



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2023 • RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- The New Orleans Saints defeated the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 23-13 Sunday.
- With the win, the Saints improve to 8-8 on the year. They move into a tie for first place in the NFC South with the Buccaneers. For the Saints to win the NFC South, they will need to defeat the Atlanta Falcons in Week 18 at the Caesars Superdome and the Buccaneers will have to lose to or tie the Carolina Panthers in Charlotte.
- The Saints improve to 40-24 all time against Tampa Bay, including 19-10 on the road. They have won six of their last seven contests at Raymond James Stadium.
- The Buccaneers became the second team the Saints have 40 wins against, joining the Falcons.
- New Orleans tallied 310 total yards and allowed 349 total yards, including giving up 344 in the second half.
- The Saints outgained Tampa Bay on the ground 108-57.
- The Saints outgained the Buccaneers 202-44 in the first half. They held the ball for 19:46 compared to just 10:14 for Tampa.
- 42 of Tampa's 44 yards in the first half came on one drive. Outside of that nine-play, 42-yard drive, the Bucs totaled three yards on 10 plays. The 44 net yards surrendered were the lowest first half total given up by New Orleans in 2023.
- The Saints converted 13 first downs and allowed just three to the Buccaneers in the first half.
- New Orleans allowed the Bucs to complete just two of eight (25.0%) third-down attempts.
- The Saints dominated time of possession, 36:38-23:22. They ran 70 offensive plays to Tampa's 50.
- New Orleans won the turnover battle 4-0, forcing two fumbles and intercepting QB Baker Mayfield twice. It was the first time Mayfield was picked off twice in a game this season
- QB **Derek Carr** completed 24-of-32 passes for 197 yards and two touchdowns, zero interceptions and a 111.1 passer rating.
- Carr surpassed Jim Kelly to move into 31st all the all-time passing touchdown list, tossing his 238th score in the second quarter.
- TE **Juan Johnson** had a monster day, tallying six catches for 70 yards and a touchdown in the first half alone. Johnson finished with a career-high eight catches for a career-best 90 yards and the score.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** carried the ball 10 times for 45 yards before leaving the game at halftime with an ankle injury. RB **Jamaal Williams** carried the load in the second half, totaling 19 attempts for a season-high 58 yards.
- TE **Taysom Hill** completed one pass for 11 yards, carried the ball twice for one yard and caught two passes for 30 yards and, including a 22-yard touchdown. It is Hill's fourth-career game with a touchdown catch and a pass completion.

- WR/RS **Rashid Shaheed** had two catches for 14 yards, returned two punts for 27 yards and two kickoffs for 47 yards.
- The New Orleans offensive line surrendered only one sack.
- LB **Pete Werner** led the Saints with nine tackles (eight solo).
- Rookie DT **Bryan Bresee** finished with two tackles (one solo) and one sack.
- LB **Zack Baun** finished with three solo tackles, one sack, one pass defense and one special teams stop.
- DB **Johnathan Abram** recorded his first career forced fumble and first interception of the season to go with one pass defense. He finished with five solo tackles on the afternoon.
- LB **Demaro Davis** finished the game with four tackles (one solo), one stop for loss and one fumble recovery.
- CB **Alontae Taylor** recorded his first career interception in the second quarter, picking off Mayfield at the Saints two-yard line.
- P **Lou Hedley** pinned his 30th punt of the season inside of the 20, moving into second place for most punts inside the 20-yard line in Saints history.
- K **Blake Grupe** went a perfect three-for-three on field goals. He is now tied with Wil Lutz (2016) for the most field goals by a rookie in New Orleans history.

SAINTS POSTGAME QUOTES 12-31-23

HEAD COACH DENNIS ALLEN

Opening Statement:

“Happy New Year to everybody. Good team win for our football team. [I] still feel like there were some things that we could have done better. [I] still felt like there were a few things that we left out there on the field, but I thought, particularly in the first half, I thought we played really well in the first half in all three phases. I thought the field position in the game was a big part of the game. I think the takeaways in the game were a big part of the game. I think we ran the ball a little bit better offensively, which opened up some things in the passing game. We did a good job on third down, converting on third down. Look, there’s a lot of good things that we did. Obviously the first drive of the game, taking it down there, being able to score points, putting seven on the board I thought was big for our football team. I’m proud of the way that our guys continue to compete. I’m proud of the way our guys continue to fight, and I’m proud of the way that they played today. Now we [have] to digest this and then get ready for Atlanta.”

