



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2019 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the loss, the Saints fall to 10-3 on the season and 5-2 at home. New Orleans returns to action on Monday, December 16 when they host the Indianapolis Colts in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. Kickoff is set for 7:15pm CT on ESPN.
- With the loss, New Orleans' all-time record against the 49ers falls to 26-48-2. HC **Sean Payton's** all-time record against San Francisco drops to 6-3 and 3-3 at home and Payton falls in his first career match-up with 49ers Head Coach Kyle Shanahan.
- The Saints and 49ers combined for 55 points and eight touchdowns in the first half, both highs in any game this season. The last time two teams combined for 55 first half points was Week 1 of the 2018 season (New Orleans and Tampa Bay combined for 55 points) and the last time two teams combined for eight first half touchdowns was Week 10 of the 2010 season (Washington and Philadelphia combined for eight touchdowns).
- Offensively, New Orleans amassed 465 total yards, their highest output since October 27 vs. Arizona, including 349 passing yards and 116 yards on the ground. The Saints scored touchdowns on each of their first four drives of the game for the first time since October 8, 2018, when they defeated the Washington Redskins 43-19.
- Defensively, New Orleans held San Francisco running backs Matt Breida and Raheem Mostert to 54 yards and 69 yards, respectively, and extend their streak to 39 consecutive games, including regular and postseason play, without allowing a 100-yard rusher. New Orleans surrendered a season-high 516 yards of offense to San Francisco, including 354 passing yards and 162 rushing yards.
- QB **Drew Brees** finished the game 29-of-40 passing for 349 yards. Brees threw for five touchdowns for the 10th time in his career and first time since throwing seven against the New York Giants on November 1, 2015.
- Brees now is tied with Peyton Manning with 35 career games with at least four touchdown passes for first in NFL record books, ahead of Tom Brady (29, entering Sunday's game vs. Kansas City).
- Brees also rushed for his 19th touchdown as a member of the Saints on a one-yard run in the second quarter. The score breaks a tie with former Saints signal-caller Archie Manning for the most rushing touchdowns by a quarterback in club history and was his 23rd overall in his 19-year career.
- With 134 yards on 11 receptions today, WR **Michael Thomas** set a new franchise record for receiving yards in a season with 1,424 yards so far this season, breaking his own record of 1,405 set last season. Thomas' season total moves to 121 receptions, surpassing Marvin Harrison's 118 for the most receptions through the first 13 games of a season.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** surpassed 2,000 yards receiving for his career with his 6-yard reception with 10:32 to play in the second quarter. Kamara becomes just the fourth NFL running back to amass 2,000 yards rushing and 2,000 yards receiving in their first three seasons, joining Christian McCaffrey, Roger Craig, and Herschel Walker. Kamara finished the afternoon with 25 rushing yards on and 18 yards on four receptions. Kamara's third quarter fumble was the Saints' first offensive fumble lost of the season.
- RB **Latavius Murray** finished with 67 yards on nine carries. His 9.9 yards per carry was his highest average this season.
- Playing in his 184th career game, WR **Ted Ginn Jr.** recorded four receptions for 50 yards, both highs since recording seven receptions for 101 yards on opening night vs. Houston, Sept. 9.
- TE **Josh Hill** scored his second touchdown of the season on a 3-yard reception with 14:57 to play in the second quarter, marking his first season with multiple scoring grabs since 2015. Hill finished the game with two receptions for four yards.
- WR **Deonte Harris** recorded both a reception and rushing attempt for the first time in his career, finishing the afternoon with 13 receiving yards on the one reception and eight rushing yards on one rush. Harris made an impact in the return game, recording kickoff

returns of 31, 51, and 21 yards and a punt return of 25 yards, all of which set up Saints first half touchdowns.

