

**New Orleans Saints Coach Sean Payton**  
**Wednesday, January 10, 2007**

**Opening Statement:** *Joe Horn will be listed as questionable on the injury report. He did not participate in team work. Omar Stoutmire will be listed as questionable. Those are the only two injuries we have right now.*

**Q:** *If Stoutmire is able to play, would he start?*

**A:** *We'll see where he's at.*

**Q:** *Do you have an explanation for why Jeff Garcia has been so productive in his last six starts?*

**A:** *Earlier in his career in San Francisco, he was the same way. He provides great leadership at the position. I think he's a good decision maker. He extends plays with his feet very well. He moves in the pocket. He does a good job of getting the ball to the playmakers. I think he's a good quarterback. He's been to three Pro Bowls. He's been to the postseason before. His mobility and his ability to throw the ball from different positions on the field are challenging and things he does very well.*

**Q:** *Is there a cutoff point as to when you need to see something from Joe Horn?*

**A:** *I think at some point here in the next practice or so you would hop. He felt better today. Tomorrow, we're into a red zone day, which is our last full practice. It felt better today. He took individual workouts, ran routes and was part of those other periods.*

**Q:** *Do you talk to your players about the lack of playoff experience on this team?*

**A:** *Certainly it's one of the things that you recognize. We talk about it. You have to play in the playoffs to obtain playoff experience. It's one of the things that you deal with. We've played in some pretty big games this year so far. I think our response is the right response when it comes to this type of atmosphere. We're playing at home and there will be a lot of excitement and enthusiasm. I don't think either team will have any problems in getting ready to play. It will come down to the execution and all of the little things that go into winning a game.*

**Q:** *Can you discuss the play of Mike McKenzie this season?*

**A:** *He's played very well, especially in the last half of the season. Anytime you're playing a down safety defense to stop the run, you put those corners on islands. When you watch him play, he's gotten more and more consistent and comfortable with what we're doing defensively. He's been a big reason for our improvement on defense to where we're at now, as opposed to where we started back in training camp. He plays with a lot of confidence. He's smart and he's been a large reason for our success as a team as well.*

**Q: What attracted you to Drew Brees?**

**A:** *I think that initially he wasn't even on the radar because he was with another team. When it became apparent that he might be available, you look back at the things he has been able to accomplish. In high school, he won the state championship. He went to Purdue and with a new coach there in Joe Tiller, all of a sudden they're in three bowl games and the Rose Bowl. He was a part of that program turning around. He went to San Diego. There was a new coach there in Marty Schottenheimer. Shortly thereafter, they're in the playoffs. That success has followed him and not by accident. I think he's an outstanding quarterback. When he became available due to the concern of the injury, which was something we discussed and researched, he gave us a lot of flexibility that when it came time for the draft, it ended up being a good decision.*

**Q: Some people say this team has been riding an emotional wave since the Monday Night Football game. Other people suggest that you should try to avoid the peaks and the valleys of waves. What is your thought on that?**

**A:** *We've played 16 games now. We haven't played just three. We're on game number 17. We've handled times when we've lost and bounced back and played well after a disappointing game. You get to this point in the season and I think both teams are playing with confidence. Certainly Philadelphia is and I know we are as well. We'll see what happens when the game starts. At this point in the season, getting ready and getting focused become easier for me as a coach, because of the significance of the game. I don't have to worry about a great pregame speech this week. Our players understand the significance of this game. I think that will take care of itself.*

**Q: Can you discuss about how well your offensive line was able to protect Drew Brees in the first game and with that in mind, do you anticipate that Philadelphia might try to do some things differently?**

**A:** *Philadelphia is one of those teams that are good on defense. For the last five or six years, they've been one of the top five or six defenses in the league. Nobody does drastic things at this point. There are looks and other things that are different from the last game. The last game seems like a year ago. When you go back and look at that tape early on, we had some momentum to start. In the second half, they got that back with some big plays and took the lead. Fortunately at the end we were able to finish and score to tie it up and get a field goal late. It was a close, hard-fought game. It came down to a field goal. There will be some things that are different possibly about what we see defensively and different for us on offense or the Eagles on offense. You might tweak some things and put in some new looks, but can't recall the last time there's ever been a wholesale change by a defense. You look at what's gotten you there. You have to be smart and stay about of the long yardage situations. Those are the things that are tough to manage. Those early downs are important.*

**Q: does offensive line play become more important in the postseason?**

**A:** *I think it's always important. I think the ability for your offensive line and defensive line to play well each week has a lot to do with the outcome of games. The importance of us in blocking well in the running game and blocking well in protections are all things that are important.*

