



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES
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DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 • CAESARS SUPERDOME
POSTGAME NOTES

- The Saints loss on Thursday drops New Orleans' record at 5-7. The Saints will return to action when they travel to MetLife Stadium on Sunday, December 12 to play the New York Jets at 12:00 central. The game will be televised on CBS (WWL 4 locally).
- The Saints loss drops their record against Dallas to 13-18 and gives them an 8-4 record against the Cowboys at the Caesars Superdome.
- Saints Head Coach **Sean Payton** drops his record against Dallas to 5-4 and drops his home mark against the Cowboys to 3-2.
- The loss to the Cowboys drops Payton's record to 7-4 against Dallas Defensive Coordinator Dan Quinn, who served as interim head coach on Thursday night in place of Cowboys Head Coach Mike McCarthy due to COVID-19 protocols.
- The Saints extend their streak to 316 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 NFL.
- New Orleans had a season-high 405 total net yards.
- Quarterback **Taysom Hill** completed 26-of-40 passes for 238 yards and a 70-yard touchdown to WR Deonte Harris. With 11 carries for 101 yards, Hill became the third Saints quarterback to have 1,000 career rushing yards, joining Archie Manning and Aaron Brooks. Hill became the second Saints quarterback to rush for 100 yards in a game since Brooks ran for 108 yards at San Francisco on December 10, 2000.
- LB **Demario Davis** had four tackles (three solo).
- WR **Lil'Jordan Humphrey** notched a careerhigh in receiving yards with 49 and one 24-yard score on two grabs.
- Wide receiver/return specialist **Deonte Harris** entered the contest with 699 career punt return yards, fifth in club record books. Harris recorded 37 punt return yards on Thursday increasing his career total to 736, moving past Reggie Bush into fourth in club record books. Harris also recorded four catches for 96 yards including a 70-yard touchdown reception. Harris now has 72- and 70-yard touchdown grabs on the season.
- Linebacker **Kwon Alexander** recorded a team-high nine total tackles on the night.
- Cornerback **Marshon Lattimore** recorded his second interception of the 2021 campaign to go with three passes defensed.
- DB **P.J. Williams** surpassed 200 tackles for his career, tying a career-high with a team-high eight solo stops.
- New Orleans converted five-of-14 third down conversions and went 1-for-1 on fourth down conversions.
- P **Blake Gillikin** punted six times for 308 yards with a 51.3 gross punting average, a 44.0 net and a 62-yard punt that tied a career-long.



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DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 • CAESARS SUPERDOME SAINTS HEAD COACH SEAN PAYTON

On the loss: It was a disappointing loss. I told the team there were a number of things that we did well in the first half. I thought that we played well defensively. I thought that we stopped the run. I thought that we stayed on schedule. I thought we did a few things offensively. Obviously, the turnover going in before the half in the red area was a significant play. They ended up turning it around on their next drive and scoring. The second half, obviously, was different. It's difficult losing. We have a few days here that we have to get back and get on with the next game."

On if he considered splitting quarterback play tonight: "No, he (Taysom Hill) was playing quarterback. He hurt his finger. We had to splint it somewhere in the first half. He felt good enough to go, but our plan was to play him."

On if his finger injury affected him tonight: "I don't know. You would have to ask him. I thought that he played with a lot of heart and a lot of guts. We didn't help him any in the first half. I'll be honest with you, we have to catch (the ball). That first interception. We have to catch. It's the perfect coverage. Look what we get. We dropped the ball. They made a good play on it. That's unfortunate."

On the blindside block call: "I'm not real familiar with that type of block on that situation. It is unfamiliar."

On how to evaluate the offense when you have three interceptions in the fourth quarter when trying to play catch-up: "You have to look at the entirety of it all, to be honest. When you watch it, you have to study it, what we are doing well, who's doing it. Obviously, we have a number of new guys that are doing things that are playing for the first time. If they are going to play next week, we have to improve. In the meantime, (hopefully we) get some of those other guys back (to help)."

