



NEW ORLEANS SAINTS VS CHICAGO BEARS
SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2021 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- With the win, the Saints advance to the NFC Divisional Playoff, to be played at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday, Jan. 17. The Saints will play in the NFC Divisional Playoff for the third time in the last four seasons. Kickoff is set for 5:40pm CT.
- With the win, New Orleans improves its overall postseason record to 10-12 and home postseason mark to 8-5.
- This is New Orleans' first playoff victory over Chicago, making the Bears the eighth team New Orleans has defeated in the postseason. With the win, New Orleans' postseason record against Chicago improves to 1-2.
- With the win, New Orleans improves its all-time record against Chicago to 18-15 (including regular season and postseason games). In games played in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome, the Saints' record against the Bears improves to 8-3 all-time and 3-0 since Sean Payton became Head Coach in 2006 (Regular season and postseason).
- With the win, New Orleans now has a 5-6 all-time record in the Wild Card round and 4-3 record at home.
- Including the regular season and postseason, the Saints now have multiple victories over four different opponents this season (Atlanta, Carolina, Tampa Bay, and now Chicago). This is the first time in club history New Orleans has multiple victories over four different opponents in a single season. Previously, New Orleans had multiple victories over three opponents in 2000, 2006, and 2011.
- For HC **Sean Payton**, the victory improves his postseason record to 9-7 all-time and 7-2 at home. Chicago HC Matt Nagy becomes the ninth coach Payton has defeated in the postseason in his career, giving Payton a winning mark against nine of the 14 head coaches he has faced off against in the postseason. Payton's record in the Wild Card round improves to 4-2 all-time and 3-1 at home.
- Payton now stands tied for 19th in NFL record books with Vince Lombardi, Jimmy Johnson, John Madden, and Tony Dungy with nine postseason victories.
- Offensively, New Orleans amassed 385 total yards, including 123 rushing yards and 262 passing yards. New Orleans set a new club postseason record for time of possession, possessing the ball for 38:58 (breaking mark of 37:50 set on January 13, 2019 vs. Philadelphia). New Orleans also set new postseason club records with 11 third down conversions (previous high of eight was done twice) and five first downs by opponent penalty (previous high of four was set on December 28, 1991 vs. Atlanta).
- Defensively, New Orleans set franchise records for fewest points allowed and fewest yards allowed in a postseason game, holding Chicago to 9 points and 239 total yards. New Orleans held the Bears to 191 passing yards and 48 rushing yards - Chicago averaged 228.4 yards per game passing and 102.9 yards per game rushing in the 2020 regular season.
- QB **Drew Brees** finished 28-of-39 passing for 265 yards and two touchdowns and moves into fourth all-time in NFL postseason records with 462 career completions in the postseason, surpassing Joe Montana. In his 17th postseason appearance, Brees' earned a passer rating over 100.0 for the eighth time and first since the 2018 Divisional Playoff game vs. Philadelphia, when he threw for a 103.1 passer rating.
- Brees now has thrown for 36 postseason touchdowns in his career, and joins Tom Brady (75), Joe Montana (45), Brett Favre (44), Peyton Manning (40), and Aaron Rodgers (40) as the only players with 35+ postseason touchdown passes.
- RB **Alvin Kamara** rushed for 99 yards and one touchdown on 23 carries and added two receptions for 17 receiving yards. Kamara has now rushed for 272 yards in the

postseason in his career, good for second in club record books, surpassing Reggie Bush (200) and Pierre Thomas (215). With six more rushing yards, Kamara will surpass Mark Ingram (277) and become the Saints' all-time leader in postseason rushing yards.

