



NEW ORLEANS
SAINTS

POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES
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KANSAS CITY CHIEFS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
SUNDAY, AUG. 13, 2023 • CAESARS SUPERDOME
SAINTS POSTGAME NOTES

- New Orleans moves to 1-0 in the preseason after their opening victory against the Chiefs in the Caesars Superdome. The Saints return to action on Sunday, Aug. 20 when they play the Los Angeles Chargers at SoFi Stadium following two days of joint practice on Thursday and Friday. Kickoff is set for 6:05 p.m. CST. The game will be aired regionally on the Gray Television network of stations in the Gulf Coast (WVUE FOX 8 in the New Orleans area).
- Attendance at the Caesars Superdome was 70,028.
- The victory was New Orleans' first victory to open a preseason since a 24-20 win at Jacksonville on August 9, 2018.
- QB **Derek Carr**, S **Tyrann Mathieu**, WR **Michael Thomas**, DE **Cameron Jordan**, and K **Wil Lutz** served as the team captains
- The Saints tallied 21 first downs in the contest compared to 17 for the Chiefs.
- DB **Ugo Amadi** and DE **Kyle Phillips** each recorded interceptions, Phillips' helping set up the game-winning 31-yard field goal by K **Blake Grupe**
- New Orleans converted 7-of-16 (43.8%) third-down attempts.
- Defensively, the Saints held Kansas City to 5-of-13 (38.5%) on third down conversions.
- The passing attack was key for New Orleans as the quarterback room combined to complete an efficient 27-of-38 passes (71.1%) for 267 yards and three touchdowns, **Derek Carr**, **Jameis Winston** and **Jake Haener** each tossing scores.
- DB **Ugo Amadi** recorded a second-quarter interception off a pass tipped by CB **Alontae Taylor** from Chiefs QB **Shane Buechele**. Amadi finished the game with two tackles.
- LB **Ryan Connelly** led the team with four tackles and one pass defensed.
- LB **Zach Baun** added three tackles including a sack in the third quarter
- Phillips intercepted Chiefs QB **Chris Oladokun** on a third down with 1:04 remaining in the fourth quarter to help fuel the Saints' come-from-behind victory.
- Carr led a 12-play 80-yard drive to open the game, capped off by a four-yard touchdown pass to WR **Keith Kirkwood**. Carr completed six-of-eight passes for 70 yards and a touchdown in his lone drive of action.
- The touchdown pass from Carr to Kirkwood was the second time the Saints scored on their first offensive drive of a preseason game since the 2012 Hall of Fame Game against the Arizona Cardinals, when Mark Ingram scored a one-yard rushing touchdown. In the 2022 preseason opener at Houston, RB **Dwayne Washington** caught a nine-yard touchdown pass from QB **Andy Dalton** on New Orleans' first drive.
- QB **Jameis Winston** took over for the remainder of the first half and completed 11-of-13 passes for 92 yards and a touchdown with a 121.8 passer rating. QB **Jake Haener** played the entire second half totaling 105 yards and completing 10-of-17 passes. He added his first career touchdown pass on a two-yard score to RB **Ellis Merriweather** as part of a 76-yard drive late in the fourth quarter.

- RB **Jamaal Williams** led the Saints in rushing with 28 yards and tied a team-high nine carries with Merriweather (24 yards).
- WR **A.T. Perry** made his first NFL catch on a pass from Winston for a 14-yard gain with 6:46 remaining in the first quarter and later caught a 29-yard touchdown. Perry led the team with six catches for a team-high 70 yards and a touchdown.
- WR **Lynn Bowden Jr.** had the longest punt return of the day with an explosive 22-yard return in the third quarter. He also added one assisted special teams stop.
- LB **Ty Summers** finished with two solo tackles, one sack and one special teams stop.
- In making his Saints debut, Tulane graduate and rookie LB **Nick Anderson** had one assisted tackle and one assisted special teams stop.
- LB **Nephi Sewell** recorded one assisted tackle and led the team with two special teams stops.
- P **Blake Gillikin** punted three times for 114 yards (38.0 avg.) and had a team-long 47 yard boot.
- K **Wil Lutz** made his lone field goal attempt of 36 yards and made both of his extra points. Grupe added the game-winning field goal from 31 yards out as time expired.



