



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

ATLANTA FALCONS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2024 • CAESARS SUPERDOME

- The Saints defeated the Atlanta Falcons 20-17 on Sunday, improving their record to 3-7 and their all-time regular season record against the Falcons to 56-55. The win also extended the Saints' current home win streak against Atlanta to three games.
- Interim Head Coach **Darren Rizzi** got a win in his Saints head coaching debut, making him the fifth Saints head coach to win his debut with the club, joining J.D. Roberts (1970), Ernie Hefferle (1975), Sean Payton (2006) and Dennis Allen (2022). Both Roberts' and Hefferle's wins were also as interim head coaches.
- The Saints victory against the Falcons gave the franchise their 425th victory (regular season and postseason combined).
- RB **Alvin Kamara** continued to be a reliable force in the Saints backfield with 17 carries for 55 yards while adding a club-best five receptions for 54 yards receiving. He became the Saints' all-time leading rusher on a seven-yard rush in the first quarter, surpassing his former teammate Mark Ingram II. Kamara now has 6,544 career rushing yards.
- Kamara has 24 career games with at least 50 rushing yards and 50 receiving yards, surpassing Tiki Barber (23 games) and Pro Football Hall of Famer LaDainian Tomlinson (23) for the third-most such games in NFL history. Only Pro Football Hall of Famer Marshall Faulk (41) and Christian McCaffrey (30) have more.
- Kamara has 1,136 scrimmage yards this season and is the third player since 2000 with at least 1,100 scrimmage yards in each of his first eight seasons, joining Matt Forte and Pro Football Hall of Famer LaDainian Tomlinson.
- With his five receptions, he surpassed former Saint Darren Sproles and Matt Forte in the NFL record books and took sole possession of ninth place in all-time running back career receptions (556).
- With his 54 receiving yards on Sunday, Kamara surpassed Earnest Byner and moved into 16th in the NFL record books for receiving yards by a running back.
- Kamara had 109 total yards from scrimmage, his 56th game with 100+ yards from scrimmage, the most in the NFL since he entered the league in 2017.

- Kamara played in his 111th career regular season game and moved into a tie for 37th on the club's all-time list for games played with G/T Andrus Peat.
- QB **Derek Carr** was efficient for New Orleans. He finished 16-of-25 (64.0 pct.) for 269 yards with two touchdown passes, zero interceptions and a 126.9 passer rating. The offensive line kept Carr's jersey clean, not surrendering a sack.
- Carr now has 5,681 career completions, surpassing Pro Football Hall of Fame QB Fran Tarkenton (Class of 1986) to move into sole possession of 20th all-time in NFL history.
- With 227 passing yards, Carr also surpassed Pro Football Hall of Fame QB Joe Montana (Class of 2000) to move into 23rd all-time for career passing yards (40,594).
- With Carr's two touchdown passes, he now has 253 career touchdown passes, surpassing Drew Bledsoe to take sole possession of 26th all-time.
- Carr's two touchdown strikes were to WR **Marquez Valdes-Scantling**, who finished with three receptions for 109 yards (36.3 avg.). He tied a career-high for scoring grabs and also had a game-high 67-yard catch. Carr and Valdes-Scantling connected on 40-yard and two-yard touchdowns, marking the first game where a Saints receiver had multiple touchdown receiving game since WR **A.T. Perry** did so in the 2023 regular season finale against the Falcons.
- WR **Kevin Austin Jr.**, and TE's **Taysom Hill** and **Juwan Johnson** were all efficient with two grabs each. Austin and Hill both had 36 yards apiece and Johnson had 22.
- Hill played in his 103rd career game today, moving into a tie for 53rd on the club's all-time games played list with DL Elex Price and S Malcolm Jenkins.
- The only takeaway from today was a fourth-quarter interception by S **Tyrann Mathieu**. Mathieu now has 36 career interceptions, the most by an active player, surpassing a tied with Vikings S Harrison Smith. Mathieu also tied his career-high with three pass breakups, his most as a Saint.
- LB **Demario Davis** led the defensive effort with 10 total tackles (two solo) and one pass breakup. Davis now has 1,401 career tackles, surpassing the 1,400-tackle mark and now has 40 career pass breakups.
- Davis played in his 107th game as a Saint and moved into a tie for 44th all-time in Saints record books for games played with S Gene Atkins and LB Pat Swilling.
- DB **Ugo Amadi** recorded nine solo tackles, a new career high in solo stops and is tied for a career high in total stops, and also added three stops for a loss, a new career-high.
- DE **Payton Turner** recorded his second career forced fumble on his sack today. His first career forced fumble and his first also came against the Falcons in Week Four.

