



NEW ORLEANS
SAINTS

POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES
GREG BENSEL + SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
SUNDAY, SEPT. 9, 2018 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the loss, the Saints start the regular season 0-1. The last time the Saints won a home opener was on September 8, 2013 against the Atlanta Falcons. The Saints return to action on Sunday, Sept. 16 when they play the Cleveland Browns at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. Kickoff is set for 12:00 p.m. CST. The game will be aired on FOX (WVUE-FOX 8 in the New Orleans area).
- Today's score marks the most points scored on opening weekend in NFL history with a total of 88 points, the previous record was 87, when the Eagles defeated the Redskins 45-42 on September 28, 1947.
- The Saints loss moves New Orleans' all-time record against the Buccaneers to 32-21.
- The Saints currently have a streak of 257 regular season games without having been shut out, dating back to a 26-20 win at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on September 6, 2002 at Raymond James Stadium, the longest running streak in the National Football League.
- Tampa Bay out gained New Orleans 529-475.
- **T Terron Armstead**, QB **Drew Brees**, LB **Demario Davis**, DE **Cameron Jordan**, LB **Craig Robertson** and C **Max Unger** served as team captains today, voted upon by their teammates.
- Eight players made their Saints playing debuts today and three rookies made their NFL debuts.
- QB **Drew Brees**, completed 37-of-45 passes for a total of 439 yards, three touchdowns and a 129.5 passer rating. Brees' 28-yard touchdown to Ted Ginn Jr. gives him the most touchdown passes in season-opening games in NFL history with 35, surpassing Peyton Manning (34). Brees played in his 250th career game today. The only other quarterbacks in NFL history to play in 250 career games are George Blanda (340), Brett Favre (302), Peyton Manning (266), Earl Morrall (255) and Tom Brady (253). He became the 17th player overall to appear in 250 career regular season games. Today marks Brees' 249th career start. Only Favre (298), Manning (265) and Brady (251) have started more games.
- It was Brees' 100th regular season contest with at least a 100.0 passer rating since 2006, the most in the NFL during that timeframe.
- With his second quarter 28-yard touchdown pass to WR **Ted Ginn Jr.**, Brees surpassed Peyton Manning for the most season-opening game touchdown passes (35). He finishes the 2018 season opener with 37 touchdowns.
- The passing yardage total was Brees' NFL-record 16th career 400-yard passing game, his league-best 58th 350-yard passing game and his NFL-best 110th 300-yard passing game.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** rushed for 29 yards on eight carries, with two rushing touchdowns, successful run for a two-point conversion and through the air added nine catches for a career-high 112 yards and one touchdown. It was his first career-three touchdown game.
- WR **Michael Thomas** finished with franchise-record 16 catches for a team-high 180 receiving yards, marking his fourth 100-yard game of his career and his single-game career high in receiving yards. Thomas also reeled in a six-yard touchdown catch. Thomas now has 2,562 career receiving yards, becoming the 16th Saint with 2,500 receiving yards. Thomas also broke the Saints single game receptions record previously held by Tony Galbreath (14 vs. Green Bay on September 10, 1978). The 180-yard receiving total is tied for fourth in club record books.
- As Kamara and Thomas each had 100-yards receiving, it was the 18th dual 100-yards receiving game in franchise history.
- WR **Ted Ginn Jr.** hauled in a 28-yard touchdown, marking his 30th career touchdown catch. Ginn finished with five receptions for 68 yards and a two-point conversion reception.
- TE **Benjamin Watson** recorded four catches for a total of 44 yards, surpassing Steve Jordan, the father of Cameron Jordan, moving into a tie with Ben Coates and Todd Heap for 14th all-time in career receptions for a tight end (499).
- G **Josh LeRibeus** started today at left guard, making his first start as a Saint.
- LB **Demario Davis** made his debut as a Saint today. Davis led the Saints defense with eight total tackles (five solo).
- DE **Cameron Jordan** played in his 113th consecutive game today and overall, the second-longest games played streak for defensive ends behind Carolina's Julius Peppers. Jordan finished the game with six total tackles and one pass defensed.

- S **Kurt Coleman** made his debut as a Saint today, recording three tackles, to reach 500 career stops for his career.
- K **Wil Lutz** completed a 36-yard field goal.
- P **Thomas Morstead** punted three times for 156 total yards (52.0 gross avg. and 45.7 net avg.) with a long of 58 yards. Morstead played in his 143rd career game today, putting him in a tie for 16th place on the club's all-time games played list with wide receiver Eric Martin (1985-93).
- S **Chris Banjo** and DB **Justin Hardee** tied for the team lead with two special teams stops each.



TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
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SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

(Opening Statement) “We did not do well. Number one, third down numbers were not good again. They were not last year when we lost to them in Tampa. Obviously, the two turnovers we had, and zero takeaways on the other side (were a major factor). That’s not the type of game that suits us and that’s the type of game we’ve played in years past as a .500 team. We have a lot of work to do and a lot of things to correct. We had way too many mistakes, and we struggled with explosives (plays on offense) that they had and we have to get cleaned up. Obviously, it starts with me and our staff and we didn’t do a good job. We will look at the tape tomorrow and start again next week.”

(On defensively what didn’t work) “Take your pick. We did not hurry the passer. Guys were open. Third downs were awful. They had over 500 yards. We didn’t disrupt the timing to any element of the passing game and too many penalties. I can’t think of any positives.”

(On the Michael Thomas play where it appeared that he might be untouched) “That’s not the frustration right now. It’s not going to be a perfect game.”

(On anything being able to happen in this league on any day) “That is true, and you just say it happens, so there isn’t any butts after it. You have to come ready to play in this league, period. And I give credit to Tampa where their quarterback played especially well. I thought the offensive line played well and I don’t know how many times on third downs he was able to get out of the pocket, even on that last drive.”

(On defense playing better last year against Tampa at home) “Nothing from last year carries over to this year, I’ve said it a million times. There’s not a single thing that carries over.”

(On the disorganization in communication) “Listen, there were guys playing their technique. At times, technique was poor and we got beat at the line of scrimmage. They have some talented players, but I wouldn’t equate it to that. I thought the quarterback for the most part was pressure-free, and that’s going to be tough. If he’s pressure-free then the receivers are running through the defense and that makes it doubly hard. Somewhere you have to disrupt the timing of the pass.”

(On Tampa having big plays) “Listen, just giving a good quarterback in this league time to throw and (then) you have talented receivers is not a good combination.”

(On some of the plays in the third quarter and how thing went quickly then) “I’m thinking of our time of possession which went by pretty quick. Obviously, we will check the tape. We had one series that was a run, then a screen, and then it was a third down so we punted. I’d have to go back and look at it to be specific. You want to avoid a game that becomes one where you are calling it like you have to score each series. That becomes difficult, but sometimes when you’re in those games that’s what you have to do. We didn’t score enough.”

(On Ryan Fitzpatrick having a late third down conversion) “He played well. The stop was difficult, especially that last one.”

(On pass defense not coming together as well) “It’s not like we’re taking last year’s group and (last year’s) numbers. Tampa Bay came ready and they put it to us. They put it to us good.”

(On players being professional and insulating them from talk about being favorites and talk about winning big) “I think that this is part of being a professional. We still have focus on the job we have to do and we’re playing good teams. It’s different from college football and this is each week a battle and we know that.”

(On Ryan Fitzpatrick catching them off guard with his ability to run) “He’s done that pretty much his whole career. He’s been pretty effective to climb and get a first down. He’s not exceptionally fast but someone who is willing to run, especially when he sees the right coverages. We have to do a better of job of keeping them contained in the pocket.”



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TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS HEAD COACH DIRK KOETTER

(On if there was a way to forecast that Ryan Fitzpatrick would have that kind of game) “He’s got it in him. You saw it. His demeanor is always so laid back. You never know if he’s up or down...It’s just like practice during the game, even though he is aware of what is going on. I think that is one of the benefits of having a guy with his experience. Fitz is just a solid, solid guy. He is not going to let too much rattle him.”

(On how the Bucs took momentum when Ryan Fitzpatrick was able to hit so many receivers with passes over-the-top) “It does a lot, especially when they (the Saints) come down and ram it right down the field on us. To go out and answer and get that first one (score) was big. That first drive was huge. I thought that Fitz did an awesome job of just giving guys a chance just to make plays. We had one in the third quarter where he overthrew Mike (Evans) when #23 (Marshon Lattimore) fell down. Other than that, all of our other balls down the field, he gave those guys a chance to make plays and they did. Two of them, (Chris) Godwin, the one over the middle and two to O.J. (Howard) (when) guys were hanging all over him. Those were both pretty plays. Those are the plays O.J. makes in practice.”

(On protection of the quarterback today) “Everything starts with protection. Protection beats coverage. We talked about that all week. Protection beats coverage.”

(On Ryan Fitzpatrick making the right reads to receivers) “He’s got rules built in based upon what the coverage is. (The Saints) did a good job disguising because we had a couple of things on where if Fitz had to do it over again, he would’ve been on the other side. That’s the game within the game. That is the beauty of the NFL with those hash-marks close together, disguise is a big part of it.”

