



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## TENNESSEE TITANS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, DEC. 28, 2025 • NISSAN STADIUM SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- The Saints victory improved New Orleans' overall record to 8-9-1 against the Titans all-time.
- The New Orleans win marks a four game win streak within a season for the first time since a six-game winning streak from Weeks Five-Ten in the 2020 season. For Head Coach **Kellen Moore**, a four-game winning streak is the second-longest for a first-time head coach with the Saints behind Jim Haslett's six-game winning streak in his first season in 2000.
- The Black and Gold victory over the Titans gives the Saints a 5-3-1 edge in games played in Houston or Nashville against the Titans/Oilers franchise.
- The Saints victory would close out the month of December for the team having won four contests in the month for the third time in franchise history, joining the 1987 and 2011 teams.
- Offensively, New Orleans gained 423 total net yards, went five-of-11 (45.5 pct.) on third down and scored touchdowns on both red zone trips.
- QB **Tyler Shough** finished 22-of-27 (81.5 pct.) for 333 yards with a touchdown and a 142.4 passer rating. His 333 passing yards set a new career-high for the rookie signal-caller. He also rushed three times for eight yards.
- After throwing for 308 yards last week, with his 333-yard passing performance today, Shough is the first rookie quarterback to have back-to-back 300-yard passing games since the Houston Texans' C.J. Stroud, who did so in four consecutive games (11/5-11/26/23), that season's NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year.
- RB **Audric Esteime** was the leading rusher for the Black and Gold, carrying 14 times for 94 yards and a 32-yard touchdown. His 94 rushing yards are the most in a game in his career.
- WR **Chris Olave** led the receiving effort, catching eight balls for 119 yards and his ninth touchdown of the season. With his 119 yards, he became the sixth Saint with 1,100 receiving yards in a season (1,163) joining WRs Michael Thomas, Joe Horn, Marques Colston and Brandin Cooks and TE Jimmy Graham.
- Olave's eight catches marks the first 100-catch season of his career, which makes him the only New Orleans Saints receiver besides Michael Thomas (three times) to reach the 100-reception mark in franchise history.

- WR **Kevin Austin Jr.** also had a productive day, recording four receptions for 52 yards and a touchdown, setting new career-highs in receptions, receiving yards and long reception (36), and had his first career touchdown.
- TE **Juwan Johnson** caught four passes for 95 yards with a long reception of 39 yards. His 95 yards also set a new career-high.
- CB **Alontae Taylor** led New Orleans in tackling with nine (seven solo) while also recording four pass breakups. Taylor's four pass breakups today moved him past 50 for his career and set a new season-high. With 12 pass breakups on the season, Taylor become only the fourth Saint to have ten passes defensed (statistic recorded since 1980) in each of his first four NFL seasons, joining LB Rickey Jackson (1981-84), CB Dave Waymer (1980-83) and CB Marshon Lattimore (2017-20).
- Rookie LB **Danny Stutsman** also tallied six tackles (three solo), setting a new career-high in solo stops.
- DE **Chase Young** recorded four tackles (three solo), 1.5 sacks, including a strip sack on Tennessee QB Cam Ward that he returned for a touchdown. It was the first time a fumble was returned for a touchdown by New Orleans since LB DeMarco Jackson's eight-yard return vs. Carolina on Dec. 10, 2023. Young now has a career-high 8.5 quarterback takedowns in 2025 (in only 11 games).
- Young also has three defensive fumble recoveries in 2025, tying his career-high that he posted as a rookie in 2020, when he earned AP NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year honors and tied with LB Pete Werner and Chicago CB Nashone Wright for first in the NFL.
- DE **Cam Jordan** tallied five total tackles (two solo), a sack and a forced fumble. That sack brings his total to 9.5 on the season, his seventh season with at least nine sacks, making him the 29th player in NFL history with seven seasons of at least nine sacks. With his 17th career forced fumble, Jordan surpassed DE Charles Grant and took sole possession of fourth in club record books.
- LB **Pete Werner** recorded five total tackles (three solo), which broke the 400-tackle mark for his career.
- DE **Jonah Williams** also recorded a sack on Ward, which set a new career-high with three on the season to go with three tackles (two solo). It is also the first time he has posted back-to-back games with a sack.
- K **Charlie Smyth** set a new career-long with a 57-yard field goal in the third quarter, while also making a 56-yard field goal earlier in the game. He is the first kicker in Saints history with three field goals of 56 yards or more in a season. Smyth also had six touchbacks on seven kickoffs.
- LB **Demario Davis** played in his 226th career game, surpassing Keith Brooking and Hardy Nickerson to take sole possession of ninth all-time in NFL history among linebackers. Davis finished with six assisted tackles and a split-sack.
- Davis also tied LS Joe Federspiel for 28th all-time in Saints history by playing in his 130th game as a Saint on Sunday.

- LS **Zach Wood** played in his 148th career game, both overall and consecutive, surpassing OL Jim Dombrowski (10/25/87-11/3/96) for the franchise's second-longest games played streak.



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## **NEW ORLEANS SAINTS HEAD COACH KELLEN MOORE**

### **Opening Statement:**

Really fun win. Really proud of our guys. As enjoyable of a win as I think we've had this year from the standpoint of the first half going the way it did, not meeting the standard, having to navigate some stuff in there. And then the second half, the way our guys responded, and it took all three phases. Complementary football at its finest. All three phases contributed really well in that second half. Had some big-time plays by some big-time players.

### ***Were there some adjustments you made at halftime to come out be dominant?***

Our guys just played well. I don't think halftime you have some big Knute Rockne speech or some new offense or defense. Guys started playing really, really well and I thought handled the second half at a really high level.

### ***What do you think of Shough?***

Tyler, just an awesome, awesome game. The composure, navigating stuff early. Big play after big play. He's obviously having a special season. I know he doesn't start the season as the starter, but just the way he's handled himself through this whole journey, I think really, really special. I think, obviously, the on the field speaks for itself.

### ***What do moments like that, where basically you guys get into shootout, what do you learn about him in that situation?***

Yeah. I think it's just resiliency, his ability to handle each and every play. That's a really good quarterback on the other side. Cam (Ward) is going to be a really good player in this league. I think what everyone just watched was two quarterbacks that will probably be big-time quarterbacks in our league for a long time. We're fortunate to have Tyler (Shough). Cam is going to do a great job here in Tennessee as they build this thing. I thought it was a fun game.

### ***What got you guys -- the first half, Cam Ward was kind of was in and out (of the pocket) every play, what changed?***

Again, I think just execution, rush plan, playing together, back end playing really clean. He's a really good player so he's going to make some plays. You saw those show up in the game, his extended plays. It's a really special attribute of his. He makes big-time plays because of it, so you've got to keep going. You've got to keep going. He's going to make plays. You have to keep on going.

### ***Seems like there was some heavy personnel to slow down the run. Was that complicating the pass rush when he was able to extend?***

They ran the football really well the last two weeks. They've got two really, really good running backs. Those two are really, really good players. It certainly was something he had to start with. We had to start with the run game, do our best controlling that.

***Would you like to make a case for Tyler winning Rookie of the Year?***

I think Tyler's just had an exceptional year. His composure, his growth. Really, really special season. For him to navigate this and the momentum, I think, we're carrying as we've gone through this journey together is really, really special. I think we've got an awesome team around him, building it the right way. Tyler is doing special stuff.

