



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## WASHINGTON COMMANDERS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, DEC. 15, 2024 • CAESARS SUPERDOME POSTGAME NOTES

- The New Orleans Saints fell to the Washington Commanders 20-19 on Sunday. With the loss, New Orleans drops to 5-9 on the season and will play the Green Bay Packers at Lambeau Field on Monday, December 23 at 7:15 p.m. CT. The game will be nationally televised on ABC and ESPN.
- The Saints rallied back from a 14-0 halftime deficit and trailed 17-0 in the third quarter before outscoring Washington 19-3 for the remainder of the game. New Orleans narrowed the deficit to 20-19 on a one-yard touchdown pass from QB **Spencer Rattler** to TE **Foster Moreau** as time in regulation expired. The Saints opted to attempt a two-point conversion for the win that did not convert.
- New Orleans has held opponents to 21 or fewer points in the five contests since Interim Head Coach **Darren Rizzi** took over.
- The Saints tallied a season-high eight sacks against the Washington Commanders. The team last did so against the Falcons on Nov. 22, 2020. All-time, New Orleans has recorded nine sacks in a contest three times and eight sacks in a contest five times since sacks were recognized as an official statistic by the NFL in 1982.
- Sunday's contest marked the fourth time since 1982 that the Saints have recorded five sacks in the first half of a contest, tying a franchise record.
- QB **Spencer Rattler** entered the game in the third quarter. On his first drive, he led the Saints down the field completing 2-of-4 passes for 51 yards in a touchdown drive that was 6 plays, 71 yards and 2:27 time of possession.
- Rattler finished the game completing 10-of-21 passes for 135 yards and had one touchdown pass for an 84.4 QBR.
- QB **Jake Haener** made his first career start, becoming the 39<sup>th</sup> different starting quarterback in franchise history. Haener, the 2023 fourth-round draft pick, completed 4-of-10 passes for 49 yards, had one interception and was sacked three times for 29 yards.
- With 1:55 left to play, Rattler led the Saints on a 11-play drive, covering 56 yards in 1:55, ending with a touchdown connection to Moreau from one-yard out to make the score 20-19 as regulation expired, followed by the unsuccessful two-point conversion attempt.

- New Orleans got on the scoreboard with a 21-yard touchdown pass from WR **Cedrick Wilson Jr.** to RB **Alvin Kamara**, putting the Saints on the scoreboard and reducing the team's deficit to 17-7.
- Wilson Jr. tossed his second career touchdown pass, previously doing so one other time against the New York Giants as a member of the Dallas Cowboys in 2020. He is now six-of-six passing in his career with two touchdowns.
- RB **Kendre Miller** led New Orleans with nine carries for 46 yards, averaging 5.1 yards per carry.
- WR **Marquez Valdes-Scantling** had a team-high 64 yards on just two catches, including 39-yard reception, marking the longest play of the game for both teams.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** totaled 70 yards from scrimmage, 58 receiving yards with a touchdown and 12 rushing yards.
- Kamara's team-record 86 touchdowns move him into a tie for 54<sup>th</sup> all-time with RB Ottis Anderson, WR Hines Ward and Pro Football Hall of Fame WR Paul Warfield (Class of 1983).
- Kamara's 25 career receiving touchdowns moves him into a tie for ninth with former Black and Gold WRs Quinn Early and Robert Meachem and moves him into a tie for 18<sup>th</sup> all-time in NFL record books among running backs with James White.
- Kamara's 11,541 career total yards from scrimmage rank 80<sup>th</sup> all-time, surpassing WR Muhsin Muhammad.
- LB **Demario Davis** played in his 111<sup>th</sup> game as a Saint and moved into a tie for 38<sup>th</sup> all-time in Saints record books for games played with G/T Andrus Peat. Davis finished with a season-high 14 tackles (nine solo), including one sack and two tackles for loss. Davis' tenth tackle of the game gave him 100 tackles on the season, which he has done in seven consecutive seasons with the Saints, since signing with the team in 2018 as an unrestricted free agent. Including his tenure with the New York Jets, Davis has eighth consecutive seasons reaching 100 stops in a season and has done it 11 times in his 13-year career.
- DB **Will Harris** made his 50<sup>th</sup> career start on Sunday and his tenth this season in his first year with the Black and Gold. Harris finished second on the team in tackles on Sunday with nine (seven solo).
- DB **Ugo Amadi** played in his 75<sup>th</sup> career game on Sunday. Amadi now has a career-high 49 tackles this season after logging seven stops Sunday, including a 14-yard sack in the second quarter. He also finished the game with one pass breakup.

