- he couldn't play.

Q. How's Marquise Blair?

PETE CARROLL: He got hurt. Marquise got hurt. He hurt his patellar tendon. I'm not going to specific about it. But that's -- check that. He hurt his patellar. And the patellar got -- there's something we got to do there. And I'm not sure exactly what it is. But it's a significant injury.

Q. Is Tyler okay?

PETE CARROLL: Yes. As far as I know. I haven't seen him. He's not on any of the reports I have. Brandon Shell just kind of re-aggravated his ankle real late there. Other than that, we don't have anything else.

Q. On the Woods offsides, you didn't have a field goal block on or anything?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, we had a big time field goal block on. We always, we do. And we -- yes, and we took great pride in rushing that with that group. And I don't know, you know, what happened. You know, Al's great and a disciplined football -- as disciplined a football player as we have. And I don't know what happened on that. I haven't talked to him about it.

Q. Did Damien try to warm up and play pregame?

PETE CARROLL: Yeah, he couldn't get back. No, he did not work out in pregame. He wasn't ready to do that.

Q. On releasing Cedric Ogbuehi

PETE CARROLL: We had to make a spot. And for Rashaad to come up.

Q. Do you have any more word on when Russell might come back?

PETE CARROLL: No. No. I don't know. I can't help you on that. I just know he's going to -- whatever he's going to do is better than anybody could ever do. And he'll get that done.

QB GENO SMITH

Q. Geno, what's the mood in the locker room right now?

GENO SMITH: It's tough. Man, we lost. No one's happy about it. It's another close game for us. We had a chance right there at the end. It's tough. One thing I know about these guys is no one's going to quit. No one's going to point a finger. We're all going to pick up what we need to pick up. And we're all going to get better. You know, find ways to get better and find ways to get a win.

Q. What's your assessment of the offense tonight?

GENO SMITH: I think we had spurts where we were really good. And I think we had times where we didn't finish. We were moving the ball. You know, some costly sacks where, you know, kind of put us out of position. A couple penalties that we'd like to not have. But overall, I mean, with the elements and everything else, you know, not to make any excuses, I think we moved the ball pretty well.

Q. Geno, you mentioned the sacks. Some of those came at some really critical moments. What do you kind of think about those plays when you look back on them and you kind of have those moments come about for you?

GENO SMITH: Well, I mean, that's part of playing quarterback, honestly. Playing quarterback, you got to put the team in the best position to win. And whatever I got to do to get the ball out or evade a sack, whatever I have to do to not have that happen, that's a part of my job. And I put that solely on my myself, honestly. And I got big enough shoulders, I'll take it all. You can put the blame on my feet. No worry. I know I'm going to do whatever I need to do to make sure that we get a win.

Q. The third down that took Meyers' field goal out to 53 yards there in the open end, what could you do? That looked like a blitz with no pickup. You're saying --

GENO SMITH: I would have to go look at the tape to be exact and to give you the best answer. In hindsight, just doing whatever it takes, whatever it takes to get the ball out. That's a part of my job, putting us in the best position to win. And when things like that happen, it's the quarterback's job to make sure it doesn't.

Q. What was it like handling the ball, throwing the ball in these conditions tonight?

GENO SMITH: I thought we did fine, honestly. I didn't think about it once. I didn't flinch once. You know, I think I missed one to DK where I put a touch on it and it kind of floated on me. But other than that, I think we were fine.

Q. You had that great touchdown pass to DK. Honestly, I don't think you threw it to him again until the fourth quarter. Was that something they were doing, the defense, play calling?

GENO SMITH: Obviously, we want to get the ball to our playmakers. DK is a great player, Tyler's a great player, Gerald and all those guys. We want to get the ball to all those guys. To be honest with you, I can't really pinpoint to you why it happened the way it did. That's something we got to look at and correct. But it happened like that. And we still had a chance at the end of the game. He made a crucial third down at the end of the game. And that's what he does, he's a great player. And so, honestly, man, it's just one of those things where we came up short again. These last three weeks, we've had the ball at the end with a chance to go win and we didn't get it done.

Q. Geno, the defense gave you -- a recovery fumble gave you a short field. Can you take us through the sequence of that possession?

GENO SMITH: It was a great job by the defense. It was a great hit. I think it was Ugo who made the hit. It was a great hit. That's what they do, they make plays on defense. They did a great job all night. I feel like we got the ball there. And one thing that I'll say is finishing drives is huge. And then rewarding our defense whenever they do get a turnover like that. We preferably want to get seven. So whatever we have to do to make sure that happens. We all got to watch the tape

and really take ownership and figure out what each individual can do to make sure that gets done.

Q. Geno, you're not going to be satisfied until you win, obviously, as a competitor. But what can you -- how are you feeling about your control of the offense and your ability to move the pieces when you're out there at the line of scrimmage and in the huddle?

GENO SMITH: I feel great about it. That's all the hard work throughout training camp and all those things we put a lot of work in. And so, I feel great about what I'm seeing out there and how I'm getting in and out of the huddle. Obviously, there's a lot that I can improve, as well. So for me, it's just focusing on those things, the things that I can improve on. And then just continuing to build.