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(Opening Statement) “It’s good to get a win. I thought our first units, both offensively and defensively, really came out strong and played well. It was good to see the offense (on the) first drive of the game take it right down the field 11 plays and get a touchdown. Obviously with a few new pieces it was good to see Derek [Carr] out there. It was good to see Mike [Thomas] get a catch across the middle, so there were some good things that happened there. The second series offensively again we were able to take the ball downfield and get points. And honestly, I thought it went downhill from there. I don’t think we executed well for a good chunk of the game until obviously there at the end with the two-minute drive and then we get the takeaway at the end of the game to seal it. Kind of the same thing on defense. I thought initially we started out strong. We got a couple of stops with the first unit which was good. And then (later), when we gave up the deep ball, that kind of changed the momentum of the game. In the second half, I just thought we made too many mistakes. Mistakes that will end up costing us games. But like I said, I am glad we got the win. This league is all about winning, so winning in the preseason is important and I am glad our guys were able to do that. It was nice to see [Blake] Grupe get a chance to get to kick in that situation and be able to knock it through.”

(On what he liked about QB Derek Carr) “I thought he was in control, poise, threw it to the open guy. Kind of the way you want your quarterback to operate the offense. He did a nice job stepping up into the pocket a couple of times, so I thought overall it was a good experience.”

(On if CB Alontae Taylor’s evaluation is the same working in the slot and outside cornerback) “I would say they are two different evaluations. I think overall Alontae’s had a really good camp. I think he’s still getting used to playing inside in the slot – and that’s part of the deal with growing up and playing in our league. If everyone is just an outside corner, somebody has to go inside, and so he is going in there and getting some work. He will keep learning from his mistakes and will get better from it.”

(On A.T. Perry’s play) “It was good to see. I thought he stepped up and caught the ball well. I don’t like him reaching for the goal line there at the end on his first touchdown, but it was good. He made a couple of contested catches and I thought he was able to run down the field, put his foot in the ground and come back and create some separation. I thought he played well.”

(On the play of the younger guys) “We had some young guys score their first NFL touchdowns; we had some guys kick their first NFL field goal. So, it was good to see some of those young guys make some plays. Certainly, we are in a race to improve from now to week two and we have a few days before we get on a plane and head out to L.A. and get some work in against the Chargers, so we still have a lot of things to improve on.”

(On his thoughts on QB Jake Haener): “Early on I thought he was a little erratic, but I thought as he settled down, he got better. He has a little moxie to him and when the game was on the line, he got us down the field and put points on the board. It was disappointing on the two-point play that we snapped the ball early and don’t get a chance to at least try to execute in that situation. I thought that was my one takeaway is that we had too many self-inflicted wounds – not with the first groups, but as we got into the second and third waves, we had some self-inflicted wounds that we have to clean up.”

(On forcing turnovers): “We have talked a lot about taking the ball away and we got two of them today. I think takeaways are contagious. When you start getting them, they tend to come in bunches, so everything is about the ball and we have to continue to emphasize that as a coaching staff and make sure our guys understand the importance of the ball, both protecting it and trying to take it away.”

(On how the team won) “You know it’s a preseason game, and when we didn’t get the two-point conversion, we could have said let’s get out of here and save our pads a little bit. But, I thought it was important for us to take the timeouts. We figured if we got them three-and-out and they had to punt the ball back to us, we’d get the ball with about 15-20 seconds left and maybe we could get ourselves in long field goal range and see if (Blake) Grupe could hit a long one. Our guys on defense made a play and you never know when those plays are going to come so you just have to keep playing.”



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(Opening Statement): “As far as injuries go, Nic Jones fractured a couple of fingers there. We will see how he does. (Anthony) Witherstone hurt his toe, his big toe. We have to see how that also does when we get back. All in all, it was good to get a game in. The ones – we have to pick up the tempo there on both sides of the ball. Not good enough. We have some things to work on there. It was good to get the young guys in. I thought they actually played pretty well, the twos and the threes. Some good things from really all of the different positions. They all come back after being left in a deficit and bring ourselves back in the game. You can’t finish it. You can’t finish with a mistake. That’s a terrible way to end the thing. Looks like the Saints have a good football team. We have to make sure we get our stuff taken care of.”