- WR **Tre'Quan Smith** scored the Saints' final touchdown of the game on an 18-yard reception from Brees with 1:00 to play in the game. Smith has now scored three touchdowns this season, two coming within the last three games.
- S **Vonn Bell** recorded his first solo sack of the season, taking down 49ers QB Jimmy Garoppolo with 2:38 left in the fourth quarter. He finished with a team-leading 12 stops, and now has 86 tackles in 2019. Bell's three stops away from setting a new career-high.
- LB **Demario Davis** recorded his third sack of the season, and second in the last three weeks. Davis finished with seven tackles on the afternoon, moving his season total to 95 stops. With five more tackles, Davis will have 100 stops for the third consecutive season and sixth time in his career.
- LB **Craig Robertson** recorded the 10th interception of his career, picking off Garoppolo with 13:36 to play in the third quarter. The interception was Robertson's first since December 31, 2017 when he picked off Jameis Winston in the final game of 2017. Robertson added eight tackles and one pass defense on the afternoon.
- DT **Mario Edwards Jr.** recorded his second sack of the season, both coming in the last three weeks, taking down Garoppolo with 4:42 to play in the third quarter.
- K **Wil Lutz** has now converted 14 consecutive field goals, connecting on a 55-yarder with 12:41 to play in the third quarter, a 48-yarder with 4:56 to play in the third quarter. Lutz has now converted a league-leading 29 field goals this season.
- P **Thomas Morstead** punted once for 45 yards. Morstead appeared in his 171st career game, moving into a tie with Wayne Martin for eighth place on the club's all-time games played list.
- Before leaving the game in the second quarter with a concussion, TE **Jared Cook** scored multiple touchdowns for the fourth time in his career. Cook finished the game with two receptions for 64 yards and the two scores. Cook now has six touchdowns this season, matching a career-high set last year as a member of the Oakland Raiders.
- After failing to score on their opening possession in any of their first eight games, the Saints have now scored on their opening possession for four straight weeks. Cook's 38-yard touchdown reception capped off a Saints' 9-play, 73-yard drive that used the first 3:26 of the game. Cook scored again on the Saints' second possession of the game, marking the first time this season New Orleans has opened the game with touchdowns on both of their first two possessions.
- The Saints' extended their streak to 285 consecutive games without having been shut out, dating back to a 26-20 victory at Tampa Bay on September 6, 2002. The streak is the longest running streak in the NFL and fourth longest in league history.



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

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NEW ORLEANS SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON**

Opening Statement:

“Look, I’m going to be real quick. Obviously, it was a back and forth game. Tough loss and so many different momentum swings in that game we probably have to watch the film two or three times to go through the ebbs and flow that they had. Credit San Francisco, they made plays at the end when they needed to. It was a little surprising to me that it ended up being that type of game. I did not think it would be. I thought it would be much lower scoring, but that’s the direction it went and you have to score one more.”

Do you know why it was not defensive holding on the fake punt play?

“I don’t want to answer one officiating question today, so I won’t. Sorry.”

Can you talk about the job Kyle Shanahan did calling the plays. It seemed like they had the defense off-balanced.

“There was not a lot of balance with the score. There was not a lot of balance in either defenses. They do a good job. When you can run the ball like they can and obviously, it creates throws and creates misdirection plays, they are challenging. That is why they are one of the better offenses.”

Why go for two early in the game? After they got the flag, it puts you at the two-yard line.

“Flag puts it at the one (yard line). That’s why.”

Was this your best game offensively overall?

“It’s a fair question, and yet I’d say any game you consider your best game offensively would have to include a win. This isn’t just about getting passing yards or rushing, it’s about winning games. So, no.”

In a game like this when it is high scoring. Typically, the team that has the ball last in these types of games win...

“I know what you are going to ask. Am I going to slow it down and score seven? I do not know how to do that. What if you don’t have as many plays to score seven?”

Any thoughts on doubling (George) Kittle on fourth and two in that situation?

“Its fourth and two so there is a handful of things you are wanting to do and you kind of play with a man underneath, safety high defense. They got into a good bunch set and he was able to uncover it. I’m sure when we watch this tape there are going to be a handful of things that if you play it back over again you try to find a way to make sure he doesn’t beat you in the end.”

Talk about the comeback. I know you did not win, but you were down nine in the fourth quarter and to score twice on those guys. You have to feel at least positive about it?

“Listen, you are talking to me right after a tough loss. Are you telling me how I am supposed to feel? Alright, I do not feel encouraged. I feel frustrated because we had opportunities during the game offensively to take advantage of the field position. We had a number of opportunities. We missed assignments, so no I’m not encouraged that way.”



