

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Dave Canales

Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Another great day. I think just coming off the practice field, another physical practice. When we put these guys in pads, it's almost like, should we not be going in pads right now? The guys are ready. They're itching. They're excited, but we got some great work today.

We got a move-the-ball period at the end, a couple of different situations just to kind of fine-tune some stuff and get ready as we turn around and get ready for game week.

Q. It looked like Damien was out of a red jersey. How much did he participate today?

DAVE CANALES: So we had him just full go in individual so he could body up and really, you know, stress himself, see where he's at, but he was still on that pitch count where he didn't take team reps as the practice went on.

But he's right on schedule with the progression that we thought. You know, Denny has had a great plan for D-Lew to get back to this point to start hitting stuff in front of him. So he got some really good contact. He's getting great work, and we expect him to be able to practice next week.

Q. How do you manage that energy, though, because you're still a week-plus out? You don't want to burn them out, right? How do you sort of balance that?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, you know, we can't hold back any day we go out there, because every opportunity -- the best way to make mistakes and to find out things is full speed, and then we correct from there. So we just ask the guys to go there.

Every single time we're on the grass and as a staff if we feel like we need to take care of them, then we'll take care of them. We'll take pads off. We'll shorten our periods. We want to get the same amount of work, but there's a way you can dose that to be smart with it, but we just don't want them having to second-guess what tempo we practice and we play with so that we get the full muscle memory that we need.

Q. Tell us what you are seeing at left tackle without Ickey right now.

DAVE CANALES: Pretty good. Yosh was in there today. Brady had some snaps. They're working. They have the mindset and mentality that we're going to make a decision on who that is by Wednesday as we go into practice, in fairness for the guy to get those reps.

We're not 100% sure who we're going to put out there right now, but they both got really significant snaps today. So we'll look at the film, and we'll make the best decision for the whole group as we got to Wednesday.

Q. Is part of that weighing that if you have Brady at left tackle, you don't have him as the utility lineman maybe on game day, and you kind of have to figure out multiple spots?

DAVE CANALES: That's a factor, right? That's a factor because Yosh gives you the flexibility. He can play either side. So can Brady, but at the same time, it's like we really just have to put our best foot out there for what we feel is best.

Q. Is JT definitely out?

DAVE CANALES: No, he's not. We're super hopeful. I'm going to remain hopeful all the way through next week to try to get him out there, move him around, see what he can do, but we just have to have a contingency plan because he cannot practice today. I would not imagine him practicing on Monday either. So we're going to have to try to get him out there as the week goes on.

Q. You guys are off until Monday?

DAVE CANALES: Yes.

Q. The new wide receiver came in today.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

Q. What did you see from him in his first practice?



DAVE CANALES: He was a guy we watched coming out of A&M. First and foremost, just thought he did a really good job of fielding punts, fielding kicks. That's something he's done in his whole career.

You know, in the little bit we had him, we didn't have him in too many of the team settings, just in fairness. He just got here, so knowing the plays and all that.

But in individual drills he looked quick. He's got some power. For being a shorter guy, he's pretty well-built. He's done some running back in his past. Really an intriguing prospect, being able to offer multiple things.

Q. You only had Hendon out there one day today. What jumped out, just seeing him in person?

DAVE CANALES: Smooth thrower. A lot of power in his arm. I can tell he's worked on his footwork and his base and fundamentals since college. He looks like he's really dialed into the technique and all that.

But, again, same thing. Was more just an individual period, but I loved what I saw today where.

Q. He was an older rookie throughout the process. How much do you think sometimes -- I know we look at age and you want to get those guys younger, but in a quarterback position, how much does that kind of maybe help them in a way?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I mean, I think for any position. It's kind of life perspective really. Where you get a guy that's 25-ish years old -- he's 27 -- you know, you've seen a lot of life. You've learned lessons. You've been on your own. Kind of keeping your world small so you can keep it organized. So I've seen that happen in multiple different positions.

Quarterback too, yeah, that's important. There's time on task and years that can benefit guys that way. Yeah, he's a grown man.

I had a chance to visit with him today and just kind of recap and revisit. The last time we sat together was in the interview process after the draft -- I mean, after his college season where he was still rehabbing, but you know, it's the same guy, same depth of character. I really just happen to like him a lot, and plus, all the talent. I'm really excited for him to be here.