On how the defense played against the Dallas offense: "Yeah, it's a real good team. Look, it starts with defending the run well. We were able to do that. That was certainly one of our keys we felt like was important. This team, when they get the running game going, they become real difficult. I thought that we did a lot of good things defensively, relative to how we wanted to play this game."

On the explosive plays by Dallas: "Time of possession (was a factor). The defense is back on the field several times. Obviously, there is an attrition to that."

On how the team can score more points running the ball: "I thought that we did some good things running the ball tonight, much better than a week ago. I thought whether it was running back runs or quarterback runs, (or) our yards per carry, we felt that had to be better than a week ago. You have to take advantage of that in the red zone. I don't think we did a good enough job there."

On if the series of designed runs on one particular drive were pre-planned by him and the offensive coaching staff: "You have it in the gameplan. You can't spend the whole night doing that. It gives you an advantage. It's something that there's a physicality that comes within the style of play. He (Taysom Hill) did a good job."

On if the team was trying to get Hill on the move since there were two backup tackles starting in the game tonight: "We are trying to look at every type of protection or play. It felt like we could reduce the stress on those two players. (You have to think)...How do we not turn it into a night where there is eight or nine sacks? You know? In fairness to the process of coaching, how do we get those guys on our team the best chance to win? Whether it's movement throws, whether the protection was different with bumps or nudges. We felt like that was going to be important considering some of the ends that we were going to see?"

On how he plans to use the next week and a half: "We'll see. It's a few days (off). We will get guys some rest and come back next week and get ready for the regular schedule work week."



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DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 • CAESARS SUPERDOME SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

QB TAYSOM HILL

On the injury to his finger: "It is doing okay. We will get it assessed and figure out a plan tomorrow. I went to throw a ball and I hit it on a hand."

On his overall assessment of his game performance: "You know, I'm not going to rush to any conclusions having not seen the tape or anything, but I feel like we did some things really well tonight, and then we did some things really poorly. Obviously, it's tough to win a game when you turn the ball over four times, and as soon as you look at the stats and you look at what we did, that's obviously the thing that jumps out to you that's disappointing. The drive at the end of the first half was disappointing, having the turnover there and not getting any points out of that drive. Then later taking a sack and not getting any points on that drive. You know, they're just kind of freak things but that's really what jumps out."

On his interceptions throughout the game: "Yeah, you start pressing, and I mean, look, some of those things are freak things. You know, you're trying to throw a shell across and, you know, the end's not rushing. I don't know what you're supposed to do about things like that. But, look, I think we did some good things tonight, we did some things that we need to clean up, but we'll assess that moving forward. Those would be my thoughts just coming out of the game."

On the circumstances of the interception at the end of the first half: "Look, you're trying to give your guys opportunities to make plays. That play was designed for that exact coverage. That was what we were trying to do. So, yeah, I'm disappointed that the play turned out to be an interception, but that's on that I'm not going to beat myself up over."

On his opinion of the QB run plays: "Yeah, I made a comment to Coach (Sean Payton) at halftime. I said, 'Hey, I like some of these QB runs.' I didn't know we were going to call them on the next drive, but I felt like that was nice. It's nice to get into a bit of a rhythm and get the ball moving, and just get going and get into the game a little bit. I'm a physical player and this stuff is fun for me."

On if his feedback impacted the call of QB run plays: "No, I don't think so. The way these games go, sometimes it becomes more heavily that way than throwing the ball or just handing the ball off. I think it was just the situation at the time, so I was fine with it. I told Coach (Payton) that I didn't have any concerns with that going into the game, so I don't think that factored into any of his play calling."

On his third-down sack: "That was a disappointing play. We were obviously trying to run it naked. It was kind of a run-pass option, get the edge, and (Micah) Parsons played it well. They zoned it off so there was a guy sitting there for Ty (Montgomery). It was a good play by them. If I had to do it over again, I would have just thrown it at Ty (Montgomery)'s feet and kicked the field goal or have the opportunity to go for it on fourth and two. So, I was disappointed about that play, just trying to make a play, and I wish I could do it over again."