***We've asked a few times about him being an elevator of everybody around him, did you really see that on a day like today?***

I thought he made some big-time plays. So start credit with him. I thought other guys stepped up, (Audric) Esteime with 98 yards of total offense, making some plays in the run game, a pass game play. Kevin Austin getting a touchdown pass. He had some stuff with the penalty and stuff he had to fight through. I thought it was awesome on offense. On defense, we have some guys. Chase (Young) and Cam (Jordan) just kept rushing. Demario's (Davis) got six tackles. He's at 137 (tackles on the season) now, career high, year 14. I know he wasn't in the Pro Bowl, but he's a Pro Bowl linebacker each and every year. He's just a really special player. So, we had a bunch of guys make plays.

***Was he (Demario Davis) doing something at the end of the game?***

Yeah, he had something come up and so those other guys rolled the rest of the way.

***Is that a challenge since he's the MIKE?***

Yeah, the communication had to adjust there. We did bang a timeout to settle everything down, make sure everyone was good to go after one play, once we made the transition.

***Was it just because it was so late in the game he didn't go in the injury tent?***

Yeah.

***Do you know what he's dealing with?***

Just a calf thing that came up.

***And what did you think of Esteime? What got him going?***

Just the physicality of the run game. He's just a physical, physical runner. The play that he scores and has a big run, by no means is that the design or the intent of the play. We have issues we've got to clean up. His physicality showed up. It was really special.

***With Kevin Austin, what did you see from him?***

Kevin (Austin Jr.), I thought, made some plays. Obviously, big-time catch in the red zone really against not ideal leverage across his face on the DB and wind on the out breaker. He made some plays. Dante (Pettis) made some plays. Unfortunate fumble on the big-time play by him. Obviously, guys will have to step up, and they have.

***You use the word resilience a lot. Was it just kind of an example of things didn't go well through a lot of the game?***

Yeah, that's the beauty of this game. I feel as happy about this one as all of them just because of the standpoint of not the standard met in the first half. Chase (Young) makes a big-time play to score. Other than that, we're not playing to our standard. Everyone kept going, kept going. Then felt like we were making plays as the game progressed.

***Did Chase's play spark something in your guys, to have that play in that moment?***

Those are big spark plays. Special teams and defensive plays like that, when you score in those phases, it's big time. It gives you a chance. It felt like it at least kept the game tangible and within reach there just with that play.

***Charlie? What did you think of his game?***

I thought Charlie (Smyth) did really a good job. There was wind with this game, some different elements he had to navigate. Two really big kicks, long kicks. He had good stuff in there.

***Did flipping to the other side of the field help him?***

I don't think so, but there was obviously some wind he had to navigate.

***Chris with over 100 catches. What does it say about him that he keeps seeming to get better?***

Just keeps taking advantage of opportunities and has done a nice job. Big-time touchdown. We needed that to come out the second half. He made a really big-time play there to have 8 catches, 119 yards, a touchdown. He's got 100 catches now this year. He's made some big-time plays.

***I know he was dealing with a back injury, was that ever really in question?***

Obviously, we're toward the tail of the season, and these guys are battling. That's what I appreciate and respect so much. All these guys are sore. They're tired. They've gone through a lot physically. These weeks, they have to put a lot of time into their bodies just to get them ready on Sundays. Certainly, Chris (Olave) is going through that. A lot of our guys are going through that. For them to be ready to roll, credit to them.

***You mentioned Cam Ward. What goes through your mind when you see the opposing quarterback spinning out like that or holding the ball for five seconds and still able to make plays?***

There are special quarterbacks in this league that are going to make plays. He's going to be one of them in this league. Obviously, everyone saw what he did at Miami and throughout his college career. He's a really, really good player. He was the first pick in the draft for a reason. He'll do a lot of positive things for the organization, building it up.

***Grateful for the replay assist on that fourth-and-10?***

Yeah, replay assist. Obviously, we'd have challenged it if we had to based off the evidence that we had, but it obviously worked in our favor.

***Juwan (Johnson), caught 20 of 21 targets. Have you seen him improve from a security perspective?***

I think he's doing an excellent job being friendly to the quarterback, finding voids in the middle of the field. A couple designed, a couple off-schedule plays today that he was able to make some plays. He's made some extended plays after that. The catch and run, the ball security, he's doing it the right way.

***You're technically eliminated from the NFC South, but you would only be a game back (with a win next week). From what you were at the end of the season to be right where you are, what have you made of your guys' progress***

Yeah. I think it comes down to people. We have a really special group. They do it the right way. They're so connected. These guys are battling such at a high level and competing for each other, and I think it's really special.



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## QUARTERBACK TYLER SHOUGH

***Do you have any flashbacks to the Miami game last year with the way that this one was going?***

Yeah. I was frustrated we didn't get to finish it on offense. So, obviously you don't want to be on the sideline for that. But it's just a huge credit to our defense for holding it down all day. I feel like that's kind of been our thing, we're having fun, we're playing complementary football. They did a great job of making the stops when we needed them. We got to find ways to start faster and finish them.

***Could you take us through the second half of how you approached it and what really got you guys clicking?***

It was our same approach the whole game, we just had to be more dialed. We had key penalties on third-and-short. We had a couple of close ones there that kind of stalled those drives out that was really kind of the story of it. And we just got to be better. So, at halftime, Coach (Doug) Nuss (Nussmeier), myself, all the guys, we were all firing up, just trying to light something. Like keep doing what we're doing, but find that extra edge, find that extra inch where we can go out there and finish them. So credit to the O-line, they played their butts off against a really stout front and all the guys that stepped up. We were kind of banged up and it was just a great team win.

***You hear 'next man up' a lot, but this team is really kind of delivering it. What is it about this group that it doesn't seem to matter who's in there, whether it's Kevin (Austin Jr.) or Dante (Pettis)?***

I feel like we just don't care. Like we go out there, we're here for a reason, we're going to go out there and operate. There's no, 'Awe man, if we had this', or, 'Awe, this is a good opponent', or you know? Like let's go out there and play football, man. This is why you do it. And that's kind of my message, what a great opportunity. Next man up, now you get to go make plays and everybody stepped up. Everybody did. Everybody did an incredible job. Audric (Estime), Dante (Pettis), Kevin (Austin Jr.), Juwan (Johnson) and Chris (Olave) both making plays all over the field. And like I said, the O-line, they did a really good job with a lot of different looks in the upfront. So, it was just kind of a lot of fun when we came together.

***Was the touchdown to Chris Olave the same play that you almost hooked up on last week or what was that?***

Yeah, yeah, it was a very similar play, very similar play. It actually wasn't necessarily like the perfect look, just ran a really good route, corner latched on and found it. So, he's just got great feel, obviously he's our dude.

***What did you make of Audric and the running that he provided?***

Man, he kind of sneaked up on us. I feel like he's been kind of that stout, really strong kind of a power back and he's making elusive plays all over the field. He's agile, he is really smart in pass-pro. He's stepped up on a short amount of time, him and Evan (Hull), they have done a really good job. So, Audric kind of closed that game out for us. What an unbelievable performance by him. And I mean, I trust those guys completely, so super proud of him.