(On if this game was a hard effort performance to pull off after the state of the team following last week’s loss)
“I think state of the team is probably... I’m sure everybody has their own opinions about the state of the team, right? But I’ve never questioned the mindset of our team. I’ve never questioned the toughness of our team. I’ve never questioned the [competitiveness] of our team. Look, this game we play is hard. It’s not easy. There are some times that you have to fight back after a tough loss, but I told the team last night we’ve got to handle hard well, and I thought our guys did that today.”

(On how he feels about how his team responded to his message about doing hard well)
“Look, it’s positive. I think when we have faced some adversity, I think our guys are generally respondent. We knew our backs were against the wall and we knew that if we didn’t take care of business today, that it didn’t matter what happened anywhere else. We knew that we had to win this game, and I think our guys had the mindset that we were coming in here to win. And that’s what they did.”

(On S Johnathan Abram’s performance)
“I thought he played really well. I was extremely proud of him, happy for him. The way that he played — great effort play on the strip to cause the fumble that Demario [Davis] recovered. There [were] a number of things he did well, obviously that play stands out, but here’s a guy that’s been kind of on the practice squad, then he’s on the roster. [He] probably hadn’t gotten as many opportunities as he would like, but he’s one of the ones that’s got probably the most time on the iPad in terms of studying what the opponents are doing. He works extremely hard at it, and he got his opportunity, and he performed well.”

(On what went into the decision of Abram playing)
“Well I think... look, primarily it was because we had a rookie player that missed the early part of the week practice and I think, particularly for a young player, I think you’ve got to practice to be able to play and play well. And look, it doesn’t really matter how he gets the opportunity, it’s about taking advantage of the opportunity and I thought he did a good job of that.”

(On TE Juwan Johnson’s performance)
“I thought he played really well today. Here’s another guy that... look, we’ve had a number of guys that have kind of gotten challenged a little bit, and they’ve responded to the challenge. Juwan Johnson being one of them. I think the last couple of weeks Juwan has really responded to it and performed well. Obviously, the touchdown was a big play in the game. The third down catch down the middle of the field was a huge play in the game — it changes field position. He catches the boot, I guess it was the fourth quarter there, and gets us in some good field position, so I thought he played well. I thought he played through a little bit of a shoulder injury and came back out and played and competed, so I was really proud of him.”

(On the first half being the best the team has played collectively on both sides of the ball)

“Yeah, look, it has been a long season, so I think there’s been some times where I feel like our team has played really well in a lot of spurts. But yeah, I do. I feel like that was all three phases, I think, that contributed to us being able to get out to that lead in the first half.”

(On QB Derek Carr taking a different approach)

“Well, I think A, he’s feeling a little bit better. Obviously, he’s had a couple of things that have nagged him throughout the season, and I think he’s probably... look, nobody is 100% healthy at this time of the year, but I think he’s closer to that now than maybe where he was a month or a month-and-a-half ago. So yeah, I think he’s been performing much better over the last month or six weeks of the season. I think a lot of that is health related.”

(On if the team’s performance today is in line with his expectations for the team)

“Still not perfect, but it’s been improved. We’re guaranteed one more opportunity to go and prove it a little bit more and that’s what we’re going to focus on.”

(On CB Alontae Taylor’s performance today)

“Alontae was awesome today, really. Again, that’s the enjoyment that I get out of coaching – when the guy hits a rough patch and you challenge him. Look, he got benched. That’s hard, that’s hard to take [but] he responded the right way. You guys asked me, ‘How is he going to respond?’ I think he responded the right way. I think he did that today, so I was extremely proud of him.”

