

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Sunday, September 29, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Dave Canales

Postgame Press Conference



Bengals 34, Panthers 24

DAVE CANALES: Good afternoon. First just want to mention, just thinking about it and just filled with just the gratitude of being able to come and play this game when we know there's so much going on out there all across the Carolinas, people that were affected by the weather. We have family members in Asheville, and just talking about the devastation experience there.

We come into this game with just the gift and the blessing of what we all get to do here, but I wanted to make sure that I mentioned first our hearts and our prayers, our whole organization is just behind the relief effort and another just moment of gratitude for all of our first responders trying to figure things out, trying to get clean water going, things that we take for granted on a daily basis.

I just want everybody to know that our hearts are with them all as we do this.

As far as the game, another step in the right direction in some areas, but early it came down to the ball. That first drive, we've got to finish those in the red zone. Decision to go for it on 4th right there. We're knocking on the door, we've got to be able to finish that and punch that in right there. But it ended up being a huge part of the game, a huge difference in it.

But overall just without watching film, it just felt like just the fundamentals of football. A couple of missed tackles, a few big plays early on, offensively some drops in some critical situations. Just being able to do right longer to finish and execute the way that we know we can.

Another great day of running the football, the balance of it with the actions, and just some near misses, things we've got to make sure we come up with in that regard.

Again, for me just talking to the team, just encouraged that our football continues to improve, but we've got to finish and we have to execute, and it all starts with me as the head coach and as we continue to go back to this practice,

just making sure that we're really paying attention on those critical details of what it takes to play good football against a really good team, obviously with some of their players that made big plays for them today?

Q. Injuries were also part of the game today; Shaq Thompson, Josey both leaving the game. What updates have you heard on them?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we're evaluating Shaq right now. There's something in his lower leg. Really we don't know until we get the MRI and get that information, but it was enough that he couldn't finish.

Josey had two upper leg issue, a groin and a hamstring, that kept him out from going back in.

Who else did we have there? Those were the two right there. Then we had a couple guys that came out for a second. Thurman finished the game after he was taken off. We'll give you more information as we evaluate them.

Q. You spoke about wanting to see more offensive consistency. Are you starting to see it now?

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely, 50 percent on 3rd down. That's a day where you can continue drives and continue to be aggressive and take your shots, get back to the run game, which all that came to life. But it was about execution, especially in that critical situation. We get the ball back, we're down a touchdown right there, and we've got to be able to throw and catch to continue those drives to give us a chance.

Q. I know you said fundamentals were a problem today. How much of a killer was that last drive, they scored 66 yards and a minute and 8 seconds left in the first half?

DAVE CANALES: Oh, absolutely. That definitely makes things harder. But we keep believing, and we believe as long as there's time left on the clock that we can get ourselves back into the game.

Q. Do you think Diontae should have had the fade at

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

that 2nd and goal?

DAVE CANALES: He had a chance at it. Again, all these things are -- a day of near misses. We had a couple of balls that went down the field, so I'm excited about that part of our offense. To be able to stretch the field. Teams know we're going to try to run the ball. This is exactly my dream of how this thing works from an offensive standpoint, and we've got to take advantage of those ops.

Q. Defensively you talked about wanting to be about the ball. How disappointing to see the missed tackles on a couple of their touchdown holes?

DAVE CANALES: Yen, those fundamentals, right? If we rally up and tackle, make them work, make the opposing offense have to work for every point they get. They got a couple of big plays on us, and that was the difference in the game.

Q. What did you see out of Xavier today and his growth as an offensive player?

DAVE CANALES: Played fast, did what he was supposed to do, left a couple balls on the ground. That's a step that he's got to make, the fundamental things, is secure the catch and then be special after you do that.

But again, a cool spark to see him play fast like he's been doing and gives us a chance to continue to use him in different ways.

Q. It looked like Diontae dropped on the first drive in the end zone. How much did that change the whole game as far as you're concerned?

DAVE CANALES: I don't look at it like that. I take them kind of one driver at a time. That was a great opportunity. I hope we can come up with that play the next time.

