

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Dave Canales

### Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: First and foremost, Jonathan Brooks reinjured his right ACL. He'll be out for the season.

He's going to have surgery to repair that at some point, so working on all that.

My heart is with him. I mean, just the amount of hard work that he put in to get back to this place to get him to play. So he's heartbroken, I'm heartbroken, the whole group just feeling for him.

So we'll be here every step of the way with him supporting him through this journey. He knows how to do this. He'll be able to attack it, and his focus is just going to shift in terms of what he's competing for.

And so just, again, definitely hard on JB right now, so all of our thoughts are with him.

#### Q. Was it a tear?

DAVE CANALES: Yes, it's a ACL tear. They'll have to address that with surgery going forward.

#### Q. Any other damage other than that?

DAVE CANALES: No.

#### Q. Was there any risk of putting him back out there in hindsight or was it just one of those things that just happens?

DAVE CANALES: Right now my heart is with JB, just him emotional world, just getting him back mentally to a new place to attack this rehab like he knows how to do.

#### Q. On that same topic Raheem went to the hospital. (Video buffering). What's the latest on him? And also there has been talk about Xavier Legette (video buffering.)

DAVE CANALES: Raheem was taken to the hospital. Any time there is an injury and chest pain involved I think that's

the smartest thing. I'm not an expert, but I know from a medical standpoint they wanted to get him there to rule out something serious. Turned out to be a blunt force contusion to the chest area.

#### Q. (No audio - video buffering.)

DAVE CANALES: That's all in the works right now.

#### Q. Following up on Mike's question, is there something going on with Xavier's hand?

DAVE CANALES: He had an old injury. It hasn't been an issue. (Buffering) that's what we're counting on. Went right to him afterwards and said, hey, man, it was a beautiful route. Let's find ways to finish this, and I know he will get that done. He's been playing so hard for us, so counting on him.

#### Q. Dave, you guys had brought Jonathan along really slowly, making sure he was back.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

#### Q. (Indiscernible.)

DAVE CANALES: Again, I am thinking about him. This is not about the Panthers, this is about Jonathan Brooks and his journey back to playing football. And that's the part that when you see a guy work so hard to work his way back on to the field, the excitement that comes with it, my heart just goes with him, and knowing that he knows the process. He knows the road that he has to get back out there and the challenges that come with it.

So, again, yeah that's also at this point now that is an advantage for him to be able to lean on the thing he knows he has to do.

#### Q. Will Mike Boone be...

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, so Mike Boone, you know, who has been with us this whole time, we'll ask Mike to help us out that way and see where we are with Raheem.



**Q. Any thoughts on going and getting running back in the open market?**

DAVE CANALES: We're looking at all that right now.

**Q. How is Brooks doing with all this? Is he okay? How is his emotional state right now?**

DAVE CANALES: As you can imagine he's really crushed, discouraged. The excitement and the buildup and all that, you know.

**Q. Steve said you guys were very methodical and cautious with this. I remember asking you this a couple months ago. Was there a point in October where he had a setback, scar tissue that you were concerned about?**

DAVE CANALES: Not really. Again, it was about getting him on the field with confidence, playing with speed, and he showed that. So we just progressed him as we saw fit; got him to where he was playing confident football.

That's kind of the things we had talked about, so we felt like we got him to that point, and right now the ifs and whats of what happened in the past, honestly like my heart is just with JB. To get that news this morning, it hit us all really hard.

**Q. Did he have a followup MRI first thing this morning?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, he did. And that's when they confirmed it, yeah.

**Q. I know you said that your heart is with Jonathan Brooks; makes a lot of sense. Chuba Hubbard had a milestone against the Eagles.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. 1000 yards on the season. You signed him earlier this year. I don't know, how do you -- how do you see those two things happening at the same time? It's I imagine a strange place to be in the backfield.**

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. It's a tribute to the group, to the commitment to it. It all starts up front with the offensive line and the progression just of our run game and the growth in it.

Goody, Joe, Keli'i, Dean Petzing drawing them all up, just all the guys getting together to put our guys in the best situation to run the ball.

And (buffering) our system, the way it's supposed to be run and really making some great effort plays, which showed up again yesterday.

So great a thing there, but to me, the goal isn't ever to rush for 1000 yards. It's to win games. That's ultimately what the guys care about too.

But the guys take a lot of pride in running the ball hard, and that's been something we can count on for the most part. So really, really cool for the group there.

**Q. Dave, last night we talked to a pretty animated Robinson; leads you guys in sacks. Played against them pretty regularly in the NFC West before that. I am just curious, he says he's getting more pass rush opportunities than ever before. Coming into this and signing him, what did you know about him and what have you learned about him as a player since he's been here?**

DAVE CANALES: First and foremost as a guy, just the character of the guy, like the effort that he plays with when he's out there, the strain, the commitment to really playing physical football, and wanting that as a group, he's central to that identity for our group of just playing hard.

And he shows it. That's the way he plays. He brings a lot of passion. Just really cares. Has a lot of pride in what he does.

And then he came into this season in great shape. You know, for him, I hadn't been around him, but he was like, this is the best shape I've been in in a while and he committed himself to taking care of his body coming into this year.

And so he just made himself available and has taken advantage of his opportunities.

**Q. Did you address Jonathan's injury with the team?**

DAVE CANALES: I did, yeah. The guys were kind of here, but as a group we addressed it. You could feel all the guys just feeling for him. And just the character of the kid. Like he is a standup guy. He does his job. He works hard. He cares about it. He's into it. He's detailed in the stuff that he is studying. So he approaches the game the right way.