- DE **Cameron Jordan** totaled six tackles (three solo), including two sacks for a loss of 11 yards. Jordan's 28 multi-sack games is a franchise record, surpassing Pro Football Hall of Fame LB Rickey Jackson (Class of 2010).
- Jordan, who has 120.5 career sacks, became the 23<sup>rd</sup> NFL player with at least 120 takedowns.
- Jordan's sack in the second quarter to force the Washington Commanders to punt and made rookie QB Jayden Daniels the 48<sup>th</sup> player for Jordan to have recorded a sack against.
- S **Tyrann Mathieu** also had six tackles and forced one fumble, while CB **Kool-Aid McKinstry** and DE **Carl Granderson** each had six tackles. Granderson also had one sack.
- DE **Chase Young** had two sacks in the game for a loss of nine yards and finished the game with three tackles. Young finished with two sacks for the second time in his career. He had two takedowns against the New York Giants as a member of the Commanders on Oct.22, 2023.
- CB **Alontae Taylor** has a new career-high 79 tackles in 2024 after registering five stops.
- DB **Shemar Jean-Charles** had a crucial fourth quarter pass breakup to go with a career-high three special teams tackles.
- P **Matt Hayball** has 34 punts downed inside the 20-yard line, a new team record since the statistic was first recorded in 1976. Hayball had two punts downed inside the 20 on Sunday.
- K **Blake Grupe** was two-of-two on field goal attempts in the game with a 51-yard field goal being the longest of the day.



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### Opening Statement:

“I’ll start off just by saying that I’m unbelievably proud of our football team. I don’t know if I’ve ever felt like that in 32 years of coaching. Coming off the field, I just told the team that, just a mixture of emotions because we walk off the field with a loss, but I don’t know if I have ever been prouder of a team. It’s certainly a mixed bag there. Obviously, it was a tale of two halves. We did not play the game we wanted to play in the first half. That is a little bit obvious. We had one first down, and 14 total plays. It was not all on the quarterback. We felt like we needed to make a change there at halftime. We did. Spencer Rattler did a great job, came in and provided some spark. Not only that, we only gave up six points in the second half, which gave us a chance to win. As I just told the team, we needed one more play, and unfortunately, we dug too big of a hole there in the first half. We dug a 14-point deficit. Listen, when I took this job on my first day I told you guys and I told everybody that we weren’t going to lack passion and we were not going to lack fight and we were not going to be boring to watch. I’ve never seen a group in there fight harder, be more passionate, and certainly, that was an exciting second half of football. I wish we would have duplicated it for two halves. During halftime, we said we are going to find out a lot about ourselves and how we are going to respond and what kind of fight we have because that’s what we have been talking about for these last five games in six weeks. As I just told the group, I have been extremely proud of the way that everybody in the locker room has handled the situation in the last six weeks in the last five games. I didn’t think I could be any prouder, but I was as proud as I’ve ever been today walking off the field because that was just an unbelievable fight to the finish. We were just one play short.”

### On the decision to start Jake Haener over Spencer Rattler and then make the switch mid-game:

“I think Jake’s first half comes down to a couple of plays. One, he completes that third down ball to Cedrick [Wilson Jr.] for a big play, and we’re going to have really good field position. Then, it gets called back for holding. That was a huge swing because we got sacked on the next play. You guys can look it up, but that’s like a 40-plus-yard swing. That might change the whole entire half for Jake. Then, he had another throw to [Marquez Valdes-Scantling]. MVS had a phenomenal game, but MVS drops that over ball that is on the run. If you take those two plays and we don’t get a holding call, which was suspect, and if we complete that ball, we might be talking and having a different conversation. I just felt like, and the offensive coaches felt like, we just needed a spark in the second half, and that is why we made that decision. I am certainly not down on Jake. Listen, we only had 14 plays. They controlled the clock. They controlled the ball. They did all the things we didn’t want them to do coming into the game. Like I said earlier, it’s not all on Jake.”

### On why a spark was needed outside of Haener’s play:

“We had one first down, and we had zero points. We were kind of reaching there for something. Sometimes, a fresh face in there – I’ve said this before, Jake [Haener] and Spencer [Rattler] are very similar players. I thought there were a couple of plays where Jake had some positives. I thought we held the ball a little too long a couple of times, took a few sacks. It wasn’t all on him, some of the protections as well. Those are the reasons. Sometimes when you’re in one of these games, you’re just stale, and you’re looking for a spark. We just felt like a change of scenery, a change in the position was the way to go.”

### On the team’s response to Spencer Rattler entered the game:

“As I said at halftime to the offense, we just need the first score to get a little momentum going. Sometimes there is a snowball effect. I think, if I am not mistaken, we had one first down in the first half, and we had 16 first downs in the second half. A tale of two halves. It’s just really that initial read, that initial scoring drive to get a little confidence. When there’s a big fat zero up there for a while, there’s

not a lot of confidence going on. Once you get that first score, everybody starts feeling on the sideline like you can do this.”

