

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Monday, December 30, 2024

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Just looking at the film, you know, and evaluating from all phases, was just the sobering deal of we got out-coached and out-played down there and weren't able to come up with some opportunities offensively to extend some drives and couldn't get off the field.

I think the blocked punt really just kind of added a little bit extra to that frustration of just lack of ability to play our brand of football.

So we just attacked it like we always do, looking together film, talking through everything, and then just getting our mindset focused this week playing against Atlanta.

**Q. After reviewing the tape and everything, are you planning on making any changes to the defense this last week?**

DAVE CANALES: Just focusing on the Falcons, trying to shore up, attack their run game. We know that they're going to do that, going to try to run the ball, we'll take that first and foremost.

And then offensively just try to get right back on track playing a little bit more balanced football. That starts with third down, so a lot of emphasis and attention there.

**Q. Just to follow up, in your film review with Evero, what was the conversation like on what went wrong in this game?**

DAVE CANALES: Just looking for guys to play good football, fit their gaps, team tackling. You know, we missed some opportunities there. Just find different ways we can attack the offense and try to shore that part up.

**Q. Dave, are you going to start Bryce this week?**

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. You know, our mentality as a team is to finish strong. We have one more opportunity to get back to our football, to play balanced football, complementary football. The pursuit of that continues this week against the Falcons.

**Q. Your other starters as well then?**

DAVE CANALES: Yep. The focus is for all of us -- guys that are available, we're playing. This game, these opportunities are so important as we learn about who we are as a team as we're continuing to progress and develop our systems and concepts.

So just taking this as another opportunity to finish.

**Q. And will Chuba need any sort of surgery for that calf strain?**

DAVE CANALES: He will not.

**Q. As you've watched Bryce over the last month or so, what kind of habits has he developed against pressure? Saw a lot of it yesterday. What were you hammering on and what was he harping on during that time that he wasn't playing to help him with that?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we just focused on each game plan and take the tools and the different adjustments and try to apply them to what we're doing in the game.

And so that's just a weekly progress, weekly connection between the offensive line, quarterback, running backs to all be on the same page with the protection, and then just try to attack the voids that the defense gives us.

**Q. Staying on Bryce, he was also throwing the ball downfield a lot against the Bucs. What was that a product of?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, looking at the course of the game, looking at some of opportunities that we had, of course starting off in that first drive, you know, having some success down the field, and then I was calling a little bit more of aggressive style of plays for Bryce.

I think Bryce could feel that, and so he was looking for those opportunities. There were a few shots down there, some near misses I wish we could have back, and we just got to find a way to make those plays.



I love the aggressive takes, those shots of it. Then the flipside is you're going to live with some second and longs, third downs that get you in a little bit longer distance when you don't hit those.

I was just looking at those opportunities to try to attack these guys with some of the matchups we had.

**Q. And then just generally speaking, the defense is what it is. Top two running back starting the year are done for the season. Is the rest of the season -- I think I know how you're going to respond to this -- but is the rest of the season, or the final game about seeing Bryce Young play well and finish the season well?**

DAVE CANALES: It's about the Panthers. It's about finishing. It's about finding our style of play. That's the challenge that we have right in front of us, is can we refocus one more time. Can we have another great Wednesday, another great Thursday and Friday, and stack it all together, because that's what we do to have that kind of mentality where we're going to finish what we started, and that's the hope for this week.

**Q. I think Bryce was under pressure 63% of the time of the dropbacks yesterday. How do you feel like he handled that? What does that show you in his progression?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, he was a stud about it and just kept battling. They did a great job whether they were blitzing us or just rushing four with their stunts and some of those things. I felt like, again, kind of the style of the game and the score of it when we give teams more opportunities, they will start to game up different. They will start to attack you in different ways.

We kind of brought that on ourselves based on just the mode of the game. Bryce just stood in there and kept operating, which I was proud of, again, to be able to just keep hunting and trying to find opportunities down the field.

**Q. Question about the defense. Are you convinced that long-term the three-four is the way to go in this league with the way players, you need specialized players to build a solid defense?**

DAVE CANALES: That's our scheme. I love this scheme. I know what it looks like when it's done well. That's my hope, is to continue to just build on that and continue to just improve on the concepts, look at the things we did. We have one more week this week to get more film and opportunities to evaluate the things we're doing, and just keep taking those steps in the direction.

We're asking our players for fundamental execution, and so this scheme calls for that. That's offensively and defensively and special teams, the whole thing.

So we're all in the same evaluation process.

**Q. What do you think is missing for this year that you're going to have to fix next year?**

DAVE CANALES: We'll get to that after the season. Right now we are focusing on the Falcons and the guys here that are going to bust their butt this week. To honor that, they call for all of our attention and focus to be on playing the Falcons, who's a really good team.