***How would you describe your poise in a situation like the one you guys find yourself in?***

For me, it's just execution. Like I said before, I felt like I was prepared going into it and it's just one more rep. So, just operating it and that's my mindset. How can I make it one more rep, make it perfect, and then go from there.

***I know you're reviewing stuff on the sideline, talking with your coaches, so I don't know how much you're actually watching when the Titans have offense going. Does anything go through your mind when Cam Ward is kind of spinning out while holding the ball and making plays? Do you feel like a need to do the same or match the same thing?***

No, I mean, I think that he's really special at that. I feel I can do those things too. However, we were able to get a strip-sack and a touchdown off of it. I think that there's kind of a feast or famine sometimes and think he obviously made a lot of really good plays. And that's a credit to him because he's a really good player. But I think our defense did a really good job. It's kind of tough when you have those scramble opportunities, and you're trying to cover for that long, and plaster and keep your rush lane sound. So, we knew that going into it, that was part of their game, and they did a really good job managing it.

***You mentioned going into the week about how you've kind of started to understand the value of how important negative plays are to a defense. Would you say that was kind of a factor in today with the defensive line having impact where it was and just kind of staying in the chains?***

Yeah, 100 percent, 100 percent. We knew that they were a really good defensive front and we can't just go backwards against those guys. The more opportunities that they have, they're going to take advantage of them. I think we did a good job at that overall. I think we just had some penalties here and there that were costly and a couple of times where we got to be more dialed on certain routes, communication, stuff like that, to where we can shore that up. But yeah, credit to them, they're a really good defense. So, we'll kind of find those ways to make it all click together and we'll finish this strong.

***Do you guys express the confidence that they have in you when a game like this is unfolding, or do you sense the confidence that they have on you based on what you've proven over the past few games? Do you feel like that's growing at all?***

For sure, I think it's all kind of growing. I think that's the fun part. We're growing together as a team. We're having fun playing football with each other. We're having fun just operating, going through those adversities, those ebbs and flows of the game, and I try and stay as steady as I can. The guys, we're feeding off each other, 'Hey, you're going to go win this game right here', 'Let's go win it right here', 'One play at a time', all of those things. I think we're constantly talking and just kind of feeding off of each other and that's the best part about it.

***Sounds like Kellen (Moore) lost his voice a little bit, was he's getting fired up after the game?***

No, he's been battling it throughout the week, I think. So, it was going to be interesting throughout the game. There were a couple of times where he got a couple of voice cracks, but he did a good job. And obviously, he is the best, man. So, he was super fun, he called a great game, and got us all ready to play.

***I know you said you want to win teammates over and you're not concerned what you're proving to the outside but are you proving anything to yourself in this stretch?***

I'm trying to constantly prove myself right as far as my own self-belief and hold myself to a high standard. The ultimate goal is to win and come together as a team, and I feel like we've been able to do that. And how do we keep replicating it? So, for me, that's my constant goal, everything else that comes with it is part of it and I love playing with these guys. I feel like we could play a whole other season right now and we got a really good opponent that we got to finish out.

***There was a really good turnout for Saints fans behind the bench today. What does that mean to you in a season when you're 5-10, to see that many fans on the road?***

Yeah, Who Dat Nation showed up for sure. I mean, it felt like it was equally as loud on third downs for some of them at their own home stadium and that's just awesome to see. When you have people traveling like that, the fans at our hotel, at the game early, they're active and it's the best fan base in the country, for sure. So, it was really cool to be able to see that and get a win in front of those guys that travel and everybody. So, appreciate the support and obviously, we're going to need it in Atlanta as well.

***Six wins is one more than the Saints had last year. Does that mean anything to you to be able to improve on last year's record?***

I think we're always trying to improve. I wasn't here last year and my whole goal is to do everything we can to win games and take advantage of those opportunities. I think we got another really good one left.

***How important is it, short-term and long-term, this season and in the future, to string wins together like this versus, let's say, what you guys went through in the beginning of the season?***

It's why you do what you do. Winning is the ultimate goal and everything's more fun whenever you can capitalize off of that hard work that you put in. And how do you keep replicating that? And you come together as a team that way and you understand that's the formula. And how do we keep doing that? We want to be here and be a part of it and be a part of New Orleans and the city and we're having fun that way.

***Are you able in the middle of the season to kind of step back and look at like 'Okay, we've won four in a row in back-to-back games' or do you have to have tunnel vision until the end?***

Just process oriented, you got tunnel vision, because you have to go through each rep, every single play. Tomorrow, we're going to be going through treatment, watching film throughout the whole day. I think that's the fun part about it, because as soon as you become complacent, that's when it kind of bites you in the butt. And there's a lot of stuff, we weren't great today, we have to be a lot better. So that's the thing about it, it's never as good or as bad as it seems and we have to find a way to shore those things up. I think that's the best part about getting a win and getting a team win is that there's things to clean up and move forward for.

***Chris's (Olave) game today, you obviously know he's going through the back thing and just to see him kind of grit through it and have such a big game back-to-back 100-yards, what does that mean?***

He's unbelievable, man. I think his greatest strength is his steadiness. He shows up every single day. He's battling through injuries, we're all battling through stuff and just his ability to be dynamic, regardless of the situation, showing up, it's just a credit to him and I think we feed off of that for sure. So, I'm super proud of him for kind of elevating our team that way.

***What led to the 60-yard completion?***

Yeah, he ran a great route. Had double moved him, we'd kind of thrown some quick game a little bit throughout the game. He ran a great route, slipped him inside and just took it down the sideline, it was a great route by him.

***To only have five incompletions, you talk so much about your process, what does that tell you about your process to only have that few?***

Yeah, I got to be a little bit better. There's a couple of misses that I feel like I could have shored out with my footwork wise and can take advantage of some scramble opportunities. I haven't watched it

yet though, but I think we've got to be consistent and that's my goal is to kind of continue to be consistent that way. And like I said, we'll finish strong.



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## **RUNNING BACK AUDRIC ESTIME**

***What was supposed to happen and what went right for you to break free on your touchdown run?***

Yeah, it was really just the effort of everyone finishing their blocks and not giving up on the play. It wasn't the prettiest look, but we made it work. The offensive linemen were finishing their plays, the tight ends. Mo (Moliki Matavao) stepped up, made a good block and my resilience is to keep on running and finding a crease and making something out of nothing.

***What is that like to have a day like you had today after what you went through this season, what does that mean to you?***

It's really emotional for me. But this is just a representation of the person I am, the people in my life around me. When you're knocked down, you just got to get back up. And it's a representative with this team been this whole year. We could have been the team that laid down, but we bring it every week. And we try to go 1-0 every week, and we play one game at a time, one play at a time. And I got an opportunity, and as this team has an opportunity, we just try to get the best as possible out of it.

***What have you shown for coaches to stick with you the way that they have?***

It's just really my consistency in practice. Just making sure that they know that I know what I'm doing. On third down, which became a big factor in my game, you got to be able to protect the quarterback and just be able to grow every week. And that's what I pride myself in, be able to go every year, every week, and I feel like that's what I did. And kudos to the coaches, coach Kellen (Moore) and coach JT (Joel Thomas) for trusting me and having me out there.