Q. Just what's the next step for this team to kind of get back on track?

GENO SMITH: The sun's going to come up tomorrow and we going to get right. We're going to make sure we do whatever we need to do. Whether it's in the classroom, the weight room. And then when it comes down to executing on the field, we just got to own those moments. We just got to own them. Those are crucial moments and we had chances to really ice the game. And so, we've got to really put that in our mindset just, like, Hey, man, we got to be closers and finishers. And that's something we can really work on.

LB JORDYN BROOKS

(On the feeling in the locker room after that game) Obviously, guys are disappointed, but nobody is pointing a finger. We're sticking together. We're not giving up on ourselves. People outside these walls may be pointing the finger and giving up on us, but we're going to stick together. We're going to figure it out."

(On what it will take to figure it out) "Just lock it in. Just keep doing what we're doing. It was just a play here and there. So we have to go back and watch the film, evaluate ourselves. Each man has to hold themselves accountable; see what they could have done better, and get it fixed."

(On the defense possibly turning the corner over the last few weeks) "I thought we've been playing better these last few weeks. That's just guys communicating. Early on, during the year, we were just having communication problems and it led to this play and that play. I think guys are talking better. The chemistry has grown on that side. We're going to continue to do what we do, and get a win here, soon."

(On his pass breakup in the end zone) "I was pretty much playing the hooks. They had a guy crossing. I felt somebody come behind me, and I just read Jameis' eyes, and got up to get it tipped."

(On whether he thought that play and the fumble recovery were enough to win the game) "I thought we did enough defensively to win. Offensively as well. Like I said, it was just a couple

plays here and there. Both sides, all sides, all phases, can be cleaned up, and we win the game, easily.”

(On the emphasis on finishing) “That’s kind of been the problem the last couple weeks, just not finishing. Like I said, it’s nothing major that’s happening. It’s just about finishing. That’s what we have to do as a collective group. That’s what will make the difference.”

(On how different it is without Russell Wilson) “It’s different. Obviously, Russ is, in my opinion, the best. So, it’s going to be different. But, we’re rallying around Geno. In running the ball, and making plays when we can. Right now, Russ is down, and it’s next man up mentality.”

FS UGO AMADI

(On what happens now) “Where do we go from here? We have to go back to work, get ready for the next opponent. We can’t leave stuff in the past, we have to move forward, get back to what we believe in, and that’s winning.”

(On whether it feels like the defense has turned the corner, specifically on third down) “Definitely. We take pride in that. Last year, that’s where we were hurt the most. That’s a point of emphasis going in to this year. Getting off the field on third down.”

(On whether he thought the forced fumble play had turned the game) “I believe that whenever you get the ball out, and give it back to the offense, that’s always a momentum builder.”

(On whether he knew the ball had come free right away) “Yeah. When I hit him, I was looking back the whole time. I knew that ball was out.”

(On the importance of trust) “When I think of trust, I think it’s everything. Communicating at the snap, trusting your teammates. I feel like that’s never been the issue. We just have to keep harping on it. It just never comes easy. When you’re climbing the mountain, it’s never easy, but when you get to the top, it’s going to be a nice view. Whatever you do in life, there are going to be trials and tribulations.”

(On why Alvin Kamara was so effective as a receiver tonight) “I believe that’s who the quarterback wanted to target; that’s his go to guy. He’s electrifying when he gets the ball. I give kudos to him. That’s his game.”

RB ALEX COLLINS

(On the Saints’ run defense) “They just did a great job of reading the runs and attacking hard down field. Throughout the stretch, we had to switch up our scheme a little bit and attack them harder. I felt that it started to open up towards the end and we started to get a little more yards at the end. They are a great defense, they came to play, and played hard.”

(On how he's feeling after the game) "I'm great, mentally too."

(On how he was feeling throughout the week) "I didn't even feel it. Going out there, I was able to really move how I wanted to and go without any limitations."

(On how difficult it is not being able to finish these close games) "Just like I said earlier, I feel like the optimism is there. We know that we are so close. We are right at the end with these teams. We are playing against some great teams, and it comes down to the wire. We have to keep executing and keep finishing strong. Hopefully the games will start falling our way because we have had a lot of close games. We went to overtime and were tied up in the fourth, so people look at our record and maybe have a different mindset about us. We know that we are one step closer to finishing, executing, and getting those W's."

LB BOBBY WAGNER

(On what message he has for the younger players) "We've got to keep fighting. It's a long season, a lot of games left. We've got to get right. We've got to really fix our mistakes and play smarter, make less penalties. That's the message."

(On how to make sure players aren't trying too hard) "I don't think it's going to be a try too hard type of thing. I think it's more of we're executing, we're making plays. We just had costly mistakes or costly penalties in the wrong moments, so it's being more conscious in those moments to make sure that it's important to be on point."

(On Alvin Kamara) "He just made some good plays. I didn't see all of them because I was guarding somebody else, but it seemed like he just got inside of us and with a guy like that, you just can't let him get inside of us. They made some good plays and some good calls. He executed."

(On how he feels personally) "It sucks. It's not a great feeling. It's not a position that we thought we were going to be in, and it's just back to the drawing board for me."