And they have a lot of talent and skill. They're doing some cool things schematically as well, so that's going to require all our attention right now.

**Q. Dave, the gentlemen in front of me just addressed my question somewhat with Bryce Young. When it's a situation like you're so far behind and the other team is attacking you so much, what do you look at or try to do to be able to open things up for him and keep him from getting crushed all the time out there?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just different concepts, looking for the voids in the schemes that the defense is throwing at you and trying to attack those.

So just our nature is to compete. Our nature is to continue to try to find ways to find that drive, to find success. So that was the mentality there.

**Q. Hey, Dave, wanted to ask about two specific plays one at a time from yesterday. First of all, the punt breakdown; what happened there?**

DAVE CANALES: It was a good matchup, a nice rush. They had been covering. They had been protecting on their punts. They had a good matchup. Rhattigan on that side. We kind of had a three-on-three combo right there. 6'7" guy got on an edge and made a great play. Took the ball off Johnny's foot right there.

It's something, again, we're looking to see what we can do to shore up that part of the protection.

**Q. And you mentioned a couple of those deep balls did look like they were fairly close. I can't remember when the play was, but there was one in particular, the punt Xavier had a shot at. Is that the one you're referring to? Can you describe if it's not that on which ball you thought maybe could've come up with?**

DAVE CANALES: I thought there was a couple of them. Any time in this league you have one-on-one opportunities, whether it's the throw or the finish on the ball, I think that those are great opportunities for explosive plays.

You know, we missed Theilen up the sideline on kind of a designed wheel route. Just nearly missed him. Had a couple opportunities to Xavier down the field. Both were after the original design and timing, so this is Bryce extending the play to give him an opportunity based on what was happening with the protection back there.

I thought it was a really good job extending the play. I would love to see us come up with those. Those are off-schedule where Xavier is trying to find a Lane to escape and Bryce is trying to find the right angle to hit him.

Couple of those opportunities could have shifted our drives there in the middle of the game.

**Q. Dave, can you update us on Josey Jewel, Jaycee Horn, and Miles Sanders, please?**

DAVE CANALES: We'll give you guys a bunch more of that information as we go into Wednesday. All those guys are progressing. It's day-to-day. Miles has been cleared. Last week he was cleared to be able to play, so really looking forward to getting him back on the field for practice this week.

**Q. Was he then what you would consider a healthy scratch or was it just part of the process?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, he was cleared later in the week so really wasn't enough time to get him back into the flow of things for this week. Really look forward to opening that window and getting him back out there.

**Q. Along the same lines, any thought to shutting some of those guys down, much like you Chuba?**

DAVE CANALES: Not at all. Chuba's deal was a two- to four-week injury. We had to look at that. We don't have two to four weeks left. The guys that are day to day, we are going to look at them. We're all playing and all competing, giving us a chance to just finish one more time and finish what we start.

**Q. When you look at the last couple months and you see close games, overtime wins, 30-plus differentials like yesterday, some of that I'm sure is just the nature of the NFL. How much of that also do you account to it being a team figuring out who they're going to be and what it takes to get there?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, absolutely. I think that the teams that can find their identity and be consistent late into seasons are the ones that give them a chance to be successful.

We know how long the seasons are, so the goal is to try to progress weekly and try to keep your focus week to week without making these broad stroke judgments. Can we attack our game plan for this week? Can we have a great day of practice today?

That mentality I've seen have success for coming to life on Sunday. That's our best shot to do that, so that's when we hope for. A lot of those teams going into these games, some of these guys playing for the division, playing for a wildcard and those things, it's like all the motivation that comes from it is really important, but what it comes down to it's the basics of football. It's blocking, tackling, throwing and catching, and making your plays that come to you.

**Q. Not sure how much you guys have gotten into film yet. Curious, when you prepare for a rookie quarterback in Michael Penix, who only has two games of tape, what challenges does that present? How do you guys go about trying to attack and hopefully exploit some rookie mistakes out of the young guy?**

DAVE CANALES: Their schemes look the same. This is a really well coached team. Zach Robinson has been doing a great job balancing their run game with some of their pass attacks. The screen game, they can get involved with with Bijan and Tyler Allgeier, and a really solid skill group with Pitts, with Drake, and also their offensive line is a solid group.

Defensively watching some of their rush schemes come alive with Ellis being used in different roles on the edge, inside, really making a role for himself rushing the passer, so I can see their football continuing to progress.

From a whole team standpoint, not just talking about Mike Penix, who I think has done a really good job finding completions and all that, their scheme looks very similar and it's something we have to respect.

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