- DT **John Ridgeway III** blocked a field goal by Atlanta K Younghoe Koo, the first blocked field goal by a Saint since Turner did so in the 2022 season opener against Atlanta.
- DE **Cameron Jordan** recorded his first sack of the season against the Falcons, and with it, he moved into a tie with Pro Football Hall of Fame DE Reggie White (Class of 2006) in sixth in NFL record books for sacks against one opponent with 24 (White – NYG, Jordan – ATL).
- Jordan also played in his 219th career game on Sunday and moved a tie for 20th in games played among NFL defensive linemen with Pro Football Hall of Fame DT John Randle (Class of 2010) and stalwart defensive tackle Jeff Zgonina.
- DT **Nathan Shepherd** and Valdes-Scantling both made their 100th career appearances today. Shepherd finished with two tackles (one solo).
- LB **Pete Werner** played in his 50th career game against the Falcons and finished with five tackles and one pass defense.
- DB **J.T. Gray** and LB **D'Marco Jackson** tied for the team lead with two special teams tackles apiece.
- P **Matthew Hayball** punted five times for 224 yards (44.8 gross avg. and 43.2 net), including four downed inside the 20-yard line.
- K **Blake Grupe** drilled both field goals today, one from 38 yards and another from 26. He also made both of his PAT attempts. Grupe has made 14 straight field goals at home, the longest stretch of his career.
- New Orleans returns to action next Sunday against the Cleveland Browns in the Caesars Superdome. Kickoff is scheduled for 12:00 pm C.T. and the game is regionally televised on FOX (WVUE FOX 8 locally).



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Opening Statement

“Before I take some questions, there’s just a couple of things I want to say. No. 1, what an unbelievable week. As I just said to the players, this doesn’t happen. Today doesn’t happen without complete buy-in from the building. Listen, you guys have all reported about the changes and all that and that’s all well and good, but the buy-in and the execution and the preparation. I just told those guys nothing substitutes good preparation. We had just such a good practice week. The guys really just – I said it to you guys about the buy-in during the week, and it sounded like coach speak when I was saying it, I’m sure. But, that’s why we won this football game. We won the football game because all three phases had great weeks of preparation, and we went out and executed. Listen, there’s plenty of stuff we have to get fixed. There are some takeaways. I thought our fans were unbelievable today. You know you always worry, just generally speaking about ‘well the team’s not doing too good’. This city is starving for some wins, and we were hungry. I know they were hungry, and we were hungry to give them one. That was awesome, but think about how that effected the game. We had some offsides penalties down there in the red zone. The crowd was into the game, loud energy. We’re going to get this dome back to where it used to be. That’s the start. I do want to compliment Alvin [Kamara] on the club rushing record. Just like I just said to the team – anytime you use the phrase ‘all-time’, it’s a big deal. I know he’s joked around about feeling old, but he certainly doesn’t look old. He looks like the same guy that was producing all these years. I thought a couple takeaways from the game, I thought Honey Badger (Tyrann Mathieu), his interception at the end of the game is maybe the biggest play of the game. We started to lose some momentum there a little bit, and it’s not a surprise to anybody who’s from this area and has followed his career, that he’s making big plays and big moments in the game. Another point that I thought was a big deal was that we challenged the wide receivers. There are some wide receivers that weren’t even on our roster that were making catches. [Marquez Valdes-] Scantling with two huge plays. I kind of challenged him this week. We were joking, he and I were joking all week about having juice, having energy and practicing great, and it showed up in the game. A guy like Kevin Austin, you don’t even know who Kevin Austin is. There’s a guy who we picked up in training camp and on the practice squad from the UFL and just worked his ass off every day to a point where some of the veteran guys were like, ‘Man, you’ve got to give this guy a chance’. He stepped up. [John] Ridgeway, a guy that wasn’t on our roster initially way back in training camp, he blocks a field goal. Just some really, really good stuff there. I couldn’t be prouder. I just said to the team and to the crew in there, again, I’ve been around a long time, college and NFL, I’ve been around a long time. I’ve never been prouder of a group the way that they handled everything because when things are uncomfortable it’s easy, it’s easy to just say cash it in. No one did that this week.”

On what happened at the end of the game when he ran on the field

“I’m going to tell you exactly what happened. I yelled at Payton Turner with 30 seconds left because he’s celebrating before the game is over, so I screamed at him. He’s spraying water, and I ripped his ass, quite frankly. When the game was over, he wanted to get me back, and he came up to me when I wasn’t looking and jacked me in the back. I have a history of stingers and my left arm went completely numb (laughs). Literally completely numb. I’m sure the video has me like this (gesturing). I’m fine, I’m fine. I sound like the old guy, and that’s what I am. That’s what happened. Literally, he gave me a stinger for lack of a better phrase. I couldn’t feel my arm, so my balance was screwed up. I’m fine. Listen, all the other stingers in my life, at least I saw them coming. I was prepared for them. This one, I wasn’t prepared for. If I’m going to get hurt, holy cow. I was grabbing him like, ‘Payton are you f’ing kidding me?’. I’m like I’m happy too, but holy cow.”