**On going for the two-point conversion at the end of the game:**

“I’m not going to sit here and tell you it was predetermined before the game. I just felt like the way the game played out, AK [Alvin Kamara] had gone out. He was out for the game. MVS [Marquez Valdes-Scantling] got banged up. We started losing more offensive weapons. You guys felt the momentum shift there at the end. I do not regret it whatsoever. I don’t think the players regret it. They were all in favor of it. I just thought it was the right thing. We managed the clock really well there at the end. I thought that Kendre Miller ran the ball really well there in the two minute, except for maybe the one play which we didn’t block great. We completed the ball to Foster Moreau. We got the ball clocked. We got the touchdown. We left no time on the clock for Washington and Jayden Daniels. That was the plan. We talked during the drive through our two-part plays and stuff like that. When we scored, there was no doubt in my mind that we were going to go for two and go for the win.”

**On what he learned about Spencer Rattler through his performance:**

“It’s the same thing that Spencer has been, and part of the reason we drafted him is Spencer is not the tallest. He does not have the strongest arm. He’s not the most athletic guy, but he’s a gamer. He’s a classic gamer. When you put his college film on, that’s what it was. He’s a gamer. He just has that natural leadership ability. He has some playmaking ability. I know in the three games he started there were some bumps in the road there, but he is a rookie. I think he learned from that experience. It tells me a lot about his character, tells me a lot about his heart. The guy did not flinch. He was excited at halftime to go in the game. He took on a leadership position. He never felt like one time in there that he didn’t belong. All those things, I’m very, very proud of Spencer and just told him the same thing.”

**On the defense handling Jayden Daniels:**

“Would I have signed up for 20 points before the game? Yes. If you told me coming in they were going to have 20, I would have told you we were going to win. [Jayden Daniels] made some plays. That is what he does. That is why he won the Heisman Trophy. That is why he was drafted where he was drafted. That is why he’s having the season he’s having. He’s a phenomenal player. We knew we had to kind of contain him a little bit, but he made some huge plays. He had a couple of runs, two particular that were huge scrambles. He had the fourth down run for them where he jumped over the top. Took a couple of minutes for them off the clock. He had some great throws. That’s what he’s doing. Again, I’d be lying to you if I told you before the game if you told me defensively we were going to give up 20 and we were going to give up six in the second half, I would have signed up for that before. Overall, a solid performance by the defense, but Jayden Daniels is going to make those plays. You’re going to hope to contain some of them, and he made a few on us in crucial moments.”

**On how Spencer Rattler was able to get comfortable in the game after not playing since Week Eight:**

“His preparation. I think that he came into this game knowing we did give him some reps during the week. He had the whole menu of plays. Once we decided that Jake [Haener] was the starter, Spencer prepared himself like he was going to be. You never ever see a bad attitude, sulking, anything like that. This guy is a pro at a very young age. He has been through a lot, obviously transferred around in college. He’s been in a lot of systems. It’s a credit to him. He’s a resilient, resilient person. That showed today. I’m ultra-proud of him.”

**On what caused the second half offensive success:**

“Listen, we only had 14 plays in the first half. It is hard to grade a body of work in the first half because we had some penalties mixed in there. We had some negative plays and got behind the chains. We had third-and what seemed like third-and-double sticks a lot of times. It’s hard to get anything when you have no momentum going there. That’s kind of where we were in the first half.”

**On the official’s call regarding the missed field goal at the end of the third quarter:**

“It got totally mismanaged. They had the diving catch. I did not agree with the call when it was done. I had the challenge flag in my hand. I was talking to the sideline official, and I was looking at the clock. We were discussing on the headset about the quarter is going to end here. They were going to take the quarter. I had the challenge flag in my hand, and I am trying to figure out and communicate with up top on whether we are going to challenge the catch or not. I’m talking to the official and saying, ‘Hey, I might challenge this. I might challenge this. Hey, the quarter’s over, the quarter’s over, the quarter’s over, the quarter’s over, the quarter’s over.’ For about four or five seconds, they let the play go. He

misses the field goal. Whoever's in charge of shutting the play down, they obviously let the play go on. The explanation I got was that it is a replay assist situation. The play should not have been run because the clocks were at zero. The clocks were at zero. The clocks were definitely at zero. The quarter was over, but the officials missed that. That is why the play was allowed to go on. That is where my gripe is. The play should not have been allowed to go on. They gave the field goal kicker basically a freebie. They gave him the miss hit. I've been coaching kickers for 30 years. You give a guy a warmup shot, and you've got a pretty good shot he's going to make the second one. The success rate goes through the roof when a guy gets a second chance. That's where my gripe was. It was a game management, officials operations. I'll let the League handle it. Everybody else gets held accountable in this League. I hope the people that mismanage that get held accountable too. It was completely mishandled."

**On his opinion regarding the penalty on Payton Turner:**

"What made you think I was disagreeing with that? Yeah. I disagreed. You guys saw the play. I'm skating on thin ice as it is, so I'm going to bite my tongue. I disagree with the call. It's a shame that seven points in the game, because it was a one-point game. It's a shame that seven points in the game come down to a penalty on a field goal block and a quarter that was over and they let the play go. That's just a shame. That's not criticism. That's a shame."