***What changed in the second half to kind of unlock the run game?***

It's just second half adjustments. We came in this locker room and the coaches were riled up and everyone's riled up. We know that the first half that wasn't us, we weren't playing to our standard. And that's just what we did. We came out in the second half, played New Orleans Saints football, played to our standards, played physical. And it was really just a team effort. Like we came out, defense played their tails off. Chase (Young) made a great play going into the second half. But we just built off our momentum that we had, and we just kept on rolling.

***Has it been kind of tough to get a gauge where the carries are going to go? Is this a hot-hand situation?***

I wouldn't be able to tell you that, but like you said, you never know. You don't know. I didn't know in this game if I was going to get 20 carries or if I was going to get two carries, it's just really stay ready whenever your time's called. You just got to be able to execute and do whatever they need you to do.

***What does a riled-up Kellen Moore look like?***

I want to say it's more Kellen (Moore), more everyone else, like Coach Nuss (Doug Nussmier) and the D coordinator. But he knew that we weren't playing our standard and he expects the best out of us and we expect the best of ourselves.

***What is a game like this show you about Tyler Shough?***

Man, the past couple of games, he's a resilient guy, man. He's a guy that I want to play for. He's the guy that will make you run through a brick wall. Like you can see him stay in the pocket, take those hits and still pop up and deliver. He is a great leader. He's a rookie. I know he just started five weeks ago. And just, if you didn't know that, you would think he'd been the man and starter for the past three years. But he's just a great guy. And I'm just excited to see the trajectory of the team behind him.

***Does it do anything for the team to get in a shootout and you needed a response. Knowing that you have Tyler, does that give you guys confidence or did you sense the confidence because you guys have him?***

Yeah, for sure. Like Tyler's (Shough) a poised guy. Like no matter what situation we're in, we know we can count on him to make a play. And this is the NFL. Every week is going to be a dog fight. And we have the guys in this locker room that are prepared for that dog fight, and Tyler is the one who's leading us, especially on offense.

***How helpful is that for just as a group with Tyler being steady after the endzone fumble?***

Yeah, just like I said, playing one play at a time. Like that play was a great play, but it didn't go our way. And just about how we respond to that, we responded pretty well in that situation.

***You were with Bo Nix last year too, is that kind of crazy to you? How were you all these rookies?***

It's great to be able to learn from Bo (Nix), see how he handles his minutes on a daily basis, and then come to Tyler (Shough) , and you see a lot of similarities between them.



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## WIDE RECEIVER CHRIS OLAVE

***How much was your back bothering you before this, and what did you have to do to get it ready to play?***

Man, I'm hurting right now. But just a lot of treatment, man. Just trying to stay on top day to night from Friday to Saturday to Sunday. I had get up early. I usually sleep in on game day, but I got here at like 7:30 to try to get it right, and it worked out. Finished the game and we came out with a win.

***Chris, I know it's something you've been dealing with. So did Friday take you kind of by surprise since you had been managing it kind of on a scale?***

Yeah, it kind of did. I woke up on Friday morning, it kind of was hurting a little bit. I went into treatment and then I just, I didn't feel right to be honest. So like I said, they told me to sit out of practice just for being cautious. But I always wanted to play though, so I just try to stay on top of the treatment all Friday and Saturday, and I'm grateful to be able to come out here and play today.

***And you said that you've dealt with this since back in college, but I mean, is there anything this year that has exacerbated it?***

Not really, man. It's just something that I got to stay on top of. A lot of core work, a lot of hips and stuff, but it's just something I got stay on top of.

***Well, especially since you're going through all that. Is 100 [receptions] a special number?***

Oh yeah, for sure, man. I'm super grateful, man. I give all glory to God, my close people, my Pops, they always believe in me, man. They always talk positive to me from last year. So, I'm super grateful to be able to reach that number.

***Getting that number on a 60-yarder too?***

Oh yeah, for sure. Especially coming on a win. That means a lot. It was a great win. We fought back. We always stayed positive and knew we were going to have a chance, so I'm glad we got the win.

***Out of all the numbers, playing 16 out of 16 games means something? Like I know we talked to you last week about what you went through last year. And now you're on track to play in every single game this year. What does that mean?***

It means a lot, man. I think it's going to be my first time in my NFL career playing 17. It means a lot, man. That was one of my goals, one of my main goals for this year is try to play all 17. Playing through injuries, playing through all that, so I'm super grateful, like I said. I got to give all glory to God to be in this position. We just got to finish next week.

***Is that why you push through to play? I mean, there's a scenario where it's late in the season, your record is what it is, you could have easily taken off.***

Of course, man, of course. Try and get Tyler [Shough] that rookie of the year, too.

***Do you feel like you did?***

I feel like he got a good chance. I don't know, whoever. I think (Tetairoa) McMillan up there, but I don't know what he did today. But I feel he had a great game today.

***One catch, five yards.***

Oh yeah. Definitely. He should be at the top after this game. He went crazy today.

***What did you make, we've seen Kevin Austin on this team a handful of times and up and down to see him make that big play there at the end of the game, what do you think of him?***

Man, he's a great dude, man. All credit to him. Just the way he shows up to work, he wasn't getting too many reps. He's on the practice squad early in the year, getting released, coming back, getting released, coming back. It's a lot of credit to him, man. When his moment came, he was ready. When his number was called, he was ready. He had a big touchdown for us today. Even early in a game, he had a big play. And like I said, it was all credit to him and (Dante) Pettis too. He had a great game. Even with the fumble, I feel like he had a great game.

***Chris, you said you guys feel like you're never out of a game. I mean, you've been around for some teams that didn't have that. When did that develop this year and what led to it?***

I think it's just the guys in the locker room, man. It's the guys in the locker rooms, the older guys, Demario (Davis), Cam (Jordan). They're such great leaders and we got a great leader at quarterback, too. And Kellen (Moore), he kind of changed the locker room around, changed the culture around. I feel like it's only up from here, really. I know we got, we're 6-10 right now. But I'm super proud of us fighting back and I can't wait for the future.

***What is a day like today to tell you about Tyler Shough? Just the stretch he's having, but specifically when you guys are getting to shoot out and you need a response, he delivers it?***

Man, when the moment comes you have to make a play and he's done that every single time. He delivered every single time this year and it's not really much to say. I feel like when the opportunity presents itself, he's making the play every time. So you can't really teach that. He's a winner from what I've seen. So, I can't wait to build around this and like I said, I'm looking forward to the future.

***When Austin Estime is able to kind of open up the ground game in the second half did that just open up things for the offense as a whole?***

Man, he's been great since he got here. I know he got here last month. But ever since he's got here, I feel like every game he's making huge plays for us. That touchdown he had was huge for us. We were up one, and we needed to score. So, I feel the run game, we were struggling in the first half. We didn't really have no run game in the first half, but in the second half he's breaking runs, 10-yard runs, nine-yard runs. Kind of helped Kellen (Moore) out with the play calling a lot. He's been great for us.

***And after seeing the fumble recovery for a touchdown, is Chase Young going to have any offensive plays going forward?***

Oh yeah, I don't know. He's been ballin' all year. He has been balling all year, his energy's great. He's another leader in the locker room. He is a hell of a player, man. I went to college with him. I've seen it all in college, so I'm super glad he's having a breakout year.