(On the use of tight ends today)

“The fact that we used the tight ends says we felt like there was something maybe we could hopefully take advantage of. And again, look you never know exactly how the game is going to play out. I mean, we kind of have an idea of what they may try to do and yet we don’t have a contract with them, they can kind of do whatever they want to do and we have to be able to react to it. In this game, there are some things that I think that they were trying to do to obviously take away some of our receivers. So, the tight ends played a little bit of a bigger role – specifically, Jawan [Johnson].”

(On TE Juwan Johnson’s Confidence in himself)

“You guys have heard this because I got it from one of my mentors, but confidence is born from demonstrated ability. That’s the same thing for us as coaches – when we see you do it, we have more confidence that you can do it again. When you as a player see yourself do it, you have more confidence that you can do it again. So, I think all of those things work together. But yeah, certainly we have confidence in him and throwing him the football.”

(On RB Alvin Kamara’s injury)

“Yeah, so he sprained his ankle... I think it was on the sideline over there, in the first half right before the end of the half, when he got tackled on their sideline over there. [He] kind of came in, got it looked at, came out after the half to try to test it out, and just didn’t feel like he was going to be able to be functional enough to help us win.”

(On if it was a high-ankle sprain)

“I don’t know that. I know it’s an ankle sprain, I haven’t gotten into all of the details as to what it is.”

(On the players that got pulled out for knee injuries)

“Nephi [Sewell] has a pretty significant knee injury that he’s going to miss significant time with. Landon [Young], I think it’s the same knee he hurt earlier in the training camp, so very similar situation with him. I have to get all my injury report, but I know that was a couple that were pretty significant.”

(On T Cameron Ervin stepping in and replacing T Landon Young)

“Obviously, when you’re watching the offense, it’s much more difficult to see everything that’s happening inside. Usually, if I don’t hear his name being said, then I’m assuming he’s doing some pretty decent things. I didn’t hear his name [being] called out a lot so, nothing stood out to me like, ‘Ah, that was not good.’ So, I’m assuming that he at least stepped in and did a decent job.”

(On the key to slowing down the Buccaneers Offensive)

“The biggest thing for this game was we had to win the line of scrimmage. We had to win the line of scrimmage on offense, we had to win the line of scrimmage on defense. Our OL [Offensive Line] and our DL [Defensive Line] had to play well for us for us to have a chance to win this game. Like I said earlier, it wasn’t perfect, but I thought, overall, we were able to make enough plays up-front on both sides of the ball to do enough to win the line of scrimmage, to give ourselves a chance to win.”

(On what went wrong in the final minutes)

“We can’t let the ball get over our heads. We didn’t play as well as we needed to in those two instances. That’s why when you look at the game you say, ‘Well it wasn’t perfect.’ So, we’ve got to go back, make the corrections, [and] we got to fix that because that’s inexcusable to let the ball go over your head. When you get in those situations, you’ve been playing well for such a long time during it one way, don’t change how you’re playing. There’s that fine line of, ‘Well am I just going to play soft and easy and let them throw the ball underneath? Or am I going to play the way I’ve been playing for the last 58 minutes?’ So, we’ll look at it and our guys will learn from it.”

QUARTERBACK DEREK CARR

(On the need to start fast)

“We needed to start fast against this team. They’re leading the division – excellent on defense. [Head] Coach [Dennis Allen] challenged us this week. He challenged us individually [and] he challenged us as a team – certain units. So, getting that score early, I think just lit everybody up. [Tight end] Juwan [Johnson] made a great, tough catch – tight window. Had to take a hit for us, he did, and I think that ignited everybody. I really do. The belief – it’s one thing to keep being positive. But, when it comes to fruition, I think the belief gets higher.”

(On his on-field connection with TE Juwan Johnson)

“I thought we began to do things nice and see certain things and then he gets hurt. Then you saw [quarterback] Taysom [Hill] step up and fill that role – how many catches he’s had – can’t remember - the Houston [Texans] game and so on and so forth. But, making big plays for me and for us - especially down in the redzone again today. I think you’ve seen that position and that role get filled by Taysom and other guys. Then, Juwan comes back healthy and his role is his role. When the plays are dialed to him, he’s able to make those plays. None bigger than the one down the middle to get us out of [being] backed up. To catch that and make a front flip, one of the best safeties in the league hitting him, that was unbelievable.”

