



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS LOS ANGELES RAMS
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2018 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the win, New Orleans improves their record to 7-1 and extends their winning streak to seven games, the longest current winning streak in the NFL after dropping the 8-1 Rams with their first loss of the season. It is the Saints fourth seven-game win streak since Sean Payton was hired as head coach in 2006, and seventh in franchise history. The Saints remain one game ahead of the 6-2 Carolina Panthers for first place in the NFC South. New Orleans returns to action on Sunday, November 11 when they face the Cincinnati Bengals at Paul Brown Stadium. Kickoff is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. CT.
- The Saints' win improves their all-time record against the Rams to 33-41 and improves their home record against the Rams to 17-19.
- The last four wins of the Saints' seven-game win streak have come against teams either in sole possession of first place or tied for first place in their division, the only time in franchise history.
- The only other seasons New Orleans has finished 7-1 or better at the season's midpoint is 1988 (7-1), 1991 (7-1) and 2009 (8-0).
- New Orleans scored a season-high 45 points and gained 487 total yards, their second highest total of the season (534 at Atlanta on September 23). The Saints' rushed for 141 yards and gained 346 yards passing. New Orleans possessed the ball for 33:41, which is their highest time of possession in a non-overtime game this season (37:45 at Atlanta on September 23).
- Defensively, the Saints held Los Angeles to 93 yards rushing, the Rams second lowest total of the season. Coming into the game, the Rams led the NFL in rushing with 150.9 yards per game. They have not surrendered 100 yards rushing to an opponent during the seven-game winning streak.
- For Head Coach **Sean Payton**, the win marks the 119th victory of his career (regular season and post-season), putting him in sole possession of 35th place all-time for wins by an NFL head coach. Rams Head Coach **Sean McVay** is now the 59th coach Payton has defeated in his career and 48th head coach he has at least a .500 winning percentage against.
- WR **Michael Thomas** finished with 12 receptions for 211 receiving yards, including a fourth quarter career-long 72-yard touchdown catch. His 211 receiving yards sets a new Saints record, breaking the previous club record of 205 yards held by Wes Chandler set against the Atlanta Falcons on September 2, 1979. Thomas recorded his third 100-yard receiving game of the season and eighth of his career. His eight career 100-yard receiving games is tied for ninth in Saints history with WR **Lance Moore**.
- QB **Drew Brees** finished 25 of 36 passing for 346 yards, his fourth 300-yard passing game of the season with four touchdowns, zero interceptions and a 137.0 passer rating. It was Brees' first four-touchdown game since December 18, 2016 at Arizona. It was the second consecutive week that the Saints offensive line has not given up a sack, surrendering a league-low nine for the season at the midpoint.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** finished with 19 carries for 82 yards and 4 receptions for 34 yards. His 82 rushing yards is his second highest total of the season (134 at the New York Giants on September 30) and he eclipsed 100 yards from scrimmage for the fourth time this season.
- Kamara tied a career-high with three touchdowns and recorded his third three-touchdown performance of the season, finishing with 2 rushing touchdowns and a receiving touchdown. He scored his tenth touchdown of the season on an eight-yard first quarter run, and joins Jimmy Graham (2013-14), Mark Ingram (2016-17) and Joe Horn (2003-04) as only the third Saint with back-to-back seasons of ten touchdowns. Kamara's the only Saint to do so in his first two seasons.
- LB **Alex Anzalone** recorded his first career interception with 1:06 remaining in the second quarter, setting up a Saints six-play, 34-yard touchdown drive. The interception was the Saints fourth of the season, and eighth takeaway on the year.