On if he was presented a game ball

“They did. Derek [Carr] made a nice little speech in there, and I got a game ball. I gave a game ball to AK (Alvin Kamara). As I said in there, AK’s game ball is an all-time game ball. My game ball is a first-time game ball, but the entire building is receiving a game ball this week. Everybody. Everybody was phenomenal – support staff, coaching staff, front office, players, equipment guys. I gave the equipment guys more work this week changing the lockers around. Like everybody, never heard a bitch or complain. I never heard anybody. Just everybody from day one completely bought in, so the whole building is receiving a game ball. Derek made a nice little presentation.”

On making Alvin Kamara a team captain

“That was a coach’s decision. That was my decision. I thought Alvin’s presented great leadership all year. I think what he means to this city, what he means to this organization. I think about the way he’s played this year. I just thought how he’s handled the week very well. I just thought it was the right thing to do. Again, I’ve mentioned it’s easy to go on and do your own thing but Alvin Kamara might have been the guy who bought in the most of the whole entire team. When the younger guys and those guys see the leadership of the team, when those guys see that, they follow suit. I just thought it was the right thing to do. He’s been acting like a captain, practicing like a captain and playing like a captain, so why not make him a captain?”

On Demario Davis’ leadership on the defense

“Truth be told, I walked over to talk to the defense. I’m sure I could find the video. I circled back around because Demario had them. I said I’m good. I’m not going to do any better than he’s going to do. He had them goofed up. That’s the uniqueness about this team. We have guys like Demario, guys like Cam (Jordan), guys like Honey Badger guys like Alvin and Derek. I mentioned it during the week, we have a unique blend of young and old. Our younger and more inexperienced guys have some really, really good examples there to follow. Demario is as good of a leader as I’ve ever been around.”

On coaching his first game as the head coach

“Besides the stinger, and my left thumb is still coming back, besides that, it was awesome. Listen, you guys know I’m a pretty open guy. This is how my day started. I get down here to the stadium. I get down here to the (Caesars Superdome), and I go in the head coach’s locker room, which you know I’ve never used before, right? So here I am. I go to the bathroom, and this is how my day started – I clogged the toilet. I’m like this is going to be a crappy day, pun intended. I’m like OK, this is not really a great start to the day. Here we go. I’m not really feeling like a head coach of an NFL team right now. I’m like really? This is really how I’m going to start my day? There are moments in the game where I’m so wrapped up in my routine. There were moments today where I’m almost forgetting, I’m in my routine, and I’m kind of forgetting I’m the head coach a couple of times. All true. I thought our staff did a great job. Phil Galiano and Marwan Maalouf did an awesome job with game management, kind of helping me through it. I thought Klint [Kubiak] and Joe [Woods] called a good game. Listen, there’s plenty of stuff to get corrected, but it’s certainly a little surreal to see how happy the players were in the locker room, the celebration. It was awesome.”

On opening the game aggressively

“Yeah, I thought we had to set the tone early on, and that first drive in my mind, if we were going to get a 4th-and-3 or less over the 50-yard line, we were going for it. Set the tone and set the example. Look, it didn’t work out. We left some points there on the board. I thought at that moment, I think it was 4th-and-2 on the five-yard line, I thought the worst case scenario we didn’t get it. We had them pinned back. We got the ball back in pretty good field position after the punt. It all worked out. No doubt. That’s what my message to the team was. My message to Joe and Klint was, ‘Hey, we’re going to be an aggressive play call’. It didn’t work out in the end. We got the incompleteness with Alvin, but listen, that was a great play call by Klint. I wanted to be aggressive. I didn’t want to just run the ball one more time and punt it back. I wanted to be aggressive. In the beginning through the rest of the game, I was on their tail all the way through.”

On what he has felt from the city

“Like I mentioned earlier, I thought the energy in the building was great. I’m not going to lie, I really didn’t know how it was going to be coming here today. Great crowd, great energy. It’s just (great) to

see the fans (excited) in the beginning of the game and to see them as I was walking off at the end was great. I said earlier in the week, the city should be pissed off; the fans should be pissed off. They know what a winner looks like. They want winning football, and the goal all week was to do that. I'm happy we delivered. Now, like I said to the team, let's see if we can duplicate that week after week, but it's certainly a great start."

On the special teams performance

"Well, Younghoe [Koo] kicked our ass in the last game. He was lights out. I briefly talked to Younghoe before the game. Him and I are from the same area. Actually, our two high schools are rival high schools up in North Jersey, so I've known Younghoe a long time. I was busting his chops a little bit because he was lights out the last time we played him down there in Atlanta. He's a great, great player. Great job by [John] Ridgeway getting his hand on the ball, but certainly when that other ball went up, I thought the voodoo gods in the Superdome were helping us out today and Koo for sure. No doubt we made some big special teams plays. Listen, he's a phenomenal player and he's been really, really consistent the last few years."