***Were you one of the guys getting on him for his ball security out there?***

Oh no, I feel like he's big, so I don't think he's going to let go of that ball. And he's trying to score, too. So like I said, I'm super proud of him. And I'm grateful he's on our team.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## **DEFENSIVE END CHASE YOUNG**

### ***Take us through that play?***

Man, they chipped me, went high. I owe (Carl Granderson) a couple of steak dinners. He pushed the pocket. It doesn't work if we're not together, you know what I'm saying? He pushed a pocket, he went lower, I went high. It came right to me.

### ***Have you ever done anything like that before?***

No, it's funny, mid-play though, when I saw him, the ball was in the air. And for that split second, my dad used to tell me when I was a kid, and I played D-end, 'Take the ball out of his hand.' And for that split-second, it hit me, and I was like, man, the ball is right there, I can take it. And so, I came down on it and I just took it. That's all she wrote.

### ***And did you see anyone? I mean, guys are right behind you, but did you feel the guy chasing you?***

I slowed down. That's why he kind of caught up to me. As you see when I was sprinting, I was running.

### ***It sounded like your teammates were keeping you humble though with the way you were carrying the ball. What's the best comp you've heard.***

Man, it was so close. But everybody was like, 'Hey man, I'm just praying Chase just hold the ball.' I said, man, I've done this before, man. You know, I don't play offense. Definitely blessed, all glory to God, my teammates to be able to make that play happen.

### ***A career-high in sacks for you, what does that mean to you?***

God, thank you. Everything I've been through myself to be back where I am right now, it's only God that can do that.

### ***What did you make of Cam Ward's performance and what changed for you guys to have more success against him in the second half?***

Man, he is balling, man, he's going to be a great quarterback in this league. He kind of, I ain't going to lie, he's got a (Patrick) Mahomes feel to him when he's out there. Being able to extend plays while still having his eyes down the field. He is a phenomenal young quarterback and he went number one for a reason.

### ***Just the end there, knowing that you guys need a stop and that you got that stop. Just what did you make of that for you guys?***

Honestly, I had faith. I mean, it was more so like, I knew we were going to get to stop because I know the guys behind me and beside me. I know how they're built. I know how they're cut. I know Double D (Demario Davis), he's not slowing down. 94 (Cameron Jordan), he ain't slowing down. 96 (Carl Granderson), he ain't slowing down. Number 1 (Alontae Taylor), you see him —late in the game, he's flying around. DBs strapping late in game, plastering. That's everything we practice, and it goes to coach (Brandon) Staley just being a real great coach, holding us accountable, always setting the standard and it's paying off.



***What was your review of how you handled that end of game situation?***

I think we handled it the best way we could, man. We stopped them and we found a way. At the end of the day, all you can do is find a way no matter how ugly it gets. It's hard to win in this league and we finally got a win.

***What kind of faith do you have on the other side of the ball. Like when you get in a shootout like that, you go off the field and see Tyler Shough step onto it, did your confidence grow in him as this stretch has gone along?***

I told you last time, man. Week by week, confidence is built. And I'm really happy for him, proud of him because I know what it feels like to come in and have his eyes on you. We don't call it pressure because we had that our whole life. But the way he came in, didn't get to start Week 1, stayed on it. You can just see in practice how he was staying on it, he didn't wither away from the program and he earned it, he deserved it.

***What do you make of the way Chris Olave's bounced back from last year?***

He is a dog, man, there's certain things that you can't teach. There's certain things that start at home, and that's how your parents raised you. And he has a great foundation, I know his parents. He has big brothers, so I know how he's built. And Lave (Chris Olave), it's time to put some respect on his name, for real, man. He's out there doing what you do, that number one.

***To string some wins together like this, obviously eliminated from the playoffs this year, but going forward, what does that mean to be able to do that? As opposed to maybe where you guys started the season.***

Yeah, man, it feels good. At the end of the day, we're not in the playoffs or anything like that. But just to get this streak, we know that we're building. We know we have a great foundation. And we're excited, man. God gives us another opportunity to do it again one more time. And we're going to keep fighting.

***I know you guys have said a lot throughout the season about how tight-knit this locker room is. You were on Cam's podcast saying the same thing this week. Is that different than some of the other teams that have been in these kinds of situations where you're feeling it at the end of the year like you're really onto something?***

Yeah, it reminded me of my rookie year when I got to Washington. As a defense, I think that year we finished in the top five. And we were just — we were really like brothers out there. Like, one guy makes a play, we all really made a play. And that's how I'm feeling right now, man. It doesn't matter who makes it, as long as we make it, we're good. You know what I'm saying? That's a great feeling, man, a great thing.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## **TENNESSEE TITANS INTERIM HEAD COACH MIKE McCOY**

Sorry for being late. I was just talking to Van (Jefferson). So, I apologize for that. Unfortunately, obviously Jalyn (Armour-Davis), with the Achilles, and Van with the forearm. It's hard when you see guys that work like that, and that's the bad part of the game. Van was rolling, making some big plays, and unfortunately, he gets hurt. So it's tough. Tough way to finish the year for him, both the guys, really. It's tough, the Achilles, going down like that early. It's the bad part of the business. To sum it up, we didn't finish. Simple as that. We did not finish. We got outscored 24-6 in the second half.

***Seemed like you guys found some openings in the middle of the field, especially hitting Chim (Dike) in that deep route, seems like you guys didn't attack the middle of the field the rest of the game. Was that by what they were giving you with looks, or was that something that you guys have baked into the game plan?***

Well, I think like every play you have, when you're trying to throw the ball downfield and do certain things, certain coverages work out a certain way and other times you don't get that throw. We tried to throw one to Chig (Okonkwo) down there later in the game. So, it was the perfect coverage for the play that we got to hit Chim going across, and it worked out perfect. So, if there's coverage that takes certain things away and change your progressions when the middle of the field's open or middle field's closed or safety, post safety. So that changes from what is the route, what's the progression, things like that.

***What'd you like about what you did to get off to a good start? And what maybe did you not do well down the stretch?***

I think we were moving the ball, obviously, offensively, throughout the game. We didn't finish enough in the red area. But the way the defense started getting off the field, holding them to field goals, we were more efficient as a team. But just for the team things, if you look at it like, Jeff (Simmons), 10 sacks, 10-sack season, awesome. Once again, he comes out there and does his thing. Tony Pollard, 1,000 yards, four straight seasons. And then the special one, Chim (Dike), most yards in NFL history. Pretty impressive for a rookie. Unbelievable. I don't know all those numbers, and I know some people that he passed. It's just what a phenomenal year through this point in the season. He's got one more to go.

***Did you get a good look at the review of the replay to Tyjae (Spears)? Can you kind of just talk us through the thought process of challenging versus not challenging?***

There's always going to be—anytime throughout a game, there's always great communication. I think they've done a great job, the officials, with me on the sidelines this year, of going through and communicating of what it was, what they see, when the replay assists. And there's times, too, they can say, they tell you, 'Hey, you can challenge this. You might want to.' It's open. It's been great this year, the dialogue I've had with the officials on our sideline and the communication. Same thing when double moves come up sometimes. I'll tell them, 'Hey, we've got a double move coming.' I think when they communicate that way, it really helps us out. That's why we have the replay assists in what we're doing in the NFL today.

***On that play specifically was there something that made you not want to challenge it?***

Well, no, there's certain things that come up, and things that are said and you make those decisions as you go.