- Entering the game with 28 postseason receptions, Kamara becomes the club's record holder for receptions by a running back with 30 (breaking a tie with Darren Sproles), and moves into sole possession of fourth in club record books for receptions by any player, regardless of position.
- Kamara's 116 yards from scrimmage moves his career total to 526 postseason yards from scrimmage, which surpasses Devery Henderson (461) and Reggie Bush (486) for third in club history and first amongst New Orleans running backs.
- WR **Deonte Harris** recorded seven receptions for 83 yards, both team-highs. Before today, Harris had one career postseason reception, a 50-yard catch in the Saints' Wild Card game vs. Minnesota last season. In his postseason career, Harris has caught all eight passes he's been targeted on. Harris also averaged 7.3 yards per return on three punt returns in the game.
- WR **Michael Thomas** recorded five receptions for 73 yards and one touchdown, returning to action after being activated off Injured Reserve yesterday. The touchdown is Thomas' fourth postseason scoring grab, moving him into a tie for first in club record books with Marques Colston, Devery Henderson, and Willie Jackson for postseason touchdown receptions. Thomas, who entered the game with 38 postseason grabs, becomes just the second Saint to record 40 postseason receptions, joining Marques Colston (58). Thomas also joins Colston (788) as only Saints in club history with 500 postseason receiving yards, now with 566 postseason receiving yards in his career.
- TE **Jared Cook** recorded four receptions for 40 yards. Entering today's game, Cook had averaged 70.8 yards and 5.8 receptions in his four playoff appearances.
- RB **Latavius Murray** recorded the first postseason receiving touchdown of his career, finishing the game with two receptions for 11 yards and the touchdown and rushing for nine yards on four carries. Murray has recorded at least one reception in each of his five postseason appearances.
- QB **Taysom Hill** recorded 15 rushing yards on four carries and two receptions for five receiving yards. Four carries and two receptions both match postseason highs for Hill, set in last year's Wild Card matchup with Minnesota when Hill rushed for 50 yards and recorded 25 yards receiving.
- Three Saints recorded their first career postseason receptions. FB **Michael Burton** recorded two receptions for 15 yards, WR **Lil'Jordan Humphrey** made one catch for 14 yards, and rookie TE **Adam Trautman** recorded one four-yard reception.
- CB **CJ Gardner-Johnson** led New Orleans with eight tackles. DE **Cameron Jordan**, CB **Janoris Jenkins**, and LB **Demario Davis** all finished with five stops.
- For the fourth time in six postseason appearances, CB **Marshon Lattimore** recorded two pass breakups in a postseason game. Lattimore added two tackles.
- DT **Sheldon Rankins** recorded his second career postseason sack, taking down Chicago QB Mitch Trubisky with 12:32 to play in the third quarter. Rankins finished the game with two tackles, the one sack, and added two quarterback hits.
- K **Wil Lutz** converted all three of his PATs, setting a new club record with 16 postseason extra point conversions, surpassing Garrett Hartley (15, 2009-11) in club record books. He also drilled two of his four kickoffs into the end zone for touchbacks



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New Orleans Saints Head Coach Sean Payton

On if the team was going to go for the fourth down with Taysom Hill at quarterback:

“It was basically a no-brainer freeze; and, actually, when we were on the field, we were just going to take a delay and then kick the field goal. It’s a heavy run formation, a different cadence from a different quarterback. It worked pretty well.”

On if changes were made at halftime that enabled the team to play better in the second half:

“I thought in the first half, it wasn’t necessarily on third downs, we had some minus plays. It was the complete opposite in the second half. We didn’t have a lot of possessions, but I know that we had two long drives, because when drives are over and you look at the pictures, when you get a heavy stack, you know that you were on the field for quite a while. I thought that the second half time of possessions were important. It proved to be important. Our defense played outstanding. Really, the one field goal came off of a turnover of ours on offense. It was a great team win; and, I thought in the second half, we got things clicking a little bit, relative to scoring touchdowns and moving the football.”

On what Deonte Harris brings to the game: “We got a lot of zone coverage. Some of it was two-deep high or quarter and some of it was single-high, but maybe a little bit more zone on some down and distances than we might have anticipated. Drew (Brees) did a good job of coming off to some players. Deonte’s one of those guys in space that (can make plays). He made a number of plays today. That was significant. He’s hard to tackle one-on-one. We tried to get him the ball on a few drive-starting plays. It’s good to have him back in the lineup.”