(On rookie Justyn Ross’ performance): “Yeah, you know before I comment, I want to take a look at the tape. In general, I thought the guys did a decent job. I know he had the touchdown. That was a good play, that play. As a whole I have to see all the work they did.”

(On Justyn Ross playing for the first time in two years): “That’s the good part of the story, and he came out healthy. That’s a positive thing.”

(On Patrick Mahomes’ sideline leadership): “Some of the guys were a little flat in the beginning. You can’t do that. When you come to work, you need to come to work ready to go.”

(On the 4th-and-1 sneak): “After looking at it on the replay, we probably should have gone to the left and not the right. They ended up pinching on that side, the left side, and we probably could have gone in that direction. We’re trying to get where we can do that. We can’t work on that in camp live. You get good work on it here. It didn’t work. That was the bottom line. We have to go back to the drawing board on it.”

(On his thoughts on Richie James) “Again, I have to look at the whole work, but he had a beautiful catch there, a couple of them. That’s a good job by him. He’s a good football player. We know that. He’s got a good feel for things.”

(On rookies Felix Anudike-Uzomah and Rashee Rice): “That’s so valuable for them. They’re two guys who need that – the speed of this, live, the whole deal – and not just a handful of reps, putting a series together. I think that was good for both of them. Again, I have to evaluate off of the tape. We’re going to look at it. There are going to be some corrections. I thought for the most part they held their own and did a decent job there. I’ll take a peek at that.”

(On if he has any idea of the severity of Nic Jones’ injury): “No, I don’t. I’ll know more here in the next day or so. We know it’s broken. Some you can just cast up. Other ones, you have to have surgery on it. We’ll see where that goes.”

(On the touchdown pass by Shane Buechele): “It was a good escape. That escape was good. The throw was good. The catch was good. All around that was a pretty good play. Glad he had a chance to get one in the end zone there.”



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QB Derek Carr

(On how the first drive felt) "Felt good. Felt efficient. It was nice to get a couple of situations in the third down, get some red zone, and all that stuff because, again, they don't tell us like how much we're going to play and all that. So to get a couple of situations in there and then throughout the game to talk through things with Pete (Carmichael) in certain situations and things like that in a game type scenario. It was good. It was a lot of fun. Loved being on this side of things in the dome. I can get used to this place it's a lot of fun."

(On why he liked playing in the game as a starting quarterback) "When I woke up this morning, everything was new to me. Where's pregame meal? I followed Erik McCoy in and I was like, "bro, I don't know where to go to park." He was like "follow me." As soon as I got in here, Reg (Reggie Stone) was showing me everything like everything there is in the locker room and I was like, "alright, where's the shower? Where's the snacks?" Everything was new. For me to get out there more importantly and play football in the stadium, this time when it wasn't loud, we can operate and do those kinds of things. It was important to me to do that no matter how old I am and how many years I've played the NFL, to do it with a new group, all new receivers and for everyone to be in there and playing, I think is a mark of this team that any chance we can get to go out there and coach (Allen) will let us, we just want to compete and play."

(On Keith Kirkwood) "Keith Kirkwood was someone...We had three lifting groups and we'd always lift at 6:30 group and at 6am. I'd be like whoever wants to meet me there, I'll be there at 6:00 a.m. to throw these new routes and these kinds of things and Keith was there every single time. After practice, I always run extra, Keith, as you guys see, he is always right there next to me running extra with me. If we don't see each other we make sure that we check in "did you do it?" I think that it's his hard work and his determination. He's a veteran player. He understands what it takes. I'm just really proud of him. To be able to get a touchdown, I know it was preseason game but they still all feel good."

(On what he could have done better today) "We had a false start. I will look at that and I always put false starts on myself. Was there something in the communication process that I did not do, right? Everyone wants to look at the jersey number that they put it on, but I have a lot to do with that too. I have to look at that. I'll always try and put those on me. Because I'm always trying to deflect from those guys as much as I can because, again, if there's a way that I can help us be better, that's all I'm looking to do. I'll check in with those guys, especially after we watch it. Especially with what kind of play it was and what we were trying to do. Is there something there that I could have done better to help them out."

(On the offensive line) "When we have those five guys out there in practice all together. Sometimes some guys are limited and things like that. But when they're all five out there, it's like wow, this is pretty impressive, man. That's the first thing I told him when we came off field, I was like "I got to go through reads and make decisions, play quarterback, I appreciate it fellas." Because those guys man, they did a great job on that. It is one drive, but it is okay to get excited about, it's professional football. I think those guys are really good players. We'll watch the film and there's going to be things that they'll want to fix and that I'll want to fix but just playing the game and being able to see things and all that, I thought they did a great job."