***How did you like the way Cam Ward played to keep some plays alive downfield?***

There were definitely some wow plays in there. Obviously, the one play, we can't have the sack fumble for a touchdown. That really hurt our football team. But just continues to get better. He's learning. I just talked to him. This is another game to learn from. There's some certain things were covered downfield and trying to scramble around, make some plays. We had a number of throwaways today. They did a good job of covering certain things. But there are some of those plays, I mean the one that they ruled his knee was down. But, I mean, just even having the ability to get that ball off, he's a special player. Week in and week out, he's starting to show everybody those type of plays that he's going to make, and not just the easy ones, but the ones that are really difficult to make. So it's great to see him do that.

***Can you discuss how you prepared for Tyler Shough and how you would rate his performance today.***

It's like any game plan. You go into a game plan, Dennard (Wilson) and his staff put a plan together of what we always think, what is the coordinator, in this case, the head coach as the play caller, what is he doing with this player? A younger player, how are they helping him? Is it quick game? Is it play-action? So, all those things, like every game plan you go into. And you always look at how are they—because obviously, they made the change at quarterback. So, as you watch tape over the year, were there certain things they're doing different to help this player to be successful.

***I know you haven't watched the tape, obviously, so I want your opinion just generally, maybe not about this game in particular, Cam's time to throw today was the longest by any quarterback since at least 2016. When a guy has that long to throw, you know a pretty long time, in San Francisco a couple weeks as well, what does that generally tell you about how they're seeing the field and how their guys are getting open downfield?***

Well, I think it's a combination really, of everything. I'll say one thing, like the fourth down call there's nothing like you have a good running game. That's always going to help the protection, especially when there's play-actions and things like that, a number of them that we ran today. So anytime you have the play-actions, you're going to have a longer time to hold on to the ball, do certain things. When you're efficiently running the game, you're committed to the running game. And I think also as Cam (Ward) extends plays, you know that obviously jumps the numbers up from time-to-time. And I know you referenced it earlier, but I'll have to watch the tape to see exactly, 'Hey, could we have gotten rid of the balls sooner or certain plays? What is it? Were plays covered? Is it a progression?' Something like that. So, I'll have a better answer once I watch it tomorrow.

***Maybe a question for later. But as a guy who's been around a lot of NFL teams, you've been doing this for a while now, how close do you feel like this team is to being back where it wants to be in the near future?***

I think if you look at how we played the last month of the season, really, you can see the growth of the team. Being 2-1 heading into this game, going to Cleveland, getting the win, unfortunately we came up short in San Francisco. They had the phenomenal game last week [against] Kansas City. You see the way the entire team played, the way we started and started playing today, I think there's so many positives you look at. We knew it was going to be challenging throughout the year and how it was going to go. It's hard to win in the NFL. But I think you see the way Cam's (Ward) starting to play and the more plays he's making. I mean, you've got Jeff (Simmons) on defense. You can't build—he's the pillar of the defense, and the way he played, once again today, it's week in and week out. I think there's been a lot of growth this year on the team. It's great for—there's a bright future here. You look at it and the amount of snaps these rookies have played, you are just speaking offensively, Cam is playing with the three rookies with him in the skilled positions. Those snaps are invaluable for their

futures. The amount of snaps that Cam's gotten this year, the way he's improved, it's only going to help the organization, Cam, the offense. Then you look at the amount of plays, really, in the secondary part of Marcus (Harris) and Kevin (Winston Jr.) and, unfortunately, they both got dinged and they're not playing right now. You look at Marcus, and both those guys really, at playing not just one position, but two positions. So I think you look at this rookie class and you say this was a really good group moving forward. Give Mike (Borgonzi) and the whole staff credit for the guys we brought in here to help us get to where we are today. They've got a really, really bright future. The thing I love about them, too, is that they truly love the game. They are the first ones in, the last ones to leave often. And you guys wrote the article early about Cam being here bright and early in the offseason. And that's how they all are. I mean, you walk in, by a room, late at night sometimes, and they're all sitting in there watching tape. So, they've all got a really bright future. It's great to see.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## QUARTERBACK CAM WARD

***You had some success early, and what happened down the stretch when you had a chance to it finish off?***

I think just playing on time, being good in the run game, being efficient in the pass game. And at times, myself getting big-play happy with trying to push the ball down the field and then just me having to connect with the receivers. So, everything takes in part to when we're good and when we are bad. But, it's all about us just continuing to go up and stay on the right trajectory.

***On the giveaway, did you not feel him coming from behind and the way that he was able to strip you?***

No, not really. Just having to move away from pressure on one side, then I need to keep two hands on the ball. That's why they were able to get one off of us, but I just got to protect the ball.

***Today it seemed like you were able to find those rushing lanes that you were able to find early to mid-season and you had a really good day getting extended plays. Is that something that you would see on tape or is it just a natural progression of the game slowing down for you as you go and progress this year?***

Just a lot of stuff I see on film. But then also after the first drive and second drive getting the feel for the rushers and then just trying to buy time for my receivers to make plays for us. I think the O-Line did a fantastic job in pass pro and that's just something that we got to continue to build on, our scramble drill rules and receivers always making plays.

***What did you think of Chig (Okonkwo) getting into the end zone after that catch?***

I loved it man. That's a free touchdown for the quarterback, but that's all Chig (Okonkwo) right there. I'm talking about spinning out of somebody, do a cartwheel, going in end zone, hit his dance. So, that's a Chig play. That the plays that what we expect out of him. I'm just happy he's able to do it and I'm looking forward to it next week.

***On that play to Tyjae (Spears) that ended up being called back, how do you know he would be there? Was that part of the progression? Was that just school yard?***

Just Tyjae (Spears), I always know where he is. He's in the right spot every time, then they just me getting through the progression, knowing where my back is. But then just trying to give us a play on fourth down to not let it be a sack just try to put the ball in a playmaker's hand. Did that, unfortunately got overturned. Defense gave us a stop to give us a chance to get another drive in. We just didn't come up with it.

***Is it difficult to come back for another drive after something like that's been overturned?***

It's not difficult, it is motivating, if anything, you just got to, have an next play mentality. We have that as a whole on offense, and we just didn't get the job done today.

***Do you feel like this result is representative of who this team is right now?***

Um, no. I think the best thing about this team is that we know change is coming. Change is coming in seven days. But back in August, everyone said to each other that we got each other. Every game that

we're going to, whether it's win or lose, we know the culture that we have and that's something that we've got to build on. This game, at the end of the day, will never define us. But, the biggest thing that we want to have in the locker room is a winning culture. That's something we're trending upward and getting toward. We just got to make that emphasis on every day.

***Knowing that change is coming, what's the next week going to be like for you knowing this team is going to a lot different next year?***

To win our last football game together, I think that's the biggest thing. Excited for guys to step up and make plays with their number's called. Not a lot of people get opportunity to play out there on Sundays. So, the guys we have in our locker room, we take advantage of each and every opportunity and just try to put the team and ourselves in the best situation to try to win games for the franchise.

***But do you do you feel the ebb and the flow of the game like that? Is that exciting to be part of that?***

No. You get touchdowns or you die trying. So, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter whether you're up by a lot or you're down by a lot, just got to take every drive the same and try to score points.