On Tyrann Mathieu's role and performance in the game

"I think Joe [Woods] within the game plan wants him to have some things that we do that gives him the ability to read some stuff. Obviously, great read on the interception and great play. That's the best part about him is he's his own biggest critic. He knows what good football is. He knows when he's playing good football, and he knows when he's got to step up and what things he can correct. His experience is huge. He's not a guy I have to worry about getting prepared. He's the ultimate professional. He's got a great football mind. I'm really happy he's in our locker room, that's for sure."

On if he was able to get any sleep last night

"I didn't get a lot during the week, I can promise you. The first few days of the week, I was dragging a little bit. Last night, I made sure. I caught a little bit of a cold during the week. Shocker right? I wasn't eating or sleeping. I caught a little cold here, and I was like man I've got to (deal with it).. I woke up feeling great, ready to go. I came down here refreshed and energized. Now I have to rehab my shoulder because of Payton (Turner)."

On Derek Carr's deep throws today

"He threw a couple of great deep balls today to Scantling. Some great routes by Scantling. It was great to see those guys connect. You look at Derek for the day, he came out of the game with a 127 passer rating, a really efficient game by him. The deep shots are huge because it opens up everything else. Scantling did great because like I said, we put in a couple of those plays, a couple of shots to him, and it was great to see him cash in on those."

On if his family was here

"I did. I didn't have everyone. My two sons that play college football, they weren't able to make it down. I had some family, friends, some of my college buddies came in. Obviously, my family was here. Just a lot of great people, The support this week has been phenomenal. I still haven't answered every text. I'm still working on that, but it's been awesome."



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QB DEREK CARR

Opening statement

"Many people didn't know this, but my dad was dealing with some stuff this week. So shoutout to my dad, that one was for you. He's doing good."

On impact of this win

"Hopefully (this) just gives us confidence in our process and give us confidence in the way that we go about our business. When things don't go right, when a coach gets fired, everyone feels that because we all had a hand in that. It's football, it's not just one person. But we know how that goes. It was an emotional week, but I was proud of our guys that we flipped the switch and compartmentalized and just went to work. Thankful to get a win against the team leading our division. What a difference a week makes for us, so hopefully we can continue to build on it. We'll definitely have some corrections, but to get this win, I know it felt good for everybody in the building, and gave us, hopefully, some confidence going forward."

On throwing to Marquez Valdes-Scantling

"I told [Marquez], I said I love throwing to fast people, my whole career. I said, 'You're fast and tall,' so that's two good things. We didn't have a lot of experience with him playing receiver for us today, but at the end of the day, nobody cares. We have to execute. We have to go make plays. Thankfully we have a guy like MVS, that has played a lot of football at a very high level in some big situations, so he was able to come down with some of those plays for us. But it felt good to be able to hit and connect on some of those, because we knew the potential was there, but it's nice to connect on and see it actually happen."

On reaction to successful connections with a new teammate

"I'm just thankful. I'm thankful they hit. Throw to those fast guys, I tend to just see where they're running. Coach (Greg) Olson always told me to judge angles and speeds, whether it's walk through or full speed, and that's how you work on accuracy. But thankfully, we were able to hit them in stride. That's the thing about those plays, if you don't hit them people say, 'Oh, well they haven't worked together,' and it'd probably be true. But thankfully, we hit them and they ended up being really big plays for us in this game. But he's a veteran, I'm a veteran. He knew the landmarks, he knew where to run, and thankfully I've thrown to some fast guys here before that helped me."

On dealing with the missing speed with injured players (Chris Olave and Rashid Shaheed)

"I think [Marquez] gives us an element of that, especially now. Making those plays down the field is not easy. Tracking the ball with guys all over you, that's not easy, but he did a great job. Hopefully that adds an element to the team when watching the film, like 'Oh, wow. They're back to throwing things 60 yards in the air.' Hopefully that helps everyone else, helps [Alvin Kamara]. It all works together. I'm sure the happiest person in the building was Alvin when he saw those connect, because now safeties got to back up, DBs are a little less downhill. That's football, it all works together."

On Alvin's dropped pass on the last drive

"Me and Klint [Kubiak], on the sideline, he said, 'Hey, next two to five, how do you like this?' and I was like, 'Yes, please call that one.' So we liked it, and there's a progression to it. It just ended up being Alvin's play. I mean, it's AK, I'm not worried about it. Obviously we want to hit it, we want to hit them all, but we're going to keep continuing to rely on 41. He makes that play more times than not. He basically came over and just fell on me like, 'I'm so sorry.' I just put my arm around him like, 'Bro, I love you, bro. If that ends up costing us, I would throw it a hundred more times to you.' He knows that, I know that. I

mean, he was heartbroken when that happened. He wanted to ice the game, not even have to put the defense out there in that situation, but thankfully the defense made a stop, so it didn't hurt as much."