(On if his early chemistry in training camp with Juwan Johnson affects their play now)

“Yeah, absolutely. [Juwan Johnson] is another guy, that when the defense is doing their thing and I’m doing my extra work, he’s down there catching balls for me. He’s down there working with me – getting me extra reps. We threw that route, I think, three or four times extra on that left side in practice. We felt like we didn’t really like it and we needed to work on it. Man, he catches it – catches a touchdown today. So, we’re always working at that chemistry. It’s never perfect. This is NFL football – it’s never going to be perfect. But, we definitely rely on all those reps we’ve had together, for sure.”

(On Dennis Allen saying his play has been better since he has been healthier)

“You know me, man. I can’t make an excuse or because I’ve been playing well. ‘Oh, yeah. My shoulder – I feel better.’ I do feel better – I can always be honest with you. I do feel better. But, I’ll let [Dennis Allen] and other guys [can] talk on that.”

(On the touchdown pass to Taysom Hill)

“Well, he did a great job of using help to get a pick. Taysom’s so fast that he got the guy in a trail position and I was able to not overthrow him – just give him a ball that he can react to. He made an outstanding play and I’m thankful he landed in the endzone.”

(On being able to get fullback Adam Prentice a carry after his fumble last week)

“Yeah, that was awesome. I’m not going to lie to you, when I went to hand that ball [off], that’s usually [running back Alvin Kamara] back there. When I went [back], I was like, ‘Adam!’ – and he took off. It was a huge run for us to take some time off of the clock. But, I know for his confidence, too, he was probably thinking of the last time he played these guys. I even told [running backs coach] Joel [Thomas] on the sideline that was huge for [Prentice] to be in there for that play and have that opportunity to show – because I’m sure he was thinking of the last game. Just like I was thinking of the last game. I think I was fresh off the Green Bay [Packers] game. I was very frustrated with certain things with things I could and couldn’t do. So, it’s always good to win a division game to get back at somebody and get a win because they got after us the first time.”

(On players stepping up to combat the loss of Landon Young and Alvin Kamara)

“Those are two guys, you know, again you can’t just replace guys. You know, Landon [Young] and AK [Alvin Kamara] are great teammates, great players, great people for our locker room and for our team and I thought that Cam [Erving] stepped up huge for us coming in in that role. He’s done that before for us in the season and he’s played well. I thought he did a great job. I thought Jamaal [Williams] stepping up - that’s no shock to me - Jamaal’s, you know, one of the best running backs - power running backs that you’re going to find. And he’s one of the most enthusiastic – he’s a different cat, but he’s one of my favorite teammates I’ve ever had because of his love for, not only the game, but his love for his teammates. You know, he tells us all the time ‘I’m going to run through someone’s face for y’all, this ain’t for me.’ You know, and when you have a guy like that you can always go to bat with him and Taysom [Hill] could probably talk about him even more, you know, with the years they spent together, but the short time I’ve been with him, he brightens my day every time I see him and to see him get a lot of carries, make some tough yards for us today, against a really good run defense, I thought he did a good job.”

(On Jonathan Abrams’s successful performance)

“I was so happy. You know, we obviously were together with the Raiders. I’ve seen his development, I’ve seen his growth, and I’m more proud of who he’s become off the field and the type of man he’s become, you know, the type of father he wants to be. You know, as much growth as he’s made on the field, off the field he’s done even better and I’m so proud of that because he’s worked hard at it. I thank God for him because he’s a great teammate, you know, even though on the scout team sometimes he’s a saboteur and it is what it is because that’s Jon. You know, but when he got his chance he made a lot of great plays.”

(On team “playoff mentality” mindset)

“We’re still alive playing for something – job’s not done. You know, one of my favorite - my favorite athlete of all time, that’s one of his most famous quotes. You know, ‘job’s not finished.’ So until we run out of time I’m going to keep believing, I’m going to keep working. We can’t feel satisfied because we have to win. You know, we came in with the expectation to win, we had to win, we did, it feels good, but we have to play another team that we didn’t beat this year. And so I’m looking forward to that matchup and we’ll start on them as soon as we can.”