On if there were any reservations about allowing Drew Brees to leap over the goal line:

“No, we talked about that during the week, how he’s feeling. He’s feeling good. No, we just knew that a half-yard, we would be willing to do based on the type of goal line front that we were getting.”

On if he has concern about the kicking game: “As a coach, you have concern 24-7 about a lot of things. You’re focused on all of the specific details. I thought that from a kicking game standpoint, we did a lot of things well. We missed a field goal (though). Wil (Lutz) is someone that will bounce back. I think, believe it or not, we are fortunate to win a game; and, yet, we feel like there’s a lot of things that we can do better. That’s what we will get ready to get started on as soon as practices begin. I think that he (Lutz) will answer the bell.”

On if he was concerned about a slow start today: “As a coach, you’re always concerned; you’re wanting to operate efficiently. Look, I think that it’s really focused on the things that you can tweak. We threw the ball a little bit more on first down. It’s a good (Chicago) defense, a good front. We did the things that we needed to do. (It was) a good win.”

On the process this week for Alvin Kamara: “He is extremely smart, so he can pick things up right away. He was Zoomed-in for meetings. He was virtualled-in for practices. I think there are some players that it might have affected more, but he is one of those players that he understands what we are doing formationally, so it made that transition a little bit smoother. It was certainly good having him back in the lineup.”

On what he liked about the play of the defense: “I thought we tackled well in space. I thought our third down numbers were good. Ultimately, I think that we forced them to become one-dimensional. When you are able to do that, you are going to win a lot of games.”



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New Orleans Saints Quarterback Drew Brees

You look at what Deonte (Harris) did today and obviously like he was a big part of what you were doing, moving the ball downfield. But especially on third down, he had like four third down conversions today. How big was he there for you guys specifically?

“Yeah, listen, he's a great weapon. He can do a lot of things. He's got a really great feel for the game and a lot of our route concepts. And so, we're trying to put him in positions where (there are) good matchups in space, get the ball in his hands and let him do what he does best. He did a great job.”

First of all, what read was Latavius Murray on that touchdown?

“He is not. He is not in the progression. There's five other guys or four other guys. And he is actually blocking. And then he was there to cut Khalil Mack. So, he was on the ground. And then he popped up. And I just kind of dished it over (Khalil) Mack's head to Latavius (Murray). So, they played a totally different coverage than what the play was designed for. So, there's nobody open, so I go to scramble, he pops up off the ground. And just had to get the ball to him.”

Secondly, I mean, I guess you've spent most of your career figuring you would never meet Tom Brady in a playoff game, unless it was the Super Bowl. Is it pretty remarkable to get that third matchup in this new rivalry already next week?

“Yeah, (I) don't take it for granted. I'm very appreciative of the opportunity. And listen, the minute that he signed with the Bucs and came in the division, you felt like that was going to be a team to contend with, that was going to be a team that had playoff aspirations and beyond, just like us. So, I guess it was inevitable.”

After you broke your ribs, did you think the Brees leap basically was off the table forever?

“Yeah, that's a good question. I guess that I hadn't really thought about that one. But, we got to fourth and one there. And I told Sean (Payton), he's looking at the call sheet, trying to figure out what he's going to call and I said, listen, just let me jump over the top. So, that's what we did.”

I've also got to ask this, I know you were really fired up and talking into the camera after that, do you like, because they overturned the touchdown, were you like, man, I kind of wish I would have waited on that one?

“No, I thought I was in. I guess I just pulled the ball back a little too soon. But regardless, I guess I'm just going to have to do a few more box jumps tomorrow, when I work out, make sure I can get that extra distance. It was a little further out than normal, but still felt like I got in.”

No, I meant specifically when you went up to the camera?

“Well, I didn't go up to the camera, the camera was in my face as I was walking off. I just said, hey, we're going to get in, we were going to get in.”

You and Mike Thomas have only played I think 10 quarters of football all year. So, what was it like to finally have him and AK (Alvin Kamara) back on the field with you?