Q. How do you kind of view the tight end position? I think you have four of them on the roster. I know you use two at times, but do you have a clear-cut starter

there? How do you kind of see everybody's role shaking out?

DAVE CANALES: They all kind of do different things. I think, again, here we are, who can help on special teams? That's going to make the determining factor on who is the third tight end up? JT will certainly be out there, and then we got to see how we're going to use the rest of the guys with Mitch Evans, with James Mitchell, with Tommy Tremble.

We still have some days to kind of figure that out, but it is right around the corner where we do have to solidify, like when we're going into Wednesday's practice. So those decisions got to be made by Tuesday night.

I'm really happy with that group. They're a versatile group. They're tough, and I think JT has really improved himself in terms of just being a pass threat for us this offseason and this camp. I'm really excited about that group, and it's going to be another good decision for us to make.

Q. Do you have any more clarity on safety and where that starting spot opposite Moehrig is?

DAVE CANALES: We will see next week. We are practicing in different modes right now, but I just love having three guys that have been trained that have been here with us, and they've all flashed in different ways. That's Demani. That's Nick. That's Lathan.

All three guys, again, they all bring a little different flavor. Lathan is the downhill smack you type of player. Nick is the elder statesman of the group. When he talks, everyone gets organized. That's such a valuable thing. Then Demani, he has such great range, and he's so useful in a bunch of different ways. It's a good group.

Q. Have you had any interesting or telling interactions with Derrick Brown this summer?

DAVE CANALES: I just think the whole -- just his whole approach to this season, he wants to win. He wants to win bad. He wants to win right now, and I can feel his presence on the defensive side.

This is how we're going to practice, and this is how we're going to play. It's infectious to have him out there, because he just works so hard. He chases everything down. He doesn't take any play off. He gets through.

If he has a good pass rush, he redirects and chases the ball down the field. If he has a good run play, he fits up. He kind of just redirects and follows the running back. He's getting himself in game shape. He's showing everybody



what it looks like to extend the play through the echo of the whistle.

You and I both know, plays don't always just stop at the point of contact. Sometimes special running backs will break a tackle, a receiver may make somebody miss. We have to have everybody in pursuit, and he brings that tenacity and that work ethic to our group.

Q. Last year you guys told JT that he had to earn getting that No. 0. You know, for some guys roster numbers or jersey numbers are important to them. Do you have any cool stories maybe about you personally and wearing a jersey number in high school or college or dealing with a player? I know that's kind of out of left field, but any interesting jersey number stories?

DAVE CANALES: I guess the fact that I wore 81 for four out of my five years in college, and my favorite number was 17, and the punter was No. 17. He was our starting punter the whole time. We were the same class.

We were having lunch in our last training camp. It's our fifth year. I took a redshirt year. It was our fifth year. We were having lunch just hanging out. I just kind of commented, you know, like, Man, I wanted that number. He was, like, You're wearing my high school number. So we were kind of shocked that we hadn't had this conversation before. We're wearing each other's jersey number.

So in a way Kevin Quan, I'm one of his biggest fans, and he's one of mine. Hopefully he gets to see this at some point. Anyway, that's my funny story for that.

Q. Did you end up switching?

DAVE CANALES: We swapped for the season, yeah. Anyway, that's all I can really think of.

Otherwise, you know, guys kind of -- I think sometimes what happens with guys, you know, as they make these shifts in their career -- I notice with hair. Sometimes a guy will come back with a different hairstyle. It's like, something is going on here.

If a guy wants a different jersey number, might just be trying to turn another leaf. For JT it was just him working really hard, doing what we asked. It was a cool way to reward him last year.

Q. Why 17?

DAVE CANALES: It's a family number. Jeffrey Waters was my favorite player, Carson High School safety, so I

chose 17. A lot of my kids wear 17. It's kind of a family number. Lizzy did too in soccer when she was younger, so...

Q. You were doing that 2023 draft, and both Hendon and Bryce were in that draft. Did you happen to watch that Alabama-Tennessee game between them or remember anything that stood out about that tape?

DAVE CANALES: Of course, I did. Are you going to bring this up? I'm sure Hendon has already brought it up in the locker room, or he may not have out of respect. That's a touchy, touchy subject that I'm going to steer clear from right now, so...

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