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SAINTS QB DREW BREES

(On how difficult the game was today) “I would say today was just a hard-fought football game all the way around. Both sides. Back and forth. They are a great team. We’re a great team. We have the ability to be a great team. So this was like a heavyweight boxing match. All game long. That’s how I would categorize today. And certainly I know there’s some things offensively we can clean up, certain opportunities to extend drives to get more points that would have made a difference in the game honestly when it comes down to it. But you always have that right? You always have those moments and it really comes down to the last four minutes of the game, what happens and you just want a chance to win this. We had a chance. Unfortunately, they were the ones who came out on top today.”

(on New Orleans’ offense going against San Francisco’s defense) “I know what our offense is capable of. To me, honestly, (any team is) a faceless opponent. I do not care about reputation. I do not care about statistics. I don’t care about anything (like that). I’m just going to play what I see and then develop a game plan that you feel like puts you in better position to win the game and they’ve got a ton of great players, *great* players, right? And if you’re not executing to perfection, they’re going to make you pay. I felt like we did a lot of things really well today, but there were definitely a few things here and there that could have put us in position for another field goal, which makes a difference at the end or extend a drive. Don’t give them the ball back in second quarter, which allowed them to go down a get a touchdown. So many little things that I know were just from an execution perspective on our end.”

(on the failed two-point conversion) “Nobody was open.”

(on using Jared Cook early in the game plan) “That’s definitely a factor. You know, he had two catches for from 68 yards and two touchdowns today. He was impactful. Would have been nice to have him obviously felt like he would have had opportunities. He would’ve been able to compliment everything that we were doing. It just put more on the plate for Josh Hill and Taysom Hill. Those guys played phenomenal.”

(on if San Francisco is a team that New Orleans could possibly face again in the playoffs) “I hope so because that means we are accomplishing our goals.”

(on the team’s approach in practice after a loss) “We’re better than what we put out there today and I’m not just talking about offensively. We had chances to score more and you feel the flow of a game like this and you know you have to score and you know and you’ve got to execute to perfection and we weren’t quite there. Did a lot of good things. It’s just not quite enough.”

(on if he felt good about the two-point conversion) “Absolutely. Again, you know you’re in that type of game, right? We’re going to play aggressive. We faked the punt. We brought just about (every) kickoff out of the endzone and hit on a couple of those. We had a great return there. Let’s see if we can break one of these. Those are difference makers.

“If you just look at the statistics if you’re going from the two-yard line versus going from the one-yard line it’s a big difference. We had a play we liked. Oddly enough, they miss a line. They had an extra guy who shouldn’t have been there. So, unfortunately, the play didn’t work, but that’s a big play in the game if we get (it). We’re going to play aggressive. We’re going to take chances. We’re not going to making excuses.”

(on four touchdowns in the first four drives) “I’d like to see more of that.”



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SAINTS PLAYERS

QB Taysom Hill

On the loss: "It's a tough way to lose a game. I felt like overall we played really well. I felt like our energy level was really good. We went out and competed really hard. It's a tough one to swallow. We've been here before. We will get in here tomorrow, watch the film, and find where we kind of went wrong and fix things that need to be fixed."

On if there are good takeaways from the team's offensive performance: "Yes, you look at how we played offensively. Offensively, I felt that was one of our cleaner games this season. We certainly did a lot of good things out there and just came up a little short, not quite enough to get the win. We'll see where we came up short and find ways to fix it."

On if he thought it would be that high scoring a game: "No, I didn't. Certainly, you look at the 'Niners and what they have been able to do defensively this year. We really didn't know what to expect. I felt like we liked our matchups offensively against them. And, I felt like we had a really good game plan going in to handle them up front and doing different things that way. I didn't expect to lose on a last second field goal in the 40s."

WR Tre'Quan Smith

On the mechanics of Hill's fake punt pass attempt and his perspective on it: "I definitely knew that it could be defensive pass interference. I didn't know that he (defensive player) was going to do it, but good job for them knowing that you could do defensive pass interference, but you can't hold. He did a good job. He did his job. He reached out, grabbed me and pushed me. He just cannot hold. I was not really trying to pay too much mind on him. My job was to catch the ball."