“It was great. It was great to get him in the end zone too. Hopefully we broke the seal and there is a lot more where that came from. But listen, we got some work to do. I think still, just kind of, first time, really, that we're getting everybody together again. Hopefully we get Tre'Quan Smith back this week as well. And there's just so much timing and rhythm that goes into the passing game. And so, many little nuances and things that, when you're playing a lot, it becomes automatic. And that is when, you're really playing at the level that, man, we've been at in many cases around here. But listen, this is playoff football, you know, each game becomes obviously more meaningful. And you've got to continue to fine tune and find ways to play your absolute best football. And listen, we need to improve, we still need to improve. There's still room for that. And so, that's what this week's going to be focused on, is continuing to find those extra little percentage points.”

That first long drive in the third quarter, you got a lot of clean pockets on that drive. And that wasn't really the case in the first half. Did you guys change things up at halftime? Did you flip protections around?

“We always do. We always change up protections just, in launch points. Just so defenses cannot get a beat on you. Focused on trying to get the ball out and finding completions, creating matchups and such. I thought we were good on third down today I felt like we were able to do that, well. Even some third and long situations where we just found outlets and guys were able to get first downs. But the guys up front, I felt like did a great job against a really good pass rush front. By sustaining those drives, you end up getting those 12 play, 15 play (drives), we had a few of those drives in the second half, which chewed up a bunch of clock, kept our defense off the field, and fresh. And we were able to get points. And at the end of the day, you know, despite the first half, where we felt like, we weren't really able to capitalize on some of the drives and really get significant points. (The) Defense played lights out. Special teams played really well, played the field position game at times. It was just great complementary football all the way around. And sometimes you've got to do that to win. That's what the great teams do.”

Alvin (Kamara) said earlier that you two communicated a lot during the week, you and him? What was that process like for you all?

“Yeah, just texting, as things came up, just texting him kind of my thoughts. And hey, this is a little nuances, this is a little different and be ready for this. So that, you know, when he showed up for game day, it wasn't, like a totally foreign gameplan. And (I) felt like he handled it really well despite the circumstances.”

Okay, one other thing real quick. TV cameras caught one of your sons, we couldn't tell who it was, doing the griddy after one of the touchdowns? Did you teach them that dance?

“Which one is that?”

The griddy dance, I think, it looked like that os what he was doing. Which is what Sean (Payton) did.

“It's probably my oldest son, Baylen. He's the one with the rhythm, of all the kids. So he'll start dancing and celebrating. He's kind of the swag king in the family. So yeah, it was probably him.”



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New Orleans Saints Defensive End Cam Jordan

On why he didn't offer to get slimed on Nickelodeon: "When you talk about me versus Sean (Payton) getting slimed, I thought that that was a no-brainer. I'm going to serve him up every time. I'm glad that it was him (who got slimed). I am more mad that I couldn't set him up for me to dump the bucket on him. If somebody had to get slimed, I am glad that it was him."

On what they can take away from the defensive performance: "We bring all of the juice and intensity we need. That first half, our interior line play was crazy. We harped on it all week. We said that if the interior line plays well, we're going to benefit as a defense. You saw it time and time again. Guys like Shy Tuttle, Malcom Brown, Sheldon Rankins, and David Onyemata came in there and did more than just well, they balled-out. It was able to set the edge up for us. We fed off of our interior guys' game. You talk about how our secondary took to the field today, I loved it. P.J. (Williams) created that fumble. Malcolm Jenkins scored the touchdown. We should've been up. With that defensive turnover, it would've been huge. At the same time, we pretty much came out in the second half and pretty much played lights out football, minus the amazing Jimmy Graham one-handed grab that we know he is capable of doing. That is why he is Jimmy Graham. He probably leads the tight end world in red zone touchdowns because he is 6'8 and can jump"



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SAINTS TIGHT END JARED COOK

You guys got Alvin Kamara and Michael Thomas back, but Deonte Harris played a huge role for you guys today. How big was Deonte today? It seemed like he made a lot of catches on third downs and made guys miss, that sort of thing.

"He was huge in both phases of the game. He was huge for us. I think he was seven-for-seven. He just came out involved in places where we needed him and Drew (Brees) was able to find him early and just kept hitting him throughout the game and that's huge for us."

