

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Monday, December 16, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Really tough one for us starting right off the bat without the ball. The turnovers make it difficult. Had a few more explosive plays than we did throughout the day. When you're accumulating the turnovers and the explosive plays, then all of a sudden your mode really shifts and they put us into football where we're chasing. We had to throw it more. That's when their pass-rush can start to get after you. They were comfortable with the lead running the ball and executing that.

It really flipped the style of complementary football that we've been playing for a couple of weeks now. Just made it really challenging on us yesterday.

Q. How does this show maybe the fine line for teams that are trying to establish who they are between the things you for the to do to be competitive versus getting the ball out?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, 'cause (indiscernible) ways to make plays, Bryce moving around, finding creative throws for guys, guys working for him.

We found one drive where it came to life and we had some success, but we weren't able to sustain it. They did a great job. We talked about the Cowboys for the last month, of just the progression that that team has taken. They played great football yesterday.

Starting with the football, we played right into their hands and they took another step. So we got to come back to the drawing board and look at what were the things we can shore up.

Q. You were asked yesterday if it felt like a step back. Do you still feel that way after taking a closer look?

DAVE CANALES: Certainly with the football. I certainly felt like the ball security, just finishing the play ending with the ball that way. Then just some of the pre-snap things offensively, just felt like our operations, we had some false starts, had some things happen that way.

The Cowboys had a share of theirs too. For us it's taking advantage of the week of work, the preparation that goes into it, the intentionality to try to replicate that game type of speed. I feel like we can be more polished in that regard.

Q. Did you see any common threads in Bryce's two fumbles and/or his two interceptions?

DAVE CANALES: Honestly, just finishing the ball with security. In a vulnerable situation you're going down to the ground, we got to go down with two hands to protect it. That's a vulnerable spot we try to highlight and talk about.

The other one was on a sack. Sacks happen. It's like we hate sacks but at the same time it's not the worst thing. Let's finish play with the ball. If we got to live with the third and longer or second and longer we can do that. Just taking care of those things.

I thought the Theilen was a bang-bang play, a great play by the defender on that one. The ball carried right up into Kendrick's hands. I thought we had a surface on that one. I thought he made a great play on that.

Q. Despite the turnovers, is that a sign that you've seen a lot of good things, maybe enough other good things in this game that make you think that he's still the guy?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, got to say his demeanor and response to the challenges and adversity we face in the game, for Bryce to continue to play with confidence, to continue to see the coverage, to see the routes develop, throw the ball to number one, he stayed consistent that way. Even coming off to the sideline talking to the guys.

I felt his confidence. I felt confident to continue to try to work our way back into that game. Unfortunately we weren't able to do that. But he gave me the confidence to feel like let's just keep rolling. I feel the same way this week.

Q. After the game you kind of explained why you went to the pass game so quickly. Hindsight is 20/20, but is there any regret in throwing the ball so early, getting



away from designed runs?

DAVE CANALES: I wrestled with it, yeah, for sure. I just felt the whole flow of it. I felt the success that the Cowboys were having, too, on the other side. I felt like the accumulation of the last couple of weeks and our ability to find success in the pass game, I felt we would have a chance to be balanced that way and to try to get a few more first downs.

With the turnovers and then the points, all of a sudden we come out in the second half, we take a sack and fumble right off the bat. It was like the score put us in a situation where I'm always for competing. I think you would ask any of our players, they want us to go, be aggressive, say let's get after it and try to attack these guys to work ourselves back into the game.

I don't regret that at all.

Q. The offensive line has been a top five unit as far as sacks allowed. Other than the Cowboys being able to be more aggressive defensively, what do you think led to the issues yesterday?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just opportunity. Like when you give a defense that many opportunities to rush the passer, it's very similar to like a running back gets into a flow and a rhythm. Pass-rushers do the same thing. They start to set you up. The more ops you give them, here comes this stunt, then the guy does this okey-doke inside to outside move. I think the flow of it gave them a lot of opportunities. Then they mixed some cool pressures in there that caused us to be hot a couple times.

It was just the number of opportunities I think that accumulated. I think the offensive line, they would tell you themselves there were things they would like to have back, as well. It was just an opportunity thing.

Q. Where does Legette stand? Any thoughts to shut him down for the season?

DAVE CANALES: He's week to week right now. I think we're still doing all the workup on that for him right now. We'll give you a better picture of that in the next couple of days. Right now we see him as week to week. I'd love for him to have a chance to finish strong with us.

Q. Groin or wrist?

DAVE CANALES: The groin.