(On getting the ball to so many skill players on this team) "Hopefully our skill guys just continue to understand one guy may have 10 catches in the game and you may have two, and that may happen for two weeks and then boom, you are going to have 12. We have to be able to play that way and play selflessly. I believe we have a group that will do that. Because boom, everybody is catching the ball. Bam, bam, bam, you know first play is for Chris (Olave), then we got A.K. (Alvin Kamara), then we find Juwan (Johnson), then we find Mike (Thomas) then we...everyone is touching it and then all sudden Keith gets a touchdown. So everyone did the cardio and Keith got the reward. Hopefully our guys understand that that's just how we're going to have to play if we want to do the things that we want to do. Because if we can be, you know if we can do that and spread it out evenly..."

(On if he was anxious) "I was very excited. No anxiety. I've been doing this like a decade. That is when I look in the mirror sometimes and I see the gray hairs it does feel like a decade but it does not feel like it goes so fast. But the nerves just...You're not nervous anymore. You just want to go out

there and execute and play at a high level. I was really excited and... I will tell you what, I was really excited when we turned left right here and started coming down and the lights were off and they started playing a little music and I was like "oh yeah, now it is time." So that got the juices flowing. But I tried my best. I am an emotional, excited person. I try my best to stay like this so don't throw the first one into the stands. It's hard not getting excited coming out to that intro."

(On completing the few passes under pressure) "I was happy because usually some teams won't blitz in the preseason. They won't or if they do it's just someone off the slot, it's just easy stuff and they walked up in there double A's, double mugs another time, they gave us different looks all game. And for my drive, it was nice to get someone man someone blitzing me I was fired up that now I get to move and work on my stuff in a live scenario, and it was a great pickup. It was satisfying because those are the realest reps it gets, like they can hit me out there. For our guys to be able to, with that in their mind, do their jobs and execute, everyone, most time you can do the physical part but the mental side to make the right point and make the right calls and pick them up and do all that and everyone do their assignments. Everyone gets excited about the skill players and the points but it doesn't happen until we do that part right first. And so I was really proud of that."

(On Jake Haener) "Jake Haener? I was proud of him. When he came off after the interception, I said "you know who else threw a pick in their first preseason game?" He started laughing and I was like "just keep cutting it loose, man. There's a long half, we're going to win this thing." And I didn't know we'd win it the way that we did. But I was really proud of him. And he's going (to) be a good player for a long time. Because he works really hard and he cares. And he's good. So (I'm) really proud of him. And the more reps he gets he'll just keep getting better."

(On what it was like for his family seeing him play) "I haven't gotten to talk to them too much, just a little bit before I walked in here. It was... for them putting on black and gold for the first time, it was probably a little weird because when I put that uniform on and I went in the mirror I was like... Jake walked up, he's like, "that looks weird." He said... I was like "I know, I've been in the same place for nine years." But it may look weird, but it felt right. I told D.A. (Dennis Allen) that earlier this week. I just feel refreshed and I feel rejuvenated and to put that uniform on and come out and be a Saint. It felt really good. I know my wife was excited about today and my three boys... My little girl she don't care. She was yelling "touchdown Raiders" the other day. I was like, we have to fix that. But my three boys, they were so fired up. I got to see them before the game it was really cool for me. They were on the field. Those are memories that we'll have forever. I am sure that they're going to know more about this game than I will. They will know all those things and so I am sure when I see them, they will be really excited."

(On AT Perry) "I think it's good for... I mean it's the National Football League. It's not easy out there. It's one thing to watch it from one point of view, but when you're in it, in full speed game live reps where they can hit you and all those kind of stuff, you got to read it right and make the right decisions. For him to go out there and play the way he did, I'm so proud of him. But for all the young guys, I thought that they... whether they started slow or started fast I thought everyone just settled in and just started playing football. That's what the preseason is for, for everyone to just get... knock the rust off, all those things, things you've been working on in camp, doing it in the live game. And for them to see like, "oh, man, that does work" or man "what coach was telling me was right." A lot of that was happening today. I was really proud of him. He was featured today. He was getting the ball a lot so it was good."