Slow start. Any thoughts on why maybe it took you guys a little while to get going. Were you concerned at any point?

"That's just how the game goes when you're in it. Of course, it is not how you want to start. Of course, it is not how you want to be in a game operating. That is not so much the concern. It is not something that we really worry about when we're out there playing. It's just about making the next play on to the next play and continue to push forward."

Was there anything you guys did with your protections or anything that got Drew a little bit more time? I felt like there was a lot of pressure in the first half and then the second half there's a little bit more time for the offense to operate.

"We were worried about Khalil Mack and Robert Quinn the whole game. We knew that going into the game on what type of pass rushers they had and we knew that Drew was going to need some extra time and extra help, so we kind of figured that going into the game and not really much changes during the game. It's just, you knew that going into the week. That's how our game plan went."

SAINTS DEFENSIVE BACK C.J. GARDNER-JOHNSON

Welcome back. How are you feeling for getting back? What was it like last week, having to sit at home and not be there with your guys.

"It was hard. But focus on this week was my main focus, stay healthy and just go out and do my job and just do what my coach taught me. I'm not trying to do too much, just go out there and compete and play for myself."

CJ, did they try to take you out of your game today based on what happened back in November or was it pretty quiet?

"It's pretty quiet. We are here to play football. We are not here to do anything else. Like Coach Payton says, to just stay focused. I am not worry about anything else. I am here to help my teammates. I am not out here to be an individual show. That's not what this is for. I was glad we got the win. Great team win on both sides of the ball and ready to continue playing."

Can you just give us your evaluation of just how you cut up the defense played? Seems like you guys are peaking at the right time and playing your best football right now.

"We are out here doing our job. I can't speak for everybody, but I just see a team playing together on the defensive side. Just listening to coach and do an assignment. That is all it is. When we focus on the right stuff and have our eyes in the right place, we are doing good. We got to continue it. We got games left. The season is not over so focused on the next one."



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SAINTS RUNNING BACK ALVIN KAMARA

How was it going through practice virtually and in zoom. It seems like you didn't miss a beat

"You have to adapt. Obviously I couldn't be here this week for practice. They had the practice livestreaming. Coach (Joel) Thomas was miked up. He threw the run looks, pass looks, everything. I was talking back and forth with Drew (Brees) all week. It didn't really affect me too much. I try to stay attuned with what's going on week in and week out, so I can kind of pick up things on the fly."

Can you speak to how you felt physically while you were out?

"It didn't really affect me too much, just taste and smell thrown off a little bit. Otherwise I was fine. No real side effects or symptoms. I felt fine out there today, being out for that extended period of time. My wind wasn't really affected. Thank God for the health. Something I had to deal with."

Were you sweating out the Saturday/Sunday playoff slot potentially last weekend?

"Yes, I was watching (and anxious). But I got a little source that calmed my nerves and told me it was going to be a Sunday game, so it calmed my nerves, definitely relieved. I wanted to be out here and help the team."

Did it take a little while to get going with the run game in the first half leading into the second half?

"I was just out there in the moment. I feel like sometimes we start a little slower than we like to, but like Sean said we settled in and came out and did some things we talked about all week. We put ourselves in better position to execute and kind of get our tempo going. I have to watch it (film), like Sean says, but these guys like me, Mike, Deonte, we've been playing, but guys have missed time for certain things and nothing changes when you get back, plug and play."

SAINTS WIDE RECEIVER/RETURN SPECIALIST DEONTE HARRIS

Welcome back, what was it like to return after having missed so much time and made an impact?

"Like my first time in recess, when I was in elementary school. I'm just glad to be back. This is a game I loved to play since I was a kid, so I'm glad to be back."

This is two straight years you have turned out big games in the playoffs. What is it about this stage that seems to bring out the best?

"If you have a big game, you have a big performance, that's been my motto since I was young. They say big time players make big time plays and I'm just trying to make plays for the team."

It wasn't just you returning today but it was Michael Thomas and Alvin Kamara too. How big was that, not just you, but getting almost everyone back on offense?