(On Ryan Fitzpatrick’s running ability) “He is over 2,000 yards in his career. You notice when he is taking a knee on victory (formation), he isn’t going backwards. He is very proud of that 2,000 (yards).”

(On what changed defensively for the team to take control) “The turnover touchdown (on Mike Gillislee’s fumble). I think that was (a turning point). We were talking on the headphones. At one point, one of the coaches said, ‘It looks like it’s going to be a trap game.’ We said on the phones right then, ‘Ok, what happens in a trap game? Turnovers are what decide it.’ That’s about what happened.”

(On who called the play offensively) “You guys were there. You guys were at the game We ran the Buc offense.”

(On what a win like this today does for the team) “We’ve got a whole new set of problems starting here in a few hours. To win on the road against a division team, NFL team, in a place like this, against a team like that, against a quarterback like that, that is huge. That is a huge way to start your season. I do not think that anyone in here was picking us. So, are you kidding me? That’s a huge plus. They’re all tough. We’ve got to figure out a way to do it better, different some way. (We) need to find a way to do it again next week. Philly (Philadelphia) they don’t care about that game (today).”

(On DeSean Jackson’s fast start today) “First play he got the ball out there on the flat. Then, the two over-the-top. That is what Jason (Licht) brought him (in) for.”



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QB DREW BREES

(On losing the first game of the season) “The loss is disappointing. Obviously, there are some things out there on both sides of the ball that we all feel like we can improve upon and be better at. Obviously, the difference between winning and losing (is thin). I think there were some unfortunate penalties today that stopped drives for us offensively and continued drives for our defense. When you look at the final score and you get to go back and see the impact of some of those, those are significant and make the difference between winning and losing. So, maybe we can get better in some areas and just understand that if we want to put ourselves in the best position to win, we have got to fix these things.”

(On the offense having to pick up the pace to come back late in the game) “It really does not change our mentality at all. We still go out there with the same intent, that is great execution, great poise, tempo, mixing the run and pass. We expect to score on every drive. Regardless of what is happening on the other side of the ball, we are always focused on scoring points and if we don’t, then let’s put our defense in the best position with punting them down deep into their territory and making that a challenging thing.”

(On there being a wake-up call after a week one loss) “Listen, we understand we have some areas that we need to improve upon, but regardless of a lot of things if you just look at it, we gave them a touchdown, with that turnover, and we turned the ball over another time when we were in a position to get points; a minimum of three points, potentially more. That is a ten-point swing, so despite all the other stuff, a ten-point swing in this game is a huge deal. That wins the game for us.”

(On having to score a lot in the second half with the deficit) “We kind of got the feeling that was the way the game was going, but again that does not affect our mentality offensively. Until you get into a position where it’s the fourth quarter and it is 48-24 and now you have to score quick, but prior to that it was just methodical. When we get the ball, let’s possess it, move the chains, get points and play complementary football.”



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SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

DE CAMERON JORDAN

(On the game today) "They made more big plays than we did. As a defense, you never want to give up 41 points. That's on the defensive line That's on me. We got a wakeup call for sure. The good thing for us is that it is week one. We can adjust this. It's early."

(On Ryan Fitzpatrick's performance) "He stepped through the pocket. He rolled out. He made a lot of plays with his feet. It's something that you have to be aware of. I said earlier this week that he is deceptively fast. We had it in the gameplan to take care of that, but he did a great job."

(On if he is surprised at the defensive results this afternoon) "At the end of the day, it is the NFL. There are 32 teams comprised of 53 players that are giving it their all every week. We have to gel as a defense now. It is one thing to be the preseason, but we are facing live bullets. We are in the thick of things. We have to address ourselves of who we exactly that we want to be. The 48 points we allowed today was unacceptable."

SS KURT COLEMAN

(On their wide receivers) "I think we match up well with who they have. I would take our guys over their guys. Honestly, we didn't make plays. We shouldn't blow this out of the portion. They made plays, but we needed to make more. That's the bottom line. At the end, somebody wins and somebody loses."

(On the long plays today on offense) "Watching their film, they take a good amount of shots down field. We have seen it. It is just about someone winning and someone losing. Unfortunately, we came up a few plays short this time."

DT SHELDON RANKINS

(On Ryan Fitzpatrick) "He was able to convert a lot of (first) downs for his team and that put them in positions where they could be successful. It's clearly something that we are going to have to go back and review on this tape. We have Cleveland coming in next week with Tyrod Taylor who is a little more elusive than Ryan Fitzpatrick. If Cleveland is going to be watching this tape, then they are going to be salivating. We have to get this cleaned up."