**Q:** *Can you discuss why you have had some success against Andy Reid as a head coach and as an assistant?*

**A:** *I fairness to that question, I've been a position coach. I've been a part of teams that were doing pretty well in New York and then Philadelphia took that over. In Dallas it went back and forth. Andy's been a head coach there from the time I've been an assistant. I don't look at that as a fair comparison. I'm a head coach here at New Orleans now. We played them one time in a close, hard fought game. During Andy's time there, they've been able to accomplish all the things that we want to accomplish and build here. That's a good football team year in and year out that has a chance to play in the postseason and to possibly go on and play for a championship. Those are the things that Andy, his staff and his team have been able to accomplish since he's been hired from the late 90's up until now. They've been one of the most consistent teams from a won-loss standpoint, over the last five or six seasons of any team in our league. They've done a great job. Those are the things that we wanted to aspire to be.*

**Q:** *You talked about getting a binder ready when you were interviewing for coaching jobs. What was in that binder?*

**A:** *I think you spend a lot of time with schedules for the off-season, minicamp, training camp and the regular season. It starts with schedules. It might include a staff list of who you'd like to hire on offense and defense and possible a two-deep in those areas. It might include how you want to organize and prepare for the draft and how you want your assistant coaches to handle those responsibilities. You include your offense and your defense. There are about 25 tabs in there including free agency, the draft and other practice-related schedules we've talked about. You include policies on items. It ends up becoming pretty thick.*

**Q:** *Do you feel like most aspiring head coaches have that or do you feel like you have a more throughout book?*

**A:** *When the season ends, the challenge is preparing in a short period of time, because I don't think you're giving it thought during the course of the season. You're preparing right now to play games. When the season ends, it's a short week. If you're interviewing the week after the end of the season, you have a lot of work to do. There's some late nights, a lot of coffee and getting that stuff organized. If you've gone through it once before, you keep it with you and update it. Maybe you put it together over a period of time, but when the year ends, if it happens and you're interviewing, you really have to get working on it.*

**Q: Do you have any type of plan for when you decide when Michael Lewis or Reggie Bush will return a punt?**

**A:** *It is about feel and seeing how things are shaking up. Maybe Reggie hasn't been involved much in the last series on offense. It's a way to get him touches. A lot of it is dictated by the flow of the game.*

**Q: Yesterday Andy Reid said that Jeff Garcia didn't become a bad quarterback overnight. A lot of people thought he fell off the face of the earth. Is he playing at as high a level as he was in San Francisco?**

**A:** *I agree with Andy. I've seen firsthand what he can do. When I was in New York, we went out there and played them in a Wild Card game. We had a big lead. I watched him on the field level bring his team back in a big game and come back and beat us. There's a lot of things that go on for that position to be successful and you see it with the way he's playing now and the way he played in San Francisco. His two steps before Philadelphia there were possibly a lot of things not going right. Insert any quarterback you want in those scenarios and they're going to struggle. He's with a good system, a good staff and guys that run a good offense and have for a while. All of a sudden now, he's having success and I think Andy's exactly right.*

**Q: Can you discuss the problems that Garcia presents to you on Saturday night?**

**A:** *He's a guy that can make plays with his arm and his feet. He's a good leader and he gets the ball out quick. He's playing at a very high level. He hasn't turned it over. Those are all the things you're looking for at that position.*

**Q: Looking back at the decision to trade Donte' Stallworth, do you see it as a trade that benefited all parties?**

**A:** *Whenever a trade takes place, both teams are hoping to gain something from. Certainly in this case, I think it's happened. It's a great example of a win-win. It's an opportunity for Donte' to go to Philadelphia. It's an opportunity for us to acquire a player in (Mark) Simoneau and a pick. (Marques) Colston had a lot to do with it with his development. I think that would be accurate.*

**Q: How would you characterize Brian Westbrook as a running back?**

**A:** *He threatens you in a lot of ways. He's one of the most explosive players in our league at that position. He's a threat with the ball in his hands as a runner. He's a threat when he lines up outside as a receiver. I think he's very intelligent. He's smart. You can see that in his play. He understands the passing game. He understands what he's doing in the running game. He can line up in a lot of different spots and he can run. You have to be able to account for the different places he's playing and you have to tackle well. He's exceptional that way.*

**Reggie Bush Press Conference  
January 9, 2007**

**Could you talk about your relationship with Deuce McAllister and how it has evolved over the course of the season? And how you have managed to survive in the same offense?**

**Bush:** “From the time I came to the team, Deuce has welcomed me with open arms. He has been nothing but a great leader for me and a guy that has taught me how to play like a pro and how to handle your lifestyle as a pro. He’s been great and has been a big help to me and I couldn’t think of a better person to show me how it’s done.”

