

# Las Vegas Raiders

## Media Conference

Sunday, September 22, 2024

Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Dave Canales

### Press Conference



Panthers - 36, Raiders - 22

DAVE CANALES: Great game. Really a group that really dove into the process, the fundamentals, the work that we're looking for. Starting off this week, just stacking up three great days of practice, the coaches challenging guys, the guys challenging each other.

Sunday is about the players and putting them in position to have success. They took advantage of that in different ways. It was just a great picture of Panthers football -- being able to run the ball, stopping the run, playing complementary football on third down, taking advantage of red zone opportunities, the whole thing. The coverage units just flying around with great energy and chasing.

It was just a carryover from a great week. I've got to give props to the whole group of continuing to trust this process. It's a great starting point for us to play our kind of football. Really excited to get back home, get back to work, and have another great week.

#### Q. (No microphone)?

DAVE CANALES: It was just complementary football. Being able to make those third downs, allowing us to continue our drive so we could get into our actions.

We had a couple of explosive plays. When you get a new set of downs and you play efficiently that way, you're looking at favorable third downs. Other than a couple that we got a couple sacks. We had a penalty that put us into a bad spot. In general, we had some really favorable third down opportunities for us to convert to get back out there so we can run it some more and we can get those touches, the backs can get their groove.

And Chuba can see the holes and press it, Miles can get his touches. So the whole thing revolves around that, and both sides defensively and offensively, the story was third down, and we did a better job so we could play our kind of ball.

**Q. You mentioned the energy on special teams. It looked like there was energy in all three phases. Is that kind of what you thought -- was that part of the reason why you made the change at quarterback, to see that sort of contagious energy across the board?**

DAVE CANALES: It really was just the whole group, and I can't put it on one player specifically because I don't want to slight all the guys who have been trying so hard in practice to set a standard.

We set that standard this past week. Last week we had two out of three practices that were up to standard, and one kind of waned. Just challenging guys to trust this. Our football will get better. Our processes will get better as we engage that way.

So you just saw a group in all phases really engaged and focused from one play to the next with that finish mentality.

**Q. If I could follow up real quick, was there one throw from Andy today that sort of got -- made you stop what you were doing and say that's what we were looking for?**

DAVE CANALES: Honestly, it's just what I expected out of him. We practiced the things. The receivers were in the right spots for him, and he took advantage when they gave us favorable coverages to hit those plays.

The early one to Tommy on the first drive to get us down there for the first touchdown -- my first opening drive touchdown in my career, by the way, so I was excited about that.

Then the throw to Thielen. Just the timing and rhythm of it was fantastic. He just continued drives so we can get in that striking zone and take those shots when they're there.

#### Q. (No microphone)?

DAVE CANALES: Honestly, I just felt like the whole group in general showed up ready. This is a really serious and really focused group and something that I've had to get



used to because I'm so high energy and I want things to be a party all the time.

This group is just like, Coach, just tell us what you need. We'll do it. They're very matter of fact and focused that way, and I love that about them because they take pride in it.

**Q. You had a couple guys come of the field. Said this week block that stuff out. Was anything said about the way your team was talked about this week?**

DAVE CANALES: It's all about us. We just focus on the things that we can control, which is our process. Attacking each day -- work Wednesday, turnover Thursday, focus Friday, and that's the message. Tell the truth Monday, we've got to look the film and clean up the things we need to get better at and celebrate the stuff that we did well and move on. We can't linger on these things. Really it's just about us.

**Q. (No microphone)?**

DAVE CANALES: They played great team defense in the run game. Guys being disciplined about where they were supposed to be to fit those. Backers played great. We set edges. We did all the things that are required of the run game.

Again, I'll go back to it. Can't put it all on the defense. We had two weeks where we struggled on third down. We were three and out, punting, and the defense is back on the field. And the war of attrition, that starts the cumulative effect, which you saw in favor of the Panthers at the end of the game. When we can sustain drives, we start pushing, we can get hidden yards and moving the line of scrimmage.

So it flipped for us. Our defense was able to get out there fresh and just play football. So it all fits in there together as a unit.

**Q. (No microphone)?**

DAVE CANALES: It's just about taking advantage of his opportunities. He had a couple of great ones today. You can see what he can do with the ball after the catch. Just making more than what's there. All the things that we saw throughout camp, the things that I've seen in his career.

So I was just really excited to get him involved in what we were doing, and he's the dynamic part of our offense.