(On success against the Buccaneers defensive pressure)

“That was some of the most - that was the saw capital of the world today. They were bringing every form of corner, nickel, you know, safeties, and, you know, base linebackers, SAM, WILL, inside pressure, outside pressure, picks, stunts, and our guys didn’t give up a sack. I know it says one on that sheet, that was my fault I thought I threw it away. So I want to credit our offensive line with an amazing job that they did. You know, our two offensive line coaches with the plan that they gave us. Because, you know, when they give us a plan and

we go out there and execute it, it's awesome when you come away with those results. Because that's really tough to do against this team. They have a lot of disguises, they hide their pressures better than anybody else, they do a fantastic job, and they've played a lot of football together, you can tell. So, to come out of that with one sack, which was my fault, but none by the offensive line, that's an amazing feat that they had and they deserve a lot of credit.

SAFETY JOHNATHAN ABRAM

(On studying week in and week out.)

"I'm gradually growing as a player and I mean, the only way that you have any real thing, in life, is you have to put the time and effort in. So, I mean, that's kind of why I prepare the same because I never know – or anybody never knows – when your moment is going to come. So, first, I'll got to thank God for the moment. He gave me the opportunity to showcase everything that I've been learning because I haven't been the guy to soak in the moment of me being on the practice squad and any of those things. So, I kind of just show up the same, I study the same. So, from those moments, I study hard just so I can try to help the guys in the room make plays. So, when I was over there with the iPad and the pencil, I was taking notes. You know, charting the routes and things of that nature to try to help them be a step faster. Just trying to do my 1/11th."

(On what he saw this week that allowed them to lock-in this game.)

"Well, the coaches have done an amazing job of giving us the information of what they like to do and preparing us for really good gameplan to take away what they do best and make them play with their left hand. So, I think that was the biggest thing."

(On being a player waiting for his opportunity.)

"It's like any other thing in life. You've just got to put your faith in God and know that he will bring you through on the other side because it's not something easy to handle. We all want to be out there. We all want what we want out of life. Sometimes that doesn't align with what God has in store for you. So, you kind of just have to trust in Him and just do your part, just do your work and know that God is going to bring you through."

QUARTERBACK TAYSOM HILL

(On his touchdown reception)

"Yeah, I mean Derek [Carr] described it very well. We came out, we knew it was man [coverage], and that's what you're kind of hoping for when you're in my position. We had a nice natural pick and Derek gave me a good ball. That was it."

(On getting the tight ends involved and what it does for their offense)

"I don't know. I guess, typically, at the tight end role, you're catching balls over the middle and some of those balls typically end up being high-percentage throws. I look at some of the receptions that we had in that room today and I felt like a lot of them moved the chain, so that was fun to see. And I think it was also one of those things [where] you don't know who it's going to be when you are playing the Saints offensively – is it going to be outside, 'Sheed' (Rashid Shaheed), Chris [Olave], Lynn [Bowden Jr.], A.T. [Perry], or are we going to have the guys inside in the tight end room and running backs? So, we have a lot of weapons and [there were] a lot of opportunities for the tight ends today."

(On if this was their most complete game of the season)

“Yeah, I think that’s fair – offensive, defensive, special teams. It felt like it was a really clean game – defense forced four turnovers. You have a defense that creates four turnovers, and we don’t turn it over. Special teams played a clean game, and man, it was great from every aspect.”

TIGHT END JUWAN JOHNSON

(On how conversations with Dennis Allen challenging him)

“They were tough conversations. Whether I liked it or not, I had to receive it. He’s our head coach and he challenged me and that’s something I had to take full on. He knows that I haven’t had the year that I necessarily wanted, haven’t been performing the way I wanted to. He challenged me and those are some tough times, it’s been a rough couple of weeks. I’ve leaned on my family, I’ve leaned on my teammates, I’ve leaned on the coaches, a bunch in the last few weeks and its really paid off. God is good. I’m at this point right now. I’m performing now to what my capabilities are. There is still meat left on the bone. I still feel like there is more that I could be doing. I missed the pass later on in the second quarter that could have got us into some scoring positions, so there is definitely still meat on the bone that I can get. I feel like I’m just only touching the surface and there is more for me to do.”

