

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Dan Morgan

Weekday Press Conference



DAN MORGAN: Obviously we're excited about the guys that we acquired in free agency. We were able to retain some of our own and then we extended Jaycee, so we were happy to get all those deals done.

Really excited about getting the new players in here in the building, you know, in our locker room, around our players just for them to establish chemistry together, and, you know, get going.

So we're really excited about these new guys. You know, I think what we did in free agency, it's really going to allow us to have some flexibility in the draft, of what we do in the draft.

I think obviously we're going to be aggressive to get some playmakers, whether on the offense or the defensive side of the ball, like I said before.

So we're just really excited about the direction that we're headed as a team, as an organization. I feel like things are really trending in a good direction, and I'm really excited.

So with that, I'll open it up to any questions.

Q. When you guys look at free agency as a whole, I know you said you're excited about the guys who are in here; any particular position or particular aspect of the plan that didn't kind of come full circle for you guys, and is that an opportunity now in the draft to go and attack?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, I think we pretty much hit on all our targets. Obviously the Milton Williams thing, that fell through. We are really excited about Turk and what he brings. Yeah, we're excited about those guys that we signed.

I do think it's going to allow us to be flexible in the draft, but like I said before, we were going to build our defensive front; I think we did that. You know, we signed three guys there.

So at each level I think defensive line, linebacker, on the back end with Tre'von, I think we addressed some needs that we have. We're far from done. There is a lot of work to do.

We're excited about the draft. We have nine picks and we're going to go attack it.

Q. With that safety group you basically got a clean slate.

DAN MORGAN: Yeah.

Q. Obviously a lot of holes there, having the guys come visit. How aggressive do you plan on being at safety moving forward? Do you kind of have to weigh having limited experience there if you do go all in on the draft?

DAN MORGAN: Obviously you guys saw that we brought in a few veterans; few guys on the street that we like that we think can help us. See what happens there.

But the draft, I think there is a good crop of safeties there, too. We know that that's a position that we need to address. The numbers aren't where they need to be there, but we'll get there. We just got to stay patient, stay with the plan, and let it happen.

Q. So you mentioned that this free agency period allowed you to be a bit more flexibility going into the draft. It's no secret this is a very defensive free agency. Am I right in saying that those words indicate that maybe you're going to use a high pick on a wide receiver? I don't mean to put you on the spot like that, but just how much has your free agency plan affected what you need at wide receiver?

DAN MORGAN: You know, I don't think it has affected it that much. Like I said to you guys before, we're going to take the best players, however that ends up on the board. When it comes to pick 8, if pick 8 is an offensive guy or a defensive guy, we're just going to draft the best player we feel is going to help our team, help our organization moving forward.



You know, we're really not going to box ourself in with any position or any need. I think that's when you get yourself in trouble, is when you do those type of things.

Q. And then you mentioned really building up that defensive front. One guy that has kept cropping up, at least as we've talked about is Bobby Brown III. What made him such a compelling free agent?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, first of all, I think you look at his age. He is still so young. I think he's 25 years old. 25 years old, he has a lot of versatility. You know, from a position standpoint he can play the nose all the way out to the four technique, five technique.

So I think he's really valuable in terms of securing our interior run defense and making us stronger on the inside. That's why we brought him in. I do think he has some pass rush upside as well. That's a little bit on tap.

So looking forward to getting him here and him developing and showing us what he's got.

Q. Dan, you mentioned the Milton Williams thing. What's that process like when you guys are going through free agent meetings of, okay, we like this guy at this level, and if it gets to this point, then you do some other thing? What are those meetings like and what goes into that process?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, you know, I think when myself, Brandt, Coach Canales get together, we're obviously talking about who we think can help our team, and then money always comes into play.

We're going to put a number on it. I just think it comes down to us three communicating, just being detailed with the plan, being disciplined with the plan, setting a number we're comfortable at, and then, hey, if it gets to that number we can choose to go over or choose to stay.

But I do think we come in with a plan and then I think we stay disciplined with that plan, and I think that's key -- going to be key to our success moving forward, just having that discipline.

Q. Good morning, Dan. I know Alex touched on it as far as your free agency plans at the wide receiver position. As you saw some of those bigger name, high profile receivers sign elsewhere, how deep into negotiations were you with those guys, and is there a name still out there that you guys could be targeting for that position?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, you know, I think with every position, not specific to wide out, we're going to look for the best players. If we feel like a player is out there that can help us, then we're going to look into it.

Sometimes it works out; sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes a guy is a fit; sometimes he's not.

