

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



**Q. Talking about these divisional games on the road what have you seen from the team in terms of their approach this week?**

DAVE CANALES: Just back to work. This is our work Wednesday, and so the discipline is the focus, can we capture it. Can we pour into the game plan in our meetings, talk things through, be really focused in the walk through and that's certainly what it felt like out there. These guys know what kinds of opportunities these are every game, so valuable. So we go into this one with the utmost respect for the Falcons and each other as we come to a close on our season.

**Q. Some of us wondered whether we would see smiles again this year with, Jonathan stepping up at that point, what kind of opportunities are there for Myles in Week 18?**

DAVE CANALES: For us it's about going out there and being competitive and playing our best brand of football and Myles gives us a chance to do that.

For me, it's like, even just him being out there in the huddle, talking to the guys and the guys kind of responding with smiles to see him out there again with us doing this, really cool for the guys to be able to do this together.

**Q. When you have Chuba out there, he's obviously the feature guy. How do you balance the split between all these guys and trying to establish the run game with three guys basically?**

DAVE CANALES: We'll figure it out on game day. But it will be some mix of the group of guys, and they are all hungry for opportunities. So it would be really cool.

**Q. Jackson made the comment that he's never faced a left-handed quarterback. From your experience, how much of a difference does that make? Is it just training your eyes when it comes out of their hands?**

DAVE CANALES: -- at University of Texas, special teams,

he was a lefty, my last year playing receiver at Azusa Pacific, and your ball hits your other hand. So like imagine the spine of the ball, I can't remember which one, if you're a righty it smacks your left hand, the spin goes, balm, you stop it that way. With the lefty, sawed, it's like, I didn't expect that. The ball puts force on your other hand.

So I guess for Mike it would be awesome if we get an opportunity to catch one of those balls, and he'll feel the difference there. Otherwise, I think maybe with some primary reads, kind of being out to the left side, we kind of throw it, you know, just based on field position and hash with right-handed quarterbacks, so I think they probably take the same approach that way.

Yeah, be interesting.

**Q. With that said, for a while, it was like the left tackle is the premium position, and seems like the right tackle and left tackle are becoming synonymous with the same value now. Does that change anything with the way you play into the right tackle?**

DAVE CANALES: I'm not sure about that really. Honestly I know that is technically his blind side, but I think for us, calls are formationally-based or field boundary-based, those types of things. I guess that's the way you've got to approach it. But that's something. You know, if you have a quarterback you're invested in long-term as a lefty does that right side become more of a fleet of foot pass protector, whatever that is.

Does that answer your question?

**Q. You were asked about Mike Jackson. Is he a guy you all want to have --**

DAVE CANALES: We'll look at all the guys and evaluate that. He's done a fantastic job. I think JC and Mike are like the No. 1 tandem in terms of pass break ups per attempts and so on. He certainly has come up big for us in a few games.

Think about the Saints game, think about the fourth down play he makes to end the game. I think about the



Cardinals, two knock downs with Marvin Harrison junior on the right side and rolodexing some of the different ways he's showed up. A sweet TFL in the game last weekend where they had a toss crack for minus three and just the style of him, the consistency of Mike, I've known him for a long time. He's exactly the type of people that we want to be here with the culture, the attitude and the professionalism.

**Q. The other day you mentioned anybody who could play was going to play. Have you heard from any of those guys that didn't play last week that they were really push to go try to get back out there, that kind of thing?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we are just taking them day-to-day and kind of following their progress and making sure we do the right thing for the player first and foremost and all of their guys, their message is they want to play. They want to be able to finish well. They want to be able to finish together. It means something to them, and that's really special to me because all of these games are so important.

**Q. As a big culture guy, are you big on maybe rewarding hard work behind the scenes in that final game, not necessarily the cost of winning but like if somebody was a backup, giving them more snaps or somebody on the practice squad being elevated for all the work they did?**

DAVE CANALES: It would be great to give guys opportunity to play for sure. But obviously we are going to offer that to the guys who have been playing for us and let them finish on their own terms, and then we'll kind of take it as it goes. That would be great if you could. But that's not really my thought process going into the game.