S Marcus Williams

On the mood of the team: "We've been down before. We've got to keep our heads up and continue to get better next week, come out strong, come out ready to play and everything will be fine."

On if the Saints may see the 49ers in the playoffs again: "If we see them, we see them. If we don't, we don't. We are just going to take one game at a time. That's our mentality, take one game at a time, come out and do our job."

CB P.J. Williams

On penalties hurting the team: "It's tough. It's definitely hurting us in a big way. We just have to make sure that we are using our technique and tighten it up, because when we get into the playoffs it's going to be a different story. We're not going to be able to do it (with penalties)."

DE Cameron Jordan

On the loss: "It's something that we have to deal with. They (San Francisco) had over 40 points on the board. That is on the defense. When you have an offense rolling the way that they were, with the ebbs and flow of the game, this is something that we have to be able to go back to what we know. You've got to be able to stop that run. At the end of the day, they ended up with over a buck-fifty (150 yards rushing) on the ground. Whether that's Jimmy (Garoppolo) scrambling, whether that's the 15 running backs that they have in the backfield, it's something that we knew coming in that we were going to have to stop. At the end of the day, we didn't do enough to get a win."

On if anything surprised him today: “We knew that we were going to get their best shot. We saw every trick play, I think, that we can imagine. At the end of the day, it was up to us to see how tough they were, not how fast they were. We’ve got to get back to the gameplan and what we know.”

T Terron Armstead

On the offensive game: “We did some things well. We had some explosive plays, some big long plays, big long touchdowns that we haven’t really had the last several weeks. We happened to add those explosive (ones) into our offense. We had a pretty methodical march down the field, the way that we run different shifts and personnel to add those big explosive plays that just adds another element to our game.”

On neutralizing Nick Bosa: “(He is) Extremely talented, explosive, smart, and has a really good feel for the game. He does things instinctively that you don’t normally see from a rookie. I was impressed with him. I felt like we competed against him at a high level. It was a fun battle.”

DB C.J. Gardner Johnson

On the unnecessary roughness penalty: “There wasn’t any other way that I could hit the man. I didn’t hit him with my head. It’s a bang-bang play. I guess that they probably made the right call, but I don’t want to dwell on it.”

“There wasn’t any other way that I could hit him. I hit him with my shoulder. I’m not trying to hurt anybody, I’m out there trying to make a football play. The refs think otherwise, so I am ready to move on and play the next game.”



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(On the emotions of the last drive in fourth and two) "I'm just trying to call the right play, when you go through a game like that, that was as cool a game as I had been a part of, a lot of emotion. I thought I was going to have to call a number of more plays to get into field goal range, but (George) Kittle took care of it."

(On Jimmy Garappolo) "He's unbelievable. No matter what happens," Shanahan said of his quarterback. "He's had a lot of good games this year. He has made some times where he's made some mistakes. But he's the same guy every day. Just to be able to deal with that crowd noise and to deal with adversity that went in and out throughout the game, to be able to deal with me, he's the same and a lot of fun to coach."

(On George Kittle) "When one of your best players has the mentality he has that is everything. O-linemen don't have a choice, they have to be tough, but the mentality of your team and toughness of your offense has to do with your skill positions and I think our skill guys like Deebo, play physical. There isn't a more physical tight end in this league on the run plays and pass plays. It's a pretty tough mentality here."

(On what it means to win a game in this environment) "Not much. It means we're 11-2, so we'll see what else happens. Everybody wants to talk about that each week, but it would be more fun to talk about it if everybody else had bad records but there are a lot of teams with good records. It's just one week at a time. If you start feeling good about yourself it's going to be over fast and if you get down, you knock yourself out and don't give yourself a chance. It's going to come down to the last week with the teams in the NFC."

(On if he knew he would have to do some innovative things on offense because of the opponent that is the game) "We knew we would have to do some things on offense just because of how unbelievable they played. They (defense) went against a great offense with a great coach and a great quarterback. We owed it to them, because I think there's a number of games this year where the offense hasn't."

(On handling the noise) "I thought we handled the noise great. It wasn't perfect. I thought we were able to overcome it."



