



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS DETROIT LIONS
SUNDAY, OCT. 4, 2020 • FORD FIELD
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the win, the Saints move to 2-2 on the season improve their all-time record against the Lions to 14-12-1. Their road record against the Lions also improves to 4-7-1.
- The win improves Head Coach **Sean Payton's** record against Detroit to 6-3, his road mark against the Lions to 2-1 and his record against Lions Head Coach **Matt Patricia** to 1-0, which also makes Patricia the 66th coach of the 80 he will have faced to defeat and the 56th of 80 to have a winning record against.
- Payton's combined 141 combined regular season/postseason victories have him ranked 26th all time, moving into a tie with former Panthers, Broncos and Bears Head Coach John Fox.
- Offensively, New Orleans racked up 392 yards in the win with 246 passing yards and 164 rushing yards on the way to scoring 35 points.
- Quarterback **Drew Brees** started his 279th career regular season game today, breaking a tie for 22nd all-time with LB Clay Matthews, and completed 19-of-25 passes for 246 yards and two touchdown passes. Brees led the Saints on five scoring drives resulting in five touchdowns.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** led the team in rushing with 83 yards on 19 carries and one touchdown. Kamara also caught two passes for 36 yards.
- Kamara has scored a touchdown in six consecutive regular season games, tying the club record shared by Dalton Hilliard (1988-1989, 1992), Pierre Thomas (2008), Jimmy Graham (2011-12) and Kamara (2017).
- RB **Latavius Murray** finished with 64 yards on 15 carries and scored two rushing touchdowns. Murray now has 41 carrier rushing touchdowns and surpassed the 4,500 yard mark for his carrier. Murray also caught one pass for 19 yards.
- WR **Emmanuel Sanders** led the team in receiving with six catches for 93 yards. Sanders surpassed the 8,000 carrier receiving yards mark.
- WR **Tre'Quan Smith** finished with four catches for 54 receiving yards and tied a career-high with two touchdowns receptions.
- TE **Josh Hill** played in his 107th career game today, moving into a tie with LB Pat Swilling and S Gene Atkins for 39th place on the club's all-time games played list. Hill caught one pass for seven yards.
- DB **C.J. Gardner-Johnson** led the team in tackles with six tackles (five solo).
- CB **Patrick Robinson** intercepted Lions QB Matthew Stafford in the endzone in the second quarter and also added four solo tackles and two pass defenses.
- FS **Marcus Williams** and CB **P.J. Williams** each played in their 50th career games with Marcus Williams making his 50th career start.
- DE **Cameron Jordan**, DE **Trey Hendrickson** and DT **David Onyemata** each recorded 1.0 sack of Lions QB Matthew Stafford.
- Jordan now has 4.0 sacks of Stafford. Stafford becomes the fifth signal-caller, he has at least four sacks against and the Lions are now the sixth team Jordan has at least four takedowns against.
- Jordan added 4 solo tackles while playing in his 148th consecutive game today, setting a new club record and breaking a tie with T/G Jim Dombrowski 10/25/87-11/3/96.
- WR/RS **Deonte Harris** returned two punts for 33 yards (16.5 avg.) with a long of 38 (his longest of the season). Harris also caught one pass for 10 yards and carried twice for 10 yards.
- The Saints have not surrendered 100 yards to an individual player in 46 consecutive games in the regular season and postseason combined, the third longest streak in NFL history.

SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

On if he was able to sleep last night due to the false positive COVID-19 test: “Yeah listen, it is what it is. I’m proud of how we got ready to play despite some of the challenges. There were seven, eight, 10 of us up past 1 a.m. in the morning and that’s just the way it is. Took them a while to get the point of care tests here.”

On when the team received the point of care test results: “3 a.m.”

On when the team knew they were playing a game today: “This testing was done by 12:55 a.m., and then we got the results back before 3 a.m. Look, we were playing a game and getting ready to play a game. That’s just part of the deal this year.”

On if the team’s schedule was changed this morning: “No. Look, it came back with a false positive. The concern that we had with the tracer system is that it only showed three [close contacts] and we knew it was way more than three, just based on where he was sitting on the airplane. So we went ahead ourselves – and point of care tested four or five more players that weren’t on the tracing system. I think the tracing system has had some inaccuracies to say the least, but I think we were smart enough to realize who else might have been exposed and went ahead and had those guys tested.”

