



Crosby struggling with long-distance coverage

Oct. 24, 2012

The word shank is defined as?

- A) The part of the human leg between the knee and ankle
- B) A cut of meat from the leg of a steer, calf, sheep or lamb
- C) A mis-hit in golf
- D) A 50-plus yard field goal attempt by Mason Crosby in 2012
- E) All of the above

Crosby has a career percentage of 79% on field goal attempts and through 2011 he had hit on 55% of his kicks over 50 yards.

This year, Crosby is 1 for 4, and while the percentage is obviously lower than his career average, it is the look of the three 50-yard field goals he has missed through seven games that is troubling. Crosby nailed a 54 yard field goal attempt vs. the Bears at Lambeau but missed twice vs. the Colts at Indianapolis and once on Sunday at St. Louis.

Crosby's strength has never been in doubt but the accuracy on the three misses from 50 yards is a little worrisome because the last two were not even close. One was a high pressure kick at the end of the Colts game to force overtime. A shank there could be blamed on nerves.

Although you never want to see the word "choke" in a sentence with your kicker's name, nerves would be a reasonable and understandable excuse. But the shank Sunday against the Rams was at the end of the first half with the Packers leading 10-6. This should have been one of those very low risk, high reward opportunities for Crosby to cash in on. It looked just as bad as the last second field goal attempt against the Colts.

The shank against St. Louis on Sunday was also made worse by the fact that Greg Zuerlein, the rookie Rams kicker, had just nailed a 50-yarder. Zuerlein, in fact, is 5 for 7 from 50-plus yards this year.

One look at the kicking statistics through seven weeks shows that kickers are hitting a higher percentage of 50-plus yard kicks. [Crosby is at the bottom of the list of kickers](#) who have attempted more than two 50+ yard field goals.

It's hard to find fault in the Packers' recent play and with two home games in which the Packers will be heavy favorites, the possibility of a 6-3 record heading into the bye is within reach. A team can never have too many offensive weapons in the NFL and Crosby's long field goal range and accuracy used to

be one of those weapons in Mike McCarthy's arsenal.

Let's hope it returns.

PackStat of the week: The Packers are the biggest favorites in the NFL this week. They are 13 point favorites vs. Jacksonville.

Prediction of the week: The Packers will score at least 40 points at Lambeau for the first time this year and run their record to 5-3 with a win against the Jaguars.

Find this article at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/sports/packers/175699131.html>



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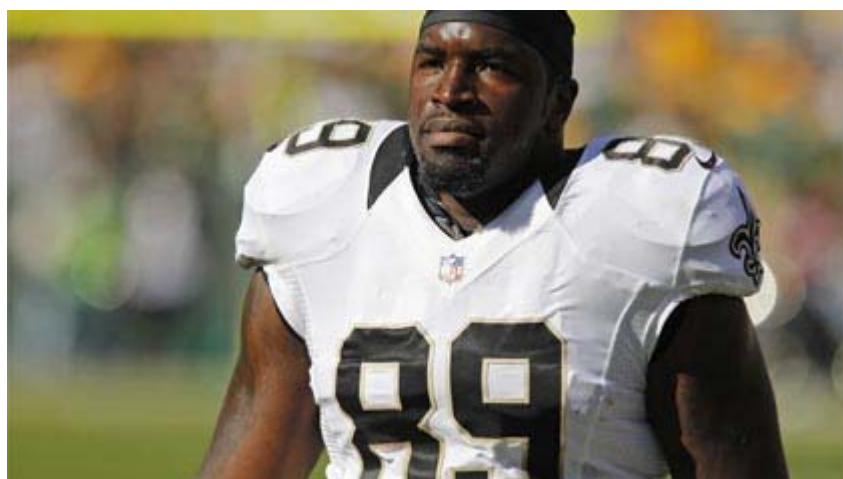


Daniel Graham Ready to Return Home, Face Former Team

Posted Oct 24, 2012

By Matt Mendelson

Saints tight end is excited to face off against his former team in Denver on Sunday Night Football



Saints TE **Daniel Graham**, an 11-year NFL veteran, is enjoying his first season in New Orleans as a member of the Black and Gold but he can't wait to return home.

Graham, a Denver, Colo. native, will have that opportunity this Sunday when the Saints go on the road to face the Broncos in primetime on Sunday Night Football on NBC.

He will have a chance to go back to Denver and face his former team, this time while donning a fleur-de-lis.

"This is another game, another opportunity," said Graham. "I am with the Saints now and that is the only thing that matters."

The 6-3, 257 pound, tight end played for the Broncos for four seasons from 2007 to 2010 and appeared in 63 games. Graham started 61 of those games in Denver and recorded 102 catches for 1,072 yards and seven touchdowns while being named a team captain for his final three seasons.

Graham did hint that getting a win over his former team might leave him with some satisfaction.

"I was telling one of the guys a couple weeks ago, that is one thing you are always hoping for, that victory over your old team," said Graham. "It's always extra special to beat the team you used to play for."

Even before entering the NFL, Graham had become accustomed to playing football in the Centennial State. He attended the University of Colorado where he registered 106 receptions for 1,543 yards and 11 touchdowns before being named the John Mackey Award (nation's top tight end) winner and consensus All-America as a senior.

Prior to enrolling in college, he attended Thomas Jefferson HS in Denver, Colo. where he was named a PrepStart All-American. In his senior year, he recorded 33 catches for 741 yards and six touchdowns while also registering 29 tackles (15 solo) and 12 sacks in seven starts at outside linebacker.

Graham is a member of what he describes as a "football family" but says there was no pressure despite the family's Colorado football ties.

"There is a lot of personal and family history that goes back to my dad playing there and me growing up a Broncos fan," said Graham.

Graham's father, Tom, played for the Broncos from 1972 to 1974 as a linebacker where he saw action in 33 games while starting 23 contests over three seasons. His older brother played at Colorado State University in the late 1980's.

For a number of reasons, Graham is excited to see his new team face off against his old team but he is most excited about the trip back to Denver.

"It's where I grew up," said Graham. "It's always fun going back there to play."

URL: <http://www.neworleanssaints.com/news-and-events/article-1/Daniel-Graham-Ready-to-Return-Home-Face-Former-Team/eafbff52-d360-4daf-ae0-76c230bcfab9>

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