



**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS PITTSBURGH STEELERS**  
**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER, 13, 2022 • ACRISURE STADIUM**  
**SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES**

- The Saints lost the Pittsburgh Steelers 20-10 Sunday, falling to 3-7 on the year. New Orleans returns to the Superdome next week, where it hosts the Los Angeles Rams on Nov. 20. Kickoff will be at 12 pm CT and will be broadcast on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 Locally).
- As a defense, the Saints tallied a season-high six sacks.
- QB **Andy Dalton** surpassed Alex Smith to move into 22<sup>nd</sup> in all time completions. Dalton is now at 3,263 completions.
- Dalton completed 17-of-27 passes for 174 yards, a touchdown and two interceptions.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** moved into second all-time in Saints all-purpose yards, surpassing Deuce McCallister in the second quarter. He is now at 8,966 total career scrimmage yards.
- Kamara finished the game with 26 rushing yards on eight carries and 19 yards receiving on three catches.
- WR **Jarvis Landry** caught his 705<sup>th</sup> career pass, surpassing Emmanuel Sanders to move into 55<sup>th</sup> place all time.
- WR **Chris Olave** tallied three receptions for 40 yards.
- TE **Juwan Johnson** caught five passes for 44 yards and a touchdown, leading the team in receiving yards. Johnson scored his fourth touchdown of the season, and he now leads the Saints in touchdown receptions. He tied his career-high as well.
- DE **Cam Jordan** tallied a split sack and five tackles and one pass defense and at 2.5 is now 2.5 away from tying the all-time Saints record. Steelers QB Kenny Pickett is the 45<sup>th</sup> different player Jordan has sacked.
- DE **David Onyemata** recorded a sack for his third straight game for the first time in his career. Onyemata ended with three total tackles.
- LB **Demario Davis** surpassed 500 career tackles as a Saint in the second quarter. He finished the afternoon with eight total tackles, including three solo.
- LB **Kaden Elliss** notched a sack for the second week in a row. Elliss tallied seven total tackles — three solo — in the game to go with one forced fumble.
- CB **Chris Harris Jr.** registered his first sack as a Saint. Harris finished the contest with one tackle.
- DB **P.J. Williams** led the defense with 11 total tackles, including nine solo.
- S **Tyrann Mathieu** totaled his 650<sup>th</sup> career tackle. He finished with seven total tackles — five solo — on the day.
- The New Orleans defense had 10 different players total at least five tackles.
- P **Blake Gilikin** averaged 51.8 yards per punt on five punts in the game.



## POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

### NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS PITTSBURGH STEELERS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER, 13, 2022 • ACRISURE STADIUM SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

#### HEAD COACH DENNIS ALLEN

##### **Opening Statement:**

Performance wasn't good enough really in all phases. We didn't play well enough. We didn't coach well enough. We have to do a better job. We fought ourselves back, got back into the game at halftime, felt like we were in a good position, and we really just didn't do anything in the second half. We have to be better.

##### **Q. Late in the game, 3rd down, 4th down, you were missing all the interior offensive linemen. Why did you guys do that there?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Well, we felt like we could make a 1st down, and we didn't do it. We have to be able to make -- we've got to be able to make, what was it, a yard and a half, I think? We have to be able to make that.

Yeah, I mean, we have got to make it.

##### **Q. How frustrated are you with the penalties?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Very. And look, I'll go back and look at all of them. I know some of them certainly looked legitimate. We'll have to go back and look at it.

But I think we had 10, I think they had three or four. Some of those that we had specifically on defense kept drives alive, gave them 1st downs. Yeah, it's disappointing.

##### **Q. Did you expect to have this much trouble running the ball today?**

DENNIS ALLEN: No. Look, we knew they were a good run defense, and we knew that they were going to have some juice coming back with having T.J. back out there. But look, we felt like we would be able to run the ball better than we did. We knew it would be tough, but we felt like we could run it better than we did.

##### **Q. When the team is kind of having the same sort of problems on a weekly basis, whether it's the turnovers or not forcing them or trouble stopping the run, what does that all Boyle down to?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Yeah, I think we've got to coach it better and play it better. I mean, I just think we have to be better in a lot of areas.

##### **Q. At this point were you thinking about a quarterback change for next week?**

DENNIS ALLEN: I'm not going to get into that right now. We just came off the game. We'll have plenty of time to evaluate where we're at in a lot of areas.