On the frustration of this recent losing streak: "It's very frustrating. It's unfamiliar territory for us. It's my fifth year, and I haven't experienced anything like this since I have been a Saint. I think, again, the thing that we have talked about internally is that there are no guarantees in this game, and I'd say that this group, the leadership, everyone continues to work and put their heads down to do everything you can do create opportunities to win football games. But there's no guarantees. We're going to continue to work and do everything we can to get back on a win streak, but yes this is disappointing."

On the impact of using this time to get teammates healthy: “I don’t want to just keep talking about getting healthy. Obviously we need to get healthy, that will help our team a lot. At the end of the day, this is the NFL. It’s the next-man-up mentality, and if somebody can’t go, he can’t go. We have to find ways to win football games with who’s available. Everyone wants everyone to be available, but we’ll just take that day by day.”



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS Thursday, December 2, 2021, • CAESARS SUPERDOME SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

Wide Receiver Lil'Jordan Humphrey

Describe what you guys were able to do offensively tonight: "I feel like we got out there and moved the ball a little bit. We self-inflicted (some things) and that hurt us sometimes, but we're headed in the right direction for sure. We are still working."

Describe what happened on your touchdown play: "Just went to go block down as a chip block and went to go work to get open. I was open and Taysom hit me wide open for a score. It was a great play call by coach."

How will this time off affect them positively and what will he do with this time off? "I definitely want to clear my mind a bit. I'm still going to get my routine in, get a workout in, see my son, and just relax a little until we get back to work next week."

What does it feel like to be on a five-game losing streak? "The energy is different. I don't really know how to explain it, but it's just different and it's not something you really want. It's up to us to change that. Like I said, we just have to get back to work and change the outcome of things. Control what you can control."

Do you feel like you guys are headed in the right direction? "I'm not going to say right direction, but we made some plays happen and had some good stuff out there. I mean we just have to take the positive and run with that, and work on what we didn't do so well."



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DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 • CAESARS SUPERDOME SAINTS PLAYER QUOTES

CB P.J. WILLIAMS

On giving up the explosive plays: "It's very frustrating. You never want to give up explosive plays. That's the number one key to victory for us every week. We make some good plays with three and outs and then give up the explosive play. That doesn't help out our offense at all. We hold ourselves to a high standard and that's not it."

On the breakdown on the long touchdown run: "I just feel like enough people didn't get outside. I'm pretty sure we got blocked and there was a free lane. We didn't get out the box fast enough."

On their goals for this week: "It was to limit the run. We didn't want to give up many explosive passes. We knew that we could play with their offense. We knew that we were good enough. We had a bad week last week and we knew that we were going to come back strong. We just needed to keep them out of the endzone. We needed to play way better third down defense. We needed to play better red zone defense. The main thing is to win situations."

CB MARSHON LATTIMORE

On the explosive plays: "We are going to look at the film and see that we did a lot of good things. There are some things that we still need to tighten up. We just have to keep going. We have to keep going. It's not like we are panicking. We are out there fighting hard. It's all going to come together."

On being of the field a lot: "We've been on the field a lot, but it's football. That's what we got to do. When the offense is going so well, then we have to step up and do what we have to do. We can't hang our heads."

On the big touchdown run: "I didn't really see what happened. I just saw him run."

On the mini bye: "We just have to regroup. We have to come back on Monday and get back to work. We have to keep fighting. We are still in it. We can go 10-7. We just have to believe that and go out and do it."



