

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Amazing event last night. Joy to the Carolinas. Over 700 kids. They had food and ice cream, all kinds of stuff. We had Buddy the Elf walking around, and I think we had a couple of other Christmas characters walking. But it was amazing. Kids with huge bags, toys, shoes, all the things. Just a really touching event. Just wanted to make sure I shared that, first and foremost, Teppers and Coca Cola Consolidated, an amazing event.

**Q. On the community stuff, how does it change being a head coach sort of being that figurehead, that representative of the organization?**

DAVE CANALES: I'm proud of what we do. I'm proud of the way that we outreach. There was, I think, two other events in the Western Carolinas as well for Joy to the Carolinas.

All the different community things that I've been a part of, Hurricane Helene, and the outreach and things we were involved with there, it's been really special to be part of a group and a good showing by our players, too, just going out there and enjoying the day and spreading the love. It was great.

**Q. You had a lot of guys today who were either resting or injured, several veterans. Can you give us the deal on Clowney and Woods, and you already mentioned Xavier earlier.**

DAVE CANALES: It's that time of year. I think we have a bug going around a little bit. We kept guys away from the other guys. Clowney was one of those. And then Woods is just a rest deal, just trying to get our guys' bodies rights. We'll get on the field and have a practice tomorrow and run around.

And today was an opportunity to just shorten it up a little bit, have more of a mental focus day, focus on some of the things we've been working on. Anybody else questions-wise?

**Q. As far as linebacker goes, you put Trevin and**

**Claudin on IR. What's the plan at linebacker? Will you guys kind of experiment maybe with the secondary, kind of, to fill the void?**

DAVE CANALES: We have Jacoby Windmon coming up to the team. We signed Jackson Mitchell back to the practice squad, who has been with us. Just some guys who have to be ready to go.

Rhattigan, playing a lot of teams, but he's been in those meetings as well. And Josey will be able to go. That's our group. So that's what we'll go with on Sunday.

**Q. With Rhattigan, he's played like 20 career snaps on defense. What type of opportunities is this for him to kind of show what he can do on defense?**

DAVE CANALES: Could be a great opportunity for guys to get in there show what they can do, especially this point in the season, being around the system, hearing the words. It could be a fantastic opportunity there.

**Q. Was (indiscernible) a rest day?**

DAVE CANALES: Yes.

**Q. From the standpoint of Trevin with the shoulder, was that more precautionary, or what's his outlook for return? Not for the season, but dealing with the shoulder?**

DAVE CANALES: I think it's something that has to be addressed. There was a couple of things going on. We all thought it was the right thing to make sure that we got ahead of that.

**Q. (Indiscernible) surgery?**

DAVE CANALES: I believe so.

**Q. There have been some guys in the locker room that have been like a calming force for a season like this, maybe somebody you brought in, whatever, to kind of help stabilize bring it into the culture?**



DAVE CANALES: I think veteran leadership. I think about guys like A'Shawn, who has been a real passionate player for us, and really championing the cause of the effort required to play at this level. Who knows it better than a guy who has been around for a while? He's been great. But I can't just name one guy. I'd have to rattle off a bunch of guys that have really just come back to work.

The work always brings us back regardless of the outcome of the pass game. It's like we get to Wednesday and it's Work Wednesday. And so we've had a really mature group that way to just get right back to work, focus on the next opponent, and there's a healing process that goes through that, too, for us to be able to snap out of it. Here we go, guys, we've got another challenge, they'll keep coming. Guys have been great about that.

**Q. Curious, some of the linemen said Robert Hunt has been that for the offensive line, what have you seen from him and the stability he's brought to that group?**

DAVE CANALES: Robert, D. Lew, just the consistency, Taylor Moton, guys that have been around for a long time and understand what this work looks like, especially late into the season, body care, making sure you're on your details, especially as you shift into a combination of full-speed stuff with walk-through stuff, how much the pre-snap is important. And the guys really took that to heart today just coming off of a game where we had some pre-snap stuff, and it was crisper today. So they took the challenge the right way.

**Q. The years you spent in the same division with Tyler, obviously you weren't game planning for him, but when you evaluate quarterbacks, what did you see twice a year from him?**

DAVE CANALES: He's a special player. He's got ability. He's got great arm talent. He can throw really on every part of the field, throw on the run as well. His ability to extend plays is special.

Also just saw a guy who, he's really competitive. And we had some knock-down, drag-out games in Arizona, in Seattle. Seemed like we traded off over the years winning at their place and they'd come and beat us at home or give us a tough game. But he's been a part of that for a couple of years and shows a lot of toughness.