**Has it been hard to have two running backs and only one ball?**

**Bush:** “No. Coach Payton has done a great job of distributing the ball. The great thing about this team is that we don’t have selfish players. Everybody is above the team and about winning. So we don’t have to worry about that on this team with everyone doing their part. Everybody is excited to be in the position that we are in right now. Nobody is being selfish and it’s never been like that.”

**You are no stranger to big games. Can you compare the feeling now to playing for a national title in college?**

**Bush:** “It feels just like a national championship game. It’s big and it’s going to be just as big as the Monday Night game we played earlier in the season. The stage will be there and be set. Everything to make this a huge game will be there. The national TV. Playoffs. We’ve been in this position before. We just need to show up.”

**From a personal standpoint, it appears that you are running with more confidence with each game. How does that make you feel personally coming in to this game?**

**Bush:** “Obviously it is good for my confidence level. I feel like I am getting better and adjusting to the offense more. I would say I am calmer. That just comes with time and experience. I just thought it was a matter of time before I got running back to how I know how to.”

**Andy Reid said this week about Brian Westbrook that it’s not the acceleration, but the acceleration through the hole. Is that pretty much the same thing you are experiencing?**

**Bush:** “Yeah. That’s an old saying and something I have heard back all the way to my days in Pop Warner. It’s not the speed to the hole, but the speed through the hole. It’s really what a running back has to do to be successful.”

**When did you really start to get into that groove and find that comfort level?**

“I would say about midway through the season. I would say the first six games, adjusting to and finding my rhythm and just getting used to this offense and finding my identity in the offense.”

**What type of interaction have you had in recent days with fans regarding how big this game is?**

**Bush:** “Every game for this city has been huge. The fact that we are winning has been huge for the city. So everybody is excited and ecstatic so we don’t have to do anything for them because they are already pumped up and excited.”

**What is the funniest or most poignant thing a fan has told you this season?**

**Bush:** “Just everybody has been really excited. It’s almost like a life-changing experience for them. If you talk to them, it’s like their lives thrive off of the success of the team. We have a huge effect on the city and the people here and all the things that they have gone through. We are sort of like an inspiration to them. We know that we mean a lot to them and they mean a lot to us.”

**Are you aware that you are preparing to play in the probably the biggest game in this team’s 40 year history. Did you expect something like this so quickly?**

**Bush:** “Not until you just mentioned it. It’s a big game and fortunately coming from USC I have been able to play in some big games, so I am going to take it as another football game and take it as it is and not make it any bigger than it is. We are just going to go play football and try to win another game.”

**Is it a lot to ask an athlete to carry the weight of a city on a player’s shoulders?**

**Bush:** “Well it’s not just one of us. It’s the whole team. For us, we just try to do our part and win and be active in the community and be active with the fans. For the most part, we know what’s at stake here and are just trying to keep it in perspective and not let it weigh too much on our minds.”

**What concerns you the most about the Philadelphia defense?**

**Bush:** “They are a physical defense and known for being able to get great pressure on the quarterback. So we need to do a good job of stopping them and not letting them get to Drew when he is throwing the ball and not allow them to get penetration when we are running the ball. We really have to be conscious and fundamentally sound out there.”

**There are a couple of your former teammates on their defensive line. Have you talked to them at all?**

**Bush:** “No. But we’ll talk.”

**Do you ever watch Brian Westbrook. Is he interesting for you to watch, particularly the way he gets involved in both the running and passing game?**

**Bush:** “I like watching him and always have. He’s a great athlete and a great player. I have always been a big fan of his and he is a guy that is everywhere, punt returns, kickoff returns, catching the ball. He’s kind of been a leader for me, seeing how it’s done.”

**Would you say you are more like Westbrook or a guy like Tiki Barber?**

**Bush:** “I would say we’re more similar (Westbrook & Bush) in those ways.”

**What about the loss of Lito Sheppard for them and what that will mean for those of you guys that catch the ball?**

**Bush:** “Well obviously we know that and we are going to try to make the most of our opportunities to catch the ball and opportunities in general on the field. Obviously losing Lito Sheppard is big for them and we’ll see what we can do about that.”

**It’s a Tuesday but it feels like a Wednesday. How do you feel?**

**Bush:** “I am excited. I wanted to play the game yesterday. It’s going to be a huge game and this is the kind of game where playmakers step up and can make a name for themselves. You just go out there and play and these are the games I love to play in. I am sure all the playmakers, guys like Drew and Deuce, this is what we live for, games like this.”

**Do you think Joe Horn is ready to make a big return on Saturday?**

**Bush:** “I think so. Just being around him and talking to him I know that he is anxious to get back. He’s been out for a couple of weeks. He’s a playmaker and a fighter and I know he’s going to be all out.”