On recovering from a play like that

"[Darren] Rizzi talked a lot about this week like, 'Hey, if crap doesn't go our way, it's okay. Keep playing.' It kind of just eased the mood. Honestly, we have nothing to lose. They already fired our coach, We lost last week, at the time, to a team that was in last place in our division. What else do we have to lose? Just go out there and compete. If it doesn't go right, keep playing. That mindset of keep playing, keep competing just put ease to everybody. When you get your back up against the wall and you get guys in that situation or scenario, it can kind of feel like a big letdown. It happened, and everyone's crushed, like 'Oh, man, I wish we had that one,' but if they go get a field goal, we just keep playing. So I definitely felt that steadiness for sure."

On Coach Rizzi's attitude leading into today

"Fired up, honest, intense. Those are the words when I think of Rizz, that's what I think of, especially pregame. His awareness for what everyone's dealing with, too, it's rare, but he's really good at it. Rich Bisaccia is a lot like that. Their awareness, I don't know if it's just special teams guys or what, but their awareness for knowing what a guy's dealing with, knowing what's going on at home, but still encouraging you, there for you. He texted me last night about the situation that we were dealing with, with the family, and for that to be on his mind when he's about to coach his first game as a head coach, it just says a lot about him. And I'm sure he texted multiple people last night, because that's just who he is. We love playing for him, and you want to win for him. You want to put your best foot forward and hopefully give him a chance at being a head coach someday."

On the current state of the locker room

"Just confident, really. We really believed that we were a good football team this whole time. And I know, trust me, for me especially, that that was a long seven weeks. I was like, is this ever going to end? We have those human thoughts, but we never wavered in the work and we never wavered in our confidence in what we could be. Just when you get punched in the face over and over again, it starts to hurt. So for us to bounce back and do that, Double D [Demario Davis] said it to me, he said before the game, 'Don't be surprised when it goes well today,' and I just smiled because that's how we felt the whole time. He said, 'We should be surprised when it doesn't.' That just speaks to the kind of leader that he is, that he's been here for years."

On finding success with an interim coach previously with Raiders in 2021

"Absolutely, and I said that after we met with Rizz when everything first happened. I have seen this, like I sadly joke with y'all, (about this) situation too many times. With this scenario it's very similar where it just feels different. Whatever was going on, it just didn't work out for us. The next guy, when I see it's successful, it just feels different. And Rizz did a great job of changing the environment and just how it felt. To really just give guys hope again, like, 'Hey, we got this,' that kind of feeling. Rizz reminds me a lot of the situation with Rich, and Rich Bisaccia is one of my favorite men in the world, and he's one of my favorite coaches I've ever had. I can't put Rizz there yet, we're one game in, but I do love playing for him."

On whether it was his first time outrushing Taysom Hill

"Thank you for asking that question (laughter). It is the first time I've outrushed Taysom [Hill]. So I think all the quarterback powers would clearly go to me from now on, so we'll see."

RB ALVIN KAMARA

Opening statement

"Before anybody says anything, I just embarrassed everybody. I'm sorry for dropping the ball (on the last possession). Alright, let's go."

On being named a team captain

"(Darren) Rizzi just kind of told me, he was like, 'Yo, I'm naming you captain. It's overdue.' So, when he told me that, (I) obviously appreciate it, and then he announced it in the team meeting, and everybody was hyped. I don't know, I'm the captain."

On reaction after the drop

“I’m good, I was just mad that I put [the defense] back on the field, really. I wasn’t concerned with them going back out and doing what they had to do. I just wish I would’ve just iced it so we could ride off into the sunset.”

On becoming the franchise leader in rushing yards

“It means a lot. I was just telling everybody Rizzi gave me the game ball and just kind of announced that in the locker room. I just told everybody ‘I’m not really one to celebrate too many of my successes. I just keep moving, keep moving, keep moving, keep moving, keep my head down. But this one is special.’ It made me feel old. It made me realize how much ball I’ve played and how many people had a hand in helping me get here. So I’m definitely appreciative to my teammates, to this city, especially to be able to do it in New Orleans, do it in one city. It’s amazing, so I’m going to cherish that.”

On fan recognition moment during the game

“You just put everything into perspective. It just makes me think about everything that I’ve been through to get to this point. Eight years of being here, and all the people that helped me. It’s special.”

On the differences this week with the coaching change

“It was a culmination of a lot of things. It was energy, it was our belief. I think we got some swag back. The preparation, details, the fundamentals. I think everybody was accountable to each other. We haven’t had that. It hasn’t been there. I’ve been saying this past couple weeks, we all want to win. The recipe was just missing something, and I feel like we got that thing. Rizzi came in and he had a clear message for us. He told us, ‘This is what we have to do to win,’ and he gave us the recipe, gave us the formula. Everybody bought in throughout the week. Everybody did what they had to do. It’s about doing your job. And there’s still a lot of things we left out on the field and we’ve got to clean up. And it starts with me and that drop that I’m mad about still, but we won. I think everybody just bought in and we were united. Unity was one of the words of the week. When you’re united, and you all believe, and you’re all together, man, there’s so much you can do. You see it out there and you see the product.”