"It was like getting the band back together. We had the issues the last couple of weeks with COVID and injuries and having most of the guys back from injuries. Now we just want to get 100 percent healthy and make this Super Bowl run."

Talk about what made your connections with Drew Brees so good on third down and did the time off help you at all going into this fresh?

"We practiced it a lot, just like Drew told you earlier, a lot of practice goes in, a lot of timing. All week we've been practicing."

"Definitely, fresh legs, fresh feet. It stunk that I had to miss some games. I felt like those guys needed a little break. They're been going hard all season. I just wanted to come back and make plays."

CORNERBACK MARSHON LATTIMORE

How do you think the defense is playing right now?

"We're turned up. We have to get to it. This is the fourth year, we have to do it. We're playing lights out right now and keep making the plays."

How do you guys feed off the energy C.J. Gardner-Johnson brings and gets everyone fired up?

"I tell him turn me up all the time. Everytime I do something, I tell him to turn me up. He's the one who gets in people's heads. We needed that. Whatever we have to do to win and keep doing it."



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SAINTS LINEBACKER DEMARIO DAVIS

It seemed like it took the offense just a little bit of time to find its rhythm. How much pride do you guys take in keeping that game where it was until they kind of found it and put the game away late?

“We’re a team that’s built on playing complementary football. And so, we have the ebbs and flows of the game. And our job is to go out there and get stops. And that’s all that we’re focused on.”

You got Marcus (Williams) back today, you got CJ (Gardner-Johnson) back today, P Rob (Patrick Robinson) back today. How big was that just getting those guys back after missing them for various amounts of time?

“This time of year, the more healthy you are, the more guys you got, the better off you’re going to be. And it definitely was helpful to have our guys today.”

Can you just talk about the effort on third down today, I think the only ended up with one the whole game? Just the effort on third down?

“To be successful in this game, you have to be good at third down. You just got to be able to play good situational football. We thought we had a good read on what they were going to try to do. We feel like we had a good handle on our game plan and what we were trying to do. And it just goes to the execution of the guys. So, it was good enough to get a win today. And that’s what we were looking for.”

How much of a difference is it for you playing with Alex (Anzalone), as opposed to Kwon (Alexander) and just how was it having Alex (Anzalone) back in there next to you?

“We have a good linebacker room. So, we feel like anybody that’s on the field is going to be able to contribute and bring a lot of energy, a lot of effort and play at an efficient level. And that is what is most important. And that helps when we have a veteran room. We got young backers who can pick up what we try to do. Because you never know, it’s always next-man up. And everybody in that room has to be ready. And I think we have a good room and are able to adapt to that.”

You talked this week about appreciating being in the playoffs because those opportunities do not come very often sometimes. How much do you appreciate, playoff wins are even more rare. How much would you say you appreciate this right now? And how good does it feel right now?

“You’re grateful, for sure. It’s important. But, you know, it’s nothing to, it’s kind of tricky, because you have to appreciate it. But, it is nothing really to relish in and celebrate because you got to complete the mission. You’ve got to stay locked in until we complete the mission and the mission is not done. So, it was good for us to get a win today. But, we got to be ready to do the same thing next week.”



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BEARS HEAD COACH MATT NAGY

Opening Statement

"It's always difficult coming off a loss at any point. Being it's the end of the season, there are a lot of emotions in that locker room. I appreciate these guys. It's been a long year. I love everyone one of these players and coaches. It's not where we want to be. We understand that we have to grow from this. We have to learn in a lot of different areas. They fight and they care about it. At this moment, I care about them. As far as the game goes, we struggled on third down offense. We were one of ten. You have to be able to make plays when you get the opportunity against a really good football team. You have to give credit to Sean Payton and that team. They have a lot of great things going there. They're tough. We didn't put it together in all three phases. We know we have to be better. We have to score more points. Defensively, I thought our guys came out and fought. We talked all week about putting the ball on the ground by getting turnovers and takeaways. You could feel the energy and juice on the sideline. That part was good. Offensively, we struggled to get that run game going. We have been a lot better weeks prior. We were able to work off our naked, our boots and our actions, but struggled a bit there. We had a penalty in the red zone that forced a third and 20. We have to learn from that. The offsides on fourth downs. The little things like that. Anthony (Miller) getting disqualified. Our guys have to learn from that. With that I'll go ahead and ask for questions."

