

## Saints' Justin Drescher OK with anonymity



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Advocate staff photo by PATRICK DENNIS New Orleans Saints long snapper Justin Drescher, white uniform, waits for the snap count in special teams drills at a training camp practice Wednesday in Metairie.

[BY Sheldon mickles](#)

Advocate sportswriter

METAIRIE — Unlike a lot of professional athletes, anonymity is the name of the game for the player who wears jersey No. 47 for the New Orleans Saints.

Even the most rabid Saints fan may have trouble coming up with the name of long snapper Justin Drescher, who is usually mentioned only when something goes terribly wrong — which is never for the third-year pro.

Well, almost never.

Drescher did have one bad snap at Carroll High School in the Dallas suburb of Southlake, but has since been near flawless during a four-year college career at Colorado and in his 11/2 seasons with the Saints.

"I had one in high school, but other than that I've been pretty fortunate," a smiling Drescher said. "Hopefully, I'll never have one here."

That's a good goal to have because the job of a long snapper can be as tenuous as that of NFL kickers. Just one bad one can get you a coach-class plane ticket out of town.

For example, the Saints got rid of Jake Ingram just three days and one regular-season game after he won a three-man tryout for the job following a season-ending injury to longtime NFL long snapper Jason Kyle in 2010.

Drescher, who was signed by the Atlanta Falcons as an undrafted free agent that spring, was one of the two players beaten out by Ingram. Just two days later, however, he was back in New Orleans for another tryout and got the job this time.

The next day, he boarded a chartered plane with his new teammates and on Thanksgiving Day made his NFL debut in Cowboys Stadium — not too far from his home and high school.

"It's kind of surreal," he said. "It's kind of a crazy story.

"I was substitute teaching back home, just teaching little kids and hoping for a shot. I was about two months away from giving up, you know, just going on and getting a job."

But fate intervened when the Saints decided to let Ingram go after his brief stint with the club.

Drescher, who graduated from high school in 2006, became part of a New Orleans-based Carroll High alumni club that also includes kicker Garrett Hartley (Class of 2004) and backup quarterback Chase Daniel (2005).

Drescher said he didn't know if Hartley or Daniel, who had kept up with him in college, had recommended him to the Saints scouts and coaching staff.

"I would like to think my sheet in college, and what I did, my performance in college, helped me get here," he said. "But hey, it all worked out, and I'm here. So far I'm doing all right and just trying to keep getting better."

Drescher started working at his craft in high school, but the all-district guard was a little small to play offensive line at the next level. So the 6-foot-1, 235-pounder devoted all his time to being a specialist and attended the renowned Chris Rubio Camp where he was noticed by the Colorado coaches.

"I found my niche, and I was offered right out of high school," he said. "Chris helped me work on my form and get better to where I was good enough for college. After college, I continued to work hard and the right opportunity came up, and I just made the most of it."

Hartley and punter Thomas Morstead certainly are happy that Drescher gives them one less thing to worry about when a blocked extra point or a snap over the punter's head can mean the difference in winning and losing a game.

"Accuracy is the most important thing for me," Drescher said. "The best snap is when Thomas goes, 'Yeah, it was a great snap.' That's what I aim for every day. They know it's going to be there every time ... that's the biggest compliment I can get."

"Justin's just one of those guys that's naturally gifted as far as what he does," said Hartley.

"He's really been a true professional as far as being accurate, reliable, consistent. You can't ask for anything more out of a long snapper."

Drescher said he needs to get better at blocking and staying low when he gets the snap off, but special teams coordinator Greg McMahon is pleased with what he's seen.

"He's meticulous, he takes a lot of pride in his craft, and I think he's a good pro," he said. "Not many people know him and that's a good thing.

"I don't remember him having a bad snap. Maybe a problem with a tighter spiral or a little better location (for the kicker). But he's done a good job. These guys are hard to find."

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