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 • CAESARS SUPERDOME DALLAS COWBOYS INTERIM HEAD COACH DAN QUINN

Opening comments: “One thing you guys have heard me say before is that I love doing hard things with a group of people, and this is one of those moments. We have great people to get the job done. I wanted to make sure Mike (McCarthy) and all the guys who missed let them know we have their back. That was the only thing I was nervous about. I didn’t want to let him down, Mike. He’s done a great job in leading us to how it’s going to go down, the play-style we wanted to go, but it was just a cool win, a total team win. You talked about playing complimentary ball, so getting the ball out a few times tonight, that was big. To have a four interception night, that was huge. This is a tough place to play, and this is a tough team. To have that kind of resiliency tonight, I thought it was cool. This quarterback [Taysom Hill], he was a handful. For a guy who can run it, throw it, he’s as tough as they get. It was definitely 11-man football when he was running. I don’t know how many carries he had, but it was certainly an all day fight. We knew it was going to be coming down here. I loved the mindset of the guys. Mike and all of the coaches were there with us every step of the way in the preparations, meetings and all of that. It was just cool to have a good team win.”

On the most difficult thing this week outside of the game: “I will say Mike (McCarthy) did a good job of just making sure everything stayed level -- how we do things, the approach that we go. We weren’t going to make shit up and change things. It was more like let’s make sure we do this in the style and fashion we needed to. Make no mistake, we were not pleased with our last performance. We needed to come back and make sure we played like we were capable of. It was just cool to see the guys fight and battle for it.”

On if they got Mike McCarthy on the phone postgame: “I haven’t spoken to him yet. He’s supposed to be online here, so Mike if you’re listening hello. I have not spoken to him yet. I’m looking forward to visiting with him.

On being on the sideline: “Well, it was fun because it was that kind of emotional game. There were big plays, our offense had a few, and it was exciting to see that. Defensively, obviously getting the takeaways was good. I’m hopeful you guys won’t see me again, and I’ll be back here on the top hopefully by the next game and Mike will make all the progress he needs to have him back on the field and a lot of other guys too. We missed a number of guys today on the staff side and a couple of players as well. Hopefully, this is hitting us with some time to get back and get back to our normalcy.”

On if this was an ugly win: “I think at the end, it’s just a matter of resiliency. Not every game is the same. Tonight we knew going in this was going to be a fight. This was going to be a battle. It certainly was. We were coming in ready to make sure we were ready to get it on with physicality and aggression. We said if it took all night or longer into overtime, we were going to be ready to go, however long it took. We have some excellent leaders. If you guys could hear the way Dak (Prescott) talks before the game to the team, it’s one of the most impressive things that I’ve been a part of. The leadership, the commitment, these guys battling for one another, you can tell they have a unique brotherhood that ties them together, and they’re allowed to fight together. It’s really cool to see.”

On what Dak Prescott said pregame: “Some of it we can repeat; some of it we can’t. It was just a matter of echoing Mike (McCarthy)’s message of complimentary football, including other guys into it, how we needed to attack, how we would play. It’s pretty cool when you see guys living in unity together, and I think that’s what this team stands for in all sides, all phases. These punters were hitting bombs tonight. The field position, the effort by the guys on the outside, certainly with (C.J. Goodwin) and (Kelvin) Joseph. Both punters were really ripping the ball. The field position was a real factor.

On getting Cooper, Lamb and Gallup all touching the ball on a drive early in the game: “What a cool way for Amari (Cooper) to reconnect and get back in. I’m sure moving forward his reps and playtime

will go. Just having those guys in, I can tell you firsthand at practice when all three of them are ripping, it is a handful. Others got to feel that, but it was just good to get guys back. We have some more guys coming. We have some guys out, not just on COVID but injury-related as well. Hopefully, we will get some more guys back next time we go.”

On not finishing the game offensively: “I think I know where you’re heading with that. Coming in, we knew we had to have some patience, too, to go. Any time on third down, you want to see those numbers increase, and I’m certain that we will. There were a lot of big parts of us living in the penalties for us tonight that was huge, especially after the last game where it was in triple digits for penalties.

On how much he watched the offense compared to normal: “I would kick off to the defense and say, ‘Hey, I’m going over to the offense. If you need me, kick me back.’ I’d find my ways to get back in. Fortunately I’ve done some of that before. It was good being in the moment, but I’m glad to give the keys back to Mike (McCarthy). Hopefully that will be soon.