(On the win and how many players chipped in) "I mean, throughout the season it's going to take everybody in the building to win. And if we are all pushing the same direction, we'll be able to do it. And for the young guys to get in there... The camaraderie, the confidence that they will have now that... Man, the young guys, the third group went in there and they got the ball back for each other, they went down and scored and they knocked the field goal. I mean what that does for their confidence is unbelievable. That only helps our whole team be better. I think, especially the way that we won, I think it's only a good thing. But like D.A. said, whether it's regular season or preseason, we don't care. If we're strapping it on, you're going out there. You're not going out there to try and lose and be okay with it. We're going out there to win and we were happy we were able to do that."

(On if Drew Brees gave him advice) "No, we laughed about a couple of things, that maybe our defense may know our plays and things in practice and all that kind of stuff. But we didn't talk about this. I think... I've been playing for a while. If I was a young guy, there are certain questions I'd ask him and asked him beforehand and all that kind of stuff, but they're certain things now that he's not like "you Okay, you ready to go for the first" He doesn't have to do that kind of thing. But we're able to talk about just how big of an impact the things that he said to me ended up with me being here and everything, I told him everything that he said to me, they have proven it. What you said is what they are doing. I think just from that relational standpoint took us to another level because everything he said was true and they've proven it. Mickey (Loomis) and everybody's proved it so far."

(On if he could hear the crowd when they announced him) "Yeah, that was cool. They were loud, that was awesome. And I think there was some Chiefs fans yelling at me too."



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DT Khalen Saunders

(On his first game at the Caesars Superdome) "Oh man it was amazing. Obviously coming out seeing the lights in the stands and stuff look like you looking off into space. All black and seeing black and gold, it was definitely a spectacle coming out of that tunnel and we hadn't even like do the introductions or anything, we just came out and it was the energy. So I can't... I want to see how they get when you introduced Demario (Davis), I want to see how that gets. It was a great experience, it was fun."

(On how it was lining up against his former team) "Also fun. It really felt like practice. It just really... I felt like I saw a lot of plays that I'm used to seeing. I was out there calling out some stuff and kind of cheating a little bit but not cheating because I know them. But it was fun, getting to talk to those guys too before and after the game. Because, like I said in my introductory press conference here, I'm a big team guy. I'm going to treat them...treat those guys like my brothers. I still talk to those guys daily and so it was good to kind of reconnect with them and share sentiments and all of that stuff like that. But they also know who I am and they know that I'm a team guy so they know I take the Saints seriously and it's not like no, "man I wish I can be back." Like no, I love y'all to death but I'm a Saint. So that's how it is now and it was a good experience and it was a good competition."

(On the opening defensive effort) "I think that's how we need to play the rest of this year. I think that, especially with a higher team offense like that, if you can get some stops like that early, you're going to get those guys punting the ball pretty early. First two series and stuff (like) getting clutch fourth down stops and stuff like that. That's all the makings of a top-five defense. I think that we have to see our offense too. Those first two drives going out there and scoring back to back. that's the...what else do you look for in a good team? You're getting stops, you're getting clutch fourth down stops and you're going down and dropping the ball and putting it in the end zone. I think that we have the makings of a championship team and it's just a matter of us to prove that right or wrong which we will prove right."

(On the snap count and if he wanted more reps) "Absolutely. Absolutely. That's the competitor, the football player in all of us. Don't nobody wants to just be done completely playing, especially when you getting some tackles and getting back into it finally, like, oh, man, this how football feel. And then you get taken out. But obviously this opportunity... this is not our time, this is not my time. This is an opportunity for the younger guys. This is obviously for me just to sharpen my skills and polish up and get ready for the season. But one thing that I will say that I've learned over my career so far is it's not about your first team. It's about those guys who's given those guys a break. Those guys are coming in there should never be a drop off. And that's one thing I preach to the guys, the younger guys, the rookies, and just the guys on you know behind me is like, "Man when 99 comes off the field..."

(Malcolm) Roach...I love playing with Roach because there's no drop off at all. And I kind of relay that to the younger guys and I'm like, yo, y'all got to... when me and Roach not on there, it should look like me and Roach on there. That's just kind of our mentality and mindset."