**Q. You said Jameis is healthy enough to play, though. Would his health, considering he's probably not 100 percent, impact that decision?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Yeah, look, I know we're all looking for answers there, but I'm not going to go there right now. We'll evaluate where we're at, and we'll have a plan for the coming-up week.

**Q. After a seventh loss, how does the message change in the locker room to the team?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Well, look, when you get in situations like these, you have to fight your way out of it. There's no other way to get out of it other than fight your way out of it.

This is where you've got to lean on the leadership of the group, and they've got to pull us through.

**Q. Why did you guys decide not to have Callaway down this week?**

DENNIS ALLEN: We felt like that was the group that gave us the best chance.

**Q. Do you worry about keeping the locker room together at this point?**

DENNIS ALLEN: No.

**Q. Were they doing anything in particular to limit AK in this game, especially as a passing target?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Yeah, look, we struggled to get in much of a rhythm offensively, and so I think it all started with our inability to be able to run the football. I don't think they did anything in particular that took him away. We just didn't get him the ball as much as we probably would like to have.

**Q. When you have someone like Elontae Taylor who has more than one penalty in a game, do you talk to them in the moment?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Well, look, yeah. Some of the fouls are aggressive fouls, so no, I didn't specifically go over to each one of them and have a discussion with them about the fouls. We'll get them corrected.

**Q. Did you see this as a good opportunity to kind of stay within striking distance of the division?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Yeah, look, we've got to worry about winning games, and that's really where the focus is.

**Q. You said you have to play better, coach better. What do you have to coach better in that equation?**

DENNIS ALLEN: I think some of it would come down to some fundamentals and technique. I still think there's got to be some improvement there. The discipline aspect of -- we had a couple of false start penalties. There's just a lot of different areas that we've got to improve on.

**Q. I assume you're not going to want to make an excuse, but when health is an obvious logical factor, how much do you equate that with what's going on?**

DENNIS ALLEN: I mean, listen, I couldn't sit here and say that it's not a factor. But it's the nature of the beast that we're dealing with. We've got to find a way to get the guys out there that we have on the field and get them to play to their best ability, and then they've got to go out and execute.

**Q. When you look at where this team is now compared to maybe where they were at the beginning of the season, do you feel like this team has improved?**

DENNIS ALLEN: In certain areas, yeah. But we're not getting the results that we need to get. Certainly I think these last couple of weeks we've probably taken a little bit of a step back in terms of production.

We'll go back and evaluate and keep working.

**Q. When you say you're not worried about the locker room, why not?**

DENNIS ALLEN: Because I think we have a good locker room. I think we have a bunch of guys that are fighters, and I think they're going to still fight and compete.

**QB ANDY DALTON**

**Q. Can you just talk about today and how did you feel about the offensive line?**

ANDY DALTON: At the end of the day, we didn't make enough plays. That's what it came down to. We weren't able to sustain drives, and that led to us not scoring enough points.

**Q. How frustrating (indiscernible)?**

ANDY DALTON: It's really frustrating. We know the potential of what we can be and what we can do. To have games go like this consecutive weeks, it's tough.

**Q. Can you describe kind of what happened on that 3rd and 1, 4th and 1, where you had a chance to still be in the game at that point?**

ANDY DALTON: Yeah. We ran the ball both times and weren't able to get it. I think that's what happened.

**Q. On that second interception throw to Kevin White down the sideline, what were you seeing there? What went wrong?**

ANDY DALTON: It was a one-on-one play, just trying to give Kevin a chance. Unfortunately he didn't come down with it.

**Q. Coach Allen says he believes in this locker room, the leadership going forward. You've been around this team for a while. These are tough times. How do you feel the core of this team can handle it?**

ANDY DALTON: We have the right people in this locker room. We've got the right people on this team and in this organization. The only way we can do it is we've got to stick together and understand what we have to do. Everybody needs to look at themselves and say what can I do better.

If we do that, we'll get this thing turned around.

**Q. Were they doing anything in particular to take away the run?**

ANDY DALTON: Yeah, we just weren't able to run it. I think at the end of the day they made plays and we didn't.

**Q. You mentioned the potential; what do you have to do to achieve that and be in it consistently week in and week out?**

ANDY DALTON: I think we have got to put everything together and we've got to execute the plan that we have in place. We have to understand how teams are playing us and be able to make adjustments and do different things. I think it comes down to just everybody being on the same page.