- RB **Mark Ingram** finished with 9 carries for 33 yards and caught a three-yard pass and eclipsed 7,000 career all-purpose yards on his five-yard run on the Saints first drive of the game. He is the fifth Saint with 7,000 all-purpose yards, joining Marques Colston, Eric Martin, Deuce McAllister and Horn. He also
- CB **PJ Williams** tied a career-high with three pass defenses and finished with six tackles and one tackle-for-loss.
- LB **Demario Davis** led the team in tackles, finishing with seven tackles, one tackle-for-loss, and one quarterback hit.
- LB **AJ Klein** tallied four tackles and recorded the 250th tackle of his career on his first quarter tackle of Todd Gurley.
- TE **Benjamin Watson** finished with a season-high 62 yards on three receptions, and scored his second touchdown of the season on a second quarter 13-yard scoring pass from Brees.
- WR **Tre'Quan Smith** recorded two receptions for 23 yards and scored his first touchdown since scoring two against Washington on October 8.
- The Saints finished two-for-two on fourth down conversions and are second in the NFL in fourth down conversion percentage at 90% (9/10).
- The Saints set a new NFL record for of 24 first-half first Downs, breaking a record of 22 previously set by New Orleans on November 4, 2017 against the Jacksonville Jaguars.
- New Orleans finished a perfect five-for-five in Red Zone conversions for touchdowns, their first game this season finishing with a 100% Red Zone conversion rate. The Saints also went seven-for-12 on third Downs earning their best third down conversion percentage (58%) of the season.
- In his second game with New Orleans, CB **Eli Apple** finished with five tackles and his first pass defense as a Saint.
- K **Wil Lutz** converted a season-long 54-yard FG. With the field goal, Lutz has now converted his last 14 straight attempts.
- P **Thomas Morstead** punted twice and became the 13th Saint to play in 150 games for New Orleans.



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SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

(Opening Statement) “(It was a) Good win, obviously a hard fought win. We had two good teams going back and forth. The momentum shifted the second half in their favor. Credit those guys, they fought back and really came right back into the game. In the end we made enough plays, we won an important game and I’m excited about that.”

(on composure as the Rams tried to come back) “I think each week there’s instances where the game unfolds differently and today certainly it unfolded in a certain manner, but there is a confidence level in playing in close games. They understand most of the games we are going to play in are really going to be games that come down to the final couple of possessions. Part of that is experience, you gain confidence if you’ve had successful experiences or experienced some type of success. We have at some point or a few different times during the year. It’s just trying to change that momentum shift and obviously the third down with Mike (Michael Thomas) was significant. We kind of caught him in a bracket coverage, they doubled low on Alvin (Kamara), and Mike was freed up. (Michael Thomas) played outstanding today. I wasn’t all fired up about the penalty. We’ll get that figured out and handled, but he had a good game.”

(on how to handle play calling during a close game) “You are constantly working on pictures from the last series. We knew late in that game that we were going to get more five-man rush, more man-to-man (coverage). You are looking at different thoughts going in, what are our best runs when we know we are going to get see a run front. (You) Highlight and cross them off and try to take the approach during halftime. You don’t know how the game is going to finish. Defensively they made some stops during the second half and we were just going to approach each series like it was 0-0. There’s a little bit of cliché to that but we knew it would be a hard fought game. I felt coming in that we were battle-tested and that served us well.”

(on the fake field goal attempt stop) “That was a big play. Obviously, (you can) just call it a three or seven-point swing. They knew it was close and it was a huge stop because we just had the turnover. That was significant.”



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RAMS HEAD COACH SEAN McVAY

(Opening Statement) “The Saints are an excellent football team. They made enough plays to win. I thought that our team did a great job fighting in the second half. We had some things that didn’t go our way in the first half. They (the Saints) jumped out to a 21-point lead. We were able to get a field goal at the end of the first half; and then find a way to tie it up at 35 apiece. I thought that there were some play selections by me; I did not put us in some good spots to try to get us back in the game. The defense tightened up (in the second half). They made the critical plays at the end and did an excellent job. I cannot wait to go back and look at this film and figure out what we can do to get better. Give credit to Coach Payton and the Saints for coming out with a great win today.”

(On his message to the team at halftime with the 35-17 deficit) “All you can do is to just take it one play at a time. Things change quickly. (The) Defense got a couple of stops. Offensively, we were able to get into a little bit of a rhythm and finish some drives with touchdowns. Our players are great. They just continue to fight and battle. They do not flinch; they do not blink. We did not make enough plays today. It starts with me being able to look at myself critically. What can I do better for this football team? I can’t wait to get back to work tomorrow, try to get better, and get ready for a great Seattle team next week.”