On Micah Parsons and Trevon Diggs’ impact on the defense: “I think we are still going in this direction, and that’s what I hope. Every time you get a new group together, you just try to feature and find out what unique stuff that players have, and I think those are really two unique players. We feature them in ways that they can make those kind of plays. It’s not every game that happens, but it’s important to know they have unique stuff, and you better think twice at time going over to No. 7’s [Taysom Hill’s] way. Having an interception in the red zone, a touchdown by a big guy, those are things that just don’t happen that often. They were fun as hell to see. Unique stuff and ways we can feature them. I’m hopeful that when we get a few guys back in on this mix that there will be some packages and some unique ways to feature all of them.”

On Micah Parsons’ assignment on Jayron Kearsse’s interception: “There might have been some ones where he was assigned the quarterback. There were some times where the line would rush, and he was a quarterback player. Those were some of the ones you may have seen. I bet there were probably eight or nine times in the game, just because of his rare running ability. Let’s face it, the guy would be a hell of a running back, too. He’s very unique in the way that he plays. There’s not a lot of cornerbacks that are like that through the League. There’s a lot that run zone read and option, but the physicality in the running I was impressed by.”

On Micah Parsons’ sense of timing: “The matter of staying relentless, that’s kind of the message, not just for him but for all of the guys. You don’t know when that moment is going to come. We can’t call on it and say, ‘OK, this is the time’. You just have to go let it rip.”

On the players rallying around him postgame: “I do love coaching, but I also love the people and connecting with the players. That’s really why I do it ... Sometimes I come down late, but I still do that in the locker room and make sure you stay connected. It’s the best part of being on a team sport. I would say it’s a pretty cool feeling knowing there’s a whole group of people who have your back. That’s one of the messages we told the team. When you’re a part of a whole group and a whole locker room of guys who have your back, you just feel like you’re ready to take on anybody and fight for it. We all feel that way on this team.”

On how DeMarcus Lawrence played: “You know what? I was very excited to see him. He’s got such a quickness and a violence with his hands and his playstyle. I was expecting him to maybe look rusty, but he did not. It was a difficult night, chasing and chipping on the edges to go. His attitude, his mindset, I’m hopeful we keep stacking weeks and weeks as we are building, and his playtime will increase. I don’t know the exact number, but we did have a pitch count, so to speak, going in . I’m pretty sure he surpassed it, but that goes to show the work he did on his conditioning, too.”

On speaking to Carlos Watkins’ interception returned for a touchdown: “I would say for those of you who don’t know, Carlos has pretty good hands. He was a basketball player coming up out of Charlotte, too. I tried to recruit him coming out of high school, and he did not come to Florida. He went to Clemson. I’ve let him pass. He’s a really good athlete. Inside, he really has a calming presence. He knows how to play, what things to look for. Anytime you see one of the big guys rumbling and bumbling -- I’m certain it was not under 5 seconds it took to score. But, it was a really cool play, and those don’t happen that often.”

On when was the last time he spoke to Mike McCarthy: “During the day, I spoke to him and went through the last guidelines of what to do. Like I said, he’s really been leading the charge all week, even through the team meeting today on Zoom. He was all the way there through it. After that meeting, I went back to the room. We talked some more about the game and playing it out and field position and things. We thought it was going to be a tight game with both guys battling for it. We knew we were going to get their best shot, and they were going to get ours, too. It was going to be a tough game that both teams had to have it. When those moments happen, it’s going to be a fight. He was all the way there. Usually when I get to the stadium, I turn the phone off and get to it. Like I said, the only thing I was really nervous about is that I wanted to make sure I delivered for him and for the guys. I didn’t want to go back and have to say, ‘Hey, here’s your car keys. Sorry I screwed it up.’