**Do you watch all the games? What’s that like for you?**

**Bush:** “I did watch all the games this weekend. It’s been an up-and-down kind of weekend for some teams. So it’s a great learning experience for us to see that and see what not to do and see what to do. Anything’s possible and you just can’t give up.”

***New Orleans Saints Coach Sean Payton  
Tuesday, January 09, 2007***

**Opening Statement:** *Here is the update on our transactions today. We signed Billy Cundiff today. Fred McAfee was put on injured reserve. We waived Trevor Johnson*

*yesterday to create the spot for Hollis Thomas. These moves put us at 53 players. Joe Horn didn't practice today. We'll list him as questionable.*

**Q: *How is Joe Horn progressing?***

**A:** *I was disappointed that he wasn't able to practice. I think he's doing everything he can to get ready. Yesterday he went in practice pretty good. Today some of his soreness came back. He did some things yesterday that were encouraging, but there is still enough soreness to keep him from going full speed.*

**Q: *Is Horn's injury one of those injuries that can only be alleviated by time off?***

**A:** *I don't know that.*

**Q: *Can you discuss what you guys did yesterday?***

**A:** *We practiced. You just weren't invited.*

**Q: *After being placed on injured reserve is Fred McAfee done for the year?***

**A:** *That's correct.*

**Q: *How was practice today?***

**A:** *Today was an emphasis on first and second down with a lot of base situations which we typically do on a Wednesday. It was a typical Wednesday routine where we worked on a lot of our base personnel groupings both on offense and defense with an emphasis on first and second down.*

**Q: *Can you discuss how you have successfully managed the touches of Reggie Bush and Deuce McAllister?***

**A:** *It's a little bit easier from a running back standpoint, because there are certain plays that are running plays and in those, the halfback will get the ball. In regards to the passing game, you don't have that same luxury. You might have a pattern and he may or may not get the ball based on the progression of the defense you see, but the key is to have just enough versatility where you feel like you are getting both backs involved in the game, especially at the running back position. It's not always easy. I think with us being effective on third down and sustaining drives gives us more plays and more opportunities to give those players touches. The weeks where we haven't been able to do that are weeks where we may have struggled on third down, possibly didn't execute as well or found ourselves with a 50 or 60 play game rather than more. Each week it changes a little bit, but both of them understand exactly what their role is and both of them understand what their role is. There is enough variation in the personnel groupings that keeps both of them going on the field sometimes and sometimes not. It's just about having a good mix and it's not always exact science. Sometimes you get into the flow of a game like in New*



*York and Reggie received more handoffs than he probably had in weeks past. We'll see how this game unfolds.*

**Q: What things have you been emphasizing to make sure the team is sharp coming off of the bye week?**

**A:** *In a game like this I think that the players on both teams understand that it's the postseason and getting ready for a game like this from a physical standpoint becomes a little bit easier. Guys are going to play with energy and effort. A lot of it comes down to the little things. This bye week is different from the bye week in the regular season from a scheduling standpoint and not knowing who you're going to play. I think it comes down to the little things that you preach all season long such as turnovers, time of possession, third down conversion and field position. Those are the things that are going to be important. That hasn't changed. I don't think either team will have a problem in getting ready for a game like this.*

**Q: How is Philadelphia different from the last time you played them?**

**A:** *They're playing excellent football right now having won their last six games. They're playing with a lot of confidence. They have undergone the change at quarterback with Donovan (McNabb) going down and Jeff Garcia stepping in. They've gotten their running game going. The defense and special teams are doing a great job. It's a big challenge for us. We're playing a team that five or six weeks ago had to win and have continued to win these must win games. That's a credit to the players and the coaching staff. They've done an outstanding job. It's a big challenge for us.*

**Q: Is playoff football different than any other kind of football?**

**A:** *There's certainly a different atmosphere. You get into this postseason, you lose and you don't play anymore. That makes a difference.*

**Q: How important is it to get Hollis Thomas back for this game, especially with the recent emergence of Brian Westbrook?**

**A:** *It's important to have Hollis back from the sense that he was one of our starters at defensive tackle and you hope that he can help you in the run game. They've been able to run the ball extremely well with Westbrook and (Correll) Buckhalter. When we learned of his suspension, we knew it was going to be four weeks. We just hoped that we had a chance to play in the postseason when he returned. That worked out.*

**Q: Of all of the quarterbacks that you have worked with in your career, is Drew Brees the best fit for your offense?**

**A:** *The offense that we implemented was based on the players that we had. It wasn't developing the offense and finding the players. It was signing the players that we felt we had the best chance of signing or drafting and then building a little bit of what we wanted*