So we're going to explore every avenue to get better at ever position not just the receiver position. That's just how we're going to be moving forward.

Q. Back on safety, do you feel like based on where the numbers are that you're going to have to end up addressing that again in later free agency and the draft?

DAN MORGAN: You know, again, I don't really want to say our plans out here loud, but I think that's obviously a position that we need to address, along with a lot of other positions.

So we know there is a lot of work ahead and we have a plan. Just not going to relay that plan right now.

Q. With Moehrig, obviously had a very successful year playing closer to the line of scrimmage. Is that your vision for him? If so, would that put you in the market for kind of a back end ball hawk?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, you know, obviously it was our plan collaborating with the coaching staff, Coach Canales, EJ, just us talking through things and what we need. We felt like Tre'von was going to be a really good fit. He can play deep and, but he is also really good moving them up into the nickel position. You can do a lot of things with him from a run defense standpoint, blitzing standpoint.

So, yeah, he brings a lot of versatility that we really liked about him.

So, yeah, in terms of ball hawk on the backside, yeah, you know, we're going to look for somebody. Going to look for players that take the ball away. Who that is, I don't know. But we're actively pursuing and we'll be aggressive when the time comes.

Q. And then last thing from me: Could you address what those defensive tackle signings do for a guy like Derrick Brown, and A'Shawn for that matter in the bigger pick?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, I think it's good. Obviously the more depth that you have on the defensive side of the ball, on the defensive line, you know, you can have a healthy

rotation inside there. It's going to keep guys fresh. Going to keep guys healthy.

And that's our goal, is to get a front that is able to be a bunch of great players up there that will be able to rotate, keep each other fresh, and play hard, play balls to the wall every single play.

Q. When we talked to you and we talked to Dave, Dave indicated that he wanted guys obviously at the bottom of the roster to be able to play special teams, as everybody does. When you look at your returner units and kicker and everything, on day three how important is it to address those positions in general?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, you talking about the special teams?

Q. Yeah. Kicker and returner and...

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, you know, I think day three, returner, kickers, yeah, that's usually where you're going to get guys like that. But that's also where we have to look at is it a safety? If it's a safety, that's going to be our third, fourth safety. You know, can he play special teams? So that's going to be big for all those back end guys.

If they want to make our roster, they're going to have to play special teams. But it's up to us to identify those guys.

Q. And then you also said you guys really were looking forward to a center competition. Resigned Corbett; Brady is back; got a contender on Cade. Everybody else is kind of spoken for. How do you feel about the competition at that position moving forward?

DAN MORGAN: I think it's good. I think it's healthy to have competition on your team, not just at the center position, but I think we want to have competition at multiple positions.

I think that's what we're trying to get to, is to where our roster is deep and guys are competing, and may the best man win.

Q. Obviously last year in free agency when you look at the offense, particularly the line, you were going for size. Looking at these defensive guys this year, was there a common thread. Was it size? Was it speed? Was it just willingness to throw themselves into a pile? What was the common thread?

DAN MORGAN: I think ideally you want those big, long, strong, physical guys. Doesn't always turn out that way. Maybe they don't have the height. Hey, they're strong,

they're physical. You know, they have other redeeming qualities that can outweigh a lack of something.

So, yeah, we're just looking for guys that compete, guys that are tough, and guys that play 100% every single play.

Q. Brandt said some organizations don't give sort of as significant of a voice to his roll in some of those free agency discussions. Curious, how important is he? I'm thinking specifically of the Milton Williams situation where you really like a guy and he's saying, this is going to be the impact two, three, four years down the road on the salary cap to maybe keep you guys a little bit more disciplined?

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, he's staring at me right now so I got to be careful what I say. Brandt is obviously is super valuable. To have him work next to me on a daily basis side by side with myself and Coach Canales, it's extremely valuable to have somebody like him to just kind of give you the pros and cons of every decision that you make from a financial standpoint.

You know, it's huge. So to have him, we're super lucky and it's a group effort.

Q. Obviously running back position, a lot of changes there. Take me through some insight on the decision to (indiscernible) Miles Sanders, and also the excitement of bringing in a guy like Rico Dowdle coming off the (indiscernible) Chuba Hubbard.

DAN MORGAN: Yeah, obviously we're really excited for Miles and his new opportunity. Also brought us Rico Dowdle, who we're super excited about as well. I think he's going to bring a physical run style similar to Chuba.

That's kind of the DNA we want on that side of the ball. We're excited about both those guys. Kind of a one-two punch. Both can catch the ball out of the backfield, both can both pass protect, and both obviously really good runners that we're excited about.

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