**Q. In the final weeks of the season, how do you approach it, an evaluation period for Bryce going forward?**

DAVE CANALES: Bryce, and everybody, we're still in pursuit of just capturing our style of football. Great effort,

great enthusiasm, with our guys celebrating each other. I've seen that grow. I've been really pleased with that. Great toughness, finishing plays with our style, finishing blocks, finishing tackles, those types of things, the physical style of play we're looking for. Playing smart in situational football.

We've had some great opportunities to do that throughout and ultimately finish, and that's the part that I wish that we can continue to press to capture the right finish, finishing in a four-minute or finishing in a two-minute to end the game with opportunities as we've put ourselves in position to play against teams late into games.

Really hoping for that style to come alive and for Bryce to just take the next step, to execute the game plan, to just do his one part and be special when it's called upon. It's only a couple times a game and the rest of the time just do your part.

**Q. Last night David Tepper said that the trio of you, Brent and Dan, are extremely a good management team. I'm curious, what type of support have you been getting from up top at least as the season has gone along, especially since the bye?**

DAVE CANALES: It's just been the communication process for Dan, Brent and I getting our brains together, taking all the information we have about what's happening in a football world, the personnel world, all those things that go into it, all the operations, and just having that open-ended conversation and making sure we're giving Mr. Tepper great information about what's going on and giving him a pulse of where we're at and what the next steps are.

**Q. Certainly not the last game of the season, but it is the last home game of the season approaching. What's important for you and the team to show?**

DAVE CANALES: Going right back to that play style. I want to be able to play Panthers football one more time here at the house. For me, it's my high hope for this season has been to build to a brand of football that we're proud of.

First and foremost, for those players in that locker room and the coaches who are working every day, all the staff that pours into it, and then to show our fans, this is the stuff we've been working on and to bring it out to the field so we can continue to grow this culture and really the brand of football that we're looking for.

**Q. Do you believe there's motivation in playing spoiler, or are you more just focusing on what you guys are doing?**



DAVE CANALES: Honestly, it's about us. And I always want it to be that way. And I truly mean this, that every game is a championship opportunity. You're playing at home or you're playing on the road, and it's another opportunity to see if we can be right, doing our things, taking care of the ball, executing at a high level, playing with our style of football. And that's always going to be our focus regardless what time of year it is. Every game is an opportunity for the coaching staff to work on our process, the players to go about their normal routines.

Nothing should change based upon who is the opponent is. We take our same process of taking care of our body, making sure our work is right. Taking the practice to the film room, making sure we're communicating and never leaving a day left where we're not clear about what happened that day and we're pushing forward. So that's my high hope, is that we can continue to have that focus and finish the right way.

**Q. With Bryce's fumbles, is there anything you can do somebody that's worked with quarterbacks for a long time to coach him through that?**

DAVE CANALES: Just reinforcement: Every play is important. Particularly, as you start to extend plays and defenders are looking for those opportunities, to know when those things happen, when you go to the ground, it's a vulnerable spot. Gotta cover it up with two hands going down. When you're in the pocket, keeping two hands on it.

It's all across the board. We talk about the ball, first and foremost, as a team, yes, we talk to each ball carrier, whoever that is, if you have the ball, you're holding it for the whole team, trying to create emphasis that way.

Also it starts up front, whether it's offense or defense, the protection is critical. In the run game, making sure we're covering that first level so that there's no free hitters on a back from an awkward angle. So it's everybody involved taking care of the ball, particularly the people that end up with it.

**Q. The Cardinals claimed Jammie Robinson this week. Is that something where you're going to have to change defensive signals with him being so fresh there?**

DAVE CANALES: We're not going to change what we do. The communication happens so fast. But it's an advantage for them. They've got a player that's been with us, who was into what we were doing, worked hard, poured his heart and soul into it. That's something we're aware of.

But again we have to make sure that we operate quickly to minimize maybe the opportunity to see some of those things.

**Q. With the amount of attritional linebacker group has faced, how much has Josey Jewell had to step up? I know he was out with injuries for a while, but in the last couple of weeks and probably the next three weeks, how much of an important role is he playing here within this defense and keeping everything together?**

DAVE CANALES: Josey has been great this year, whether he's been on the field or off the field, he's been just a stud. He's so consistent. There's not a lot of BS with Josey. He's a pretty straightforward guy. He comes about his work. He's very serious about it, plays with passion on game day.

So that leadership and that style has been great for guys like Trevin coming into the NFL and seeing what does it look like to prepare to the NFL standard of linebacker, particularly here in our system. So he's been amazing that way.

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