(On how he capitalized on an opportunity to prevail during the game)

“The opportunity was given, and I just had to capitalize on it. That’s really what it was, just opportunity, preparation, attitude, just all of it kind of mixed together. Obviously, it is what it is, but right now the opportunities are given and I’m just trying to capitalize on them.”

(On his attitude towards being challenged by Coach Dennis Allen)

“Whatever is private, always comes to light. The gameplan will reflect it, whatever the case might be. I was challenged and it was really about my attitude. It was really about how my teammates would see it, and that’s really how the approach that I had. If I’m being challenged, they are going to see me and see how I react to it. That’s something I really wanted to show my teammates, how I reacted to it and how I took it. It only caused me to work harder, it only caused me to study a bit harder, stay a little bit longer, show up a little bit earlier. It’s just the attitude I have to have. I know I’m a guy that tries to do all the right things. When you try to do all the right things, it’s a matter of doing the right things, better. So that’s the one thing I try to do.”

(On what went right during Sunday’s game)

“Everything was clicking, everything worked out. The defense was playing lights out and the offense was playing really well. Just from the first drive, we were hitting on all cylinders. That’s the good thing about it. When we have two positive plays starting off, to start the drive, just any drive, it’s really going to end up being a positive outcome. That’s what we tried to do, get first downs. Just try to have positive plays. There wasn’t a lot of negative plays in that first drive. So the way it happened, scored a touchdown, we were seven up, so we are feeling good, and have the defense feeling good, knowing that they could play from ahead.

BUCCANEERS POSTGAME QUOTES 12-31-23

HEAD COACH TODD BOWLES

(On what went wrong today)

“Our coaches have got to come up with a better gameplan on both sides of the ball, and the players have to play it better. We were off kilter from the start. They did a good job manufacturing a drive down the field keeping us off balance. They did a good job getting turnovers. They did what they were supposed to do, and came in here to do it, and we didn’t.”

(On the lack of pressure on Saints QB Derek Carr)

“We had to stop it because the ball was coming out pretty quick. He wasn’t holding the ball long enough for us to get the pass rush, so we tried to cover. I didn’t think in the first half we tackled well when the ball was dumped down there. I thought they cleaned it up some in the second half.”

(On the sense of urgency coming into today’s game with a chance to clinch the NFC South division title)

“[There] was still urgency – they just played better than us, you know? They played better than us, they executed better than us, they won the turnover battle. Usually when you do those types of things in the games that we play against them, you win the game.”

(On not getting WR Mike Evans more involved)

“They did a good job of taking away Mike and Chris [Godwin] early on. They disguised it well and they ran guys over to him. If it looked like he was there, it wasn’t there. And they did a good job beating us up front at the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball.”

(On how well can the Buccaneers put today’s loss behind them and move forward to getting a win next week against Carolina)

“We have to. It’ll sink in today. Obviously, we know we have to win next week. We weren’t trying to bring it to next week. Obviously, we wanted to win the one today. We didn’t win the one today. We have to come back on Tuesday, and we have to be really focused. We’ve got to be ready, and we have to execute. [It] doesn’t matter who we played today – a good team, a bad team, a college team, a high school team – we wouldn’t have won the game.”

(On the performance of CB Zyon McCollum)

“I honestly have to watch the film. I really didn’t see him that much today, but I’ll check the film.”

(On the status of QB Baker Mayfield)

“He went back out there. Obviously, it was a late hit. I’ve got to look at the film again to see what happened to him, but he went back out there after he got hurt. So, we’ll see how he feels.”

(On the productivity of Saints tight ends Juwan Johnson and Taysom Hill)

“Like I said, we didn’t tackle well underneath coverage. We had leverage – we didn’t tackle well.”

(On his message to the team)

“We definitely stunk it up as coaches. We stunk it up as players. We didn’t play up to our standard. We’re trying to win our division and we didn’t win one. We have another chance next week and we [need to] come back Tuesday ready to work. By any means necessary, we have to show up Sunday.”

