

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Sunday, November 24, 2024
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales Postgame Press Conference



Kansas City Chiefs 30, Carolina Panthers 27

DAVE CANALES: Story of the day, just missed opportunities, you know. A bunch of red zone opportunities in the first half. We come away with field goals. Credit to their defense for stopping us but we had some near misses, some opportunities down there, just you wonder what happens if you can get those points, kind of change the game a little bit that way. Really so the red zone a big area for us to look at to find the finish we need to get done there.

Defensively, third down. They just were able to continue moving the sticks and giving that -- giving Pat Mahomes and that group more opportunities. Obviously that makes it really challenging, so just got to tighten some stuff up there.

Love the way we finished, love the way the defense gave us the ball back twice there. We had that three-and-out the second to last drive and then we were able to make something happen on the last drive there to go down and tie it up, but we got to finish. We have to. That's got to be the standard for what we do and we'll go back to it. We'll look at the breakdowns and what those things were and try to take the next step there.

Q. That being said, you went toe-to-toe with the two-time defending champions and played them to the last second field goal. I mean, what do you gain out of this game?

DAVE CANALES: Just, again, to emphasize the execution, the things that showed up well for us. We've been wanting our pass game to continue to show and to take steps and progress and Bryce did a great job of pushing us forward that way, even with Jalen Coker being out today. David Moore stepped up huge for us in that way. So just continuing to find that opportunity right there and that was working for us in the first half and second half, we were able to get back to our run game, which we wanted to do. They were playing us really aggressive. They were giving us some pretty tough looks in terms of

the run game so we took advantage of it a little bit in the pass game there.

Q. Coach, talk about the last drive where you scored. What can that do for Bryce as a leader, just to take that and go for it and score?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's the whole group but certainly it's Bryce showing, making the most of his opportunities and he's making a statement to all of us and showing us that he can make plays in critical areas and really play within what we're asking him to do and to extend. He did a great job of extending plays to do which is a huge part of our offense that can really make us more attacking in that way.

Q. Dave, given what you said just there, are you at a point now where you take the week-to-week label off of Bryce and name him the starter?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I don't have to make any statements. He's making it for himself, you know. He's continued to show us the progress we're looking for, bringing our skill players to life, you know. Xavier played the exposition today, so just kudos to Xavier as well, just taking on a new role and finding some success there, you know. A couple plays he'd love to have back, I'm sure. He'd be the first to tell you. But talking about Bryce, again, it's the coaching staff, it's his teammates. He's showing us what he can do when he's out there.

Q. So we can expect him to start next Sunday?

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely.

Q. Coach, going against Andy Reid, future hall of famer, what did you learn facing off against him and what did you begin from this experience?

DAVE CANALES: I mean, just watching him for years and just to see it firsthand, the patience that it shows and just the right calls to his group of guys, you know, and using different personnels, using the strengths and talents that they have is really what I admire the most about Coach Reid, and that he's got a group that just finds a way. They



just keep finding a way to win, which is a sign of a great team, you know? But, again, I got to look at us. This is about us, this is about taking advantage of red zone opportunities offensively and tip the cap to Spags and that defensive unit you know, that was able to keep us to field goals early on. Again, something that we have to continue to grow.

Q. What's the latest you've heard on JT?

DAVE CANALES: JT was discharged from the hospital, so that's good news, but he's still under evaluation so I don't want to make any definitive comments about that but certainly a positive sign that he's coming back here to the facility right now.

Q. It looked like he had movement in his extremities, Dave.

DAVE CANALES: Yes. Yes. All that was true. Just a really scary play. I don't know if you got a chance to see the replay of it. It was a very scary play for JT. Again, we'll get more information about that and let you know.

Q. Dave, you mentioned that your own missed opportunities in the red zone but the defense was able to hold that offense I don't want to say in check but especially in the red zone, they made some plays late. How impressed were you there?

DAVE CANALES: That was great. It's handling adversity but it's what happens in the middle of the field so we don't give them those ops but I love that they finished down there to keep the game close for a while until they got that touch down before the half on a third and ten. It's a big play and that's an area where we feel like we can attack them and make it hard on them but they were able to come away with a touchdown there which ended up really being the difference in the game.