On how the team “got their swag back”

“We just believed. I think we’ve been lacking in belief. I think we’ve been going out there and playing, and things go well, and right when something goes bad, the faith or the belief just falls out the bottom. But today, everybody was just bought in all the way for four quarters, and that’s what I’m used to, being here, playing a four-quarter game. I think we finished today. We were able to go out there and finish and everybody stayed together. Nobody panicked. It just felt good.”

On Coach Rizzi’s pregame speech

“He was fired up. Accountability, unity, our preparation, it went all the way up when he started speaking. He said, ‘Now you just go up there and do fundamentals, and go out there and have fun and fly around.’ I think everybody soaked that message up, and we went out there and handled business.”

On Coach Rizzi getting fired up on the sideline

“I feel like when you say ‘animated,’ sometimes it’s not genuine. That’s how Rizzi is all the time. He’s always like that. You can expect that energy from him on the sideline. The crazy thing is, with Rizzi becoming the head coach, sometimes you think like, ‘Well, what’s going to change, what’s going to be different.’ Man, Rizzi is the same as he was last week, this week. He’s just got more of a voice now. I think everything that he’s been thinking about, everything that he’s been preparing for, coaching his whole however many years, 30 years, however long he’s been coaching, I think he’s been preparing for this. So, it all just came out today. He did what he had to do. I’m proud of him, his first win as a head coach.”

On response from Mark Ingram after beating rushing record

“I haven’t even checked my phone. I heard from him last week, and he told me I should’ve broke it last week, but that it would be more special at home. But I’m going to talk to him when I get done with this.”

On whether breaking the rushing record was more special at home

“Yeah, of course. Mark [Ingram] told me, because I didn’t even know, ‘You got 12 more yards (to go), you should’ve broken it,’ and I’m like, ‘What?’ And he told me what it was and was like, ‘Man, you could

do it at home, it'll be cool.' So, yeah, it was definitely more special here in front of Who Dat Nation. What better way to do it?"

On whether it was more special against Atlanta

"Yeah, a little bit. That's the hometown, so it is a little special. I think that was special."

On whether this week was different being named captain and chasing record

"No. Business is business. I just knew I had a record to break, but I mean I was just going into the game like any other game. Like I want to win, do whatever I've got to do to help the team."

S TYRANN MATHIEU

On if there have been any changes to his role and approach after the coaching change

"No, pretty much the same old, which I enjoy doing. It's a good defense, a good scheme. Every now and then you itch to make more than just tackles. You'd like to touch the football every now and then. On that play I was able to get to it, that was it."

On what he saw prior to his interception

"It was in a double stack look, so I knew it wasn't anything vertical outside of the digs. It wasn't going to be anything deep in the dig route. So I kind of just set and once I read the route, I just tried to get to the catch point before he did."

On almost getting an interception in the first half

"Correct, correct. I think if it was just a little bit higher, I might've caught that one too."

On if he felt different today

"I think, just watching the season, obviously I haven't touched the football a whole lot in this losing streak. Just going back through the catalog, when we played those guys that first game, it was a lot of digs, a lot of digs. And I think Kirk Cousins, too, he's comfortable throwing that route when he needs a play. That was just one of those situations where I was in the right place at the right time."

On approach to tackling Atlanta's running backs

"I thought that there were few plays that could've been a little better, a little tighter, but for the most part, everybody was dialed in. We pretty much knew what we were going to get all game from those guys. They love running the stretch, they love running the toss. We knew we would have to set the edge and everybody else on the inside has got to run ahead."

On the relief of win after two months of losses

"It's tough, man. Obviously we put our all into this. You never sign up to lose seven games in a row, and sometimes it happens. I think mostly I'm just proud of really our team and everybody in our building. Even (Darren) Rizzi, I thought his whole approach to this week, I thought he really set the table, set the tempo. We really didn't feel like we were at a disadvantage. I think that, collectively, we all went into this game thinking, 'This is about to be one of those games where we have a good time and we win.' That was really the preparation throughout the whole week, just trying to find a way to win."

On Coach Rizzi's pregame approach

"Rizzi was actually calm, cool and collected before the game. Obviously during the game there's a lot of highs and lows, and Rizzi is usually on the high side. Yeah, man, it's fun. Obviously, playing for a coach like that, that can kind of keep your attention, keep you focused on what's ahead, I think that's a big deal."

On previous statements that he hasn't felt like himself

"Honestly, this is a new scheme. This is a new system for me. I've never played in the post, so there's certain angles and different things. Obviously, I put in a lot of work so I feel comfortable doing it, but every now and then I like to be myself. I think anytime I touch the ball I feel more like myself, for sure."