On if Mike McCarthy told him not to be afraid to go for it on fourth down: “No, he didn’t say that. We just trusted our guidelines to go. We just wanted to make sure our playstyle was evident. We really thought it was going to take a complimentary football game tonight through takeaways and taking care of the ball. He sent that message to the team. We knew this was a tough place to play and win. These guys are excellent competitors. We had to own the moment. It was cool to see the guys do that. They were not going to be denied at the end.”

On his head coaching process tonight vs. the end of 2020: “That’s a good question. I would say the process felt normal for me, knowing that in the preparation and all, Mike did all of the meetings. I didn’t have to add anything extra things on for that. As far as team meetings go, he handled all of that still. It was a matter of just when we got into the game how would I communicate with Kellen (Moore). He did an excellent job of if we get to this part, we’d make it, or we’re going to punt here. I just tried to be clear with the communication with everyone with special teams, with offense. With defense, that part was natural. I think I added an extra layer of communication. I just tried to be very clear with everybody about how it was going to go down during in-game.”

On the organizational agility in today’s game: “I think it’s really an example of leadership from Mike and to say what happens when the leader is not here. To have that many people step into new spaces and have no flinch to it, what an incredible job by Lunda (Wells) and Chase (Haslett). They really had to do some shifting around. The entire strength and conditioning staff’s been out for a while. We got Cedric Smith back today. Just everyone having to chip in and say no job’s not your job right now, by any means necessary we have to get this job done. When moving parts come, you know what the cool part is about when you deliver, which the guys did, there’s a lot of trust that gets built. I thought it was especially cool to see the players not flinch, not do anything. We talked about that during the week. This was their time to go after it. They certainly responded.”

On if Amari Cooper’s snaps were limited: “He was (on a pitch count), yes. I don’t know that (if he exceeded the count). It was very cool to see the big play happen for him. I would anticipate his reps effort going back into a normal practice week and such get going. For him, that was a big play. Welcome back. Welcome back home.”

On the reaction to a specific play call: “It’s funny. They weren’t certain on that call, but then, OK, OK, yeah. It was one of those ones where as a coach you can see a look that you get that you like. Sometimes, you’re like this is about to go well. Then, there’s other looks where you go I don’t know how this is going to go. There’s always one when a toss play happens like that, you just had a sense he would hit the crease, and he wasn’t going to get caught. You don’t know what’s going to happen until that moment, and then boom, out he comes. That was a big play in the game, kind of shifted a lot of momentum.”

On Will McClay’s role on the sideline: “The same that he does in the press box. He’s involved with the personnel with me. During the game, he charts some things for me, self-scout on the opponent, things like that. He did the same role, but he traveled with me down to the field as opposed to doing it in the press box. He normally does that from the press box.”



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DALLAS COWBOYS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021 • CAESARS SUPERDOME DALLAS COWBOYS PLAYER QUOTES

QB DAK PRESCOTT

On if the first drive of the game spreading the ball to all three main receivers shows what this offense can be at its peak: “Yeah, you just said it. Those three (Cooper, Gallup, Lamb) made huge plays. Obviously, Amari (Cooper) got us going on third down. Ceedee (Lamb) getting the ball in his hands, making a guy miss and getting all the way down to the one (yard-line), and MG (Michael Gallup) with the great catch in the corner and getting two feet down, those are three talented guys. I’ve got to do a better job of getting them involved. When those three get involved in the same drive like that, that’s what happens.”

On the impact of Tony Pollard’s touchdown run: “Oh, it was huge. To get out on the perimeter, great block by Malik Turner allowed him to get on the edge. He ran through a tackle and showed his speed. That was big and much needed at the time (of the game).”

On what this win means in face of all of the COVID-19 challenges the team has faced this week: “I mean, a win is a win. It means a lot. As you just said, the adversity we’ve faced coming off of the last two weeks and coming in this week hit with the COVID challenges, losing our head coach this week. So many people stepped up. Credit to Dan Quinn, the coordinators, all of the leaders on this team to do what was necessary to be ready for this game and just through the ups and downs of this game to just play complimentary football. When the offense wasn’t doing its job, the defense was creating turnovers. It’s tough to come into a place like this and win, and we’re happy to do that.”