**Q. You mentioned the first drive touchdown. What does the first win mean to you?**

DAVE CANALES: Honestly, it's just about legitimatizing the process. Legitimizing the -- because up until this point, until you actually find that success and see it work, it's just a bunch of talk. It's just a bunch of speeches, and philosophy doesn't mean anything until you can feel it come to life.

So it was really important for us to see that happen, carrying over from a great week of practice to the execution of the game, and really that's what that meant for me above all else, was just to be able to give these guys that pride and that sense that we have a great system here. And if we execute and we trust each other, we can be a good team. We just need to stay focused on the process.

It just helps me sell that. When I get up in front of them and I'm not just talking. This is real, guys. These things came to life, and I'll be able to show that to them in film.

**Q. You had a 300-yard passer, a 100-yard rusher, a 100-yard receiver, some pancake blocks out there. Is that what a Dave Canales offense is supposed to look like?**

DAVE CANALES: That's Panthers football, team football right there. I get to show them that. I get to show them how it all complements and plays off of each other. The run game, opening things up in the back half, making teams have to load the box and try take your run away and all of a sudden you've got all this space.

That's the way it fits, defensively playing the run tough, forcing them into pass situations so we can have three sacks, when can have an interception, a couple of really close ones. And then guys like Troy Hill, J.C., Mike Jack punching the ball out in different pass situations to create some incompletes in critical downs.

**Q. You talked about it being your first opening drive touchdown. How does it set the tone for the rest of the game? How important is that?**

DAVE CANALES: Again, I try not to put too much weight on it early in the game because, as we all know, games go different ways. We can't judge the outcome of the game based on a drive or based on a play. We have to have the mental discipline, whether it's a poor outcome or positive outcome, to move on to the next drive.

To your point, that gives guys the confidence that we have a great system if we trust it and we all execute. We can make yards. We can continue drives. We can score touchdowns, and we can win games.



**Q. As a followup, how do you celebrate your first win as a head coach in the NFL?**

DAVE CANALES: With the boys. That locker room, that's what I live for. That's what it's all about. It's doing everything I can to make sure I'm putting them in the best position to be successful and just to like give it to them.

Sunday is about these guys and celebrating each other and holding each other to their standard, and we'll echo that. I'll drive that, and I'll yell until my voice is hoarse throughout the week, but on Sundays, that's their day. I love the way they played together and played that kind of ball on the field.

**Q. Dave, you talk a lot about the importance of pregame mechanics and routine and in-game mechanics and routine. How do you think Bryce handled that today, and how were those machinations?**

DAVE CANALES: It was the same. He had a great process of being able to always be ready to play. I don't expect anything different there. Just taking that same approach and being ready, locked in and focused. So that was excellent.

**Q. Just a real quick update on Thielen. He obviously didn't play the second half.**

DAVE CANALES: Thielen had a hamstring on the touchdown catch, finished the play. A beautiful play by those two, by Andy and Thielen.

And the protection -- always got to talk about the O-line when you can push the ball down the field. So the protection was great there.

Let's see. Damien Lewis didn't finish the game, all these guys we're checking on. Jordan Fuller and Lonnie Johnson.

**Q. What did you see leading up to this week in Andy that made you feel he would bring that calming demeanor over the offense that it seemed to have today?**

DAVE CANALES: Andy just operated and functioned in our system, got us to the right runs, threw it to the first open guy, progressed when he had to, checked the down. He did a fantastic job of just playing efficiently and made some explosive plays and found those opportunities down the field when they were available.

When they weren't, he just got the ball out and played good, solid football.

**Q. This is your first win. Are you going to smile for us at all?**

DAVE CANALES: I'm smiling inside. This has been an amazing week, but again, just a really heavy week. Just with all the factors and getting back to work and continuing to push to establish our culture and process. I'm thrilled. I'm so joyful. Thank you for bringing that up.

**Q. On that note, how special was it to have your family there?**

DAVE CANALES: It was amazing. My two brothers, Josh, Coba. He's Jacob, we call him Coba. Coba's wife Drea. My sister-in-law Boomie, all the kids were all there, a bunch of cousins were there. My mom and dad were there.

My dad was right under the 107 sign, so I could see exactly where he was at. The black vest and the gray goatee was standing out up there, so I was able to wave at them. It means a lot to get the first win while they were here. A really special moment.

**Q. First time as a play caller, first series?**

DAVE CANALES: Yes.

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