(On the decision to fake the first half field goal attempt) “We always talk about it. We are an aggressive, attacking team. If we feel like some of these looks present themselves to try to do that, we have confidence in our players. Unfortunately, it didn’t work out in that situation. We came into this game feeling like we had to be aggressive. We wanted to be aggressive. That kind of embodies the identity that we do have. It didn’t work out today, but that’s not going to stop us from continuing to fight and make sure that we make aggressive decisions that are also smart. Based on the look, we have a lot of confidence in Johnny Hekker. We feel that more times than not, he is going to make that play for us”

(On what the Rams did on defense in the second half to slow the Saints offense down some) “I think that it was just being able to limit the big plays, be efficient on the early downs, and get some third down stops. We were able to sustain some drives offensively. We had a couple of critical stops and got them into some negative situations on some early down and distance and eliminate the big plays for a few series. (Michael) Thomas ended up making a big play at the end. (They) ended up having a fourth down conversion to (Alvin) Kamara on the toss-crack. They did a good job. You can see that that is a football team that has won seven in a row. (I have) a lot of respect for them. We came in here trying to get the win and expected to get the win.”

(On Drew Brees today) “Drew is outstanding. I just think that his command and his overall presence...you can see why he is a first ballot Hall of Famer. He made the big-time throws. I thought that he did a nice job on some third downs being able to buy time in the pocket and find some guys down the field a little bit off-schedule when things weren’t there in-rhythm. He is a special player, and I have a lot of respect for Drew.”

(On how his team feels after the loss today) “We are good. We love it. You find out about yourself when you have a little bit of adversity. I know everybody in that locker room is going to respond the right way. I have full confidence in that. Sometimes setbacks can be setups for comebacks. That is the way that we look at it. I think that the motivation and the desire to move forward in positive ways is something that we challenge everybody in our building to do. I can’t wait to go back to work and get ready to go for a tough Seattle team and being back at home. It’s a setback, but we are going to respond the right way. I have full confidence in that in our coaches and our players.”

(On the cornerbacks and the safeties struggling today) “I think some of the situations dictate whatever coverages we are in. Really, until you go back and look at the film, especially just based on my

involvement on it, I would prefer to give it a look at that and figure out what are the things we can all do collectively to try and be better there and in all areas. Everybody can look at ourselves and figure out what we can do better. You see why Drew (Brees) is the all-time leading passer. He did an excellent job distributing the field. He's got great playmakers. Michael Thomas is a guy that doesn't get enough respect in this league for the production that he does have. I've always thought that he is a great player. (Alvin) Kamara is clearly special. Drew has the ability to use all five eligible (receivers) and get them involved in a variety of ways."

(On the defensive play call on the Michael Thomas touchdown catch at the end of the game) "We were in a combination-coverage right there. They ended up getting us where certain guys were doubled and some other guys had some situations where they were able to be one-on-one. We liked the calls right there. We can always look at ourselves and figure out what we can do as coaches and what can the players do to anticipate some of those and know what to expect in that situation from the given offense."



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QB DREW BREES

(On the connection between Drew (Brees) and Michael (Thomas) throughout the game along with Thomas' abilities.)

"Some of those were tight windows. Credit to him for getting open, getting that separation, body control. Just all of those things that he does to give me a place to throw the ball to him. He makes a ton of contested throws and he did that today. Some big, big third down catches. Obviously none bigger than the one at the end of the game. Just a big time player who's always ready to make big time plays."

(On if there is somewhat of a "lulling to sleep" factor to Michael Thomas' game due to him not really being considered a deep threat by some.)

"Yes there is. He can do everything. I think, a lot of times, I think corners may get a little frustrated with him. With just as physical as he is with a lot of the intermediate stuff. So when they start playing underneath him, that's when we have opportunities to push the ball down the field to him which is what happened there at the end of the game."

(On Drew's pre-snap reads of bracket coverage on Kamara during the game.)

"They're standing next to each other. So as you're looking at it, you feel like they're dropping and will double somebody. You just don't know which one it is. Sometimes they can do three on two and different stuff like that. But, the minute the ball was snapped it felt like. Okay, Kamara is doubled, then Mike was single. Mike's prominent, here we go."

(On the matchup between Michael Thomas and Marcus Peters.)