**On the explanation given regarding the penalty on Turner:**

"The explanation that I got is that Payton Turner crossed over the long snapper and his back leg brushed over the head of the long snapper. That is the explanation I got. The long snapper is a defenseless player. There is no doubt about that. If anybody is in favor of that, that is me as a special teams background guy. They showed the replay briefly. I'm going to have to go and watch it and get an opinion for myself. On the replay that I saw, that's not really what I saw."

**On if he would have been able to challenge the play prior after the quarter ending field goal no play:**

"Since that field goal was technically a no play, I would have been able to challenge it. We saw multiple views, and the feeling I got from the guys up top was that there was no clear view that that was not a catch. I saw the play on the big board. I didn't really see a great angle. There were multiple angles that our guys who handle the game management and replay stuff felt like there wasn't enough to overturn that."

**On Derek Carr's status in the concussion protocol:**

"I'm not going to get into Derek [Carr]. Derek's still on the injury list. He obviously was impacted today in terms of not being able to play. He's still out right now. He's going to be listed still with the same injuries. I'm not going to get into all the details of that. He didn't have a practice. That's it."

**On the play call for the two-point conversion:**

"Every game you have a couple of two-point plays on the menu. Klint [Kubiak] and the offensive staff felt like that was our best call. Listen, it didn't work out. It is what it is. It was a phenomenal drive getting down there, a phenomenal drive getting in the position to win the game. Unfortunately, we didn't get that last one."

**On if Alvin Kamara got hurt on the touchdown catch:**

"I think that's where Alvin Kamara initially kind of felt something. That's what it sounds like from our medical staff. I will have more information. He's going to get some imaging stuff, so I'll have more on that later."

**On if the two-point conversion was designed to play to Spencer Rattler's strengths:**

"I think that was more of the play call that we liked. You know that Spencer [Rattler] does a great job with the dropback stuff, too. In that specific situation, we felt like we knew the defense we were going to get. We felt like that was our best play call."

**On Kool-Aid McKinstry's status moving forward:**

"All I know is that if we had gone back on defense, I was told he would have gone back in the game. I don't know all the details of it, but I was told during the game on the sideline. I was just told he was good to go back in the game. Thank you, it was a stinger."

**On the decision to go for the win after the touchdown with time expired:**

“I really think two major factors played into this. No. 1, the momentum. We had gotten all the momentum and gained all the momentum back. I felt like if we kicked the extra point and we go to overtime, who knows who gets the ball? Jayden Daniels is a phenomenal player. Kool-Aid had gotten banged up. AK had gotten banged up. MVS had gotten banged up. I was just kind of looking and saying this is our chance to win the game. It was probably No. 1, a momentum thing, and No. 2 all the personnel and where we were in the game. If you told me at halftime, the last play of the game we were going to be throwing the ball to win the game with the way the first half went, I just felt like at that point- Listen I know there’s the old adage about go kick the extra point at home and go for two on the road. We would have went for two in the Rams game, too, just the way the games played out. If we would have been scoring and the game was 45-44, we may have kicked the extra point, may be a different scenario. With where we were, I just felt like it was the right call.”

**On if the two-point conversion attempt and his aggressive play-calling is what he wants to show his players his willing to do:**

“I think so. I don’t think there’s a guy in locker room that regrets that we went for two. There’s not one guy in there that didn’t want to do that. The whole sideline, and believe me, there’s plenty of opinions, but I have to make the final decision. I have zero regret. I don’t think the players do either. We were in position the last play to win it. We had one play from the two-yard line to win the game. With all that moment, I just thought it was the right call.”

**On Kendre Miller’s development:**

“I’m extremely proud of Kendre. I’m really proud of Kendre because of the way he’s handled the last couple of weeks. He’s kind of just tried to block out all the outside noise and work hard, work on the things that he needs to work on – ball security, pass protection, mental. He did have one mental [miscue] in the game earlier. I got on him because I had to burn a timeout because we were in the wrong formation. Listen, Kendre’s whole thing is if he can stay healthy and be consistent with the week-to-week game plan, you can see the player that he’s showed the last two weeks. He is capable. I still think there’s so much football out there for that guy. He’s a guy I’m rooting for because I just think he’s got a brilliant career ahead of him if he can take care of those few things.”

**On if Derek Carr’s availability next week:**

“I don’t know. We get the extra day. Let us see where Derek is. Hopefully an extra day helps his hand heal a little bit more, and we will see if he has function and that kind of stuff. We will reevaluate that. Certainly, Spencer just came off a really good second half here. We will certainly take that into account. I do not want to make any proclamations here. We’ve got the extra day off, and we will kind of see where everyone is at.”





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### **Opening comments:**

“For us to go and get one on the road is a big deal for us. Going in, to have the time of possession, we knew that is when we (have) played at our best. Third downs are more manageable, and emphasizing that coming out of our bye on both sides of the ball was going to be big. We knew that we would have to find ways to prove ourselves on third down. I also thought finishing as a plus on the turnover margin was huge too. In a game with missed opportunities, penalties, and missed plays, it was going to get frustrating. There is lots to clean up with those and we will, but that is just December and January football. We went all the way down on the last play and when we talked about the fight of the group, I think we embodied that. It’s all about becoming battle-hardened.”