*to do around their talents. He's handled it very well. He's smart and a good decision maker. He's played consistent all year for us. He's a big reason why we've been successful to date.*

**Q: *A few months ago, did you find it realistic that you could win this many games in your first season?***

**A:** *For me as a first year head coach coming out of training camp, you're just anxious to start the schedule to see how you stack up. You really don't know. You have goals; you set goals as a team. We certainly did. I thought it was important early on for us to come out and win those first couple of games and come back here and win the third game. Some of that is built in the confidence. It's a credit to the players. Once we got going, we had a little momentum and we had some setbacks, but we were able to follow those up with wins. It's hard to say that you set a number. You know going in you're playing to win your division and then have an opportunity to play in the postseason. That's what's happening.*

**Q: *Has the acquisition of Drew Brees worked out even better than you anticipated in him being a good fit for your offense?***

**A:** *There are a lot of things that made it positive. Being able to sign him in free agency gave us flexibility with the second pick in the draft and obviously that flexibility was important when a player like Reggie Bush falls to that spot. He's been fantastic when it comes to understanding exactly what we're trying to implement and understanding what we're trying to get done each week. He works at it very hard and he's been a good leader for this team.*

**Q: *What are the traits about him specifically that you like?***

**A:** *He gets rid of it. He's accurate. He's decisive. I think he's a tough sack. He knows where he wants to go with the football. His decision-making, which is an important characteristic at the position has been excellent. Those are the things when you watch him play that come up right away.*

**Q: *Are you doing things with your offense that you were never able to do in the past?***

**A:** *There are some things we do now that we might not have been able to do before just based on the personnel you have. Reggie came in and you have Deuce already, so some of the personnel groupings might seem a little unique. You're just trying to get the players in the best position to have success. We've had to deal with some injuries. We're playing a rookie split end. (Marques) has done a good job stepping in. We've had some tight ends get injured, so we're playing with some guys that have done a good job stepping in as well as with the wide receivers behind Joe Horn. But it starts with the quarterback and that's where he's kept it together. I think that's contagious within that huddle. That's important.*

***New Orleans Saints QB Drew Brees  
Tuesday, January 09, 2007***

***Q: Sean Payton has done an excellent job of keeping Reggie Bush and Deuce McAllister involved. Can you talk about that?***

***A:*** We have two guys like Reggie and Deuce and obviously they have their strengths. You want to try to utilize those strengths as much as you can. Throughout the course of the game there are only so many balls to go around and we also want guys like (Marques) Colston and Joe Horn and other guys to have touches as well. I think the coach has done a tremendous job of balancing the offense with those two guys, giving them both opportunities throughout a game.

***Q: Is there anytime you can remember one of the guys might have become distracted by not being involved as much?***

***A:*** No, I think he keeps the flow going pretty well. Obviously Reggie is involved on special teams as well in punt returns. We can do so many things with him. We can split him up as a receiver and have him come out of the backfield and do all those things. I think we have so many formations where they're both in the game. It's kind of like even though only one of them is getting the ball in those situations, the other one has an active role.

***Q: What is Philadelphia doing differently this time around?***

***A:*** I wouldn't say that they're doing anything differently. I think that we played them that first time when they were 4-1 and playing well with a lot of confidence. This time around they've won six in a row, so they're playing with a lot of confidence. As far as the type of defense they are, they're the same type which is one that has a very aggressive mentality that thrives on getting the turnovers, playing very physical and I think we all understand that.

***Q: How will the absence of Lito Shepard affect them?***

***A:*** Obviously he's a great player, a Pro Bowler and definitely when he's in the game you want to know where he is. I think the other guy (Rodrick) Hood is pretty good who will come in and play for him as well as some of the other guys they have playing the nickel. Obviously we have a game plan. We think more about our guys and what our guys do best as opposed to the defense.

***Q: What do you take from your previous playoff experience?***

***A:*** The first thing is that you don't put any added pressure on yourself. It's obviously a football game. Obviously in a playoff game, you lose you go home. If you win, you more

*forward. Maybe there is a little bit more of a sense of urgency. As far as my preparation during the week, it's the same. I have a great routine going. I keep it going.*

**Q: Can you discuss the importance of the presence of Joe Horn?**

*A: It would mean a lot, because Joe's done a great job for us this year when he's been able to be in here. We miss him not only from a productivity standpoint, but as a leader and a guy on the sideline. Obviously if he's not in there, he'll be missed. If he plays, I think he can definitely help us.*

**Q: Have you received a lot of feedback from people about you coming to this team and helping turn them around?**

*A: I get so many people coming up to me. With so many of them, their comments are not about the great season, but talking about how it's so great that I came to New Orleans and how much it means to them that I chose their city. They thank me. It really means a lot, because people can tell how much people care not only about their Saints, but their city.*