**Q. Do you feel like that's still in front of you guys and you can get there?**

ANDY DALTON: Yeah, I do.

**Q. From what you saw, different things you were watching, do you feel maybe they got a boost with Watt back in the lineup?**

ANDY DALTON: When you get one of the best pass rushers in the league back, obviously that's a boost for your team.

**Q. Did you ever really want to play without three of your regular offensive linemen? What kind of challenge is that when you incorporate three new guys in and they're having to all play together?**

ANDY DALTON: Yeah, I think that's a big thing when you've got starting linemen out, guys that have played a ton of ball, and now you've got new guys thrown in there. It's something that we've still got to find a way to execute and make it work.

**Q. (Indiscernible) shot to the face or something like that?**

ANDY DALTON: Yeah, I'll be all right.

**Q. The focus of the running game, how did you want to balance as an offense?**

ANDY DALTON: Yeah, I think for us, you go back a couple weeks ago, I feel like that was the thing that we were doing best offensively. We had a good balance. The last two weeks we haven't been able to run the ball. That's hurt us. Put ourselves in unfavorable situations, 3rd and long, and the efficiency on 1st and 2nd down hasn't been good enough.

**Q. How would you assess some of the struggles offensively, especially towards the end, the last drives whenever it was still close, one-score game, three-point game. How would you assess how it went down the stretch?**

ANDY DALTON: We've got to make more plays.

## **PITTSBURGH STEELERS HEAD COACH MIKE TOMLIN**

MIKE TOMLIN: At home in front of our fans, appreciative of the efforts of everyone. A lot of positive contributions in three phases. Obviously things we can do better and things we need to work on. It's good to work on those things with the win. And so we'll take those lessons and move forward and get ready for our next opportunity. We'll be right back here next week. We've just got to keep digging.

Appreciative of the win, appreciative of the efforts. A lot of fun in the locker room, man. It's good to get the job done. We don't take it for granted. We appreciate it. We understand it's not anything mystical. It's good work. It's minimizing negativity, staying on schedule on offense, possessing the ball, running the ball, winning possession, downs on defense.

We left some points out there in the kicking game today. We'll get back to work with Matt Wright and company. Operationally, it could have been better in some of those things, but we're always going to fall short of perfection. It's good to win, though, in the process. I'll pause and open it up for questions.

**Q. Mike, a lot of chunk plays, 20-yard plays today, something you haven't had all year. Any reason or difference for that?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We're just working, man. We're going to keep working.

**Q. Did anything change with Kazeo taking over for Minkah at the last minute?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Not schematically, no. I thought all those guys did a nice job. We got multiple packages and so forth, and it was Kazeo primarily but, you know Minkah is a versatile chess piece, man. It was a lot of people, man. Norwood and others too.

**Q. What can you say about the running game overall, not just the running backs?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Quarterback mobility is a component of it. I thought Kenny did some good things with his legs. The runners ran hard, and we came off the ball as big up front. We ran off the ball, and so we'll just keep building.

**Q. Seemed like it was a good balance between Warren and Harris in terms of your usage and down and distance and that sort of thing. With that be said, unofficial running back committee you guys might continue?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We've been talking about it. Jaylen has been playing well and deserving more reps, and what transpired today was reflective of that.

**Q. What did you like about Kenny in the second half?**

MIKE TOMLIN: First and foremost, we took care of the ball. As a young quarterback in competitive circumstances, that's a difficult thing to do. We don't discount his ability to do that. Take care of the ball, give yourself a chance to win, and make yourself a tough group to beat. So it started there for us.

**Q. Your thoughts on your pass rush and the pressure on Dalton, even with the return of, of course, T.J. Watt?**

MIKE TOMLIN: We were more concerned about minimizing Kamara and some of the things they did with Hill and the wildcat things. I thought we did a great job of minimizing those things, and it cleared out the clutter for us to do other things. The rush was sufficient, but anything we did defensively started with working to minimize Kamara and the things they were doing with 7 at quarterback.

MIKE TOMLIN: Was Myles Jack held out because of his knee?

**Q. We had him ready to go. He was willing to go. We were going to be prudent about his usage. As the game unfolded, we liked the mix of the guys. We were getting off on third down so conditioning and things of that nature didn't become a factor. We were able to keep him out of the mix, which is a good thing.**

**Q. What did you think of Rob Spillane's day specifically?**

MIKE TOMLIN: Rob's a starter-like dude. We feel like we got a pair and a spare there. We got three starting inside linebackers, and he proved that today. I think he's continually proved that for some time.