### **On how he thought the team handled the winning-time moments:**

“They were good and bad. There were some spaces for the bad where we missed a kick and things like that, and obviously when you play indoors, you want to take shots with your kicker.”

### **On how difficult the decision was to try to kick the 54-yard field goal:**

“We thought we were in the space to kick and you make those decisions before the game. We said that if it was in the middle and inside the 38 we would kick. So, it wasn’t necessarily a hard decision because we had planned for it. We didn’t like the outcome but we will clean that up.”

### **On Spencer Rattler coming in and making a difference in the second half:**

“He [Rattler] certainly played well. He made some big plays and you saw that coming out of college. Sometimes, when you have nothing to lose, you can sling it and play free, good football. Not saying he [Rattler] did that, but we’ve all seen it before when guys come in and make a big difference like that after sitting behind guys. I think he made some big plays, and that trick play with Cedric Wilson Jr. to [Alvin] Kamara was huge.”

### **On what it meant for Jayden Daniels to be back in Louisiana:**

“Obviously, he has had a lot of success here personally, so a lot of people that have made a big impact on his life were here. He did a great job, though. He [Daniels] is pretty remarkable in that way as a mature, young player where he doesn’t ride the rollercoaster too much. That’s not easy to do as someone who gets as much attention as he does. For Marshon [Lattimore] too, as his first game back from injury was against his former team.”



**On what the Saints did to garner so much pressure and sacks:**

“I thought they did a great job at stunting today. I really do want to watch the film because we like to go back and look at things we could’ve done better, especially in that department. We have looked over it and sometimes we pause, but every little second counts. As we are going through moments like these, they are learning moments for Jayden. Obviously it’s not on one person or one group in particular, but when you get those coupled with penalties, you put yourself in a bad spot.”

**On how hard it was to lose their starting center the morning of the game:**

“It is part of the game and there was nothing we could do. He tried to go, but he is a big guy and had a strong fever, so it is just hard to go out there with that. We are fortunate with Michael (Deiter) with the experience he has and that he was ready to go once he learned that he was starting. The hardest part is not receiving all of those full reps to go through it, but he is definitely somebody we can count on. It happens in football all the time, and you hate to do it right before a game, but it’s not a lot different than someone who got injured during the game.”



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### QB JAKE HAENER

#### On how he felt about his performance:

“Obviously I’m disappointed. You go out there and you make a good play, third play of the game, and it gets called back holding call, which is tough. Credit to the guys in the second half. I thought Spencer [Rattler] did a great job coming in and handling the moment of the game and he did a really good job moving the team. Gave us a chance for a win at the end, and I was proud of how he handled himself.”

#### On regrets from first half:

“I’ll have to go back and look at the tape, that is the biggest thing. The only thing I can really think of that comes to mind is trying to force the ball to AK Alvin Kamara when we are down. Learning from that and not making that mistake again. Overall, I felt like that was probably my one bad decision. When you go back and look at it, you will probably say the same. But obviously, I didn’t get enough first downs, I didn’t move the team, and Spencer came in and did a great job.”

#### On whether momentum was impacted:

“My biggest thing is trying to go one play at a time. There were points there that just didn’t happen for us for whatever reason. My biggest thing is trying to go one play at a time, then the next play, and today didn’t go my way.”

#### On impact when completion to Cedrick Wilson Jr. was called back due to holding:

“It’s tough. You are trying to make plays, trying to do whatever you can to try and get first downs, and when something happens like that, you have just got to take a deep breath and go to the next play. Obviously you look at the big choice route I had to AK early, and then get sacked next play. It’s on me, I’ve got to step up in the pocket and make something happen with my feet. Just things like that you learn and grow from.”

#### On not getting opportunity to play in second half:

“Listen, I obviously want to be able to go and not have that leash be that tight. I felt like I wanted to go out there and have an opportunity to play a full game, but sometimes it’s not up to me. I’ve got to do what I can to prepare each week. I feel like my teammates were confident in me if I got the opportunity to go in the second half. You guys see how these games go. Sometimes, even when Derek [Carr]’s in there, one half looks like this, and the next half is totally different. You saw that today and obviously I’m disappointed that we lost, first of all, but second of all, that I didn’t get the opportunity.”

#### On how he was informed of decision to start Spencer Rattler in the second half:

“They just came up to me and told me that Spencer was going to get the first opportunity to go in the second half. Like I said, disappointed, would’ve loved the opportunity to go out there and compete with the guys in the second half and have a chance to go and see what their second half game plan was. They continue to pressure us, they continue to play through deep three under, and get to some of the calls that we talk about, and move the launch point. But for whatever reason, we didn’t have those opportunities in the first half, and made them count when it mattered in the second.”

