

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Sunday, September 29, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Zac Taylor

### Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Bengals 34, Panthers 24

#### Q. (Away from mic.)

ZAC TAYLOR: It's good to get a win. I think there were good things all the way around. Still things we're going to have to capitalize on in the second half, but I thought there was good team football there with defense getting stops, great field position off the punts and offense capitalizing and vice versa, so I thought there was really good, complimentary football there over the course of the game.

#### Q. (Away from mic.)

ZAC TAYLOR: I think we had our opportunities to knock it open, and that's what we missed. That's on all of us, quite frankly. There's things I could do better there, to help us do that, but there was an opportunity to knock it open and make it a true three-score game, let our defense pin their ears back and tee off, so there is certainly room to grow.

#### Q. How about that swing pass at the end of the half?

ZAC TAYLOR: You hold your breath. You hold your breath, and it's great when it works. And he can see it better than we can from the sidelines, obviously, where that was. Felt like Zach had an opportunity to get in there, so happy when it works.

#### Q. Is that a call?

ZAC TAYLOR: That's just part of the progression there. So, again, you're scheming up plays for normal situations. You're not scheming up with six seconds left in the half, which is about the grayest area you can get to, six seconds left, the ball gets tipped up in the air and the clock runs out. So it worked out for us.

#### Q. How badly did you guys need that goal line stop in the first quarter?

ZAC TAYLOR: It gave us a lot of confidence on defense, to get the stop. Obviously it would have been awesome if

we could have found a way to go 99 and score. I think that ball got tipped on third down. I think there was our first nonthird down conversion for a long part of the game there. But we certainly had the confidence that we were going to get points on that drive, had that worked out.

It didn't but, again, this is what I just talked to the team about. We had a great punt. Defense got the ball back for us, and offense went down and scored. They got the turnover and the offense went down and scored. That's the complimentary football we've been looking for that showed up in a big way there. Defense getting a goal-end stop, offense getting us out of there, great punt, turnover, touchdown. That's the way it needs to be for us

#### Q. Can you give us an explanation of the plan at corner back? We haven't seen you guys rotate like you have.

ZAC TAYLOR: Some of it's in game. Some of it's in game, just as the game evolves. I think overall D.J. Turner has practiced well and very limited opportunities done well. You had the pick against Kansas City that got called back, so sometimes it's about guys deserving an opportunity, not so much about what's happening with other guys. It's more so about D.J. focusing and doing things the right way, and finding a way just to get himself on the field, and I think that's what D.J. has done for us.

#### Q. When the defense is allowing points how important is for the offense to stay aggressive and keep pushing the ball?

ZAC TAYLOR: The first half was' strange one, because the first three possessions we had were backed up red zone, and then we scored in four plays on a third down.

The defense was out there obviously getting a lot of normal snaps. Offensively looking at the normal play call sheet, there was nothing called, and I think our fourth possession was two minute. So you go into halftime with your whole plan, you haven't really gotten a chance to call yet.

Just kind of a strange way that that unfolded, but happy we had 21 points there. I thought the offense executed the



situations we were in.

**Q. During the four TDs in a row there, what opened up for you guys?**

ZAC TAYLOR: No, I mean, it's hard -- I count the first drive. The ball got tipped on what was going to be a conversion there, on that third down. So I felt like we were moving the ball well. I think it was the third and four that got tipped. So we had a lot of confidence coming out of last week, had a lot of confidence coming out of Kansas City, so I think there was a lot of confidence and expectations to score.

Obviously there are some things I could have done better to help us there in the second half.

**Q. How much encouragement do you draw from not just moving the ball and scoring but so many guys have made explosive plays for you, spreading it across everybody. That has to be something you feel like you can build on?**

ZAC TAYLOR: It is, and there are certainly plays we're going to target key guys, and then, you know, if they take 'em away with whatever they are that doing, Joe progresses and finds it to so many people that can make plays for us. I can think of about every guy that was in that game that made critical plays for us in big moments. I'm not going to start listing them because I will forget somebody.

I just think we have great pieces over there, and the line is playing their tails off right now, giving him great protection, so he feels like he can sit back there, call anything, and the run game is starting to take off, and there is a lot of confidence there as well.

**Q. 130 yards in the second half. How much do you love the combination of Zach and Chase?**

ZAC TAYLOR: Outstanding. I think they complement each other really well. They can really do all the runs we have. I think the line and the tight ends are doing an excellent job. The receivers are completely bought in on the perimeter. Again, I just think those guys are all playing with a lot of great rhythm right now and a lot of confidence in the run game.

**Q. Can you give us an update with what happened with Trey?**

ZAC TAYLOR: I think it's a stringer. We will find out tomorrow.

**Q. What did you think of Ja'Marr Chase's touchdown?**

ZAC TAYLOR: That's what he's capable of. When you can throw a simple backside end breaker. I believe they were crowding him on that play, if I remember correctly, and Joe had all day to let him clear the window and really get to the backside of the progression. And then for Ja'Marr -- again, I haven't seen it live, but to break all of those tackles and have the contact balance that he has -- it's contact balance and explosiveness, which is so difficult to put all together in one snap. So that's what Ja'Marr did. He starts on the backside of the play, runs an end breaker, great catch, great tackle-breaking ability, great acceleration to go finish the run down the field, enough energy to sprint back to the sidelines. That just speaks to who Ja'Marr is.

**Q. Got a big play from Anthony?**

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah. Great job. I've seen Johnny throw a lot of passes in my lifetime. It's always up, I told him in pregame no passes today, and he didn't really give me information one way or the other on what was going to happen, but that's a great job. Key play at a key moment to get over there and get your hand on the ball and make sure that ball gets out.

**Q. Rehkow had a huge punt in the fourth quarter?**

ZAC TAYLOR: Yeah.

**Q. That's what you've been looking for for a long time, now to get that, how big was that?**

ZAC TAYLOR: He stepped up big. I thought the coverage units were really good, too, to get down there particularly the gunners and cover those punts. That's pinning them down there and allowing us to capitalize on our next possession. That's a big weapon to have.

**Q. Four games in, are you pleased with where your passing game is as a unit right now?**

ZAC TAYLOR: There are always things to fine tune. I think we have a lot of confidence and calling everything off the call sheet. That's in all areas of the game, and especially running the ball like you are, it opens things up. So, again, there's just a lot of confidence there.

**Q. Do you think this is the best you've run the ball since you've been here?**

ZAC TAYLOR: Four games in, that's hard for me to go that far, but I'm pleased with the progress we're making.

**Q. Does this feel like a sigh of relief to you and the**



**team?**

ZAC TAYLOR: We know what this feeling is, to win games, and that was the expectation. Every time I've walked off the field, I expected to come away victorious, and it's just good to check that box. I think it's as simple as that. You check the box, and now you move on. We got a great divisional game at home, and so a chance to really capitalize on key momentum here. So it's going to be a tough test for us, they're a tremendous team. We've had some great battles over the years, and I know our guys are excited to get back at it. Thank you.

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