**Q: Is it an awful lot to ask of this team to be part of the reconstruction and renaissance of this city, while trying to win games at the same time?**

*A: I don't think it's too much to ask, because guys do it, because they want to do it and you find out why guys are doing things in the community. That's part of our responsibility and obviously we have a special bond with our fans and the people in this city. That's all part of what we want to do and it's bringing us closer together.*

**Q: Much has been made about how the offensive line has started every game for the Eagles, but one of your players has missed only one start throughout the season. How much has that continuity helped you out?**

*A: It's tremendous. My first two years in the NFL as a starter, we went through 10 or 12 offensive linemen. It was a shuffle. When those guys are able to play together for that period of time, the communication level is so great. Obviously they take so much pride in what they do. That's a special group that we have. It definitely helps that they can stay healthy and be in there.*

**Q: Does Jim Johnson show you a lot of different looks?**

*A: They have the potential to show you a lot of looks. The thing for us obviously is that I felt like we did a great job of handling it the first game. Now we need to make sure we're ready for that. I'm sure they'll have something special for us.*

**Q: In what ways are you a better quarterback than you have ever been before?**

**A:** *I think it's probably a combination of experience. I've started for five years now, so I feel like I'm getting better with every start. I feel like I've had to fight through some things and adversity, obviously the injury, but also being in the situation a couple years ago of where they draft a guy to take my place and you're fighting for your career at that point. It's not only a case of am I going to be in this league, but am I going to be in this league as a career backup or am I going to be a guy who people look at with a lot of respect and can be considered as one of the best in this league. I think that those things always motivated me, but I feel like all of those things happened for a reason, because I don't think I'd be here without those things happening.*

**Q:** *Do you have a confidence that's helped, because you're in the exact opposite role with this team?*

**A:** *I have a tremendous amount of confidence. Over the last couple years, I wasn't looking over my shoulder, because I felt that it was my team and that nobody was going to take it away from me. I have that confidence and that attitude. I know that obviously they were waiting for something to happen to have the excuse to put the other guy in. Here, obviously I know that's not the case.*

**Q:** *Have you done anything to decrease your turnovers for the rest of the season following the Cincinnati game?*

**A:** *Sometimes that's a part of the game. You want to make sure they're not in critical situations or not at times where you put your team in danger. I think it's a mental thing. It's really an attitude. I think you have to know that sometimes they are going to happen and you have to move past them, but you just really have to be managing it, because it's the most telling stat in football, the turnover ratio. I think if you go back to these last six games where we've really made an emphasis of it, those games where we're taking care of the football, we're blowing people out, so it's not really close.*

**Q:** *How important has the number of long scoring drives you have had this year been in resting the defense and giving them some confidence?*

**A:** *All that works hand in hand. I think for us as an offense, we want to get out there on the field, possess the ball, give our defense a rest and go out and get points, more importantly than that get touchdowns. Then your defense comes out, they cause a three and out or force a turnover, which gives a big time momentum shift to us. I think that you just feed off of one another. When the defense gets us a turnover, we have to take advantage of this opportunity. We've done a good job of going out and doing that, just as I think the defense feeds off of if we are able to take the turnover and turn it into points, make some big plays on offense and have those five minute plus drives and then they come out fresh on the field.*

**Q:** *Do you remember the length of the last drive against Philadelphia?*

**A:** *Eight minutes and twenty six seconds. Obviously that was a big way to finish and the teams in the playoffs have a lot of finishes like that.*

**Q:** *What is Coach Payton like on game day?*

**A:** *He's pretty intense and focused. You see him on the sideline and he's really into the game screaming and hollering at something. Obviously he's in tune, knows what's going on and what he wants to call as the game progresses on offense. Obviously there are those situations that we go outside the game plan. Obviously he's really in tune with what's going on.*

**New Orleans Saints RB Deuce McAllister**  
**Tuesday, January 09, 2007**

**Q:** *Can you talk about how you told Reggie Bush that the two of you could co-exist on and off the field and can you discuss how the relationship developed between the two of you?*

**A:** *It was basically about trusting each other and showing him the ropes in film study and answering his questions in some other areas and just letting him know that I care about his success as well as my success. Him going out and playing well is only going to make me a better back.*

**Q:** *Is it unusual for a relationship like that to not develop with envy or jealousy?*

**A:** *I'm pretty much content with what I can do and in the career that I've had to this point. This is the first opportunity for me to be in the playoffs. Any help I can get was obviously welcome. We want to be successful and do well, but at the same time, you have to think about the good of your team.*