#### On difficulty developing rhythm with only 24 snaps in the first half:

“You can make whatever excuse you want for yourself. At the end of the day, my job is to move the team, and if I’m not doing that, then I’m not doing my job. I could sit here and feel sorry for myself and go cry to all of you guys, but at the end of the day, I’ve got to go get better and put my head down, and not listen to all the hate I’m about to receive from everybody, and just keep being myself.”

## **DE CAMERON JORDAN**

### **On the decision to go for two at the end of the game:**

“Why not? I mean, the momentum was there, [Spencer] Rattler was playing his ass off, big confidence boost for the young QB, and the way that the energy felt, there wasn't anybody on the sideline that didn't think we weren't going to make that.”

### **On what part of gameplan allowed the defense to make eight sacks:**

“Hard work, effort, and the trust in the gameplan of letting guys win off their edge or that interior, whatever it was, instead of trying to over gameplan. It was simplifying. BY-Brian Young, who I am going to keep speaking high praises on, just the way he was able to realize talents and utilize the D-line to best abilities since he sort of took over. You can see it, the night and day sort of gameplay. You have a D-line coach who's sort of an x's and o's guy, versus a guy who's actually played the game and has been a D-lineman (player or coach) for thirty plus years. You can see the effects.”

### **On his two-sack game and how he has felt recently:**

“I am trying to get a win. I can have all types of personal feelings, but I have always said that personal accolades, everything else, I will talk about that after the season. I'm trying to win somehow, someway. Does it feel great to be sitting at 120.5 career sacks? Yeah. But would it have felt better with the win? Absolutely. Three games left, got to be able to make the most of those. If it's not about winning, I really don't want to talk about it.”

### **On facing Jayden Daniels:**

“It was annoying. [Jayden Daniels] took off for like, 60 yards. It was going to be annoying. You knew he was elusive. If he got past that first read, he was able to extend the pocket out. There's a reason why he's been electric this year. We knew going in we'd have to break down those lanes, and even when you want to go take your dive at him, you have to make sure you have your defense rallying. I think that our guys did a great job of rallying. At some point, you knew that just because you win the rush doesn't mean you're going to win. You win the rush, you have to be aware of where Jayden is. That's something that we have to go move on to the next game with. We have another mobile type quarterback coming up. Talking about Jordan Love, he's a great pocket passer, but he can extend plays with his feet as well.”

### **On approach to tackling Daniels:**

“I mean, if you hit him too hard, it's a roughing the passer. If you don't hit him hard enough, then he's a guy who lifts and runs and is an athlete, is overly competitive, overly athletic, so if he pushes for a double, then you've got to push for a double. Sometimes you've got to suplex him.”

### **On whether Chase Young was extra motivated facing his former team:**

“Kudos to Chase. He's really turned it on these last few weeks, and I think that's just the edge that he's had going into this final turn. For sure today we felt that energy early on, but there wasn't a surplus of energy just because it was the Commanders. He's been a great addition to the pass rush and the way that we're able to attack.”

### **On differences he's seen in the D-line throughout the season:**

“It was a middle-read game between me and Bryan [Bresee]. A lot of sacks this year, you could run in between those interior games, it could go one of either way. I'm glad it went my way.”

## **QB SPENCER RATTLER**

### **On how he was told he'd be starting the second half:**

“[Andrew] Janocko told me with about 30 seconds left in the second quarter that I'd be going in, so I just had to shift my mindset, but I felt prepared from the start of the game just in case. I wasn't the emergency third this week, I was the backup, so I had to have my mind right.”

### **On whether being the backup changed his approach:**

“No, honestly. I didn’t have a lot of time on task this week with the guys, so I just had to come out of halftime and trust in what they do. These guys are incredible, how they filled up front wideouts, tight ends, running backs, so credit to them.”

**On his experience coming in mid-game for the first time:**

“I think we had some more guys healthy than last time. I think that is big. Erik [McCoy], Cesar [Ruiz], Lucas [Patrick], having MVS Marquez Valdes-Scantling out there, Kevin [Austin Jr.], Ced Cedrick Wilson Jr., Kendre [Miller], AK Alvin Kamara for most of the game. It was good to have all those guys out there. Defense, same thing. Played lights out, I thought. Kept us in that game, and we were one play away.”

**On what he saw on the failed two-point conversion attempt:**

“I thought Juwan [Johnson] got held, but there are good players in this league. It is tough to make those plays. I liked the aggression. I liked what we did there.”

**On when he knew they’d go for the win:**

“We knew before the drive. We wanted to go down there and win the game. I think that’s the mindset our whole team had. I’m proud of the team, because nobody flinched that whole game. Halftime, coming out, nobody flinched. We believed that we could come out and go win the game, and we were an inch away, so got to be proud of that.”

**On the team’s trust in him to go for two-point conversion:**

“I loved Klint [Kubiak]’s aggression. In that second half, I thought he called a great game. I thought the guys played really well up front. We protected the ball, moved the chains, [Blake] Grupe made some big kicks. We wanted to finish with seven points down there, but Grupe came in, knocked two down, and gave us a shot, and we went down and scored. Foster [Moreau] had some big time plays, Kendre had some big time runs, O-line blocked their butts off, so credit to them.”