**Q. You mentioned every team is different, what's your biggest takeaway from this team, especially your first year as a head coach?**

DAVE CANALES: The fight. I've just loved every minute of this team, regardless of the outcome of the games, the fight in this team to just continue to play for pride, for each other. It means something to them. To see them grow, and to see this locker room grow.

And I kind of alluded to this a few weeks ago, but guys coming in just a little bit earlier and hanging out a little bit longer and watching that happen over the course of the season to where it's like, you still hear a buzz when they are playing games or talking to each other. Herring the stories of guys going to have dinner together and all that.

So just learning about how they have really leaned on each other, and a pride that comes with also feeling like, all right, we can go into these games, and we can win, and coming so close in a couple of those games right in the middle, but to see the belief of the guys and the resilience in a really challenging situation and the resilience to come back every Monday to go to the film, study it, to come back every Wednesday and recapture our work ethic. A lot of character, a lot of high praise from this group for me.

**Q. Given some of the challenges this season, it doesn't have to be that way -- why do you think that this group has responded, even with this culture, given some of the adversity?**

DAVE CANALES: Hopefully it feels like it's their team. For me and the staff, we want to set the foundation. We give them the information and then we say, okay, now you guys who do it. Do it together, and break that huddle together. Finish plays together, and that's what I've seen happen. I've seen guys, you know, be able to do that regardless of what the play might have been.

So hopefully it's an ownership thing. Hopefully it's the coaching staff saying, guys, we're going to ask you to do things. We're going to ask you to execute these fundamentals and all those things, but ultimately this is your team. Ultimately this goes how we want it to go.

Just in general, like every day, every week there's growth opportunities. Every game is so important. Even in the Bucs game, as the score is getting away, these are great opportunities. We rally ourselves down the field, and he's certainly shown that. And we'll evaluate all the stuff and go through it with every little detail, you know, but that's going to be a part of our off-season self-scout process.

**Q. I'm not sure if you were asked this yet but what was the thinking in bringing Palmer up?**

DAVE CANALES: We had an opportunity. We had a roster spot, and for Jack, you know, he's been working so hard. I thought, shoot, let's get him up, like a lot of teams have three quarterbacks, and we've chosen not to have people available in other positions. But the opportunity presented itself. I was like, shoot, let's get him up there. You never know. We have three quarterbacks, and so yeah, that was pretty much it.

**Q. Looking at the game --**

DAVE CANALES: We'll think about that as we go.

**Q. How much more prepared are you going into this off-season?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, in so many ways, really, for the last two years, you know, moving to Tampa and then moving to Charlotte. So I feel a sense of relief to be in one city, really, for my wife, for my kids to kind of get into the normal rhythm of like the balance of prepping for free agency, the balance of looking at the season in self-scout, with picking kids up from practice or dropping them off at this place or that, and just really reconnecting with that part of it, it's kind of really been two years.

And then really if you count -- I went 26 days that spring to go to all the pro days for the quarterbacks, we had Geno and Drew Lock. But we've got to look at all these quarterbacks and so really the last, you know, three off-seasons have been kind of turbulent for me and my family. So I'm looking forward to that part.

Then from a football standpoint, having a staff in place, being able to look at free agency, knowing our roster, like seeing these guys every day at practice, seeing them in games, kind of look the at our roster and challenging it again against like, who is out there and all those things, like I think we'll just -- Dan and I will have a better place to kind of start with the infrastructure and system.

I do feel a lot better -- not just going to the Senior Bowl not just to hang out with Dan to get to know him again after not having that time for a year, and just knowing what's out there and being able to talk about the year.

**Q. How much do you look at the game to understand moments that maybe you're focused on the next play, how has he been an influence on your end game operation?**

DAVE CANALES: George has been phenomenal, and I think especially for the first year being a head coach and calling plays, which we've talked about in camp, what's that going to be like, I don't know.

But he really did allow me to just like focus on the calls, and kind of have a thought for like, all right, the clock is ticking here. We've got to make -- and then George is like, we'll give me before the drive, hey, I think the best strategy is if we do this. This is an opportunity to go for it on fourth or just time out usage and all those things, just having that clear, calm voice that George has, and he loves it. And he's like, you know, so it's been really cool to like talk through, should we challenge this one, all that stuff.

It's been awesome to have George. I don't have to collect all the information on my own when I have somebody's organized it for me.