

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Monday, December 2, 2024
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: I looked at the film, watched it and saw about three quarters of good football, and we know that we have to finish with consistency. We know that it's got to continue to show up, particularly in those critical moments. And just really cleaning things up in our kicking game. It was not a great day for us just in terms of the placement and our field goals, all those things.

Something we just talked about as a group: Finishing with the ball right there. We're trying to get ourselves in a better advantageous field goal there at the end, finishing on that ball and continuing to get us closer so we can finish the games that way.

The players know that, and they know that we can continue to expect ourselves to play football where -- we're in a two-minute or four-minute situation at the end of these games, and to get the execution and the finish that we want to get as a group. We all feel the same about it, and we're focused on this week and getting ready to get back to work.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, but the way that Chuba attacked the hole and the way the defense reacted to it, it seemed like the entire premise of it was knock the ball out. How much do you guys practice that during the week, just like that scenario?

DAVE CANALES: It's every play, every time we run the ball, every skill player that touches it. Our defense, they work on attacking the ball. It's an emphasis as a group. So we expect it every down, not just in those situations.

We know those situations are critical to lock it up and finish with it, but it's a habit thing, and that's something that we get on top of our guys for challenging each other because we train ourselves how to be really, really good with our lock it, our high and tight, and use that extra hand to pull it in.

Q. Are you anticipating getting Coker and JT Sanders back this week?

DAVE CANALES: That's the hope, yes. They both have a couple of big days, today and tomorrow, to evaluate where they're at, and the hope is to get them back up this week.

Q. Dave, I know this off-season you guys went very heavy on adjusting the offense and building it in your image. Defensively it just kind of seems like the run defense can't, I mean, make regular stops. What do you think the issue is there outside of just technique?

DAVE CANALES: Just owning our leverage. When you talk about the run game, it's the full group because everyone's got a responsibility and a fit, and it works all the way across the board. I think that, when you trust that everyone is doing their job and in their gap, you don't have to jump out of yours. Stay in your gap, own your leverage. The plays will come back to you if we all work together.

And it's the discipline of play in and play out, particularly at the end where the Bucs were committed to running the ball right there in the fourth quarter, and that's where they started to get a lot of their breakout plays and yards.

To just keep doing the right thing. Do right longer, that's been the message for our group, and that's something we've got to own.

Q. The players have been very quick to not blame the scheme as much as their individual teammates. What are you seeing on film from the discipline standpoint that you're talking about?

DAVE CANALES: Just inconsistency. We have to have the same execution play in and play out, and that's really what it comes down to.

Q. Sam Franklin went to the opposing locker room after the game. I know we asked about this yesterday, and you didn't have much information on it. Do you have any expanded clarity on what happened there?

DAVE CANALES: Just know that we talked about it. He and I sat down this morning and just had that conversation. He'll be the first to tell you that he shouldn't do that, that it was a mistake.

We talked about just wanting to have passion, wanting to have edge, and knowing where that -- to toe that edge and then come back to us, celebrate with us, talk to our teammates, keep our energy going on our side. We don't have to give the opponent anything, and that's one of those things too.

Q. Just the explanation for why they called Thielen out of bounds for that possession at the end on that catch, one of the things was the number of camera angles. Is that something the stadium controls? Is that something you guys are looking into?

DAVE CANALES: I'm not really sure on all that. I just know from an officiating standpoint, if they call it incomplete and they don't have evidence to flip it, it's hard, and they'll go with their call. That's the decision they made in that situation.

If they would have called it a touchdown, it would have resulted that way for us where there wouldn't have been enough angles to flip it, and they would have stayed with the touchdown call there.

Q. What do you see for Bryce down the stretch? It's been a couple games, few games now where he's led some late, important drives for the touchdown there. What are you seeing from his confidence level in terms of late game operation?

DAVE CANALES: Just decisiveness and having a plan, things that we talk about through the week that come alive on GameDay. They've been in these critical situations for the last two weeks for sure and then going back to the Saints game.

But just operating within the system and the tools that the guys are ready for to apply given those specific third and fourth and critical types of situations. Just a great job of taking those conversations, taking the practice reps, and then applying them to high pressure situations, which don't bother him, he just plays ball.

I love just how decisive and the mechanics of all those things have been.

Q. Once you were able to go back and watch the tape as well, what did you see from what Chau gave you?

DAVE CANALES: Chau took advantage of an opportunity. He made tackles. He owned his leverage for the most part. There are still things he has to clean up. He had opportunity on an interception, and he made it, and he came up with the ball. Really proud of that.

Proud of him taking advantage of another opportunity he had a couple of weeks ago, and Dane got a shot in there. I was really proud of Chau really being focused in on the week and for it to show up on game day.

Q. Tom has had a rough year with injuries and really being out of the lineup. It seems like he kind of really broke out yesterday. What has he brought to the offense over the last couple weeks, and where are you seeing him start to get on the right track?

DAVE CANALES: First thing I'll say about Tommy is this is a really conscientious football player. He takes notes. He's snapping shots of our notes on the screen, just making sure he's on top of all that stuff. So it's a great thing for him.