(On why he thinks the Saints defense has found success against the Buccaneers at Raymond James Stadium the last few years)

"It's not just us. They play like that against everybody if you watch them. They have a hell of a defense. They have some guys over there that can make plays. Dennis (Allen) does a good job scheming us up. We've just got to do a better job of executing."

QUARTERBACK BAKER MAYFIELD

(On how he feels after the late hit towards the end of that game)

"Ribs don't feel too great right now. X-rays, as of right now, are negative so that's good but we'll do more exams to see what's really bugging me. But, don't have anything right now besides just sore."

(On how this is the second game that he's been hit late by the Saints)

"Yeah, it was one of those late scramble plays that – you know, last second throwing the ball the Chris [Godwin], obviously. Yeah, they're going to take hits. They're a physical team. They played that way today. They hit us right in the mouth from the get-go. So, not exactly the mentality that we wanted to come out with. Needed to be the more physical team and we weren't today."

(On why the offense had trouble clicking today)

"I think there's many reasons. But, starting with physicality like I just mentioned. We've just got to execute better. I think there was – I think when we look back at the tape, a lot of little things and the things we were doing well, we didn't today. And it starts – you know, timing on some of the past game stuff up front and the run game. Like I said, they were more physical today and they threw us off our tempo."

(On if the Buccaneers didn't have the same urgency as they did in recent games)

"I wouldn't say that. I think we prepared great all week. I think mentality-wise, preparation – we were great. We just didn't come out and bring it to Sunday. Didn't translate. And so, can't have that. We've got to be able to show up when we need it. But luckily, we have one more game to seal this thing. Once again, back's against the wall. So, somewhere we've been before and we've got to get it fixed and move forward."

(On his message to the team this week)

"Same thing. One-game-at-a-time mentality. It doesn't change for us. We've got to win this next game in Carolina to win the division and go from there. All you need is to get a chance to get in and we're still sitting right where we need to be. Obviously, would've loved to have done it today with two games left, but it didn't happen. So, one-game mentality and our season is on the line."

(On what was different to cause four turnovers this game)

"Yeah, the first one – I've got to give Trey [Palmer] a better chance to run under it. One-on-one ball – Alontae Taylor made a hell of a play, to be honest with you. And the other one, just a horrible throw. I didn't get my feet over to the right side. I think I'll see the footwork on that when I watch the film and see if that was probably the main issue. And then we've just got to take care of it. Obviously, Rachaad [White] was trying to make a big play. They swarm to the ball. They're a physical defense. They rallied to the ball so we've got to take care of it too."

(On how hard it was for things to work today)

“Yeah, it’s just one of those days where nothing seems to get going. And then when we had a chance – yeah, couldn’t get it. One of those days where you look at it and see the things that went wrong and be like ‘Alright, we’ve got to get it fixed. Here’s where it went wrong’ and move on.”

(On needed to bounce back quickly)

“Yeah, everything we did to bounce back from our midseason lull – we put ourselves in a position to win the division, so it’s still right in front of us. This hurts because, like I said, we would have loved to have done it at home. But, didn’t get it done so we’ll have to next week on the road.”

(On if a win against the Panthers will be sentimental for him)

“My mentality playing against the Panthers – the guys in the locker room are great. For other reasons, I’ll be extremely motivated to play. Obviously, the division is on the line. There’s many things. Everyone in our locker room should be motivated, not just me, personally.”

(On how tough it is to play with sore ribs as a quarterback.)

“It’ll get easier throughout the week. The first few days are always the worst. I’ve had a few broken ribs here and there and obviously, like I said, nothing showed to that extent as of right now so yeah, I’ll be able to deal with it and go from there.”

LINEBACKER LAVONTE DAVID

(On the disappointment of today’s performance and result)

“Very disappointing. It was like we didn’t know what was at stake. We came out very flat on both sides of the ball. It’s something that we’ve got to take to the chin. They came out and beat us. We’ve definitely got to get better. Learn from it and get better next week.”