(On the late interception by Kyle Phillips) "Oh, man, obviously anytime a lineman can get to get their hand on the ball it's going to be the highlight of the day. And beyond just having an interception it's the fact of when he had it, that was like the most clutch thing I have seen in the league for a while. Everybody gets on him and (are) patting him on the back and stuff. But I just told him like, "Man, you must be living right. You must be prayed it up or something the right way to fall into that (interception) in the late (part of) game." Everybody congratulated him, telling him good job. He is been having a good camp in general. We brought him on a little later (in training camp), because he wasn't here at the start. He's picked up really well, been attacking each day showing great pass rush, showing great ability, just as you guys seen or tracking that ball. I know I was happy for him. Obviously, everybody was happy for him. I just told him like, hey...I told all the young guys this is your resume, and your film is your resume. Put it all on film, so it's nothing left to question and I think he did a great job of that."

(On following Erik McCoy to the Dome) "Oh, yeah. From the hotel. He waited for me. I'm not going to say the street's name because I'm going to screw it up. But he was down there, I pulled out and I waved to him and he was like, "alright, come on." Then I follow him all the way to my parking spot. First time for everybody."

(On how Drew Brees was almost late to his first game at the Dome) "They did tell me that story and that's why I specifically made sure I had someone to follow and who better than your center?"



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S Ugo Amadi

(On his interception): "I knew what was coming based on the formation. I knew not to break too soon. We practice that every day. It was one of those tipped balls and I came down with it."

(On making a play like that in the preseason) "It's just the beginning for me. Those plays mean a lot to a defense. Coaches, the team and fans love the guys who get the ball. They just love those type of people and that's what I want to mean to this team."

(On what the coaches said after the pick) "They just said to keep going."

(On doing a little bit of everything) "I've been doing it all my whole career. The more you can do, the more the team will like you. I take pride in being a little Swiss army knife."

QB Jameis Winston

(On how he felt out there today): "It felt great. It's always nice to get a victory."

(On the touchdown pass) "(A.T. Perry) won on a great one-on-one matchup, made a heck of play and got in the end zone."

(On what he saw out of Jake Haener) "I saw tenacity and the will to win. He led us back and we got a nice victory."

(On A.T. Perry) "He is a big target. He has a great release game and strong hands."

(On getting the win today) "Every win matters for this city and this team. For us to go out on top like that against the defending World Champions for the first game of the year is a tremendous confidence booster. I'm just happy that we got that win."

TE Juwan Johnson

(On the first drive) "I go out there and see Chris (Olave) out there and Mike (Thomas) and (Alvin Kamara), I get excited and I know the things that we can do. All of us collectively has to stay healthy. I don't feel like a lot of teams can stop us. That's just the mindset that we have. We are not being arrogant or cocky, but I've seen these guys work. I've been seeing it for the last month. I know what we can do. I just go out there."

(On Jimmy Graham making that catch) "Like I've told you guys all camp, I've really looked to and leaned on him this whole camp. To see him have a reception and lower the shoulder, there he is. It is just exciting to see him out there. We are all out there just having fun. The tight end room is exciting. You have Foster (Moreau). He is a great player. He has been doing really well for us. Taysom (Hill) is out there getting his nose dirty and doing his thing, Jimmy being that guy who everyone looks up to. It's really good to have a room like that and it's been fun."

DT Nathan Shepherd

(On the first couple of drives) "The offense did their job. They came out swinging. The defense were able to hold up. I'm really happy how special teams responded. I think they did a good job (also)."

(On the fourth and short) "It was a quick snap with a little bit indirection. It was a misdirection on the offensive part of the ball, but we got a stop and at the end of the day that all that matters."

(On if he likes the ball coming his way in that situation) "Truth be told we got some great players all across the line. Our strength is our versatility. Wherever the ball goes we are going to have a great opportunity to stop it."

(On how the first string defensive linemen played) "It is a great place to start from. We definitely have a lot of things to work on. If we can get three and outs consistently and put their offense in less favorable positions, then we are going to have a better outcome at the end of the day."

RB Ellis Merriweather

(On if he works on his balance) “Yes. Not specifically the balance, but my whole lower body especially my quads, my glutes and my hips so that I can be flexible and stronger. You have Alvin (Kamara) who is in the room and he is a gymnast when it comes to balance and mobility. I’m blessed to be able to learn from the best.”