On how Amari Cooper performed tonight in his first game back: “I thought he was great. Obviously coming off of COVID, we have to be smart with our usage of him. He came in and got the big first third-down catch and got us rolling. I mean, I think he was great in the time he played.”

On the frustration of not being consistent on offense: “Yeah, it’s frustrating on my part. I think just being greedy in some of the reads, trying to put the dagger in them rather than just playing through the play and through the drive. I was trying to do (too much) on every play, and I can’t do that. We can’t do that as an offense. We just have to stay within it and play each play as they come. It was definitely frustrating.”

On how healthy Ezekiel Elliot is: “I mean, he’s out there doing everything he can. I’m not going to say he’s nicked up and not himself. I haven’t watched the film; I’m carrying out my (run) fakes and doing my responsibilities on every drive. He was great in protection and doing all of the things we needed him to do.”

On his pregame message to his teammates: “I mean, I think it was just the message that the guys have been saying week after week before each week. I think that’s all I really did, just calling on guys to relay their messages that they’ve given before games in the past. They obviously responded to it, they liked it, and it got us going. That’s what we needed.”

On the missed fourth down conversion pass to Ceedee Lamb: “Yeah, we have to be better on that. It was a miscommunication. We have to be better as a whole on offense in the critical downs.”

On the significance of this road win to break a 2-game losing streak: “Yeah, I mean as you just said. Credit to Dan Quinn, the coordinators, Kellen (Moore) and Bones, all of the leaders and guys on this team that played a huge part to make sure we were able to fill that void (Mike McCarthy). It was a tough road atmosphere and crowd here in New Orleans, so also credit the Cowboy fans that traveled well and making this a great atmosphere. All of the Cowboy chants and just knowing that we were well represented. It felt good and I know the players felt that as well. It was huge. It feels great to break the skid and just get back rolling.”

On if he looks at this week ahead as a mini-bye: “Yeah, I definitely look at it as a mini-bye to get ourselves rested this weekend. Yeah, we need to get some players back fully healthy and just get the reps and practice they need before the next game. It’s great to have a win rolling into this and being able to just propel and hit this last stretch of games the right way.”

On if he’s spoken to Mike McCarthy yet: “Yeah, over text message. Obviously, he said he’s proud and make sure all of the guys know that. I told him we missed him, and we got it done. At 8-4, we’ll get rested, recovered, and hit this upcoming stretch the right way.”

On what he wants the offense to do better moving forward: “We have to be more focused. As I said, I have to stay disciplined and play each play-by-play instead of trying to put the dagger in them and knock them out of the game. When you do that, that’s why I was sloppy there. I was trying to take more than what was within the play and what they were giving me. So, we’ve just got to be more disciplined. I’ve got to be more disciplined in those moments and as I said, just play it out, trusting one another. We’ve got to be more focused in critical situations.”

On what it was like to get Amari Cooper going tonight on that first throw: “I trusted him to get to the right spot. I knew I was going to take a hit and just had to stand in there and let it go. He made a good catch and got some good yards after the catch. That just shows what he does and what he means to this offense.”

On pivotal the upcoming stretch is of this season: “It’s huge. We’ve got to win this division and we need to establish who we are in this division. We’ve got every (division) team coming up and Washington twice, so, it’s important for us to get healthy, get rested, and play this the right way.”

On noticing the toll his body takes after playing 3 games in 11 days: “In a sense, but especially when it was without the guys we had missing and the adversity that we fought through. It’s good to be past this. It obviously didn’t go the way we hoped and planned it out, but we’re sitting at 8-4, at the top of the division, and have a chance to get rested and recovered this week. We’ll put ourselves in a good spot as we play these next five games. We’ll hit them the right way.”