On how the team prevented getting stuck in a hole being down 14-0 early by scoring on a long drive: “Yeah I think it did. I think we were able to regain time of possession, and I think that helped. We have to be better defensively on the first drive. It’s happened too much this year. Our red-zone defense is still something that needs work. I was proud overall of how the team played considering some of the challenges that they had with some new players in the lineup. So overall, it was a good team win.”

On WR Tre’Quan Smith being a reliable target in the absence of WR Michael Thomas: “I would agree with you. I thought he was outstanding today. He made some contested plays in real big situations. A third down that he catches in that last drive, that was significant.”

On time of possession being a main focus for the team today: “We wanted a couple things. We had to play this game a little differently relative to where we were at defensively. We were going to be aggressive on their side of the 50-(yard line), fourth down – so we were playing a four down game, if you will. We went for it once; we were going to go for it if we needed to more than just once. I thought we had a good rhythm, I thought Drew (Brees) was outstanding. Thought we had them guessing for most of the first half of the game. I thought our guys up front did a really good job at the line of scrimmage, I mean I don’t know what the rushing numbers were, but overall though we did a lot of things well that will allow you to win a game.”

On CB Patrick Robinson’s play in the end zone: “Tremendous, you know. It’s tremendous. I don’t know what happened on the series after, that but that’s a seven-point play, really. I’m proud of him, I’m proud of PJ (Williams), those guys not getting a lot of work and then all the sudden being put in the lineup. They did well.”

On cleaning up penalties: “Yeah look – we just have to keep working on it, keep battling. It is a point of emphasis, so we are really making it a vocal point, and yet sometimes you just have to battle through some calls.”

On how valuable it is for a team to experience adversity and prevail like they have recently: “Look – on the road, it’s just one of those games where you’re proud of your team. It’s this game – it’ll test you from an adversity-standpoint. I think this year is going to be that way for a lot of us. New England’s going to have to travel tomorrow to play a game tomorrow night, and quite honestly, no one really cares. I mean that in a good way. There are far more other things that are important than to hear about how we were up until 1 a.m. – that’s just the way it is this season. So we have to understand that, and then just be ready to still get ready to play our best game. I thought that was important today and our guys did that.”

On if things tightened up on offense to the point where the anticipation and that is where it’s supposed to be, and the team isn’t having those mental errors with the receivers and QB Drew Brees trying to hit them and they aren’t where they’re supposed to be: “Yeah look, I hear what you’re saying. I don’t necessarily agree with all of it. We convert third downs today. Our time of possession was better. We’ll just keep working on the execution.”

On if there was an emphasis on throwing the ball downfield: “It’s a man-to-man team by nature. So they do a real good job of playing that coverage, playing outside technique, funneling routes back in to the interior of the defense. They’ll play some Cover 2, they’ll change it up on you, and we had some big plays in the man coverage. Guys got open. Drew (Brees) made some really good throws. We knew we were going to have to complement the run game.”

On running the ball 42 times: “I want to say this: I thought the guys up front were outstanding. We had a couple injuries. We moved (Nick) Easton over to left guard, and he played extremely well – the tape is going to show it. Cesar Ruiz got his first start. We had to make some adjustments there when we lost Ryan (Ramczyk) and the backs – we just did a lot of things well. It kind of goes hand-in-hand. I thought the third downs we didn’t convert were the longer distance or less manageable ones, but the ones we did, we put ourselves in a good position. Then the one time we went for it on fourth down and hit Alvin (Kamara), I think, on a big play.”

SAINTS QB DREW BREES

On the magnitude of this win considering injury adversity and COVID scares: “Yeah, I mean there was a lot going on. Obviously, coming off of two losses as well where we didn’t play our best football, we knew that we could play a lot better, we could execute a lot better. Coming up here, we lose some starters this week in practice, and then we had the whole COVID ordeal last night, or a false positive that unfortunately kept a lot of people up late and all of that stuff. But man, I think it just says a lot about this team, about all of the guys that stepped up and filled that voids, filled those roles. And everybody just persevered and found a way to get a big win today.”

On WR Emmanuel Sanders and WR Tre’Quan Smith filling the void of the WR Michael Thomas and TE Jared Cook injuries: “Yeah, listen, both of those guys played outstanding, and really, the entire cast. It takes everybody. I think, we knew that the last two weeks we have not had the level of execution, we haven’t had the tempo and the rhythm that we know that we can have. I felt like we had a good plan coming into this game. We got some different stuff from the Lions defense than we thought, but we were able to adjust. Guys played great. We ran the ball extremely well. The O-line did a great job. Latavius Murray ran his tail off. And I felt like we were just kind of staying with (inaudible) defense and then we came up with some big plays in the passing game when we got the right matchups. All the way around it was just great execution. I thought the guys did a great job.”