**Q. Mike, when you look at the way the team performed today, you said a couple weeks ago you're going to be staying focused on winning every Sunday's game. Seeing the way the team performed today, is this kind of the model? Your team made progress and won.**

MIKE TOMLIN: That's the job. That is the job. Thank you.

**Q. What did you like about Matthew Wright that you wanted to get him and maybe talk did some of the things.**

MIKE TOMLIN: We've had success with him. He left here and had continual success in the league. I think he was 21 of 24 in J'ville. He's been successful in the league. We were comfortable with that information not only in terms of what he's done in the National Football League but what he's done here with us. So it wasn't a long or significant discussion. Not necessary.

## **PITTSBURGH STEELERS QB KENNY PICKETT**

**Q. Kenny, beyond the victory, no picks. You said you wanted to protect the ball better in the second half. You threw the ball away a few times today. Were you satisfied with that?**

KENNY PICKETT: I was. I thought it was a step in the right direction. We took more shots. Obviously, want to hit more than we did. The one to Diontae was big, but we need a lot more than that. But I thought guys played really hard today. Feels good to be up here after a win.

**Q. In terms of shot taking, looked like there was at least a couple plays where you threw it right away, almost like you decided before the snap. Slant to Diontae was one of those. Did you have more of that today where you just decided and made it happen, as opposed to letting it unfold?**

KENNY PICKETT: It's just trusting what I see, and I think we had a lot more end breakers today with what they were showing and what they were giving us. I think we did a good job of hitting those, giving guys opportunities to have more run after catch. Something we want to continue to improve on.

**Q. Kenny, what do you think was key to the ground game today?**

KENNY PICKETT: The O-line, man. The O-line was unbelievable. Those guys stuck with it. They worked hard on the bye week and obviously this week getting prepared for it. Najee and Jaylen do what they do best. We have two really talented backs. We lean on those guys. I thought we had good

balance today. They did a great job in the pass game as well. In all phases, I thought we took a step in the right direction today.

**Q. How much easier does it make your job as quarterback when the running game is going like that?**

KENNY PICKETT: It's awesome. It adds more elements. Third and short, you can lean on those guys to get it, extend drives, extend plays. Really happy and proud of the way those guys played by both of them. Great job.

**Q. Kenny, it's the most 20-yard plays you had this year. What was the difference? What was working?**

KENNY PICKETT: Stuff that we worked on, and we saw what they were giving us and went off that. Just getting it to our guys and letting them make plays. We have talent all over the place. It's my job to distribute the football and get it to those guys. They take care of the rest. Like I said, a step in the right direction. Not where we need to be or where we want to be, but it's a good start.

**Q. Najee downplayed the effect for him personally of that early 36-yard run he had. What did that do for you guys as an offense to kind of give you energy early in the game?**

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, gave us that spark early in the game. We jumped up on a lead. Wish we could have put this one away a lot earlier. That play really sparked the offense and, you know, we were getting behind Najee and felt great with how he's been practicing and everything. He came to the game with a lot of confidence. It showed. The O-line did a great job as well. They complemented each other as well.

**Q. You were pretty far downfield on that play. Were you trying to get a block?**

KENNY PICKETT: I was trying to. I thought he was going to get tackled, and I saw him pop up. I was like, damn, he might be gone. I got to get a block. He almost made it. It was an awesome play.

**Q. What did you see that allowed you to run as many times as you did?**

KENNY PICKETT: There were sometimes we got covered up. The O-line did a great job. If I see a seam, I feel like I can utilize my legs to move the chains and get positive yardage. I think it's something I can continue to do and build on top of today.

**Q. Kenny, how good did this win feel for you guys and to you personally?**

KENNY PICKETT: Feels awesome. You put your whole life into this. Coming out with a win feels awesome. Definitely, you know, enjoy the 24 hours, and it's on to next week. It's something we definitely need.

**Q. This was different for you because you got to start and finish it.**

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah, my first one all the way through. Wish I was able to finish the first one. But it feels great to get this one and be up here after a win.