"Well listen, he's (Marcus Peters) a top flight corner. He's an elite corner. Just depending on the team and that kind of thing, they go in to every game saying, alright what are our matchups? where are our matchup problems? A lot of times you see it on film with Marcus Peters where they say, alright you just take their best guy, you take care of him, and we'll worry about the rest of them. That's basically what happened on that play was, everybody's trying to match and you kinda say alright Peters, you got Mike T."

(On the offense in the second half, if the success was based on whether it was due to the Rams adjustments to them.)

"They get the ball first. They go down and score. We come back. We go six plays, we convert a third down and then they drive down and score. Then we go six plays again, get a couple first downs, then we get stopped. It's just not like three and out, three and out. We were driving the ball a little bit. You've just got to be so efficient against a team like that. Especially the back and forth, is occurring. On the other side of the ball, that is as explosive an offense as there is with the Rams. We knew it was going to be an all-day battle. We knew that, even with the score at 35-14, there was still a ton of football left to be played. They're a high scoring offense. We still need to go and score some points."



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SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

WR Michael Thomas

(On the touchdown) "My number was called. The play presented itself. I made a play for my team. I live for those types of moments. It's a blessing. I thank God for letting me be on the end of that play to help my team put that game away."

RB Alvin Kamara

(On the big win) "It's huge. We are fully capable. We play how we play and focus on us. We are focused on the Saints. We are not focused on any outside noise."

(On fighting adversity) "We are focused on us. We are only worried about the track that we are on. There is no derailing this train."

(On the touchdown run on the left side) "It was good blocking. Sometimes plays stretch out longer than they need to. I just tried to keep it alive. I squeezed in there somehow."

RB Mark Ingram

(On beating the Rams today) "We believe in ourselves. We believe in each other not matter what arises in the game. We believe we can overcome anything. That is a great team. They have a good coaching staff. Give them credit. We are worried about ourselves and what we can do to improve."

(On the defensive stop after his fumble in the first half) "That was huge. They were able to get a big fourth down stop. I am thankful for those guys for having my back. At the end of the day, that's what it is all about. We believe in each other. We have each other's back no matter what. I appreciate the defense for that."

DE Cameron Jordan

(On the defense) "They have a high-powered offense. We are trying to stop Todd Gurley. I don't know what he ended up with but it seems like we did a pretty good job in the run defense part. I think he broke four big ones. That's something that we need to focus on."

(On winning the game) "That was the most important game because it was the game in front of us. We have an important game coming up next week. We have to go travel, go to an enemy's territory and get a win out there. As much as I would like to start focusing on them, we have to break down this film."

(On the second quarter stops and their importance) "That turned the tide in our favor. We talk about the ability of our defense to make those turnovers. That's what we were emphasizing all week. We let them get a couple of big plays that we would like to take back, but we have another week to make those corrections. We have another week to try to play a perfect game. As for this one, we got a turnover and made a couple of stops."

LB Alex Anzalone

(On the the crowd) "Playing at home is a huge advantage. It's awesome in these big games."

(On capitalizing on his interception today) "Coach Westhoff always says get the ball to Michael Jordan (Drew Brees). If you get the ball to him in good field position, then we are bound to score some points. We have to get the ball to him. Coach Payton has the offense dialed up and they have a good gameplan. We just have to get the ball to him."

(On the interception) "It was a normal cross route. It's a play that a lot of teams hit, but I was able to read the quarterbacks eyes, break on the ball and make a play."

LB Demario Davis

(On the the touchdown) "I keep telling everybody that's why I came here. He is a GOAT (Greatest of All Time). He feels good being on the sideline knowing that GOAT has the ball. I tell the defense all of the time that we just have to get one stop. It's like giving the ball to Michael Jordan with the game on the line. Don't worry about it. We are in good hands. You can't ask for anything better than that."



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RAMS PLAYER QUOTES

QB Jared Goff

(On his thoughts on today's game) "It was a good, full four quarter game and I think we did show the ability to fight back. I think even a little bit last week and this week, just the ability to be down and be out that we can fight back. We really made it a tight game at one point and we were right there in, just came a few plays short. I think we are just going to learn from it and move on to Seattle."

(On the fake field goal and if it shifted momentum some) "I loved it and I think he got it, so we will see. I haven't seen the replay yet, it was close. I don't know, I think it was still early and things were still about to happen throughout the game. What I think it really come down to was we both had one turnover, both teams, and they capitalized on their end and scored a touchdown and we didn't. That is the end of the story right there."