On the last third down connection to WR Tre’Quan Smith during the final drive: “I didn’t see much. I was getting hit. I was on my back, but I felt like there was a place that I could get the ball up and over the defender. They dropped a safety down to kind of rob the middle of the field, and I felt Tre’Quan (Smith) get past his guy and get over the top of that guy. And obviously that was a huge play. It sustained the drive and gave us another set of downs, and then we were able to close it out with the next first down, but that’s a huge play in the game. If you don’t make that play, then you’re punting the ball to them and they’ve got a lot of time left.”

On if this was the closest to where they want to be offensively through the first four games so far this season: “Yeah, listen. I feel like it was good tempo, I felt like it was very balanced. I felt like we ran the ball very well, threw the ball well. We were great on third downs, 10 of 14, scored touchdowns in the red zone. I hate that we had two drives in the fourth quarter that put our defense back on the field too quickly. I felt like we had an opportunity to get some points there with our drive that extended into the fourth quarter, and we ended up punting them down and pinning them down at the two-yard line. But we really should have gotten points there. And then we had I think just a 3-and-out that next drive. And then besides the tipped interception, which is just bad luck, in the first play of the game, the first drive. Other than that I felt like, listen, it’s hard to put together five consecutive scoring drives. We were able to do that today and it was great execution all the way around. You name it, we had big plays in the passing game, we ran the ball well, we had a screen or two. All in all, I think everybody just did their job, played really well.”

On getting back on track following the early interception: “I think it says a lot about our team. They go down the field, they get a touchdown on their first series. Then, unfortunately we get the tipped ball on the first play, so they get the ball right back. So we’re down 14-0 and it hadn’t even been five minutes expired on the clock. So, I think for us, to remain very calm and poised, and then again offensively put together five consecutive drives with touchdowns, 35 points and the defense to play as well as they did. Going into that fourth quarter, it’s now 35-14, and we knew we were going to have to close this team out. They’re a finish-strong type team. They’ve got a great quarterback on the other side who is used to putting together those types of drives. So we knew we had to close it out.”

On what it means to him to personally get back into his groove: “We’ve set the bar high, high expectations. There’s a reason that we have won more games over the last three years than any other team. It’s because we practice, we prepare, we have a great process in how we prepare for games and how we plan to execute and the level of expectation. And the speed at which we play, the variation with which we can win football games. So, this is obviously the closest to where I know we can be, thus far this season. We still have a lot of work to do, but I am excited to get back to work.”

LIONS HEAD COACH MATT PATRICIA

Opening Statement: “It was obviously not the outcome we wanted. [We] obviously didn’t play well enough all the way across the board. [We] started fast, didn’t really do much there in the middle, and then tried to come back at the end, which was too late at that point. So, [we’ve] got a lot of work to do in front of us. I don’t think our fundamentals were very good today. That needs to improve. We’ve got to coach better and make sure that we are doing things to help our team win, both playing and coaching. Execution wasn’t good enough. Just give the Saints credit, they came out ready to go, stayed consistent, they didn’t panic when they got down early, and just were able to operate efficiently all the way across the board. So we’ve got a lot of work to do in front of us.”

On inability to stop the Saints offense on five consecutive long drives: “I mean I think they did a great job on those drives. It’s things certainly, exactly what we talk about all the time. Just the game was up and down, I didn’t really feel like there was control in the game at all from that standpoint. And those long drives, we may have gotten them off track and then they would get a play to get back on track, and a little bit of back and forth there. It’s never a surprise when you play Sean Payton and Drew Brees from that standpoint. I think Drew Brees does an unbelievable job of, you know he’s so efficient with the ball and he’s obviously very accurate. And very calm and poised, so it doesn’t surprise me at all. I mean I think [it was] different than maybe one of the games we had earlier in the year. I thought that the guys fought all the way through the game, and tried to settle down at the end, which I think they did. But it was just too late at that point. It was too many drives in between.”

