

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Dan Morgan

Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAN MORGAN: I guess I'll open it up a little bit. I think you guys saw us make a lot of trades. Really just the opportunity just presented itself just to kind of move back, counting players. Felt like it was good opportunity to move back and pick up some extra draft capital moving forward.

Kind of set us up for the future a little bit.

Really excited about Jonathan Brooks. We thought he was the best running back in the class. Just the way, the person, the player, everything about him we really like. So really excited to get him.

Then we obviously just picked Trevin Wallace. Athletic freak, guy that can run sideline to sideline, straight ball carriers. You know, I think his ceiling is really high. I think he's a guy that's going to develop, keep developing, and turn into a good linebacker for us.

So really excited about this class so far. Got four picks to go, and keep rolling.

Q. Dan, at 33, which obviously became 32, coming into this draft, did you have a mind of trying to get back that second for next year that went for the Bears' trade?

DAN MORGAN: Not really. I didn't come in saying we got to get that two back. When it presented itself we thought it was a really good opportunity. Hey, if we can get the two back, you know, it was good timing I would say.

So we felt good about that. We were really happy about that and acquiring that pick.

Q. Not going to lie, I think a lot of people were caught the off guard by the selection of a running back. Based on some comments you made in terms of your commitment to Chuba and Miles, that's it, now you got a new guy in the mix. Where does this leave everybody going forward? Will there be some

adjustments, some guys possibly not staying?

DAN MORGAN: I think Dave can speak on this a little bit. What I would say is we got a really good running back room right now. When Dave and I took this job we said we were going to create competition in every position group. Just so happened Jonathan was there. We took the opportunity to draft him.

I think it's going to be a really competitive group and I'm excited to see them all compete during training camp and OTAs. It's going to be fun.

Q. With Wallace, I guess from a read-and-react standpoint, seems to fit what you guys were looking for. How much did Peter play a role in that? How much did you -- I mean, you're a former linebacker; how much did you zone in on him?

DAN MORGAN: I think obviously we're going to take the input of the coaches. They do a tremendous job and put in a ton of work in on this class. Obviously we value what all the coaches say.

Obviously like Trevin a lot. Too. We had him in here on a 30 visit. Really impressive young man, just the way he carries himself. Just talking to us in the room you kind of fell in love with the kid in there.

So these 30 visits, I think they mean a lot. That's just a case right there. We just drafted him in the third round, and we're really excited about him.

Q. Brooks said that all indications are he'll be ready for training camp. You feel confident about that?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, they feel good about this obviously. We felt good about it. Yeah, I think he's right on schedule. Again, super excited to have him.

Q. Either of you guys can address this. You take Trevin, and you mentioned Dan, looking toward the future with some of the picks and moves tonight. Is that a guy you see is as a Shaq successor?

DAN MORGAN: I don't know if he's like a Shaq successor. Shaq played at a high level for a long time. Obviously we think a lot of Shaq. Think a lot of Josey. Really excited about those guys.

I just want Trevin to come in here, and I think Dave would say the same thing, come in here and learn and compete and earn the respect of the veterans out there.

That's the main thing coming in as a rookie, just growing, get behind the right veteran leadership, and just kind of find his way. We have some really good vets in this locker room.

Q. Dan with these trades, have you've been the aggressor or have other teams been the aggressor or a mix?

DAN MORGAN: I think it's a little bit a mix of both. Definitely wasn't like on purpose to try to trade before every single pick.

Kind of turned out this way. I didn't even realize it until afterwards. It just really presented itself, to be honest with you.

Again, when you're going through the draft board and counting your numbers, you find those opportunities to trade back and acquire more picks, whether for now or the future.

Just took that opportunity and took advantage of it.

Q. That said, is this the ultimate fantasy fun draft for you where you're just wheeling and dealing?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, I wouldn't say that. I think there is a little bit more pressure than that. No, it's definitely fun. It's fun. We really enjoy ourselves in there. To sit alongside Dave and Bran and Mr. Tepper and the whole crew in there, we have a blast in there. We have fun. That is just part of it.