Q. Can you take us through your thought process on going for it on 4th and goal, 4th and inches in that first drive?

DAVE CANALES: That mentality. We pride ourselves on being able to run the football. We did not finish. The guys take that personally. I take that personally. That's something that we have to continue to look at. What's our schemes? What was the breakdown? I'll watch the film and take a look at that.

But that was an opportunity for us missed.

Q. You knew that this was kind of a building block year. How do you balance the long-term thought

process with the things that you did well? In order to articulate, hey, yeah, this was a step in the right direction in this area, but in reality we have a lot more things to --

DAVE CANALES: For me, it's about that one week progression. It's about every day getting better and better at our systems. Again, we're still learning all these things and coming together with the communication and all that, and it's been better week after week.

My approach is the weekly approach. The Bengals were our opponent. We saw what they did. We saw the schemes that they had. We had great calls against it. It comes down to execution.

I thought we took a step in some areas, but it wasn't enough to win, and that's the ultimate goal is to win the football games, and we didn't get that done.

Q. 4th and 10 from the 8 when you're backed up there, you had the drop earlier with Mingo, did the Mingo drop really affect whether you go for that or not, and then did you think about going for it even as low percentage as it was?

DAVE CANALES: I thought about it, but in that situation that was just really putting my trust in our team to play team football to get another shot, to get a good stop on the following drive, see if we can have time on the clock to be able to come back and be aggressive and attack.

But yeah, certainly starting the drive off, trying to get that completion going, and then who knows what happens. I hate leaving it like that. I hate that feeling of just we had this opportunity. We played ourselves back in. Xavier with the amazing interception and the guys fighting to give us a chance, the belief. That's another thing, talking about the big picture, the belief of this team is there, but we just have to pair it with our execution.

Q. Did you see something on film that led you to think that fake punt might be an option, and what did you see in that?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, down two scores we had an opportunity right there. We took a shot. It was an aggressive thought right there with our defense playing better in the second half. We took that risk. I loved that opportunity. Wished we would have come up with it. Now we're moving the chains and we're back to rhythm, get the offense back out there and see what happens.

I was all in on that decision right there.



Q. What did you make of Andy's performance just generally speaking?

DAVE CANALES: Solid day. I thought Andy just came out and executed the plan again. Hendrickson got a great rush, tipped the ball from the back side, tipped the ball up and they got that early interception. That was a rough one.

But to see him respond, bounce back, the guys staying together, staying committed to the rhythm and stuff, no panic, we ran the ball, we had the actions, we went down and scored, working our way back into this game.

So it was a great response to early adversity, and then I thought just a great job of finishing in general.

Q. Could he have done a better job stepping up on that play?

DAVE CANALES: I don't know. I'll have to check the film out.

Q. On your 4th and goal in the first series, you ran, I think, behind Zavala. Was that where that run was designed to go?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's a play we know, a play that we can execute, and we've just got to be better fundamentally right there and get that push that you're hoping for so we can punch those ones in.

Q. After Josey and Shaq left, who played for the defense --

DAVE CANALES: Trevin. Trevin hopped in, he called the plays. He did a great job just getting things organized and communicated, so really just for me, again, it's like the next guy up and the opportunity that that provides for us to evaluate our players and to put him out there to see what we have.

Q. Kind of the snapshots of those two touchdowns, scoring drives, the Chuba Hubbard and then the Legette one, if somebody from the outside looking in is trying to see what a Dave Canales offense is, are those two drives good hallmarks for what you are playing to do?

DAVE CANALES: It's Panthers football. We ran the football. We try to run teams into an attitude, and I know that they're going to mix things up, but we executed on those drives, and guys continued in different situations, 2nd and longs, 3rd and shorts, 3rd and mediums, things like that, so these are all the things we need to continue to gather information about us.

But just that mix of it and balance of it is exactly what we're looking for so we can be Anna tacking style of offense. My highest view of what we can do looks like those drives where we continue drives, we're efficient on 3rd down, the run game is solid, and we're throwing and catching like I know we can.

DraftScripts by ASAP Sports.