**Q:** *Did you have any particular emotions when you found out you were going to play Philly?*

**A:** *No, it was a familiar opponent. It didn't really matter who we were playing.*

**Q:** *How do you keep yourself and as a team from getting too geeked up about this playoff experience?*

**A:** *You just stay on your normal course and don't do anything that you normally wouldn't do out of the ordinary whether it was the playoffs or a regular season game. I think as the game approaches and gets closer, I think the anticipation continues to build. I just try to stay on as normal a schedule as possible.*

**Q:** *How tough is running against Philadelphia compared to some other teams you have run against this year?*

**A:** *They give you so many different looks. There's going to be blitz looks or pressure looks. The defense has always ranked high as far as a total defense. We don't think it will be any different. You just have to try to go out and execute as well as possible.*

*New Orleans Saints Coach Sean Payton  
Monday, January 08, 2007*

***Q: Will you compare and contrast the styles of the Eagles now that Jeff Garcia is playing quarterback for them as opposed to when Donovan McNabb was their quarterback when you last played them?***

***A: They are two different players, but certainly their team is responding to the way Jeff's played. He's come in and done an outstanding job. They've gotten on a roll. It will be a difficult challenge. Credit Andy (Reid) and his staff. They've done a good job of making adjustments. He's (Garcia) a veteran player who has been in this postseason before, been to some Pro Bowls and he's playing very efficiently right now. No two players are exactly alike, yet he comes in and they function very well. They're very explosive and multi-dimensional. It's a big challenge.***

***Q: Can you discuss how you handled preparing for opponents this weekend without any finality until the end of the Philadelphia-Giants game?***

***A: You watch it and you wait. It's all that you can do. You wait to see the results and then you prepare accordingly. We had done a lot of work on Philadelphia already, as well as on Seattle and Dallas. We worked more yesterday on Seattle. You're into your game week routine at this point.***

***Q: When you came here, did you feel a need to add players to the roster that had prior playoff experience?***

***A: No. Some of the players that came in had some. It was probably a case of coincidence.***

***Q: Is it a disadvantage for your team that they have less playoff experience than the Philadelphia roster?***

***A: There's something to be said for having experience in these types of games. Yet the more we can approach it the way we have approached the games we have played to date in understanding that it comes down to mistakes is important. We need to be smart about field position and turnovers. I think those are the main things. We'll see what happens on Saturday. It's two teams that played a really good game the last time around. A lot has changed since then and it will be a big challenge for us. We look forward to it.***

***Q: Do you have an injury update?***

***A: We have nothing to report today. We won't talk about injuries until tomorrow.***

***Q: Can you discuss how your team has changed as well as Philadelphia's since the first meeting with the Eagles?***



**A:** *This is nine weeks later. You're looking at players on offense that possibly were not playing before. It is the same way with the Eagles team. They have a different quarterback. For us, we play some younger guys now that probably weren't playing as much in the week that we had played Philadelphia. We have had change at tight end. A lot takes place in the course of the year. I think the teams are different. You're looking at two teams that won their division. They won the NFC East. We won the South. Those are always goals that the players and the coaching staffs start with. It's a credit to both teams. I think it will be exciting and will be a great environment.*

**Q:** *Do you have any type of fear and trepidation in that a lot of your roster will be making their playoff debut?*

**A:** *I don't know. We've already played in some important games this year. It's an important game. I think we'll respond the right way. You approach it, go through your routine, and get ready to play a football game. Mentally and physically, you want to be sharp when it starts.*

**Q:** *Can you talk about the importance of having a good holder and snapper based on the NFC playoff games this past weekend as well as the final result of your first meeting with Philadelphia this season?*

**A:** *I think that it just gets down to doing the little things well. You try to always emphasize the details and mechanics of everything, not just the center-quarterback exchange. I saw the quarterback get his foot stepped on over the weekend. You just hope you can eliminate those types of mistakes. As a coach, you try to cover all the areas. You can never take anything for granted. It's tough. I think it's a tough way to lose a game. In Dallas' case, they had put themselves in great position to get the clock down and finish. It didn't work out that way. You work on the details and the little things. You try to cover as much as you can. It's something that I'm sure is disappointing. It's tough to lose a game like that.*

**Q:** *What level does the pressure on your team go to now?*

**A:** *It's what you try to make of it or don't make of it. It's a postseason game. You're in a single elimination tournament now. If you don't win, you don't play anymore. It is what it is right now. We get back to all the things that we tried to do to date to prepare each week and go from there.*

**Q:** *How does your familiarity with Philadelphia based on your coaching stints in the NFC East help you in preparing for them?*

**A:** *I think you become a little bit familiar with personnel. You see some players. One of the reasons we were excited about signing Hollis (Thomas) was based on an experience standpoint of having seen him play a number of times. I think in this case, both teams having played each other in the regular season have some type of background with the opponent in terms of personnel and scheme. You just look for the execution on game day.*