(On comparing the start today to that of last season) "We have been here. Nothing brings guys together like adversity. We went up and lost to Minnesota and then New England came in here and put 500+ yards up on us. It is not new territory. It is not something that we want to deal with this early in the season. The great thing about this game is that you get another week to go out and try to prove yourself again. We will go back to the drawing board and review this tape. We will get ready to play next week."

WR MICHAEL THOMAS

(On if he is surprised) "We just have to get back work and correct our mistakes, watch the film, be honest with ourselves and take coaching in. We just have to respond and get back to playing Saints football."

(On not being touched for the non-touchdown) "It was hard. You want to put points on the board for your team. You want to help out the defense. You want to contribute and add value. I felt like we let one get away."

(On his dropped pass) "It was one drop. It was very uncharacteristic. I have to be completely honest with myself, so it doesn't happen again. We'll correct it."

CB MARSHON LATTIMORE

(On the disappointing start) "We do not want to start out like this. I do not know why we start slow every year. We need to step it up and start playing better. They won all the 50-50 balls. They beat us. We didn't get the job done. We just have to go back and watch the film. We have to get it right."

(On comparing the start to last year) "We don't want to start it out like this. We know we have the firepower on offense and defense to turn it around. We have to get it together. The offense carried us. We didn't create any turnovers. We can't lose if our offense is going to score 40 points."



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TAMPA BAY PLAYERS

#13 WR MIKE EVANS

(On after such a frustrating season last year, what does it mean to come on the road against a division rival and play this well across the board) "It means we're 1 and 0. We're going to enjoy this, watch some film, correct the things we need to correct. We have Philly the reigning super bowl champs coming in to our house next weekend so we need to prepare well for them."

(On what the team showed and what they think they will do the rest of the season) "There's a huge amount of talent on this team on both sides of the ball. When they're lined up 1 on 1 across the board, I like our odds. We've got the tight ends. We've got the backs. We've got the O-line. Everybody's making plays."

(On Deshaun Jackson's play) "Awesome. Like I said before I hope somebody hands him the pigskin. And he was running the ball. It was one of the most complete games I've seen."

(On if he was surprised about the result today) "Absolutely not. When I was speaking to the team, I said we had an awesome training camp and preseason. Now let's just carry it over and take it to the next level. We did that."

(On if he was surprised about the score) "I mean you don't usually see that often in NFL games but I wanted to hang 50. We should've had that. We'll work on that. We missed a couple of plays out there. We hit most of our plays. There were a couple of plays we could've had back."

(On his matchup with Marshon Lattimore) "It was a lot of 1 on 1 coverage. I like my odds. Like I said, against anybody, not just him. I worked hard this preseason and this week. Scout team gave a great look all week and I had a solid game."

#80 TE O.J. HOWARD

(On the play-calling) "We mixed it up. We know the Saints gameplan pretty well. So we can practice the trick plays, some stretch plays and trips right, our opportunities are going to come. And when they come, we can take advantage. We did a great job today."

(On being 1-0, while everyone wants to talk about the first three games without Jameis Winston) "Right. That's all that matters. Play one game at a time. It's hard to come on the road and win a game in the NFL. I'm so proud of our team for competing and to get a road win today."

(On how this offense can play moving forward) "We can be very special. You saw so many guys got involved today in the passing game. O-line played great. We run blocked. Everybody gave good effort. Our group is so special and I just think everyone has to keep doing the little things right and it's only up from here."

#14 QB RYAN FITZPATRICK

(Opening Statement) "It was a lot of fun to score on virtually every possession. It had nothing to do with who we were going against. You could see the confidence we had going into the game. The ball was getting spread around early. It wasn't just the Mike Evans show out there or the DeSean Jackson show. It was everybody. Chris (Godwin) made some nice catches, O.J. (Howard), everybody. That's fun when everybody's getting involved."

(On their confidence right now) "I think in general we have that confidence right now, regardless of what the play is. The talent level in that huddle of guys who can go up and make plays, it's a pretty special group. I'm glad that we showed it today, but now it's about consistency week in and week out."

#28 CB VERNON HARGREAVES

(On his fumble recovery) "I kind of got lucky trying to make a play and the ball popped out."

(On the defense's performance) "We're just trying to play hard as a defense and we're just trying to win games, it's that simple."

(On watching the offense score points like that) "We're winning. When you're winning it's great seeing them score points like that and when they do you're going to win. We have to do a little bit better job on defense, but we'll be alright."