(On what the New Orleans Saints did right today)

“You’ve got to give them their props, they won the game. But at the end of the day, we didn’t play our best on both sides of the ball. We came out very flat and [weren’t] executing. It’s disappointing for me to say, but we [weren’t] ready today. I don’t know for what reason. With everything at stake, we weren’t ready today. I wasn’t ready as a leader to get everybody ready and going. We’re definitely going to have to get ready for next week. That’s the good thing about it is we’ve got another opportunity next week and we’re going to learn from this one.”

(On what needs to be corrected to be ready to go next week vs. the Carolina Panthers)

“It’s just knowing you only get these opportunities once in a lifetime. All of these opportunities don’t come around often. You’ve got to know what’s at stake. We’ve just got to be better, man. We’ve just got to be better. You can’t take this stuff for granted. We worked so hard to get here and we just let it go like that. We can’t allow that to happen. We’ve got to learn from this, look ourselves in the mirror this week, be better, come out better next week and have a better showing.”

(On getting the sense of urgency back)

“It’s a one-game season. We can get it back ASAP – we’ve just got to go back to the drawing board. Get back to us being us. [The things that] had us on that four-game winning streak – us playing with swagger and us executing on both sides of the ball. We’ve got to get back to that.”

WIDE RECEIVER MIKE EVANS

(On how much the magnitude of this game weighed on his mind)

“Not mine. It didn’t weigh on my mind at all. I was coming out here hoping we would play some great ball like we have been. The Saints stopped us. They played great today.”

(On if he thought the loss was due to self-inflicted errors)

“It was definitely a lot of self-inflicted errors, but they definitely were the more physical team today. A lot of cloud coverage over top of me for the majority of the game. I was able to make some plays when I got one-on-one [coverage], but it wasn’t much.”

(On re-gaining momentum going into a must win game next week)

“Keep working. You know, we wanted to win this one really bad, and it didn’t happen. Fortunately, for us, we have a chance to clinch the division next week against a very scrappy team. I know their record doesn’t show it, but they’re really scrappy, so we have to come with it next week.”

(On if there is something the New Orleans Saints do that makes it difficult to move the ball)

“They’re very sound. They’re very sound. They’re smart on defense. When they play zone, they’re talking out there, they’re communicating. They’re very physical and they’re nasty.”

RUNNING BACK RACHAAD WHITE

(On trying to create momentum after falling behind early in the game)

“That’s just very hard. That’s just very rare – we had zero [points] going into the fourth quarter. I mean, sometimes you [have] to just charge it to the game. Like, you just have them days at the end of the day. Unfortunately for us, we had a bad game at a bad time.”

(On having another opportunity next week to win the NFC South)

“And that’s all we can ask for. That’s all you can ask for in life is an opportunity, so we are going to do our best to do what we need to do this week to prepare. We know [the] Carolina [Panthers] [are not] going to be pushovers either. Like you said, it’s a division game, and they [are] going to come out swinging. We just have to make sure we swing first.”

(On how he plans to personally hit the reset button)

“Honestly, everything I was just saying. You have got to understand that it happened. You [are not always] going to have a great game or a good game. I was on a good stretch. I was on a good run and now defenses are on me. I have to do a better job at just looking, seeing how people are going to play me, and things like that. But, also understanding that losses come with the game and come with the territory. Like you said, we have another huge opportunity. That’s all that matters is the next opportunity.”

(On the message after the game)

“The message was really just look in the mirror. At the end of the day, you [have] to reassess. You [have] to look at the mistakes you made. After you look at that, you have to keep pushing, you have to keep fighting. I mean, we can’t really dwell. So yes, after we correct what needs to be corrected, you [have] to move on to the next opportunity.”

SAFETY ANTOINE WINFIELD JR.

(On the mindset of the team heading into next week)

"[The] mindset [is] win and we're in. We know it's a must win for us to get into the playoffs and that's going to be our mindset, right there."

(On his thoughts following Sunday's loss)

"Just get better and get ready for next week. That's all I'm thinking about – just making sure we are prepared next week to go ahead and win because, you know, it's a big game for us."

(On why the team came out flat on Sunday)

"It just happens – it's football. They came out and executed, and we didn't. So that's just what happened today."