(On the team's message coming into the second half) "Same thing it always is, to just be ourselves and be poise and continue to execute. Getting that field goal was big and it put us in a position to continue to use that momentum in the next half. Like I said, we fought back hard, I am very proud of the guys, I am very proud of everyone, offense and defense, special teams. The way we fought helped make it a game."

(On his interception at the end of the first half) "I just didn't throw a great ball. He made a good play and I didn't throw a great ball. I thought there was a couple that I would like to have back; you always kind of feel that way when the result is this way, but for the most part I felt they played well on defense and gave us a lot of issues."

(On this being the team's first loss of the season and if it relieves any pressure on them now) "I don't think so. I think we'd put ourselves in a good place winning eight in a row. Coming in here, we knew it would be a tough game and unfortunately we came out on the wrong side, but I don't think so. We are going to take things one at a time and hopefully move on to 9-1 against Seattle."

(On having Cooper Kupp back from injury today and how he contributed) "He was great, he did a great job. Just getting him back. I am just so comfortable with him and everything he does. He is such a great player for us and just getting him healthy is really important."

(On his second game playing in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome) "It was just as loud and a lot of the same stuff involved with that, but I felt more comfortable and more seasoned and everything is not new, it is all stuff I have been through before."

RB Todd Gurley

(On his impressions of the game) "This was a game we have got to finish. I liked the way we played until the end, but obviously, we don't want that outcome or the loss, but you know, it is just another game and we will be able to bounce back next week."

(On what the Saints defense did in the first half) "Nothing we weren't doing. We were scoring points, kind of going back and forth, but we just didn't score enough."

(On coming back in the second half) "That is what we have been doing all year. Last week we were down and were able to come back. The last couple of games have been close, but we have been able to finish them out, (we) just didn't finish this one out."

(On his takeaways from the comeback) "It just tells you what type of team we are. Like I said, we have been able to do this for the last couple of weeks, we just did not come away with this big win."

This is a great team and credit to the Saints, they have a great offense, a great defense, and great coaching. They were the better team today and credit them the win.”

CB Marcus Peters

(On the late touchdown to Michael Thomas) “Third down and six, I just looked back and tried to make a play on the ball, shit happens like that in football. We were just trying to get in line and get something off and it just happened like that, I got beat. Regardless of communication, I got beat. Once the play starts you have got to go out there and you have to compete. I did, and they got it off for a touchdown.”

(On the team’s first loss of the season) “No man, how good this team is, we never thought this day would come, because we try so hard together, we know all three phases are going to go out there and compete. That is why we came back at the end of the game, that just shows how tough we are, how together we are, but this is going to be a good thing for us. We are going to go back to work and have an extra edge coming off a loss.”

(On the defense in the second half) “That was just great coaching adjustment by coach Wade (Phillips). We came out there and we executed our second half plan, but we just couldn’t get off the field on third down, I got beat on the play. I can stand up, I can play better. I have not been playing well these last couple of weeks and am just being honest, but I continue to fight, that is the type of player I am. Who cares if you get beat, but you go out there and you compete to the highest of your ability and stuff happens.”

DT Aaron Donald

(On this difference between the first and second half) “We just cleaned some things up and made less mistakes, but we didn’t play well in the first half. We need to go watch the film and see where we need to make corrections. They just played good, they did certain things we weren’t expected and a few things that slowed us down, but that is a part of the game. You have to find ways up front to put more pressure on them. We tried at times in the first, but did in the second half to get a little bit more.”

(On the Rams not recording any sacks today) “He (Drew Brees) did a lot of different things to try and slow us down. In the second half, we did some things to try and open it up and we got some more pressure on him, but he was getting the ball out. Sometimes you have big games, sometimes you get a bunch, some games you get a couple and some you get none. We just have to watch the film to make the corrections and fix it.”

(On the team’s mindset going into the second half of the season with a loss) “We are going to watch the film, make the corrections and fix things. This was just one game, we will fix it. We are disappointed that we lost, but like I said, we are going to fix it. We aren’t panicking, we’re not worried. We will make the corrections to fix it and continue to be better.”