Q. Is he out this week?

DAVE CANALES: He should be. I would think so. Again, we have to kind of put him through the wringer and see what the strength is, see if we can get him back to form.

Q. The run defense has been a problem all season. Yesterday you said 'back to basics'. After looking at tape, do you see any other opportunities for improvement?

DAVE CANALES: It's really just all we have. All we have right now is to play our schemes and play them well, try to improve that. That's where we have to go.

We can do different things. We've made different calls to try to combat it. It's about execution. But this is the only place to go. We're playing the Cardinals. Here is how they like to run the ball, what is our plan to attack that and play good team football and tackle that way.

Q. I know you're always building. You've said that from the beginning, no expectations for this particular season. At what point do you look to 2025 and make decisions like let's get these rookies these reps at these positions over some veteran guys?

DAVE CANALES: Honestly, I got to take every opponent with the utmost and highest respect. The Cardinals can be an explosive team at times. I know they've had their struggles, but I've also seen them play really explosive ball offensively. Defensively they got a really good scheme. It really requires us to put our best foot forward. We have to be focused that way.

I can't think about the long-term things that way. I really have to make sure our guys are locked in from week to week.

Q. The run defense, that's not been good. When you look back, is that something you feel like has to be a primary thing to address in the off-season?

DAVE CANALES: I think it's something to look at, for sure. I think right now I just owe it to the guys who are working their butts off to try to get things right. I respect our guys too much to look...

Again, answering the question the same way, these guys play so hard, they're so into it, working hard to get it right, the coaching staff as well. It requires all our energy to focus on the Cardinals, how they're going to try to run the ball against us.

Q. How much of that has been a product of what you've seen this season?

DAVE CANALES: What is that?

Q. How much of the run defense (indiscernible)?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, when we do better on offense, we can play complementary football, we're stronger on defense. When we put them out there and we have a bunch of three-and-outs and penalties and turnovers, every defense gets exposed, particularly ours.

The goal is to try to get us to play that complementary football where we can all carry the load. That's been our best performances.

Q. There was a series yesterday where Lamb took it over. Has there been any thought to letting Jaycee do more shadowing?

DAVE CANALES: There's certainly things that we can do. I don't want to get too much into scheme and all that. But it's a combination of a bunch of different things. It's not all just about coverage. There's all these other pieces that fit in. What style of rush you want to try to get run. Then who is covering where. When you start moving Jaycee around, there's other factors.

I think all of that goes into consideration going into these game plans. So it's a mix of those things.

Q. Why haven't you done more of that? Is that not Jaycee's forté?

DAVE CANALES: Same thing. It's got to be a combination of things, just being aware of all the vulnerabilities, when you can and can't do that.

Q. Jalen Coker now holds the record for most undrafted receiving yards for an undrafted rookie in Panther history, if you can follow that. Just your general reaction to that, how important it is to have him back in the lineup.

DAVE CANALES: I'm proud of Jalen. I'm proud of what he's made of the opportunities he's gotten. He continues to show up in big ways. Somebody that we can certainly count on.

He's a rookie. There's lots of things we're working on as well through this process. That's for Jalen, be humble (smiling).

But it's really cool for Rob Moore, who spends a lot of time with him, for some of the veteran guys that spend time pouring into these young receivers, Adam and David Moore. To see Jalen, Xavier have success when they do,

it's certainly encouraging. I'm glad he's here.

Q. What did you think of the Heisman Trophy winner this year? What are your thoughts on a two-play player in the NFL?

DAVE CANALES: I think about Deion Sanders. He had his way to do it, Coach Prime. He's kind of right there with somebody who can mentor him through some of that.

I think it would be a challenge. I think it would be a good challenge, a good problem to talk through for any team to get a player of that caliber.

So, yeah...

Q. The question about do you start looking at development guys over these last three weeks. What's more important, that versus trying to grab a couple more wins and breed a little more winning culture into the locker room?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I think it's important to set the culture that every game is a championship opportunity because you look back and you watch the film, you see these games, whether you're at home or on the road. You just try to replicate I guess the importance of each one, the importance of each day, each practice. That's first and foremost.

That's the culture we would love to have, that is we hold each opponent in such high regard, we hold each opportunity that we have in such high regard.

Within that, where have the young players shown us to be effective? What have those young players shown that we could potentially use as we continue to build?

Again, like my focus can't go too far out into the future for the respect of the guys that have this opportunity today on our 2024 Panthers team. I owe it to them, to the coaching staff, who are working hard to get these guys ready and troubleshoot the issues we're trying to face.

The thoughts are there, but at the same time it's got to be about this week. I want the guys to get used to that. This is the most important game that we have.

Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports