

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Sunday, September 15, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Jim Harbaugh

### Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Chargers 26, Panthers 3

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. I don't know how much of this you know, but with the 2-0 start, Dobbins running for 100 yards in consecutive games, you are breaking all these historical barriers, which may not be important, but I'm wondering what you think of that, and also the fact that you have won two games now at home and on the road. You won with offense and defense. You won on the East Coast and the West Coast. What does that all add up to for you after two games?**

JIM HARBAUGH: Well, we definitely do keep track of something historic like what J.K. Dobbins has done with the plus 100-yard games in back-to-back openers. I think it hasn't been done ever by the Chargers. I don't know how many it's been done by the rest of the NFL, but so excited for him.

Elijah Molden, I take my hat off to Joe Hortiz and Chad Alexander and the whole personnel department for finding Elijah for us. He's come in and been such a great addition. Just so quick he's added into the team and knowing what to do, first of all, in about a week-, two-week time frame is commendable in itself.

But, you know, the way he is playing, he is tackling. He has the huge interception today. Phenomenal.

Maybe nobody more excited for than Quentin Johnson. You know, Q, everybody on the team really likes Q and loves him, respects him. Probably most of all because he's kind of been picked on by a lot of people. It doesn't phase him. He just keeps doing him, and he works on stuff that he needs to get better at. That's the most important part. He doesn't ever get the big head. Just keep doing you, Q. It's working.

To make the tough contested catch, the touchdown, then work his way open on the second touchdown, huge. And continues to make these tough catches across the middle.

I mean, not many people do that when they're just a heavy ball lasered right on you in traffic, contested again today or on the move. So excited about that.

Great game. A lot of people. Derwin James, love the way he runs and hits. Everybody who likes football would. Denzel Perryman, same type of player there. Our offensive line I thought took another step. Great to see Gus Edwards getting into the mix and having a really good game. And J.K., you know, another big, big long run. Those are hard to get. Those are hard to get in the National Football League. Plus-40-yard runs.

A lot of good defense. Again, you know, the great -- another great performance. Another thing that's really hard to get is four three and outs to start the game. Haven't seen that much at all.

Then the fifth drive was one first down and then interception. Just played lights-out defensively. Timely sacks, timely plays, timely PBUs, great calls by Jesse Minter coming into those in those situational football.

Excited about our team playing complementary football, all three phases. Really played well today.

**Q. You talked about complementary football. It seems like in the past Justin has been asked to throw the ball quite a bit. It seems like this year he threw two games, anyway, that you are really leaning on a more balanced attack and maybe leaning on that running game. Has that been kind of your strategy going into this training camp and into the season?**

JIM HARBAUGH: Well, every game is different. We know that. But it was great. Justin, 70% completion today. Puts the ball on a dime to Q at the beginning. I mean, I think he reminded everybody that he's one of the best quarterbacks in the National Football League. We're going to lean on both. We're going to lean on both. And whatever works, whatever we think can work, but there's going to be opposing wills every single game, every sim week. The margin is credit card thin, you know.

So it's almost like an opener. You know, there was an



opener last week. This was an opener, road opener. Our guys seem to do well with the openers. Let's just turn them all into openers and just keep playing them one game at a time, one play at a time, one game at a time, one day at a time.

**Q. Did J.K. surprise you at all with the stuff he's been doing the past two games?**

JIM HARBAUGH: It's just thrilling really, Chris. Completely thrilling. You know, when a player injures himself, you know, Achilles, the ACL, the patella tendon, you know, those real big ones, those long-term injuries that take a long time to rehab. They're immobile for months. Atrophy occurs.

Just for the normal person to get back to where they can walk without a limp and to be able to function on a day-to-day basis takes a lot of rehab for any human being to do that, let alone to get back to being an elite athlete playing at the highest level of football. That's grueling. You hit about a three month on the back end of those rehabs, that's grueling to try to get from, you know, just to be able to function to play at this elite level.

To watch him come back even stronger, quicker, faster than before the injury, what a testament to his will.

And then to have this kind of success, you don't know when you come back from one of those things what it's going to be like when you actually stick that foot in the ground and there's a 250- or 350-pound guy, you know, putting all their body weight on you into the tackle with force because they're big guys moving fast. You just don't know what it's going to be like, or to anchor down in pass protection like he's shown that he can do until you do it.

So it's just incredible, just incredible what -- just the testament to his physical athleticism, plus the grueling rehab he went through, and the mindset it takes to be able to do that is -- a lesser man wouldn't. Put it that way. Lesser than who would have not been able to do what J.K. has been able to do.

**Q. Were you stressed out by the somersault in the end zone?**

JIM HARBAUGH: No, no.

**Q. What did you think of it?**

JIM HARBAUGH: It's something I've never been able to do. I know people can do it rather easily. Something I always tried to do. You know, rehearsed it. I tried to flip off a diving board into water. I've tried to do it off of a

trampoline. I only tried it once off the ground like he did it. Pretty much every time for some reason I stop mid-turn. Yeah, just cool. I've always admired people that could do that.

It's something I'm missing not getting that last part of it in, but...

**Q. You mentioned wanting your team to improve a lot in week one to week two. What did you like about the first half? How encouraging was that?**

JIM HARBAUGH: Really great half, great team play. Great effort, again. You know, by the talent and by the effort, you will be known as a football player. I've always thought that.

That's biblical to me. That's like a tree shall be known by its fruit. Football players shall be known by his talent and his effort and our guys continue to be really good at both. All three phases. You know, just came out ready, came out hitting on all cylinders. Yeah, very impressive. Really, really happy. Really happy that the guys just attack what's in front of them, the task in front of them.

They know it's critical. They know it's critical. It's as important as it gets what you do on game day.

**Q. How important is it when you talk about having success, in practice having success, but then when you actually get out there and win two in a row, what does that do for confidence or rhythm or whatever it is that you put into week three?**

JIM HARBAUGH: I don't know. I mean, I don't know all the answers to those things. I don't think anybody is going to really be thinking about it too much. Just take it one day at a time and keep attacking what you are doing. High expectations for a day's practice or a day's training or a day's meeting.

Then you feel like that training adds up, and then you can trust your training. I think that's how our guys approach it. I mean, they do it for the joy. You know, there's an energy and a joy about it, which you love to see. I mean, you are working hard and having fun doing it. That's really good. That's a great combination.

**Q. The decision to stay in Charlotte this week to practice, obviously you have the connection with (indiscernible). What do you think the benefits of staying on the East Coast are?**

JIM HARBAUGH: Getting the body clock right, cutting down the travel time. Not just in the air, but all the different

travel time. The body clock, I mean, we would fly back tonight, and we would be getting back on a plane in practically four and a half days and flying back.

That's the main reason for doing it. The 10:00 West Coast time, body clock. Just some of the studies, you know by people a lot smarter than me have figured out that's a good way to do it.

I think the other thing -- it wouldn't work if people were opposed to it, and our guys haven't been. They were like, Let's do that. That would be fun. One of the players said -- and I kind of stole his line the other day, but he said I packed the board games and the snacks. I shamelessly took that from the person. Sorry, Justin Herbert. It was so good. I just had to -- I give full credit to Justin for that pretty much Derwin James said, hey, Coach, that would be great. We want to do it. That would be great team bonding. Rashawn Slater, another captain, said he had never done that, but he was all for it. Just makes you feel so good. These guys really enjoy each other's company.

Yeah, it wouldn't be as good if they didn't, and it wouldn't be possible if people were -- what's the word -- pushback, if people didn't want to do it. Not ideal, but let's try to do what's best. Best for our players. Whatever is best for the players, you know. Whatever puts them in the best possible position, whatever is better for their safety and their performance, then appreciate the Spanos family for doing whatever it takes to make that happen.

We know that they got our backs. They got our back, front, and sides. Team Spanos, John Spanos, A.G. Spanos, Susie Spanos, they got us. They got our front, back, and sides. And we love them for it.

It just makes you want to -- it makes you want to, like, run through the proverbial wall for our ownership because they truly care about us. I think that's another benefit. We'll get back, get some regrouping, refitting, retooling, get some treatment, and get back to work because it's going to be -- as everybody knows, that's a tough game in Pittsburgh. They're a tough team to beat.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