**Q. Your touchdown, was it designed to go there? Are you reading that? Is there a skill to a one-yard touchdown run?**

KENNY PICKETT: I think there's just a little feel to it. The previous sneaks, I felt they were really crashing the A-gaps, and I think if I side-stepped a little bit, I could get around it, get in the B-gap, and no one would be there. So I took the snap, paused for a second, felt where it was at and was able to get in.

**Q. You guys came out in the shotgun, felt like you used shotgun more frequently today. What kind of factor do you think that was?**

KENNY PICKETT: Being in the gun, I didn't notice that much different than being under center. What we've been doing in previous weeks, but definitely something to look at.

**Q. Kenny, you mentioned making plays with your feet. You took a couple big hits. You were limping around a little bit. How do you feel like you're making the adjustment of feeling the rush and knowing when you should stay and when you should go?**

KENNY PICKETT: It's something that being an athlete growing up, you get a good feel for it. Did it at the college level, and feel like I can extend plays at this level long enough to free guys up downfield or take off and get good yardage.

So it's just something to be smart about, get down what I can get down. But in crucial moments, obviously, it's something I can use.

**Q. Is that the left ankle, Kenny?**

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah.

**Q. How does it feel?**

KENNY PICKETT: Feels good. I'll ice and be good to go.

**Q. Was it touch and go? Did you know you would stay in?**

KENNY PICKETT: I knew I was staying in.

**Q. Did not having Claypool almost compel you to throw more to Pickens, Johnson, and Freiermuth?**

KENNY PICKETT: By him not being there, obviously, the ball would go to the playmakers we've got. I think those guys stepped up. Pat's awesome. Shout out to Stevie, Gunner and Myles. Those guys come in unselfish, do what the team asks them to do. All around great teammates. Love playing with those guys.

**Q. Did you have to fight your instincts to throw downfield when you were throwing some away and maybe taking off on runs?**

KENNY PICKETT: A little bit. You're battling, you're a competitor, you want to make a play, but it's got to be smart. You're always balancing and always fighting the urge to make a play. Felt like I did a

good job today taking what they gave me. Glad I hit the shots to Diontae, but there's more out there we need to take. It's something we'll continue to play on.

**Q. Was that a touchdown if they don't interfere on that one, the one slant?**

KENNY PICKETT: I gotta watch it. I feel like he probably had a good shot at it.

**Q. Was that against (indiscernible)?**

KENNY PICKETT: Yeah. So I felt like we had a pretty good shot at it. He probably held them because he knew. It was a smart play by them for sure. I have to watch that.

**Q. Was that the play, or did you see that and figure that was the way to attack it?**

KENNY PICKETT: That was the play we had. I felt that was the side to work. Obviously, Diontae is the guy I want to get the ball to a lot of times. He does a great job with it. Honestly, tip your cap to them. It's a smart play.

**Q. In your eyes, how much of today was a complementary football game?**

KENNY PICKETT: It was huge. Our defense is unbelievable, obviously. I feel like we have the best player in football in Najee and what I've seen him do. I've only been here for a little bit. The guy's unbelievable. Having him out there was great.

We complement each other well offensively and defensively. We need to put more points up, like I said, and kind of run away with it a little bit earlier. A win's a win. It feels great to be up here, like I said, after a win.

**Q. The first touchdown, the hurry-up after you got to the 1, was that impromptu? Was it planned ahead of time? How does that work?**

KENNY PICKETT: Gets communicated, obviously, from Coach Canada to myself. Something we've been working on throughout the weeks, and you kind of get in those situations where you want to use it, and it's a feel thing by the play caller.

It was a great call by coach. That was another instance where they were tight with their alignments and the interior defensive line. Was able to give it to George, and he was able to go around and get it. It was a great play. Thanks.

**PITTSBURGH STEELERS OLB TJ WATT**

T.J. WATT: In front of the fans today to be able to create an awesome atmosphere as a defense, being able to fly around, being able to pin our ears back at the end there. That's all you ask for as a defensive rush man. I had a lot of fun today.

**Q. T.J., Myles wasn't able to play a lot, but Rob played a lot of big moments for you guys. What does he bring to the defense?**

T.J. WATT: He's a very versatile player. He can blitz well, he can cover well as well. He's just a good communicator also. That's super important, especially at home. Very loud. He did a great job today of just communicating. He's made some big plays for us .