On why people should believe in him as a coach despite losing the last 14 of 16 games: “I mean that’s a hard question. Obviously, we just lost to the Saints. Let’s just give them credit for this game. They played extremely well and I know we’ve got a lot of work to do. Certainly I think when I came to Detroit there was a lot of work to do, and that’s what we’re trying to do. But talking about this year right now, we’re talking about right now in these first four games and obviously today wasn’t good enough. I think after four games our team can really take a lot at itself and say ‘OK, hey how do we need to play the games? What have we got to do?’ We’ve got some work to do during the Bye week here, I think which will be good for us to really take a look at how we need to play going forward. And I think that’s probably the most important thing from that standpoint is what do we do going forward and how do we win?”

On changing the pattern of the Lions losing double digit leads: “Yeah, I don’t really think it’s the same thing over though. I mean, if you want to break it down, Chicago obviously was the end of the game, where we didn’t do a good enough job. I think Green Bay, obviously, was the halftime swing and we never really recovered. And this game I thought that we obviously jumped out early, but it was so early in the game in the first quarter. I think after that, we didn’t play very well in the middle of the game, and I thought that we came back at the end of the game, and battled to try to give ourselves a chance to win and obviously we didn’t come through. So, I think from that standpoint, those are different. Last week’s game is different. The biggest thing for us, really, what we’ve got to do, is obviously consistency. That’s what we’ve got to do is we’ve got to be consistent.”

On if he has concerns about his job security heading into the Bye week: “Yeah, again, let’s just talk about the Saints game. I’m trying to get us to play better than what we did today. I come to work every day trying to do the best I can to help this team win. We’ve got great guys in that locker room and we’ve got to find a way to win.”

On if there was any concern today’s game would be cancelled amidst the COVID testing conversations last night: “No, we just got up ready to go. The League obviously has policies and procedures in place to make sure everybody is safe and we just go play.”

On his coach’s challenge in the second quarter and how losing that challenge impacted his decisions later in the game: “Yeah, I mean obviously the one view we saw, which was he kind of landed on top of the defender when the ball came out. So we thought we had a good chance at it and it just took a while, and then eventually we saw the other view. We figured it was obviously a game where we were trying to get as many possessions as we could, knowing how good they are, and that one didn’t work out. Doesn’t matter really in the game no matter what when you challenge early, it definitely affects what you do later in the game when things come up that you want to try and challenge. That’s part of the challenge process.”

On if he is frustrated with the team’s performance defensively given his background as a defensive coach: “I mean I think obviously, we all think that we can play better and coach better. So I mean from that standpoint, we know that we’ve got a lot of work to do. And that’s what we’ve got to do. We’ve got to go back and we’ve got a long season in front of us, but we’ve got to get going. We’ve got to get some of this stuff fixed that looks good at some points and not good at other points. That has to be more consistent than what it is and a lot of that has to do with fundamentals. So that’s really what we’ve got right now.”

On in-game offensive adjustments not working through four weeks: “Again, I think we’ve been able to start pretty fast here which has been great. And I think we will come back (and) what we will try to do is sustain that. Certainly, in a situation where we get up large numbers here early, for us we’ve got to stay on it. We’ve got to keep our foot on the gas all the way across the board, all three phases, all three.”

On the Saints running game performance today: “Definitely, I think their run game is something that they have been doing at a high level and certainly their defense has stopped the run at a high level. So we knew that was going to be a big challenge for us. I think from our aspect of it, we’ve got to just do a better job all the way across the board, coaches and players and making sure that we get the run game stopped. There’s going to be runs in the game, they’ve got two really great backs and they’ve got an offensive line that runs the ball well. And when those things happen in the game, we’ve got to answer it.”

On the decision to go in the fourth quarter while down eight: “The situation is you look at those from if you decide you’re going to go for two, and you can do that, or decide that before the first touchdown, then you can go for it and give yourself two chances to get it in for the two-point conversion.”

On the defensive juggling of personnel: “Yeah, we definitely have some players out there that we want to get out in certain situations. We are trying to get them out there and obviously just looking for the consistency and that aspect of it and trying to get guys to settle in and play consistent So, from that aspect of it, we still have some inconsistencies.”

LIONS QB MATTHEW STAFFORD

On his outlook of the team coming off the loss today: “1-3. Not where we want to be after four games. Started the game well again and then just didn’t play well enough throughout the entirety of the game. Have to give credit to them, did a great job of controlling the game, running the ball. They did a nice job stopping the run against us. Just one too many mistakes from us.”

On his confidence in Head Coach Matt Patricia’s ability to lead the team: “Plenty of confidence (inaudible). We have to go out there and make the plays, when we have opportunities to make them.”