You've got JT in there who sees those guys who are just so into it. So I would say that first and foremost, just the professionalism, the way he prepares.

Then he plays hard. Whether it's in the run game or the pass game, he plays the game right. He plays at full speed. He plays it physical and aggressive. I was really happy just to see him make some plays, breaking tackles down the field, critical third downs. The scramble reaction where he and Bryce just seemed to be on the same page with that. Those things have been great.

I think just those couple of things, the speed of play and how he approaches his week.

Q. Some players yesterday said something along the lines of got to learn how to win close games. Based on your experience in Seattle and Tampa, how do you do that?

DAVE CANALES: It's habits. It's habits of finishing everything we do all week long. It's today, going through the film, the grades, taking the input, applying it to your week, taking care of your body early on in the week coming off of the game. It's all these processes that you have to see through. It's a habit, and it becomes who you are.

It's about practices, and it's about finishing the drills full speed, finishing to the ball. Everybody uncovering on the offense and covering down, chasing the ball defensively, rallying to the ball, all being there and visualizing the tackles, even though we're not going full tackling during practice. But it's all the finish of the plays and those habits.

It's the two-minute situations we do in our walk-throughs, taking it all the way down to those critical situations and just owning that, that when we're in these situations, the

execution is the same, guys. You've been here. You've taken yourself to this finished process, so let's let it happen and let's let it come to life in games.

Q. Following up on Dave's question, the idea that the NFL's broadcast partners have an uneven number of cameras at each game, did you run into that at all while you were in Seattle? Do you think there should be a standard across the league in that each game has the same number of cameras and angles?

DAVE CANALES: I think equity is important, but again, I haven't really dove into that fully. I just know on primetime games, there's going to be way more cameras available just because of the nature of the coverage and all that. So there's advantages and disadvantages to that.

So it works both ways, where sometimes you may have a big play, but because of a primetime game, you have all these other angles, and it could take it away because they see what's happening. So I know it can go both ways.

Q. What's your thoughts on Jonathon Brooks? How did he grade out when you were watching film?

DAVE CANALES: I thought it was a great step from the first week to the second in terms of his confidence. You saw him break a couple of tackles, finishing runs aggressively, some of those things. I was really pleased with the way he took another step.

That's all we expect is weekly improvement, the daily improvement, just dialing yourself into the protection plan, the runs, how we're trying to press the runs and those things like that. So another great step for Jonathon.

Q. Building off of that, I know he's only played a couple weeks, but you talked early on with this rookie class about being able to take your lumps down the road. Have you started to see that turn for some of these guys?

DAVE CANALES: It's been happening for weeks now, guys that have just been thrown out to play that we're counting on, with Xavier, with Coker, with Trevin on the other side and Chau coming in and getting another chance. So we're seeing these things pay dividends down the road as we continue to play and they keep stacking more football.

Q. Any concern with the number of dropped passes?

DAVE CANALES: No concern. Just guys that we're counting on, and I think it's really important as coaches that we just extend confidence in these guys to say, hey, we're

going to come back to you. Whether it's the pass game, whether it's Eddy, just like, Eddy, we're going to be in these situations again, we know you'll nail it. He's been so consistent. Just be you, be who you are. We count on those guys to show back up and continue to make plays.

Q. Any commonality in the red zone struggles there that you feel like you really need to focus on?

DAVE CANALES: I think it's just a matter of chemistry. I think it's time on task, some near misses for two weeks. These are things we have to hone in on throughout the week as we're looking at it and make sure we're on the exact same page.

When you talk about red zone passes, these are landmark throws. They're going to spots. You're throwing to spots. You're throwing to areas within these concepts, and those are the things we have to just continue to improve on.

Q. When you came in here, you said that you try to take a blank slate with just about everybody who is here. What was kind of your early impressions of Eddy, and how have those changed, if they have at all, over the course of these 11, 12 games?

DAVE CANALES: I think just taking in consideration his process, the way he approaches every kick and just the consistency of it. I think that's a trait of all the kickers that I've been around. But just really appreciating that, the way he's gone about his work and the way he's made himself available.

Nothing has changed for me in that regard. It's just continue to take your approach and trust the fact that your process will lead to good success.

Q. He made himself available how?

DAVE CANALES: Just in practice. I'm just saying just kicking, being out there, being available.

Q. You obviously made the move to Chau this past week. Do you anticipate any major shake-ups in the lineup this week on defense?

DAVE CANALES: No, not right now.

Q. Will Bryce keep going?

DAVE CANALES: Yes, Bryce will be playing in Philly this week.

Q. Any injury updates?

DAVE CANALES: Sullivan had a pretty significant knee injury, so he's going to be out for a while there. Anybody else came off of the injury report right now?

Again, we talked about JT, we talked about Coker, big couple of days to evaluate them, see where they're at, see if we can get them back out on Wednesday running around.

Q. Nick Scott?

DAVE CANALES: Nick Scott, he looked great last week, so another guy we've got to take a look at. With Nick, it's a matter of the depth chart and all of that, so conversations we're going to have to have.

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