On Alvin Kamara's dropped pass on the final possession

"That's kind been our season. Rizzi coming in throughout the week and challenging us, like, something bad is going to happen, something's not going to go our way. I'd probably say, if that was three or four weeks ago, I don't think we would have got that stop at the end of the game. I think that's a little growth from us collectively. Obviously Alvin has made so many plays in this league, and it's kind of hard to kick him when he drops one. It's really on to the next play."

On what was different today versus during losing streak

"I think Demario [Davis] does a great job of really keeping us centered and keeping us focused on the task at hand. I think in the past, we were pressed to make a play, and if somebody gets out a gap, we miss a tackle, we don't really zone up the read the right way. I think collectively we were all on the same page. But obviously we could be better, I could be better, Alontae [Taylor] could be better, but I thought we stuck in there throughout the whole game. Obviously that's not something that we've done really well in this losing streak."



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

ATLANTA FALCONS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, NOV. 10, 2024 • CAESARS SUPERDOME **FALCONS HEAD COACH RAHEEM MORRIS**

Opening Statement

“We had all the chances in the world out there and couldn’t capitalize. It was one of those days, one of those moments...I was really ecstatic about the fight for those guys to put themselves in position to win that game even though it wasn’t (our best performance). We are going to play in a bunch of those types of games. We need to plan to play in a bunch of those types of games, particularly against this type of team and the guys that they are and this type of rivalry that we have with these guys.”

On if he considered attempting a field goal at the end of the game

“We would have if we needed to. Obviously, you don’t ever count on that sack, being the big loss that it was. Obviously, right there I would have taken my shot. Obviously, it would’ve been fourth down. We would have had an opportunity for Younghoe (Koo) to kick it and have a walk off kick redemption. That didn’t come to fruition. Obviously, (with) the big sack and fumble and the ball gets way back there. Now, you are kind of in desperation mode, and it didn’t work out.”

On his confidence in Younghoe Koo moving forward

“Like I just said in the locker room, I have all of the confidence in the world in Younghoe. He is one of the best kickers in the game. He’s done it for us a long time. He had an off day. That happens a bunch of times. Shooters shoot. He went out there today and took a shot, and didn’t make it.”

On his message to the offense after it didn’t produce in key moments

“It’s not individualized messages. It is team ball for all of us. So, when we get stops, we want to go out there and (play) complementary ball and be able to score. If we can’t score, we kick field goals. We want to maximize our ability to be great; and, we were not able to do that today. The offense moved the ball down the field a couple of times out there, and we didn’t get field goals. We missed those field goals or had them blocked. We had a chance to go out there on defense and play really well in the second half, but we gave up too many big plays in the first half. So, it’s all across the board. We will have to review the tape. It’s not really a messaging in any particular moment. It is how you get better as a football team.”

On if Marquez Valdes-Scantling's short tenure with the Saints and success against his team today contributed to the defensive struggles

"Obviously, we had to make an adjustment and move A.J. (Terrell) over there. He's one of our best corners in the room and we had to put him on him in the second half. We had to go limit his production. I believe that he had 100 yards in the first half. He had a couple of big plays. He made some big-time plays. We won't make any excuses for anybody. Whoever is on him, we have to go make those plays. We had to make those adjustments in the second half. We had to make them even before halftime."

On how he compartmentalizes giving up two big plays to the Saints compared to the production the rest of the game

"You don't. Hats off to the Saints. They did a great job executing. That's what the game of football is. You go out there and make some plays. They made them. We've got to go out there and find a way to stop those plays and be ahead of the curb so those plays don't happen. They can be disastrous within the framework of the game. I'm fine about my guys staying in the fight. I'm fine about what we did. I'm fine about the adjustments. I'm fine about our guys going out there and playing the right way and doing it the right way. We just need to finish that game off and we would be a lot happier right now."

On critical penalties near the goal line and if he addressed those post-game

"We did. There is always going to be some of those that we talk about that we have to get better at. The holding penalties that you get that you kind of agree with or disagree with don't really matter. They called it. It was first and 20, and then we got a delay of game there. That is on me and the coaching staff. We have to get right on those things. We have to be ready to change all of those things and be ready to be better, no doubt about it."



POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

ATLANTA FALCONS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2024 • CAESARS SUPERDOME ATLANTA FALCONS PLAYERS

QB KIRK COUSINS

Opening Statement

"I felt like we had chances to win the football game or at least take the lead late in the game. Not being able to do it is difficult. It's a bad taste in our mouth. This is one that you get sick over. I felt like the second third down of the game, I didn't connect with Drake (London) on that one. We had a chance there to convert and get into scoring range. It would have helped to start fast. To punt there was very frustrating. It was just inches on being a big conversion for us. Throughout the game plays like that showed up. That's pro football. That's the thing about this league. You can get beat when you make a mistake or don't play at your highest level. It can be the difference in winning or losing. You kind of play with the focus and awareness of every snap. Today coming out of the game we feel that because of how many plays that carried that feel."