On if anything was going on with him today when missing some deep passes: “Nope, just missed them. I want a couple of those back. Obviously, had some long PIs (pass interferences) that helped us out too. They were in some bad positions on defense and made some decisions to not let us catch it and get some big plays through penalties as well. Definitely a couple I want back.”

On if the offense feels pressure to score on each drive with how opposing offenses are scoring a lot: “No I don’t think it’s any different this year than any other year for us. As a mentality every time we touch it we want to go get points. Obviously didn’t do that enough today.”

On if there is a reason for the lack of big plays so far this season: “No. I think probably just going back and looking at it, I think defenses are doing a nice job of trying to play us top down, but at the same time there’s chances. I have to do a better job of getting those guys better balls and better opportunities.”

On his visible frustration on the sidelines today: “Every time we get it, I want to go score. We weren’t able to do that as many times as we needed to today. It’s an emotional game, a passionate game. I’m trying to make sure I’m out there doing my best every single time. And there’s times, probably if you see frustration, it’s probably for myself. Just wish I could’ve been better today to help us win.”

On his interception today: “Yeah, I wish I just would have thrown it a couple of yards further. TJ (Hockenson) did a nice job of scrambling and I just underthrew it.”

On looking forward to the Bye week in Week 5: “I think we just have a lot of work to do. A lot of things to look at and see how we can be better as a team. I think for me personally, it’s going to start just looking in the mirror and how can I help us be more successful, how can I help us win more. I’ll take the week obviously very seriously and try and figure out how I can help us win.”

On if he was concerned about the false positive test with the Saints this morning: “No I didn’t think so. I think we have to trust what the League is doing and they’re doing as good as a job as they possibly can. They say it’s safe to go out there any play, we’re going to go out there and do it.”

On if the Saints' defense was throwing off his rhythm today: "No, I don't think they were doing anything particular defensively than they normally would. Just missed some chances and wish I had them back, I guess."

On if he feels the same level of preparedness this season compared to other seasons: "Yeah, for sure. I feel like myself. Obviously, we haven't hit some of the bigger plays down the field that we did last year but by no means am I feeling any different than I was. I just have to go out there and hit them. We have to make them as a team and help us put points on the board."

LIONS T TAYLOR DECKER

On the frustration of not holding onto leads: "It's very frustrating. We start fast, we show that we can get up on teams and score points on teams and stop teams. But at the end of the day, it's a 60-minute game. So, I mean, yeah, it is frustrating. There's no other way to say it."

On his thoughts on how Head Coach Matt Patricia leads the team: "We all believe in the plan that's put in place for us. We're professional athletes. We're expected to come here and perform and follow the lead of the things that the coaches have us do. So, we believe in what's being taught here. If we didn't, frankly, we wouldn't be here."

On why he has confidence in Head Coach Matt Patricia: "We've seen flashes of how good we can be. You see flashes of it; you see spurts here and there of what we can do when we execute. We know we have all the pieces to execute what we need in this locker room and on this team. But at the end of the day, it's a full group effort. Everybody has to do their job. We've seen flashes of it. We just need to see it more consistently."

LIONS LB REGGIE RAGLAND

On the frustration of a lost lead reoccurring: "It's frustrating because we have the pieces to be successful in this league, and we just have to go out there and finish. There's no excuses. There's nothing else to be said. We have to go out and play ball."

On Saints RB Alvin Kamara and the difficulty of defending New Orleans' offense: "Alvin is one of the best players in this league, and I've known Alvin since high school – that's my little brother. I know he's a problem. Then you have one of the best at throwing the ball. They're not going to stop fighting. They have a great head coach. So, we have to get pressure. We have to get pressure on them – sometimes we had pressure on them, but he got it out on time, just like at the end. Had we had a little strength – I came free – he got it out right before I got to him. Playmakers (are) going to make plays in situations when it's needed, and that's what they did every time they needed a play. They gave the ball to Alvin and they put the ball in (Drew) Brees' hands."

On re-grouping during the Bye week: "I think it's good because all the stuff we messed up on, we can go back, clean it up and really detail the fundamentals of the things. We can just go play ball, man. Good thing it's still early in the season. So, I know a lot of people are doubting us – man, forget that. It's still early in the season. We still can make a push of this thing, but we have to make up our mind and go do it because rightfully, we should be 4-0 right now. But we didn't finish. So, all the great teams in this league finish in difficult situations. That's what we have to do in situations. It's the NFL, like I said, it's a grown-man's league. We have to finish in these tough situations. Like I said, we got the pieces, we got the coach, we just have to go play, man."