Everyone is pulling for him, and so it was a good moment for us to just let him know that our thoughts and prayers are with him and we got his back the whole way through.

**Q. He went throughout the rehab process with a lot of**

**guys this year. There were a lot of guys in injury list.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. DJ Wonnum in particular said it was really hard on him. Did you notice that shared empathy in the last 24 hours from the locker room?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, from those guys, from everybody really, from the whole group. It's a group that really cares about each other and enjoys working together.

**Q. Anything that stood out on tape in your review that you want it hone in on this week in preparation for the Cowboys?**

DAVE CANALES: You're talking about just our -- from last game to the next game?

**Q. Uh-huh.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's the continued investment into stopping the run and for the consistency of it, you know, to show up so we can force teams into pass downs. Our pass rush is improving. Our coverage is improving. All those things are getting better, and it's the one piece we continue to attack and address.

**Q. JC, any update on JC?**

DAVE CANALES: I think he's day to day right now. Am I right on that, Bruce? Correct, day-to-day on that. Checked out better -- has checked out pretty good for what we hoped coming out of the game, but again, we have to take it day by day and see what his availability will be like this week.

**Q. He said that's something he's been dealing with to are a couple weeks.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. How fully committed are you now to him for next year?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I just see him making great decisions to push our whole system forward in the way that he's preparing, in the way that he's making it come to life on game day. Certainly making better calls out of what I've called and making plays out of it and finding scramble throws down the field.

So I'm fired up for the progression of Bryce and watching him take each step every week and attacking the game plan and making it come to life during the week.

**Q. Had he not had the thumb injury in the car accident, what was the plan at that point? When were you going to get another look at Bryce?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, would've been really interesting. Fortunately we got the opportunity. Bryce got the opportunity he did. On the other side of it I was pulling for Andy at the time, too, who was building some weeks. Had a couple rough weeks and he was like, okay, here we go. Let's get this thing back on track.

It's two stories and that's life. Bryce made the most of his opportunities and here we are. Just with the weekly growth, took another step in a positive direction against a really good team. That's where we are. We're week to week. Here we go against the Cowboys and we will have to lock back in.

**Q. During this last six weeks, or even Sunday, it's a obviously two-way street between the playcaller and the quarterback. Is there a play, without getting into too much strategy, that you called that he performed better than maybe the initial concept was or maybe kind of had to improvise and adjust to the playcalling?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. Like do you have an example of that?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, multiple times. Getting to different checks. I don't want to talk about our scheme specifically, but it happened a couple times where their coverage was better than the play I called and he extends the play and finds a completion, or throws an incompleteness when they got us completely covered in field goal range, it was like early in in the game, we're in like second and seven in field goal range to get our first three points.

The concept is gloved. He didn't have a Lane, throws it away, and we live to see another down after that. So just making decisions like that, it's part of the position. I would love to say that I know exactly with the coordinator is going to do in all these situations. It's just not true. That's where the ownership of the quarterback and the group to start the second play. You know this one is dead; all right, here comes the second play. We start moving, and to see the effort of the offensive line using their hands, disengaging, the whole thing, fitting in like that. But yeah, certainly saved my bacon a couple times out there.

**Q. He seems more comfortable extending those plays than I guess before.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.



**Q. What do you think that is a result of?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, goes back to the understanding of what the play design is and what the coverage is. Most plays you got an answer for this and then the second one. If they called this third defense we really don't have an answer for, that's where the quarterback says, okay, not the design, here we go.

That's where the ownership of the concepts, the trust in his skill players, playing with them pretty consistent as a group for a while with the exception of Jalen Coker.

But I think it's a group working off each other that way. That's when it starts to get really good. Me-to-you factor between the quarterback and the skill players.

I think you just know. Like as a quarterback, I see the picture what this play looks like. This is not the design, boom, start the second play. That's where you can catch the defense a little bit off guard with that quick decision and that's what I've seen happen.

**Q. Do you know yet whether Raheem will be available this week?**

DAVE CANALES: He's day to day. We think he has a good chance to be available this week but we have to see. The injury was just yesterday, so we have a couple days to figure out whether he'll be trending in the right direction.

**Q. I know you were with Deven Thompkins in Tampa Bay too. What have you been able to see from him the past couple weeks and particularly yesterday?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just the versatility and being reliable. He's just been able to come in and do a couple things offensively for us. And then especially like in the return game, when Raheem goes down DT goes in there and handles the returns. Fields the ball, you know.

One other punt I thought he could have fielded, but for the most part did a good job securing the ball and the yards we had right there. Really valuable to me and a guy that's got familiarity and also just the spirit that he brings on a weekly basis. Every day is like the best day of his life. He's on the field running around. He doesn't understand what walk-through means; he's way too fast.

But it's the spirit of his joy for being out there, it's infectious. It affects me in a positive way and it affects his teammates also. Can't really take a play off because he's always going fast, so it trains everybody, we got to go. Those are the type of guys we love having.

**Q. Is he ever still?**

DAVE CANALES: No, absolutely not. He's always moving.

**Q. And then latest on Jalen Coker?**

DAVE CANALES: Coker, again, just progressing through with the quad. I had another session today, so we'll regroup and talk about what that looks like today, and hoping to get him back out there this week.

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