***You referenced a winning culture just a little bit ago, as far as having to be built about here. Where does that start for a team that's been down as long as this one has?***

Starts one, individually. Every person in the building have to have the right mindset to win games. It doesn't matter whether you're a player, whether you're in front office, or you're in the IT department. So, at the end of the day, everything happens for a reason. We have a great building to have that culture, everyone in the building trending towards that culture. At the end of the day, it's about winning games on the football field. The coaches, the fans and the front office, they can only do so much. But at the end of the day, it's about the players putting their best film on tape each and every Sunday trying to win for organization.

***How do you assess this team in terms of growth from the beginning of the season to now in your estimation?***

The growth has been terrific, especially from a young guys' standpoint. The rookies, whether it's Femi (Oladejo), who unfortunately got hurt early, just him seeing the field through film instead of actually being out there, I think that's the biggest help that a rookie can get. And then obviously with Chim (Dike) being a Pro Bowler. Elic (Ayomanor), Gunnar (Helm). I think the rookie class will continue to get better, leaning on the vets, especially if vets like Cody (Barton), Jeff (Simmons), just to continuing to pick us up. So, I'm looking forward to continuing those relationship with those guys.

***How do you feel next week the University of Miami is going to do in the Cotton Bowl against Ohio State?***

Man, I wish I could be there, but I feel like they're going to do something to shock the world. A lot of those guys I got a chance to play with in Miami. Mark Fletcher, I'm pretty sure he's going to have a big day, the O-line up there. So, I mean, I'm excited for them. They know I'm going to be the first one to watch. I'm always tuned in with those guys, and I'm exciting for them to shock the world.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## WIDE RECEIVER ELIC AYOMANOR

***It looked like there were times when Cam Ward had time to throw the football, he just couldn't find people. What were they doing so well to cover you guys up?***

I don't know. I'm going to have to go back and watch the tape and see.

***So what happened in the second half? You guys had 26 points on the board and then they really clamped down. Any ideas of what the difference was?***

Yeah, it's really hard to say from just being on the field, because I can only see my perspective of the play, right? So I don't know if there is something specific. I'll have to go back again and watch the tape and see what really transpired. But I'm not one to judge so quickly off of just my feelings from the game.

***Bottom line four field goals just too many?***

Of course, yeah. I'm not saying that it's ever acceptable for you to only take field goals in the second half. But like I said, I have to go back and watch the film before I really pass my final judgment on the game, you know what I'm saying?

***Still, you guys had a couple chances late to win the game and tie the game. Belief still completely there?***

Yeah, of course. And so I mean, again, it's our job to finish the game right there. The defense gets the ball back. We have a chance to go score and then go for two and make the game tied, right? And so we need to convert. We need to find a way at the end there. Yeah, we just got to find way. That's our job. That's what we're supposed to do.

***What was going right early that allowed so much success and maybe what are some things they did to kind of slow you down a little bit?***

Yeah, I mean, I was saying this earlier, it's hard for me to really pass judgment on what exactly happened, because I only have one perspective of the field, and the film really tells all the truth. So I feel like I'll always wait until after we watch film tomorrow to really pass my full judgment on it. But obviously we can't stagnate at the end there.

***What are the emotions just surrounding not being able to stack wins this season?***

Yeah, it never feels good to lose regardless of if it's you trying to stack them or not. The morale is never going to be good right after a loss. But I think that the team is strong, and I feel like we have a lot of fighting spirit. I think when you really watch the tape, you see how hard we actually play. And that's something I'm really proud to say. My brothers out there really compete hard.

## WIDE RECEIVER CHIMERE DIKE

***Coming along there with 26 points and then it seemed like they really got you guys blanketed. What changed during the game?***

Yeah, we'll have to go back and watch the film to know exactly. But to me it felt like we weren't finishing drives, right? Like ending on field goals, just didn't capitalize well.

***What kind of coverage were they in most of the game? Because there were times when Cam Ward went back there and he had time, it just looked like he couldn't find anyone.***

Yeah, I mean, they're kind of a rolodex coverage team. They play pretty much everything. So, there'll be a lot of Cover 3, quarters, Cover 8, Six-man.

***Peter Skoronki talked about just the field goals. You kicked four field goals is that just too many?***

Yeah, I mean, I agree. I mean you got to finish those drives with seven points. I thought we moved the ball well, but at the end of the day, it's about the amount of points we put up.

***How do you weigh the improvements that you guys have shown in recent weeks to the struggles that you had in the second half?***

I think it's just we need to finish drives. It's as simple as that.

***You were obviously part of other teams that were able to string together wins. What are the emotions just surrounding not being able to win back-to-back games this season?***

Obviously, it's frustrating. You want to stack wins in the league, and we weren't able to do that. It was a good opportunity for us today, but we're going to come back to work and keep building.

***You score on six-of-eight drives, and then it all stalls. What do you feel like changed?***

Just not finishing drives like I said. I think that we had opportunities to get third downs to extend the drive, finish with more points, but we weren't able to.





# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## CORNERBACK KEMON HALL

***How do you weigh the forced fumble, and then giving up the touchdown after that, as a player, with those two key plays happening back-to-back for you?***

I mean, really, you have just got to keep playing. I mean stuff happens, and they're pros, too. I mean, just finishing the plays, understanding the call, especially with those situations. I haven't been in those situations in a while. So really just play the technique, and executing the call, really.

***What are you thinking about, when you miss that tackle to start, and then making up the ground to force the fumble there?***

Really just, it pissed me off. Like I said, like you just got to finish, no matter what. He made a good, quick cut. And, you know, just keep going. The play's not over, so just finish.

***Overall, when you look back at it, you made the big play. Obviously, it got everybody fired up, but in the end, how do you feel?***

I mean, it sucks, because I want to win. I want to win my one-on-one, so that's what I've got to do. Just got to win my rep. That's it.

***On the mentality during the forced fumble***

Oh, yeah, the play is not over until to the whistle blows man, no matter what happens. So you just got to keep going and just finish the play.

***How about the way you guys just battled and fought all game? I know you guys came up a little short, but I mean, the effort's been there the last month of the season.***

Yeah, man, really just playing together, communicating. Even though, we got a few busts and stuff like that. But it's just line up, and play the play again. The next rep, just try to make a difference. Make a play.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## DEFENSIVE TACKLE JEFFERY SIMMONS

### ***Does it just come down to not being able to finish in the second half?***

Plain and simple. We didn't finish in the second half. We didn't do a good job of tackling, for one, and then we had too many guys just open. We knew that they were going to get the ball out the quarterback's hand fast. It comes down to being disciplined. I guarantee when we walk in that meeting room and hear Dennard (Wilson), everything's going to be discipline. That's all we've been talking about; discipline. From eyes, the way we tackle, rush lanes. The quarterback got out of the pocket a couple of times. We've got to be better, especially in the second half. We've got a chance to put a team away, we've got to put the team away.

### ***In that second half, was it just, as you mentioned, just a matter of not being disciplined? Not executing?***

That's exactly what it was. You see guys just open. You see guys breaking tackles. I don't know what the number is right now, but from what I saw and what you felt on the field, we just weren't tackling, getting guys on the ground and just guys doing their job. Like on the run play, we had them stoned in the backfield. We'll see it on the tape but every 11 had to do their job. And then just get them on ground, we got to be able to tackle. Especially when it comes to later in the game like that where we know they're going to try to run the ball. The game is in close range, and that last touchdown run, it shouldn't happen.