**Q. How fun was the first possession, getting them backed up there, making plays. Crowd was getting into it?**

T.J. WATT: It's fun, man. When you feel like you can control the crowd and get them involved, I'm always going to try my best. It is a competitive advantage. Especially playing at home. When they get loud, makes it tough for offenses. I'm here to make plays and help make a difference in the game. That's what I'm going to continue to try to do.

**Q. T.J., when did you find out about Minkah. Knowing that you had Kazeo, did you feel like he was capable of making a play like he made today?**

T.J. WATT: Yeah. I mean, Mink was yesterday when everybody else found out. As far as Kazeo, I mean, we've seen him itching to get back, wanting to get back. And just the amount of preparation that he put in this week, he was one of the big guys about wanting splash, wanting to make plays, and he went out and did it. Super happy for him.

**Q. How key are the splash plays? Two interceptions, the fourth down stop to get the win and be in the defense you guys feel like you can be**

T.J. WATT: It's huge. We talk about wanting to create splash here. We need splash. We need to continue to do it, and it's something we're always hunting, but it comes with creating an incredible atmosphere, and that's what we had today.

**Q. T.J., how did it feel just being back out there?**

T.J. WATT: Felt good. Felt really good. Probably won't feel really good tomorrow, but it felt good today.

**Q. Did you feel limited in any way?**

T.J. WATT: No. I mean, aside from my legs feeling like wed noodles, that was about it.

**Q. T.J., we've asked you before about Alex. Why is it you guys work so well together?**

T.J. WATT: I mean, when there's so much chipping on one side or the other, you can't block everybody up front. I think Cam Heyward has done a great job. Chris Wormley, Larry O has done a phenomenal job as well. It's to a point when if you're one-dimensional, someone is going to get through. It's just a matter of time. Today, Alex got through quickly and was able to of a the game. He deserves it. He works his ass off.

**Q. T.J., there's so much shuffling going on with this roster, especially defensively, do you get the sense this is what we're expecting to see in the second half?**

T.J. WATT: Yeah, that's what we're here for, to be able to create the atmosphere like we had today. Hopefully, we can get it again next week. Take it one day at a time and go from there.

**Q. T.J., you said Friday how good the practice week was. How much do you think that led into what we saw here today?**

T.J. WATT: Huge. I mean, you don't win the game on Sundays. You win it through all the preparation you put in throughout the week. That's from, I mean, 8:00 a.m., extra meetings, to having clean, crisp practices and communication. That's why it's so important at home to have that communication as a defense because it's so loud in there. But, like I said, Spill did a great job today.

**Q. Talk about the atmosphere. Crowd getting into it a little bit more today. You guys feed off that? Did you feed off that?**

T.J. WATT: 100 percent. I think they were wild, going crazy. And like I said, I hope we can keep that up because I want them to know how big of an advantage it really is for us as a defense. It makes life hell for offenses, and we're going to continue to try to make plays to feed off them.

**Q. Started with your intro, didn't it?**

T.J. WATT: Yeah. I might not have gotten as high this time, but it was fun. I mean, those moments, it's hard when you're in the actual moment to feel. I mean, it's just full body chills, and it's like you wish you could freeze time for just one second while you're looking around and people are going crazy. But just super happy, more than anything, to get the win today.

## **PITTSBURGH STEELERS DT CAMERON HEYWARD**

**Q. Cam, you guys got turnover, interception, stop on downs, interception in that second half. How important was it for the defense to put it away?**

CAM HEYWARD: Giving up the touchdown in the first half was -- we were a little bit annoyed with ourselves about that. But in the second half, I thought we did a good job of either getting off the field by turnover or just those fourth down stops were huge.

**Q. Cam, how much important was it just to get a win?**

CAM HEYWARD: Very important. You know, we've had a long time to think about our last loss, especially with the bye week. But I think it was just important to go out there and play football. You know, that sick taste after that last loss, and then just having to deal with that for the past two weeks is, you know, you're raring to go and ready to get out there.

**Q. Cam, you listed after the last game areas you'd like to see growth in the defense. Where did you see the most growth?**

CAM HEYWARD: I thought the run defense was really good. I think just everybody playing assignment football. Even there was one play, T.J. took the assignment of, you know, taking Taysom Hill out of the play. With that, getting the ball out of his hands, I think we gave up a ten-yard run, but you could see the execution there.

So the execution I just thought picked up in the run defense, and then that led to the sacks, a couple of sacks and the turnovers as well.