**On patience and clock management during last drive:**

“I just think, playing ball, understanding the situation, getting mental reps throughout the week in practice, seeing how two minutes manufacture how you’re supposed to run it. I thought we ran it to a T and went down there with no time on the clock and had a chance to win. It was an impressive drive from the guys, great calls by Klint, and great job by the defense setting us up to get that drive.”

**On getting opportunity again after earlier games this season:**

“I knew I’d have to be ready no matter what. What I am learning is that this league is crazy. Could be one thing another week, and something new the next, so just always staying ready. I think that is what it comes down to. I think this time I just went out there and played my style of game. I wanted to cut it loose, play free, and was happy Klint had that trust in our offense to go down there and execute, and set up a chance to win the game.”

**On how a game like this impacts his confidence:**

“I think it’s great to get out there and prove something. I’ve just kind of been sitting back and watching how Derek [Carr] plays. Just watching everything, learning. I think it was good to sit back and watch how it’s supposed to be done for a few weeks, but again, third guy, second guy, first guy, you’ve got to stay ready no matter what. Credit to Coach Janocko, Klint, for preparing us throughout the week. They Did a heck of a job this week.”

**On if performance validates preparation:**

“It definitely gives you confidence, but you’ve got to do it over and over. I didn’t have any reps with the ones this week, so to be able to go out there and have that connection with them, I think that’s big. Just to be able to adjust to things going on. Again, it wasn’t just me. We’ve got 11 guys on the field. Like [Darren] Rizzi says, one eleventh. I feel like everybody on the offensive side of the ball did their one eleventh that second half.”

**On whether today’s performance was more like what he wanted out of his previous games:**

“No doubt. I was confident going in and felt prepared. I do not think we took any sacks, O-line did a great job, we ran the ball pretty well, converted when we needed to on third down. I think we were great on third down in the second half. Just got to still finish in the red zone. There were still some plays out

there to be made. I think trying to force that one into Juwan, up the seam, [Frankie] Luvu, number four, made a good play on that. I should have put more touch on it. Just thinking of other plays. We could've definitely been better, but we gave ourselves a shot, and that's credit to my guys."

**On importance of his third-and-ten pass to Dante Pettis during his first drive:**

"Yeah, confident. Coach Janocko prepares us for that look every week, we have that play. Looking for MVS first deep, they took that away, and we've seen so many clips of them bending that in on the dig, and Dante [Pettis] made a great catch. I actually threw it a little behind him, but he made a great catch and got upfield, and it was a big conversion. Then, obviously, Cedrick with the dime to AK. A great catch there, get some juice going, get some sparks going, momentum, and that was great for us coming out of the half."

**On reaction to Wilson's touchdown pass to Kamara:**

"I obviously knew it would work. We have been holding that one in the holster for a little bit. I'm happy Klint called it. It was the perfect time to call it."

**On whether the team appreciates Rizzi's aggressive approach with going for two:**

"100 percent. Sitting at where we're at, we've got to go out there and win the game. I love the aggression, I love the mindset. I think we need that."

**On his completion to Valdes-Scantling to set the tone:**

"That was the exact look we repped this week. Their defense is a really good defense, holding until the last second. Snapping the ball, they got to it too high, and I knew the middle of the field was going to be there. Honestly, I probably took one or two more hitches than I needed to, and made it harder on myself, but Quez made a great catch. (The) O-line blocked just enough, and that was a big-time catch by him."

## **TE FOSTER MOREAU**

**On his touchdown:**

"Credit everyone else. Credit all of the ten other guys for getting their jobs done just so I can have the ball on the front pad and just be able to come down with it."

**On Spencer Rattler's performance:**

"Huge, especially on that first play to MVS. It was a big time play. He (Rattler) is a big-time player. He just did an exceptional job. He didn't get that many reps during the week, so to come in and cut it loose there is impressive. There is a lot of detail in the offense, especially the motions and the shifts and everything that we try to pride ourselves on, try to open up running lanes and passing lanes, and stuff like that. Credit to him. He didn't miss a single beat. He's awesome. Every time breaking the huddle, he's giving out reminders. For a rookie quarterback to come in and do that in the fifth game that he's played is pretty exceptional."

**On how tough the loss is after coming back in the second half like they did:**

"Credit everyone else. Credit everyone for just giving us a chance to be able to be there at the last second and to have a chance to win the game is such a huge opportunity. We never lost faith, hope or belief. There is just elation on the sideline when they the Commanders missed the kick, because at that point, we know what is going to happen. We are going to go down, we are going to score and going for two. That is just what we are going to do. Credit the understanding in just the last couple of seconds of the game to get the ball spiked, have everyone on the same page and have seven guys on the ball. It seems like an easy thing, but, in reality, when the clock is ticking like that, it become very difficult."