### ***You've got young, inexperienced DB's involved in that run play and in the two touchdowns that ended the game. Is there a scenario where you ask too much of those guys and they just have to step in and get it done? What do you say to guys?***

I'll just say everyone has a job to do. I can't control injuries. I can't control who's on the back end. Those guys knew that they were going to have to play Monday. We had a couple of injuries last game. Some guys went on IR. The way we try to operate, the way Dennard (Wilson) coaches the defense is everyone has to be ready to play. And at the end of the day, when you're talking about the game of football, these guys, we're professional athletes. Everyone dreamed to play in the NFL. So, when you get your opportunity, it doesn't matter if you're young and experienced because these guys practice for this. This is the reason why we practice through the week is to play on Sundays. So, we just have to be better at doing our job. Yes, maybe the nervousness and just being able to be in that mindset of 'I've got to go out here and play football, but I've got to step up.' That's what you want. That's what you should expect as a professional athlete. You want to be on the field in that type of situation. So, it takes all 11 though, it's not just on these young guys that are having to fill in. Yes, when you've got a lot of guys going out with injuries and traded, yes, it's hard as hell – don't get me wrong. But the way I was taught, the next man up mentality. We just have to do a better job of, like I said, when it comes down to just doing your job and tackling, it doesn't matter if you're young or old. We have to be able to make tackles, and everyone just got to do their job.

### ***You had a lot of momentum on both sides of the ball early. How disappointing was it that you couldn't really sustain it late?***

Disappointing. Like I said, when you have an opportunity to put a team out and take the life out of a team, you have to do it. That's something we didn't do in the second half, and we talked about it at

halftime, go finish the game and we didn't do that. So, yes, it's frustrating and the question is, when you're walking off the field after a game, it's just like, how in the heck did we let that one slip away? And just go back to doing the basic fundamentals of the game of football. Is everyone doing their job? And just get the guy on the ground.

***You're going to have one game left obviously next week, but what's your overriding feelings as you walk out here for the last time this year?***

It's been a rough season. We won one game here in Nissan Stadium and I just want to get back to winning football games. I want to get back to packing these stands. In my first three years here, we won football games. We packed Nissan, and come in — like last week, you're here, you sing the national anthem, you hear the 'Chiefs,' which, that's what they do, they travel. But I remembered when we had the Chiefs here a couple years ago, and you didn't see much red. You may have heard it, but you didn't see much red. So, I just want to get back to being able to win football games around here. It's been a rough season for us, especially at home. I'm sure it's not the way our fans wanted it to happen. I know for a fact it's not the way we wanted it in the locker room. So, it's been a rough season, but we've got one more. Like I said, in the locker room after the game, this coming up week is going to be the last time this team is together as a whole. We've got to go out this week and take every day one day at a time, but we've got to embrace it. We've got to embrace being around each other. We don't know who all is going to be back in that locker room next year, coaches included. So, we've got to embrace it, and we've got one more. I don't know, I didn't check on Jacksonville (Jaguars). I'm sure they're still in the playoffs, but we've got an opportunity to maybe knock them down one. I don't really know what's going on with them, but we just got to go out there with a mindset that we can finish the season off the right way. One more time with this team, and that's kind of what my message to this team. Just take this week with a mindset that we're going to play for each other and finish the season off the right way.

***How much closer is this team to getting back to playing winning football than it was this time last year or earlier this season?***

We improved. You saw the improvement from guys on this football team. The reason why we were able to — I'm sure everybody will say because they were missing (Patrick) Mahomes — but the reason why we were able to win the game last week, you see the improvements from guys, especially our young guys. So, when you can see improvements throughout the year, that's what you expect. We've got a whole offseason though; we've got a lot of work to do. I'm not going to sit up here and just say maybe what somebody want to hear, but I feel like we've got to work to do. It's not going to just fix in a couple of days. Like I said, we have been getting better as a team and we've got one more to try to finish the season off the right way.

***Why has it been so difficult to just win two in a row?***

I wish I knew. When I heard the coach say last night that we haven't won two in a row in a long time, that was surprising. I'm like, what the heck? That's why I want to get back to winning football games. That's got to be our mindset of how can we stack wins because we haven't done that in a very long time. We've got one more. We can't stack no more wins right now, we've just got to focus on this last one against Jacksonville. When we get ready to come back this offseason and leading up to next year, it's going to be different.

***How do you evaluate (Tyler) Shough's performance today? How did you prepare for him?***

They won. Shout out to them for winning. They got the ball out of his hand quick after we got to him a couple of times. He's got playmakers. He was able to throw the ball. We've got to do a better job on our side of the ball, but shout out to them, they got a win.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## GUARD PETER SKORONSKI

***You guys had them down in the second half. It's got to be frustrating to not finish the deal?***

Yeah, I mean, I think it starts with our red zone trips where we end up with field goals. I think that was the difference, really. Got to get six and not three.

***What do you feel like cooled you guys off early in the second half?***

I mean, I think we still had a good rhythm at times, but it's just finishing. I think some penalties killed us. I think just lack of execution. Not being able to continue the rhythm of getting down in the red zone and finishing. Continued execution for the entire drive, I think is what hurt us. Like I said, that was the difference in the game.

***Disappointed with 26 points? Two months ago, 26 points would have been a great day.***

Yeah, I think there's been growth, obviously, I think we've all seen that. Like I said, there's a similar story to two months ago, field goals and not touchdowns. It doesn't matter if it's 26 or you only score 10, but you got to get in the endzone. I think that's defense's feast on holding you to three. So they did that today, they held us at three a few times and that's the difference.



# POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## RUNNING BACK TYJAE SPEARS

***The Titans offense seemed to just stall in the second half with just six points.***

I don't really know. but like I said, we have just got to find a way to work through adversity and keep our feet on the gas. Things are going to come up all the time. It's not about what comes up, and it's about what you work through. It's all about the ultimate goal of winning.

***26 points two months ago, for you guys, that would have been something to hang your hat on. But today, 26 points just wasn't enough. It kind of shows how far you guys have come.***

It's definitely growth. It's not all something to be mad at, but we got to finish. We've got to find a way to score more than 34 points, or whatever they score. So, we've got to score of 35, 36, you know, so we have got to find a way to win the game.

***It's been a long time since this team strung together back-to-back wins, and to have that opportunity slide through your fingers. That one's got to hurt.***

Yeah, it's definitely, things that we all could have done better. But it happened and we have got to learn from it and move on.

***How do you look at next week in terms of maybe correcting the way you guys played today, and finishing with some kind of final statement or takeaway?***

You just never know how things may look next year. You never know how things are going to look tomorrow. You just have to put your best foot forward. We're going down there with the mindset to win. We're going to do everything in our power to win. Whether it's come to preparation, practice, all the habits that we have got to carry o to next week, that's what we're going to do.

***Given how hard you guys played throughout the month of December, with an interim head coach, and obviously the record being what it is, what does it say about the character of this team?***

It says a lot about the character because I don't think there's a soul in here has got a 'give up' factor in him. It says a little about the people they've got around here. It says lot about the coaches. It says about everything. It's like, we ain't giving up.

***How bad did you want to win against the hometown team?***

Yeah, I did.