On plays in the fourth quarter that could have been executed better

"It's all running all together tight now. I'm having a hard time on being able to give you a good answer. On the flight home, I will definitely be watching it. There was a third down (throw down) the pike to Ray-Ray (McCloud III) that I would have loved to have connected on. The check down on the one before to Bijan (Robinson) I would have loved to have connected on to give us a more manageable third down. The interception was a play where I was being too aggressive. I would have loved to have just been more patient and take Kyle Pitts underneath or progressed to Ray-Ray. I did stay patient all game long and then there was the one where I was too aggressive. The final drive we certainly ran out of clock there. The sack didn't help. The sack fumble I would have loved to have just stayed positive there and avoid the negative play we had to overcome. It was tough."

On Raheem Morris putting a positive spin on the loss

"I think it is a good way to approach it. I have learned that not much is going to get coach. He stays very level and very positive. I do internalize and it hurts. It hurts for him too. We are going to have the process of watching it and talking through it with teammates and coaches and fixing things. We'll get back on the horse and get to work again. Losses like this are always tough."

(On speaking to Younghoe Koo) "It's pro football. I don't feel great leaving it in the field goal team's hands. I think it is important that we stay on the field, convert third downs, score touchdowns in the red zone and avoid penalties that back us up in the red zone. We need to execute down there so that we are scoring touchdowns. I always felt that when you kick field goals you tend to lose and when you score touchdowns you tend to win. That's important and where I stick my focus."

RB BIJAN ROBINSON

On today's game

"It was obviously one that we wanted, but we made too many mental mistakes. I wish we had some drives that we could have gotten back. It was definitely a game that we were looking for a win."

On the offense getting off to a slow start

"It was getting loud, so we were going silent. There was some miscommunication that we were going through. That can't be a problem at all. We've got to work more on situations like that. We can't let that be on an excuse. At the end of the day, we need to be on the field as long as we can to help our defense. We need to get back to the pass game and the ground game and get in the end zone."

On his 37 yard touchdown run

“I was following those seven guys up front. For me, it was a run that I had to stay patient on. At first it clogged up and it looked like I didn’t have anywhere to go. At the end of the play at the last second it opened up. I had to break one tackle and then attack the sidelines and get into the end zone. Those are just one of the runs that we work on. I trust the offensive line.”

On how heavy Tyrann Mathieu feels on his back

“I didn’t know that was him. I thought someone was behind me. It looked like they were struggling to get me down. I was like I am going to get into the end zone.”

On if it felt like the Seattle game with the slow start

“It was obviously a different situation, but it was similar to that. Starting slow doesn’t help. Obviously if you start slow, then that doesn’t mean that you are going to lose. It’s definitely harder in the NFL to come back from those slow starts. In practice we harp on going fast, speeding up and getting the ball down the field as fast as we can. It’s the main thing that we try to focus on. They made some good plays on defense. We have to watch it, learn from it and bounce back.”

CB A.J. TERRELL JR.

On if the first half felt like a regression

“We just started slow. It’s something we pride ourselves all week. They had a new coach. We just have to start fast. We gave up a lot of stuff early running the ball and passing the ball. We locked in a little too late coming into the second half.”

On Marquez Valdes-Scantling

“He is an NFL receiver. You can’t sleep on anybody. He had a good first half where we had to make some adjustments.”

On the adjustments the defense made to minimize Valdes-Scantling

“The second half adjustment was for me to start following him. That was the adjustment.”

On dealing with the Saints after Dennis Allen’s firing

“That’s the thing I was saying. You can’t take anyone for granted especially when they have a coaching switch like that. Typically, teams like to come out hot. They actually get more energy when they get a new coach. We mentioned that all week. We knew they were going to come out hot and throw everything at us. We just started out slow. We just can’t beat ourselves and get on task quick.”

On Raheem Morris’s message after the game

“It was super positive. It’s the next game. We left stuff out there that we wish we had back in the first half. We got in our rhythm the second half, but it was a little too late.”

K YOUNGHOE KOO

On his assessment of the game

“It’s not the standard that I have for myself. This game is on me and I’ll take that. It’s not ok. I think we played well enough to win the football game especially this one. I let the team down and I don’t take that lightly. It’s one of the lowest points as a kicker. I’ll have to reign myself in over the next couple of days and make the most out of it.”

On the last missed kick

“I made a couple of adjustments after the first miss. I felt pretty good about it when it came off my foot. My reaction was that it came off the foot and it felt good. Sometimes it just doesn’t go that way.”

On a career-long field goal earlier in the year to beat the Saints

“You try not to ride that. It doesn’t really matter what you have done in the past. The next best kick has to be the next one. I just have to move on.”

On what the coaches and players said to him

“They are super supportive. I can’t ask for anything more than that. I am very appreciative of that. At the end of the day I have to be better and I will do better.”

On the first missed field goal

“It felt ok. I just didn’t hit it good enough. I have to play the line better, stick to my process and hit a better ball.”