*You look for all the things that we talk about during the course of the season, such as how you do on third down and on the red zone. Ultimately, those will be the things that determine the outcome. Having played this team once in the same way with Philadelphia having played us, I don't think it's uncommon in the postseason. It probably helps the learning curve for both teams a little bit. There are always some things that you have to prepare to adjust for that you haven't seen and they do a very good job on all phases of preparation and coaching. It's one of the reasons that they've been successful in Andy's (Reid) time there over the whole stretch of his appointment. It's a credit to their staff and their team.*

**Q: Looking at the big picture of what this team means to the city after Hurricane Katrina especially, can you add the satisfaction of hosting a home playoff game under the circumstances as well as explain if this adds to the pressure that you feel?**

**A:** *I just think that the approach has to be what it has been since we led up to this position. The approach is to put together a good week of practice and preparation and work hard at it. Players understand the significance of a home playoff game to this town and what it means. We need to go out and play our best. It's the same approach we've tried to take all season. I said back when we started playing at the beginning of the year that following our first two wins and the win in the Atlanta game, which was the biggest game of the year. Now we're on about our eighth biggest game of the year. That comes with winning. You prepare to do the little things necessary. You hope to go out on gameday and execute properly. Our plan is to put together a good workweek of practice and focus on all of the little things, like we have done in all of the games we've played so far.*

**Q: Can you pinpoint why you have a better home record than road record this season?**

**A:** *Sometimes there can be a distraction in playing at home, but nothing specific. We look forward to playing in the dome in front of our home crowd, especially an evening game. I think the fans will be outstanding. I think it's important that we are playing at home.*

**Q: When you conduct statistical analysis, do you look at some of the long, sustained, scoring drives you have had as major factor in your record?**

**A:** *It would probably fall a little bit more under time of possession. When you're able to possess the ball a little bit longer than the opponent, it's obviously to your advantage to do that. Sometimes a longer drive ends up being eight or nine plays. Sometimes you may score on there plays. Possession of the ball is important as well as ball security. We don't sit down and say we need three 10-play drives this week. We just talk about the execution and you end up with nine or ten plays. You put up a sequence of plays where you probably converted some third downs and executed well on first and second down.*

**Q: Is it better to have longer scoring drives?**

**A:** *If we can score on the first play of a drive, I'll take it.*

**Q:** *Can you discuss the threat that Brian Westbrook poses?*

**A:** *He's certainly one of the players their offense starts with. They've done a great job of putting him in different positions. He's very explosive both out of the backfield and as a receiver. Obviously there will be a focus on Westbrook.*

**Q:** *Can you discuss the significance of the passion and devotion of your fan base?*

**A:** *I think it's significant to have a strong fan base like that with that level of passion. I think it's a big plus when you get to play at home in front of them. We're excited for the opportunity. I know the town's excited about hosting a playoff game. Obviously it's something that we feel good about. I'm sure the players on this team as well as the coaches and everybody else in the organization are excited for the city and understand the importance of the team to the city.*

**Q:** *Will you be able to tell if you're rusty in the first five minutes of the game?*

**A:** *I don't anticipate being rusty. I don't know if it takes five minutes to recognize if you're ready to play or not. I think we'll be ready to play.*

**Q:** *Are you satisfied with how your entire bye week process and upcoming practice schedule has gone?*

**A:** *It has gone smoothly. We've tried to get a lot done. We've tried to get them off their feet some. We had a good practice on Friday. We've concentrated on a lot of lifting and running. Today we'll have meetings and a walk-through. Tomorrow our schedule for our team will be like a normal Wednesday.*

**Q:** *Is it difficult for a backup quarterback to provide his team with a sustained spark like Jeff Garcia has for the Eagles?*

**A:** *You need to credit Philadelphia to be able to make an adjustment midstream, especially with a player like a Donovan McNabb. He's a player that people in our league considers one of its most valuable players every year. They've done a good job of making the adjustments. Jeff's done a great job of executing the game plans that they've put together. He's gotten the ball to his playmakers, he's made good decisions and he hasn't turned it over. As a result, they've won a bunch of games now. Andy (Reid) and his staff have made a great transition after losing a starter like that, especially one of the significance of Donovan McNabb. That's a credit to them. Occasionally you see where that's happened before for different reasons.*

**Q:** *How important is it for Philadelphia to have the momentum that they currently have?*

**A:** *You want to be playing good football as you enter the postseason. This is a team that is playing very well. That type of momentum brings confidence. Confidence with the players is certainly something that you can see they're feeding off of. I think it's a tremendous challenge for us approaching this week.*