LB MICAH PARSONS

On how much this season has passed his expectations for his personal goals: “I mean, I don’t think I’ve done too much right now. There’s still stuff out there that’s on the plate and we have to get it done. The job isn’t done, we have to complete the whole mission. So, nothing’s really done yet besides a couple minor, personal goals. I’m worried about the bigger stuff.”

On what it was like having Dan Quinn on the sideline tonight: “There was a bunch of energy, man. It’s different when you only need to have 10 or 20 guys bought in, but when you have 53 guys in there bought in for a (coach) and you put everything on the line for him, I think that speaks volumes to who Dan (Quinn) is and speaks to the team we have right now. I think everyone’s really excited about the win. It’s good to put a win on the sheet and it’s a good opportunity to get ready for next week.”

On what the bigger goals are for the Cowboys: “The Super Bowl, the playoffs. We only have five games left. There’s more stuff to be done in those five games. It’s not time for me to sit on my couch smiling and eating Cheetos just yet. We’re trying to do something way bigger than what every body else thought we could do this year, so, that’s what I’m focused on. I’m just doing my job in the process.”

On if the defense has to carry the offense during their struggles: “No, not at all. I mean, even without (Elliot and Cooper), I think (the offense) is very productive, but regardless of what the offense does, we have to do what we do (on defense). We want to (be productive) regardless of what the offense does. You know, if the offense scores zero points, we expect to hold the other team to zero points. They don’t carry any weight to what we do on the defensive side of the ball, and I think that’s what’s special here. We just feed off of each other, but nothing is unintentional.”

On his key sack to put the Saints out of field goal range: “Man, I was running all night chasing after (Hill). He’s definitely faster than the other quarterbacks in the NFL. It’s definitely good to get the quarterback down. I told you, I’m going after every quarterback. Of course, any time you’re backed up and have a chance to get off of the field, somebody has to make a play. You always have to think

why not me? You know what I mean? Today, everybody made a play. Tre (Diggs) made a play, doing what he does, Carlos (Watkins) made a play, Jayron (Kearse) made a big play that led to a big stop, and I think that's what's important."

On his coverage assignment and pass break up which led to Jayron Kearse's interception:

"Shoot, basically I had out in the flat until I didn't get a wheel call. As soon as I saw (Kenny Stills) turn up field I went after him. I just used my speed to catch up to him to make a good play on the ball and contest the catch."

On why he was slow to get up on the play before Kearse's interception: "I think me and Tre (Diggs) twisted our legs up on a tackle. I had a stinger that I just had to ring out. I mean, that's just the nature of the game."

On what it was like having Demarcus Lawrence back on the field: "It felt good. He's a high energy guy. Every time you're out there you can hear him on the sidelines, and you can hear him during the game, hugging you during the game telling you and all of the guys to just keep going. It's great to have him back and (have him) get his feet wet. It's just one step forward to what he's trying to accomplish and what we're trying to accomplish."

On if he's exceeded his own expectations with his play this year: "I haven't exceeded anything at all. I have very high standards for myself. What I told Coach Quinn from the very beginning, 'don't treat me like a rookie,' you know what I mean? If I'm doing something wrong, tell me I'm doing something wrong. If I'm doing something right, let me know and I'll keep doing it, but, I mean, it hasn't been good enough. He's a hard grader, and that's what I want, because it's only going to make me better. You know, you want a coach that's really going to pressure you and bring out the best in you, so I really appreciate it."

On what the rest of the team might've seen from Dan Quinn tonight: "I would say his personality. Anytime we meet up, it's always good vibes. He's a smiling guy and he's such a great person. I think everyone kind of got to see the warm side of Coach Quinn tonight and his energy and spirit he brings to the team."

On Coach McCarthy's pre-game message to the team: "Coach Mike just said, 'Don't let what's going on right now affect what we have going on.' At the end of the day, we're leaving New Orleans 8-4. That's what we're going to do, and that's what we did for Coach Mike. I'm pretty sure Coach Mike's smiling from his hotel room right now and looking forward to being back with us on Monday."