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## WASHINGTON COMMANDERS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, DEC. 15, 2024 • CAESARS SUPERDOME WASHINGTON COMMANDERS PLAYERS

### QB JAYDEN DANIELS

#### On coming back to Louisiana:

"It was fun. It was awesome. It was my second time playing in the Dome (Caesars Superdome). It was my first time winning here. My first game ever at LSU was here. It was on a Sunday and we lost by one point, so it felt good to win by one point."

#### On his emotions when the Saints were going for two to win the game:

"I was hoping that we could win it. The defense did a good job of getting the stop."

#### On the second half struggles:

"Everybody on the offensive side has to be better. It starts with me and the details of getting the guys focused and getting myself focused. We need to go back to our technique and fundamentals."

#### On the adjustment after the injuries, especially not having Tyler Biadasz due to illness:

"Obviously it was loss not being able to have Tyler. We had people step up and do the job. There wasn't too much to think about. We still have to go out there and play ball. We can't worry about who is snapping the ball and why Tyler isn't playing. We were talking about the end goal."

#### On having the confidence to go back to Terry McLaurin after the near misses:

"He was open."

#### On being sacked eight times:

"I need to be able to get the ball out of my hands and help the offensive line out. I put that on me. It is not all on the offensive line. I have to be able to be better back there in the pocket."

#### On Washington having their first winning season since 2016:

"I like to win. Nobody likes to lose. I like winning, so let's keep building from here."

### WR TERRY McLAURIN

#### On the last play of the game:

"I have confidence for us in those moments to come through. That is what we talk about all of the time is to win those moments and the defense did a great job of making the last play to win the game. You never know when that play is going to come up. They stepped up and made the plays to get us off the field."

#### On the chemistry with Jayden Daniels:

"It was pretty solid. We missed a few, myself included. We have to find a better way of finishing. I am just looking forward to getting back on the field with him and clean up some of the things that we missed. We expect to make the ones that we make and the ones that we don't we get frustrated. We try to get back to work and connect it. Him and I have definitely grown as individuals and teammates. Not just him, but our entire skill group. Early we definitely did a good job of connecting. At the end, we just need

to find a way to connect one of those plays. He and I are going to get to the drawing board on the field this week. I look forward to the next opportunity.”

**On his first touchdown:**

“It was a scramble drill. I ran a quick out on the opposite play of the field. I saw him scrambling to the left. There was an open middle part of the endzone, so I just tried to run to it. We preach all of the time that the ball finds energy. I threw my hand up and he threw a missile. I trust myself in those contested catches situations. He put it right there. It was a tough drive because we had a few steps forward and a few steps back. When you come off the field with 7 at the end, then that is what it is all about.”

**On building momentum:**

“We are not expecting any of these games to be easy. We didn’t think this game would be easy at all. I feel like that we can help ourselves by limiting the penalties and making the tough plays. I felt like we were moving the ball pretty well. We had a missed opportunity and a penalty. That will halt some drives and get you a little stagnant. We still find a way to win and that’s what is most important. We have a tough week with Philly coming into town and he have to be clicking on all cylinders for four quarters.”

## **LB FRANKIE LUVU**

**On being a part of the first winning season since 2016 for the Commanders:**

“It’s a blessing. Every win is good especially on the road. You have to show up in December football. You have to take care of your body. We have to show up all four downs. I’m blessed. I haven’t been around a winning team. Being around these guys and the winning stream is a testament to what we put it at work and what we put on the field to our fruition.”

## **CB MARSHON LATTIMORE**

**On coming back to the Caesars Superdome and getting a win:**

“It feels good. It a good feeling. It’s off to the next. This is in the past. We won, but it is on to the next.”

**On his emotions going into today:**

“I tried to stay calm. I did not try to get too hyped. If you get too hyped, then your legs can give out on you. I just tried to stay calm and get the job done. I did what they needed me to do.”

**On not a lot of plays going in his direction:**

“I was just happy to be out there. I did not really get too much action. It is a great feeling just to be out there.”

**On his comfort level in Washington post-trade:**

“I feel really comfortable. I’ve been here for a month or so and that’s enough time to get acclimated.”

**On playing with Jayden Daniels:**

“He makes plays. I respect his game.”



**PFWA Pool Reporter Luke Johnson Interview with Referee Shawn Hochuli**  
**Washington Commanders vs. New Orleans Saints**  
**Sunday, December 15, 2024**

Question: At the end of the game, it was the third-to-last play, the Saints completed a pass short of the goal line and the clock kept running and it appeared that the clock stopped at nine seconds. I was wondering if you had an explanation for the stoppage?

Hochuli: “The covering official mistakenly stopped the clock in that situation. The clock should not have stopped.”

Question: Was there any consideration of reviewing the stoppage? Was there anything that you could have done after the fact?

Hochuli: “No, it is not a situation that is reviewable.

Question: When were you all aware of the mistake?

Hochuli: “That’s all I have for you, Luke. The covering official mistakenly stopped the clock at nine seconds and it is not reviewable.