On if he believes the team is on track and if any major changes are necessary

"Making the playoffs to day, but we did today has to be a lot better. How do we do that? Every year is going to be a little bit different. That is just a simple fact. I just told the guys in the locker room that for us to get better and be the team that we need to be is something that we will do in the offseason. We will make sure that wherever there is a weakness that we make it a strength. That is going to take everybody. Today wasn't good enough. You look at a team like the Saints that has been there and done that. I think that is a start for us. You can see situation and discipline-wise that we have to be better. We have to be better in a lot of different areas. That's my job to make sure that it happens. We have to learn from that. Every year is a little bit different."

On Anthony Miller getting ejected

"We spent time on Wednesday morning as a team literally showing and explaining a particular players actions in games and teaching it. That's taking 10-15 minutes out of your day, which is precious. When you do that, it is a valuable lesson. We already knew going into this game about some of that. We talked about how every action has a reaction. We are low on numbers at the wide receiver position and the value of that zebra position for us. Our guys need to be stronger. We can't have that happen. We have to understand that. It's two times that it has happened. "

On the trick play and the missed touchdown opportunity

"I'd be lying to you if I sat her and told you that it didn't hurt. That has been sitting in the playbook for weeks. We have been practicing it. We had it. We have been waiting for the right time. Our guys knew when it was coming early on. It was unfortunate. Again, it's another learning tool. When there is an opportunity to be made against a team like this, you have to make that play. Javon (Wims) knows that. I'm not saying anything that Javon doesn't know. He understands that. Mitch (Trubisky) did a great job of giving him a chance. He put great air on the ball. He didn't make the play. The next step of that is what do we have to do. When that happens, you do not let that affect you. You do not let that deflate you. You say who cares. Let's get the next one. We just never ended up putting points on the board."

On running the ball prior to halftime

“It was the field position. I didn’t like the field position. I told the coaches let’s see where we can go here big picture. Let’s get a first down or two. The field position was so bad they called a timeout on first down. Then they were out of timeouts. It was the mindset at the time knowing that we were down 7-3 and getting the ball to start the third quarter. You end up getting a first down or two and it flips. You end up going from that four minute mode into that two minute mode.”

On the explanation of the Cole Kmet penalty

“The explanation that was told to me was that he was throwing the ball to the player. I couldn’t see any replays. Cole and our coaches on staff said that he was throwing the ball to the ref. I was told he was throwing the ball to the player like it was taunting. I still haven’t seen a replay on that to this point. That was a big play in the game. Now, it’s 3rd and 20. I was confused as to what happened. I have to see what happened. If Cole says he was throwing the ball to the ref, I believe him until I see it.”

On losing 8 of 11 going until the offseason

“You lost this many heading into the end of it. I think us as a staff we have to look at why is that, where is it and how do we get better. Every year is different. I think identity-wise as an offense we created an identity. How do we learn from that? You always have to run the football no matter what your identity is. You have to be able to do that. You might not run for 150 yards in a game, but you’re going to have a lot more 2nd and 5’s, 2nd and 4’s and 2nd and 3’s, which then keeps you out of the third and longs. Third and longs against any defense, let alone this defense, is hard. We need to figure out in the next few weeks is who are we and how do we get better. We know this isn’t good enough. We need to do whatever we need to do to win a Super Bowl. The goal isn’t just to make the playoffs. We need to sit down and evaluate all of that stuff.”

On if he will be back next year and evaluating changes as a staff

“We haven’t gotten into any of that stuff. We’ve been so focused on this game. The same thing goes with the staff. Whether it is promotions or demotions, there is always change. That is just how it goes. Tomorrow for us as a team we’ll do all of our exit interviews and talk to the guys. That will be down the road. I appreciate the fight of these players and tomorrow we will discuss the other stuff.”