Q. Going off that, with all these trades I know the goal is to improve value and make the team better. How do you make the snap-second decisions on acquiring capital or making those decisions versus guys on the board that you might like that might not be there when you trade back?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, my point earlier, these picks, we obviously like some of these players on the board. When you're counting numbers and you maybe feel like guys are similar to each other or they're around the same talent level, you feel like you can trade back and just acquire

more picks and more draft capital to set us up for the future.

Q. Dan, you talked about I believe it was in Orlando about how important hanging on to those draft assets were. Having two next year what does that do for the long range planning of this thing?

DAN MORGAN: It's obviously great. Acquiring that two, you know, we didn't have one, and to have two twos this year and to go into next year with no twos, I don't know what I would've done. It was great having those two twos. To get that two back, it definitely feels good.

You know, see where it goes from there.

Q. What does Jonathan do? What's the skillset that you think really fit well with what you like to do in the run game?

DAVE CANALES: Versatility first and foremost. Our system calls for a back that can be used of course in a traditional way, hand it to him.

Then how can we get this player in space, being able to get him in perimeter screens, check downs. We've got a really good empty package where we use the backs, flex them out to get matchups, things like that.

He's a bigger back. He's got range. There is so much that he brings from a versatility standpoint. That's probably the biggest thing that stood out.

Then just vision, patience, contact balance, acceleration, like he's got it all. Best back in this class, and we were so fired up to be able to bring him in and create that competition that Dan talked about.

Q. Anything in his visit or any games that jumped out at you, and did the injury give you any pause?

DAVE CANALES: For sure. You know, I think any time you're dealing with an injury like that we have to do or homework and have the full workup. We had great help with that information to say we feel like this is a guy who is on track within this type of injury.

So that part aside, I think just looking at Jonathan, meeting with him in person you feel the depth of character of this guy. Guy who had to overcome. Went into Texas at 185 pounds as a running back and worked his way into the guy he is today.

So a guy that's overcome the challenges of playing behind two really good players at Texas, and he was able to tell

that story, bring it to life, and really with the humility and respect for these guys that he was there, learned so much from them.

Whether it was the most genuine answer, it was a great answer, you know, just to just hear him say that, tell his story like I talked about before. So putting all those things and plus the ability, it's really cool to have him here.

Q. Coming into this draft, when you talk to everybody and say, I want to walk away with this, not necessarily position-wise, but this type of group. Was it the draft capital also? What were your goals coming in and do you feel like you accomplished them?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, I think the goals were to just draft really good football players. I said it earlier in some the press conferences. We're going to draft best player available, and I feel like we've done that so far.

We've kind of followed our board. Our board has led the way for us to acquire what we acquired. In terms of gathering the capital, that's been something that I really didn't plan on doing. It just kind of happened. Glad it did.

Q. Dan, with four picks left tomorrow, how do you view pairing those up with specific needs on the roster? Are you willing to stray a little bit from best player available on day three?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, yeah, I think so. Obviously when you have some holes, we identified some holes coming into the draft, coming into free agency, and you can't fill every single hole all at once whether free agency or the draft. You wish you could, but we're still building this thing.

You know, it's a process. We're just going to follow that and just going to acquire some really good talent, some really good people, and keep building this thing the right way.

Q. Dan you picked up the fifth year option on Jaycee. You had time to do that. There was time to potentially negotiate a contract extension. Why make that decision now in the middle of the draft? Why was it important to you?

DAN MORGAN: Just felt like it was one of those things. You see Jaycee around here, the work he's putting in, the dedication, just being here every day busting his ass.

You know, he deserved it. I think obviously he's had some tough stretches with injuries and -- but it's not due to a lack of work or commitment from Jaycee.

So we're excited about him. Excited about his future. Just really excited for him.

Q. Would you guys like to come out of tomorrow with another corner?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, corner-wise, I think that's definitely an area that we would like to address at some point, whether now or post-draft. There are still some people out there that we would consider.

Yeah, just going to, again, try to build the roster the right way. Timing-wise we'll see what presents itself.

Q. Dave, you mentioned versatility with your first two picks. Did you feel like that was something that was maybe missing from this team a little bit, you needed to have that, or how does that fit into your philosophy?

DAVE CANALES: It really is just a part of our philosophy. So it wasn't necessarily a void we were trying to fill there. It's just the type of players we are looking for. How much can they bring? What can they do?

We talk about this a lot. Just like we are really concerned about what our players can do, not what they can't do. The more they can do the more ways we can attack the defense and really have to make them cover all 53 and a third wide.

Jonathan and Xavier are players that can do that. Even Trevin looking at the versatility with his athleticism, the things we'll be able to do with him defensively is really exciting as well.

Q. Dave you said you want to bring in competition, push the roster make guys uncomfortable. Do you look at kicker/punter as a position that you guys want to have a competition there and bring in maybe somebody younger even just to keep guys fresh heading into the summer I guess?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, that's an annual thing. At every position you try to bring in multiple people, and it just raises and elevates the play. It just does. An empty basketball court without a ball bouncing around then all of a sudden you roll a ball out there and all of a sudden the whole environment and the whole energy changes in the room.

Just having that is great. We'll create those in training camp. We'll create those competitive moments and say, okay, let's stop the drill. Everyone is watching right now. We got kicks. Put them in those situations. It's really fun to elevate it that way.

Q. I only ask because you brought his name up; Mr. Tepper was in there. What was his involvement tonight? What was it like working with him in this situation?

DAN MORGAN: It's great working with him. Mr. Tepper, you know, he's into it so much. You know, I think him and Mrs. Tepper, they just enjoy being in there, seeing us get to work, just having fun in there picking great players.

I think they just love kind of like being involved and seeing these players and getting to know these players, the little details about them.

So working side by side has been great, and looking forward to many more years.

Q. For both of you, so Brooks goes off the board at 46 and the first running back. Does it speak to, I don't want to say how devalued running back has become, but there isn't as much importance placed on running backs? Over the years you've probably seen that change. Is it surprising to you, or is it just the way the league has our gone?

DAN MORGAN: I think for us, we value the running backs. We value the run game. You know, I think, again, to have a guy like Jonathan Brooks there, he was a guy that we loved, we identified. Hey, listen as long as we're happy with who we're picking and value-wise, you know, they're valuable to us. We're going to be running the ball and we are a physical team. I know Dave will speak more on that.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah. I think we do have to kind trust what does the league say. What do we feel like the whole thing, you know -- where does everybody see the value of the running back. We have to play off that too and be aware of it.

For us, just knowing the style of football we're going to play, that position is so important.

Just to kind of touch on the question earlier just about the running back room, all these guys are going to play. Look at the history of league. Every team I've been on, we used all of our running backs at different points because it's such a violent position. We look for those players that can handle that but also knowing we have good solid players because we are going to run the ball.

It's going to be a non-negotiable for us. You know, this gives us a real chance to just add another good runner to the mix.

Q. Brooks comes in just a little over 230 touches in

three years. You got somebody that still has this much tread on the tires so to speak, what can you do with that?

DAVE CANALES: It's amazing, right? You do all the analytics and you study the history of running backs and the amount of carries and all that, and this is a really amazing opportunity for us. Best back in the class. To have this type of year, this type of production, and to see his future, see where he can become, it's really exciting.

Q. You spoke about Jonathan's story, about him coming into Texas 185 pounds, whatever. Is there any part of Trevin's story that stuck out to you, whether that be on the football field or personally that resonated with you and made you want to select him?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I'll keep the personal side just between us. Pretty private talk. In terms of his athletic story, the profile of his athletic background as a track athlete, as a state champion long jumper, some of the things he's done that way. He's 237 pounds. With that kind of explosiveness, sky is the limit potential-wise from an athletic standpoint.

And like Dan said, now it's about development and him learning the system and becoming part of us. And special teams is going to be a huge part of his future. We're counting on him to come in and be a war daddy for us that way.

Q. The relationship between and you Dane Jackson is really documented. You're probably not going to tell us who it is, but is there a Dane Jackson on your board right now, I want that guy sort of thing?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, I think there is some guys we have identified in the later rounds that have the qualities, same type of qualities that Dane has.

So, yeah, there is always those diamonds in the rough that we're looking for, that our scouts and coaches are looking for.

Yeah, we're going to turn over every stone and try to find those type of guys.

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