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QB #10 JIMMY GAROPPOLO

(On George Kittle's fourth-down play): "Everyone was calm. I thought we were in a good state of mind when we went out there. We just executed that's really what it comes down to in those situations. Once he caught it and turned around and squared the guy up, I didn't know what he was going to do. I knew the guy was in a bad situation on the other side. George is a beast with the ball in his hands. It's just about getting him the ball in space and letting him go to work."

(On his fourth down and two options for the play): "There was a couple of different ones. George was man-to-man. He had a couple of natural picks. He just ran a straight route and killed the guy. It made my job easy. It was awesome."

(On the win): "It's good for our team. We win different ways every week. That's what a good football team does. They find a way to win tough games like this, whatever it may be. I think our guys are built for anything, handling the environment; it was pretty loud out there. I thought we did well with it."

(On competitiveness): "It's not just George, it's all the skill guys. Deebo (Samuel), Emmanuel (Sanders), all of the backs, they make it hard on (defensive backs) to tackle them. It's fun to watch that stuff."

(On beating Drew Brees): "Drew is one of the best ever. I love watching him on film and I love to study him. He's unbelievable. To be in a game like this, we didn't know how it was going to go initially. There was a lot of points. It was good for our team."

LCB # 25 RICHARD SHERMAN

(On Kittle): "It starts with him. He's the best tight end in football. He's the most physical. He's not just catching the ball for a good play; he's playing the game to be rude and to bully people. That play he was getting his facemask pulled. Most people would go down and complain about the facemask. Regardless of the facemask pull, he was like, 'I'm going to bully you all the way to the end zone or until you stop me. That's his mindset. We're thankful to have him because we don't win the game without that play. Jimmy Garoppolo was clutch down the stretch. This is a big time game and he played big time. He played like the best quarterback in football today. He beat a legend... This credit goes to everybody."

(On Jimmy Garoppolo): "I think it gives him a ton of confidence. I think he hasn't cared about the naysayers and what the outside world has thought this entire time. I think it's a wake-up call for them as well about the quarterback he can be in the clutch moments and crucial moments of the game. I think there's been a lot of question marks and I think that he answered the questions today."

(On defensive play): "It's frustrating because of simple plays. It's things we've gone over. It's not like they beat us with a bunch of trick misdirection plays. These are day-one football plays that we have to execute better. Give credit to them. Drew (Brees) saw them, found the people that were open, and made the plays. Give them credit, they had a good plan coming in, but we have to execute better."

(On handling the environment): "I think everybody was poised. Everybody played well. We could have played better on defense. Offensively, they deal with the hostility more than we do. So, when you score 50 points in the Dome you deserve a lot of credit."

TE #85 GEORGE KITTLE

(On the comeback): "One thing Coach Shanahan always says is don't let the beat loose in the building. Kind of like the semi-pro thing. No matter what happens, just keep calm, cool, collected, and just ride the wave. I think we did really good with that. There were ups and downs, we just kept going. I think we just kept clicking and chugging along. Defense made plays when they had to. Special teams made plays when they had to, and ultimately the offense did."

(On his fourth down conversion): "It was a choice route. It was man zone. I had a choice to go in or out. Emmanuel (Sanders) and Kendrick Bourne had go-routes which cleared it out for me. He was sitting inside, so it was a pretty easy decision for me to break out. Jimmy gave me ball and just let me run with it."

(On C.J. Gardner-Johnson and what it was like matching up with him today): “He did a great job on me all day. It was really fun to go against him. We had some good battles and I got him at the end.”

“It’s really fun, especially when you have a little bit of space. Our tight ends coach says don’t let one guy tackle you and that was my mindset, to just try and run through him and carry him as far as I can.

WR #17 EMMANUEL SANDERS

“I feel like we’ve been. Here before. Jimmy is a baller. You can look at him and see what kind of player he is. He works hard. When you’ve got somebody like Jimmy with the personality that he has, in the clutch moments he’s not going to fold because of all the hard work that he’s put in.”

(On his touchdown pass today): “We ran it like five times (in practice). The last time we ran it I actually threw a duck. I was like, ‘man, don’t throw a duck in the game because that will be on ESPN Not Top 10. I was able to execute today. I know (Coach Kyle Shanahan) was like, ‘please do not throw a duck again.’ It felt good. It was one of those plays coming into the game that we wanted to be a touchdown. So, it feels good being up here.”