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

CHICAGO BEARS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS NFC WILD CARD PLAYOFF SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 2021 • MERCEDES-BENZ SUPERDOME CHICAGO BEARS QUOTES

BEARS QUARTERBACK MITCHELL TRUBISKY

(On if he wants to be back next year) “Yes, I think I can see myself here next year. Obviously, a lot of that is out of my control. It feels like home. It feels like we have unfinished business. Now, I’m bummed about the season being over and how the game went. (There are) A lot of emotions going on right now. I can see that. There is a lot of things that have to happen and a lot of decisions that have to be made. It is out of my control, but I can see that.”

(On his performance lately) “I feel like I have gotten better this year. I feel like the offense was better when I got put back in the starting lineup. I gave my teammates a chance to win. We did win games. That’s why we were able to get back into the playoffs. It wasn’t just me. It was the team as a unit making plays. We overcame adversity together and I feel like I was a big part of that. There are some good things that we did toward the end of the season that helped put us in a position to be able to play here tonight. This isn’t how we wanted to finish. We finished 8-8 and slid into the playoffs. We did that last year. There are still things that need to be changed. There are a lot of areas that we need to grow in to build that championship culture that we want to get to. I think we have some pieces, but there is also a lot more that we need to do better. We need to figure that out”

(On his thoughts during the trick play) “It was to throw the ball and score a touchdown. You don’t get a lot of opportunities like that. He was pretty wide open behind the safety. I was a play that we have been practicing the last few weeks. I was excited. Coach got it called. That would have definitely helped early on to get on the board and get some momentum. I thought it was going to be a touchdown, but we have to have that big play mentality. Overall, we were just sloppy tonight.”

(On the drop off of the offense the last couple of weeks against Green Bay and against the Saints in the playoff game) “A lot of things. I think it comes down to execution. There are some things we could do differently game planning to put ourselves in a better position early on. It always come down to the basics at the end of the day. Are you doing good on third down? Tonight we were not. Were we efficient on first or second down? Tonight we were not. We were in third and longs and they weren’t really manageable. They put us in tough positions and we just didn’t execute. We shot ourselves in the foot a lot. I don’t think we played very smart tonight with the penalties. It was sloppy. There are a lot of things that we need to do better. There’s a lot of things that we need to get changed. It’s the culture of what we expect and what we don’t. We just have to keep getting better and you have to play your best ball against the better teams like that. You have to show up to play and execute and everyone has to be on the same page. It was sloppy for us. That’s why we didn’t get the result that we wanted.”

(On why the offense escaped them) “I don’t know. I think we just got away from it tonight a little bit. I’m not sure why. I just go out there to try and do my job to the best of my ability. I try to go out there and lead my teammates. When you are not efficient on first and second down and they are putting you in long passing situations, then you need to be able to pass the ball and convert on third down that way. We didn’t tonight. We didn’t execute. We didn’t out ourselves in a good position. We have to get that run game going a little more, so everything else can come off it. You have to give them credit. They came out and they were the better team tonight. I have a lot of love for my guys. I’m proud of the way that they battled all year long. They still battled tonight even to the very end. There’s a lot that we can get better at to put our team in a better position to win. It’s something that we have to take a look at and something that we have to talk about and move forward with.”

(On processing this could be his last start with the Bears) “It’s emotional and it was like that in the locker room. We have been through so much as a team this year. It was a special moment to share with the guys and show the appreciation of everything that they have done over the course of the year. A lot of these guys I have been with for four years. That’s really special to me especially some of the guys up front. They have had my back since I have been here. Them along with the other guys mean so much to me. It is tough. You try not to look to far down the line. You try to take it one day at a time. I know that there are going to be decisions made this offseason. I feel like I have gotten better these four years. It’s tough. There have been some ups and downs. I am proud of where I am and how we’ve battled and gotten better over the years. We’ll just take it one day at a time in this

offseason. I know that God has a plan for me. I will continue to stay positive and keep working and keep believing.”