(On if the touchdown was designed to go to him) “Yes, I’m the first option on that. No play fake. Just get to the pylon and make sure you catch the ball.”

(On his thoughts on that play) “I knew it was coming to me. Coach (Joel) Thomas said I’ve seen you from day one and I know that you have it in you. Just go out there and show everyone. He said I’ve believed in you since day one. Just go ahead and do it. I was a rookie minicamp invite (tryout). I did not get drafted. I didn’t get a signing bonus. Every day I go in there with my head down and ready to work and show them that I deserve to be out here. God is good and I was finally able to do that today.”

QB Jake Haener

(On how good the last drive felt for him) “Obviously, you come out and want to do a really good job on offense. First game in the preseason as a rookie, there is some miscommunication and some things that don’t go your way. I think playing this position you have to do a really good job of having a short term memory. You hear from people to stay with it, but I think it’s just staying positive, staying focused, staying task oriented and taking it one play at a time. We found a way to get it done.”

(On feeling comfortable under pressure in second half) “I felt comfortable that last drive. The previous few drives, I think we did a good job of communicating, getting the plan and getting into the flow of the game. It was great to get out there, get my feet wet and orchestrate something leaving people wanting more.”

(On if that situation takes out a lot of the thinking) “Yes, I always try to play in flow state. I try to play with that react mindset. I try to breathe and I try to tell myself that I belong in these moments. You just want to go out and execute at a high level when your team needs it and the game is on the line.”



POSTGAME NOTES AND QUOTES

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS VS. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 2023 • CAESARS SUPERDOME CHIEFS PLAYER QUOTES

Quarterback Shane Buechele

(On the touchdown pass to Kekoa Crawford) “Just a little scramble drill, and the guys did a good job of working for me. (It was) just playing football, man, just playing football. And, I have a good example in front of me where I get to watch him (Patrick Mahomes) make plays. Kekoa Crawford made a great play on that catch. It was just playing football.”

(On the touchdown to Justyn Ross) “That was awesome. Seeing the smile on his face after he caught that ball was the best part. He did a great job of running the route and just executing the play. I was happy for him. It was awesome...He did a great job of executing and both of us being on the same page. After that, we were all excited about seeing the smile on his face, seeing all of the hard work that he’s put in from all of his injuries. (It) was tough times for him, so for him to be out on the field, trusting his ability and executing was awesome. It was good to see.”

(On Mahomes being excited on the sideline and the message for the second half) “Coming out that second half, the message was “energy”. We needed to have better energy on the sideline and field. We were able to put together a couple of drives where we were able to score. It was kind of cool. It is always fun to have those guys be pumped up and have energy on the sideline. That was the message going out in the second half...(that was the message) from him (Mahomes) and Coach (Andy) Reid (was to) just have energy, go out and try to win a ball game.”

(On what that means to see the veteran players excited) “Just having those guys, those vets, when they are happy for you and jumping around, it’s always fun seeing them on the sideline having fun. When they’re happy for us, it makes it easy for us to be happy for them.”

(On what he saw from the starters) “There was just a lot of energy. They did a really good job of just playing with energy (and) playing within the system. Some of us, that’s the only time that we get to go out there and play. We always preach to just do your job. You don’t have to go out and do anything different, anything extra. Just do your job, play within the system, and we put together a couple of really good jobs where we had to go down and score. It was fun, a lot of fun.”

Safety Justin Reid

(On the first preseason game) “It was fun. I got to go out there and make a couple of tackles. (There’s) a lot to learn from. (We’ve) got to start faster with the first group out there. I think there are a lot of things to build on. We got to see the young guys come and fight back. (There was) a lot of good things that they put on tape. (It was a) wild way that the game ended, a failed two-point conversion and an interception. It’s preseason. The most important thing is that some guys got some experience and got some tape on that we can continue to build from and learn from in training camp and get ready for the regular season.”

(on being excited for the younger players today on the field) “We wanted to juice them up. We want them to be confident. We would love for everybody to make the team. That, unfortunately, isn’t how it works in the NFL. There’s going to be cuts. We want everybody to go out there and put good tape out there so that even if you don’t make the team here, you still have an opportunity somewhere else. There are some guys who took advantage of some opportunities out there. (They need to) keep their heads high, keep them playing hard, playing fast, making plays. They did a lot of good things.”