**Q. The third and 1 and the fourth and 1 stops, you and 99 had the third down stop. Can you tell us anything behind the scenes? Anything interesting in those two plays?**

CAM HEYWARD: It's funny. I was kind of annoyed we called it a time-out because I thought we were going to get the stop before that. Most of those times when you see the quarterback getting underneath, you know it's a sneak.

It's mano-a-mano, who gets lower on the pad level, who turns their feet, making sure there's a big pile up in the middle and then making sure on the third and 1 was actually the run to Kamara. And, you know, Kamara is in the game, you're either thinking he's getting out quick or they're giving him the ball somehow.

Then the fourth and 1, it's just about making sure there's a pile and then making sure our linebackers can throw over top.

**Q. What caused that pile? Who was in the middle of that pile?**

CAM HEYWARD: Me and Larry.

**Q. That was third down too. You guys made the tackle?**

CAM HEYWARD: Yeah.

**Q. You said you thought you were going to stop them there. Why?**

CAM HEYWARD: I think just awareness and understanding what they were going to run. I felt good about the call. And then we called a time-out, and I don't think they were ready for it. So, you know, knowing where the ball was going to be. But we stayed ready and got off the field.

**Q. A different energy today with T.J. out there?**

CAM HEYWARD: I don't think it's just T.J. I think T.J., Kazee, they both play with great energy. I think just having more of our defenders back. I know we lost Minkah right before the game, but, you know, it's a breath of fresh air to have him back.

Getting guys like Larry and Myles healthy were huge and, you know, the more guys we can have to the party, the more we're going to be successful going forward.

**Q. T.J. was crediting Rob for his communication out there. How valuable was he in this game and other things that he's done in other games?**

CAM HEYWARD: You know, we put a lot of stress on our linebackers, including me. I am the first to talk about my linebackers and get in their face and, you know, let them know what I need. Because communication from that position is critical. And I thought they did a great job -- Rob, Devin, Myles -- in just reverberating the calls because we all need them. When our crowd is loud like that, they've got to be loud as well.

**Q. Cam, every defense wants the splash plays. Today those came for you on the back end. How connected is that to you guys winning up front, stopping the run, getting them behind the chains and getting pass rush too?**

CAM HEYWARD: It starts with stopping the run. When you can make a team one-dimensional and they have to pass the ball and go down the field, it's huge. Then our back end, you know, being opportunistic, you know.

Even the Levi play, you look at it, he had to go and take it from him. When you do that, it makes you successful. So kudos to that. But it's just about playing good team defense, everybody just working hand in hand, being complementary.

**Q. Those are the plays the guys in the back weren't making in Philadelphia, Miami. That's an example. What's it do when you make the play?**

CAM HEYWARD: It's teach tape. It's something you can continue to grow on and say, hey, when we make these plays, we're in a much better defense.

**Q. When did you know Minkah wasn't going to play? Was he hurt in practice?**

CAM HEYWARD: Saturday, before the game. I mean, you know, after walk-through. I just saw something on my phone. Texted him. He was like, yeah, I had to get surgery. We saw him during the walk-through. And not thinking anything. Minkah's just, you know, Minkah's grumpy all the time so didn't think anything of it.

But, you know, after seeing it come across my phone and, you know, checking in on him, you know, Mike T explained to us. He was, like, first things first. You got to take care of the player. We got to make sure we take care of our business while Minkah's out.

**Q. Testament to the defense, a little bit of what the offense was able to do, sustaining drives and you guys staying fresh?**

CAM HEYWARD: Yeah. I think the best defense is a defense on the sideline. When the offense can sustain drives and continue keep pounding them, it's huge. We love seeing their defenders tired and, you know, kind of annoyed that they got to keep going out there. I will be the happiest guy if I only have to play 20 snaps in a game. Hasn't happened yet, but looking forward to it.

**Q. You mentioned Kazeo and the energy he brings. In terms of having a veteran like that to fill in for Minkah at the last second like that, what's it do for the defense?**

CAM HEYWARD: It does wonders. He's a veteran guy. Plays with a chip on his shoulder. If you've been in our locker room, Kazeo has been one of the louder guys this week. I think him and Myles were about to fight every day, in a playful way.

But Kazeo is just -- he's small in stature, but big with his voice. His play, he plays big as well. Having a guy like that, being able to put out there when a guy like Mink is down was very huge.