Q. You said repeatedly how much you wanted to see -- or the goal is for this team to become us. How much of that did you see today?

DAVE CANALES: I saw it again. I saw it last week -- excuse me -- two weeks in Germany. It's the style of play, it's the physicality. You see our coverage units just making big hits. We gave up the big return right off the bat which really flipped the field but defensively, guys working together and really challenging that offense, you know, and knocking some balls down in the secondary and five sacks so just continuing to develop different ways to rush the passer. All those things coming to life and just the explosive elements of our offense, making those plays where we didn't really get to the run game in the first half

but we didn't need to. We were moving the chains, throwing the ball, finding ways. Bryce was finding yards in different ways, so I just love all of that, the explosive element is what we've been looking for. There were certainly some missed ops that we could have taken advantage of as well.

Q. Dave, what are the specific things Bryce is better at now than he was a month ago?

BRYCE YOUNG: Not to get into anything specific but just all of it. It's just all the things that he continues to grow and take advantage of opportunities and lead. Another great week of practice, you know, in terms of just pushing the guys and really being the voice out there. All the things. All those things are stuff that I'm proud of the way that he's continued to grow.

Q. Dave, D.J. Wonnum seemed to, at least to us, really elevate the defense. In two games that he's played, defense has looked similarly better. How has he impacted the personality of this defense in your eyes?

DAVE CANALES: He's a pro's pro the way he prepares, how meticulous he is about his rush plan just learning the different players he's playing against and just how focused and intentional he is in his practice and preparation and it shows up on game day so it's that consistency and the things that we're growing together as a group. On top of all that, you have Jadeveon on one side and you've got D.J. on the other and you start to get more one-on-one opportunities to rush.

Q. What was the mood in the locker room and what was your message to the guys after this?

DAVE CANALES: I would say a combination of sick to our stomachs for letting an opportunity get away against a really good team and I also think that the guys can just feel what's happening. We are becoming us. We're becoming a style of football we want to pride ourselves on. We took care of the football. Defensively we got after it but they did a good job of keeping it and so I think that the guys can feel what we're trying to get philosophically and to see we can count on these guys to step in and make their plays week in and week out. When you can count of stuff, that's when confidence grows. That's when all that, you start playing faster -- you start playing more together and connected and so, again, just mixed emotions in this locker room but certainly a group that's ready to get back to work.

Q. Dave, you talk about culture a lot, especially with adversity. You guys gave up a bunch of scoring drives, the defense comes back and makes stops. David Moore fills in, does his thing. What are you

learning about this team as a -- from a vibe standpoint and a culture standpoint right now at this point in the season?

DAVE CANALES: It's the fight. It's the fight in the team. It's been a signature that I've been leaning on this whole time and even in some of the games when the score has been lopsided you see finish. You see guys that keep playing football as long as there's time on the clock. For me, it's all about when you build culture, it's culture that you celebrate. It's what you look at and you say that's us and you point to those things and the players understand what those things are now and learn how to celebrate it together and there's just an energy on the sideline that I can feel, that the guys are looking for those things to show up and counting on it and that's what we have to keep pointing to and have more of.

Q. Dave, you unveiled a couple wrinkles play calling today. There was a play where Brady was out in the route. Did you kind of enjoy the chess match of calling plays against Andy?

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. That's the thrill for coaches, for all of us, and I think it's the connection with the players, too. That the players get excited when they hear certain things called. You can see their demeanor and all those things come alive. When you're making first downs and able to attack, that's a great feeling for all of us and I don't really look at it as going against Coach Reid, it's more like trying to utilize the talents that we have, the players that we have and trying to be committed to growing those processes.

Q. Bryce's numbers against the blitz were really impressive. What did you see out of that?

DAVE CANALES: I just saw him playing decisive and it comes with confidence in knowing his guys are going to be where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. You saw a bunch of back foot throws where he knew somebody was coming open and the anticipation, all that comes from the chemistry just building over these weeks. So I was really excited to see some of those things come alive.

Q. And how much hope has he given you that he can be a franchise quarterback for you?

DAVE CANALES: That's really far in the future. Right now I'm just looking to build off this week, have another solid week of practice, bring the guys back together and just attack the basics, the fundamentals right now. Thank y'all.

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