

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Really just a humbling game, just to kind of look at where we're at right now. Had a chance to talk to the team and said, look, let's take a picture of this. Let's look right at it and look at the different areas that we need to improve. The things that we're looking at are fundamental things that we work on, that we're counting on, and I think the more that we can make the progress tangible for them, something that they can see and say, okay, well, if we work on this, we practice this, this will lead to success, this will lead to improvement in what we're doing. That's the way we try to do it on Mondays.

So we looked at the clips. We looked at the turnovers. We looked at the missed tackles, the fundamental parts of it. Looked at the processes at the line against some pretty challenging looks, some pretty challenging pressure looks that we can certainly sort out, that we have done in the past, and to make sure that we're all on the same page.

We just watched it together as a team, started with special teams clips and went to offense, went to defense and said, let's look at this and let's take a step forward, and we know what we're working on going into this week.

Q. You mentioned the looks with the snap and the pre-snap. You had two drives that were around five minutes each with very limited 1st downs earned. How do you guys kind of -- I don't want to say more urgency, but how do you get the snap off quicker, or is that strategic, that you guys are leaving it down to the last couple of seconds?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, no, it's not. That's something that we want to get better at. We'll be attacking that this week.

Q. You guys, seven straight games, you've given up 200 or more rushing yards. You brought up the tackling. Do you just have to get back to basics, or is this a matter of adjusting the scheme given what's happened as a trend?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, coming off the film, the scheme

was there. We've got to get guys down. We had a couple of TFLs available for us early on in the game. We've got to get the guy to the ground. The big 70-yarder was really, like, a free player. We got a free player, we got two guys outside, two guys in the D gap, and we're trying to spill that so Tre Moehrig could be in position to make that play, and they cut us off and so then all of a sudden he's got a decision to make, do I jump inside or hop back out, and the ball got popped out there, and Nick Scott had a chance to make that tackle, didn't get him down.

These are the things that we have to talk about and address. It's a run fit thing. It's making sure you can trust if I do my job, the next guy will do his.

Q. Back on that pre-snap operation, where is the disconnect? Is it you not getting the play in fast enough or Bryce not getting it out of the huddle?

DAVE CANALES: A little bit of both, and we've just got to keep pushing the whole group to make sure that we're replicating that and that's coming to life in walk through and practice the whole thing.

Q. How much of an impact is it when you're breaking the huddle or they're breaking the huddle late and Bryce not getting to see the flow?

DAVE CANALES: It creates more challenges. We have the information we need to get the hots right, to get the protection right, but it's those critical five or six seconds. It doesn't seem like a lot of time. It's everything for us to be able to play at the line of scrimmage, get to the right looks and execute.

Q. Do you have an update on Terk Wharton?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, Terk has got a hamstring. He's going to miss a little bit of time. I think right now, it looks like it's going to be in that two to four weeks somewhere, that kind of range. We got an MRI on him today, and he was having a fantastic game. He had four tackles early on and was really doing a great job getting off of blocks and making his opportunities.



Q. Does IR sound like that's a possibility or no?

DAVE CANALES: I'm not sure about that right now.

Q. Is Pat Jones okay?

DAVE CANALES: Pat Jones had an ankle. He's going to be okay. We checked him this morning. He's sore, but the hope is to get him back on this week for practice.

Q. From a play calling standpoint, specifically on that 4th and 1, would you do things differently, or do you still like the play call after watching the tape?

DAVE CANALES: We had good match-ups. We had what we wanted. We've just got to execute it. That's kind of what we went back to, and Bryce and I had that conversation, and it was like -- he liked the call. We had guys in good match-ups, and we've just got to execute.

Q. Did he try to throw the ball away, or was it just off the mark, and if so, would you rather him take the shot just in case?

DAVE CANALES: I thought it was kind of a miscommunication, is Xavier going to break to the front pylon or go to the back pylon. I think he was taking a shot to the back pylon on that.

Q. That's supposed to be a rub route; did T-Mac run the right route?

DAVE CANALES: On the 4th and 1? No, it was not.

Q. Describe what you saw on that play. It looked like Legette was open there for a second but also Bryce had pressure. What did you see and what do you think should have happened there?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I just think execution in general. I don't want to get too specific about our plays.

Q. You were able to hit T-Mac a couple times on 3rd downs. What did you think about his first performance out there in the NFL?

DAVE CANALES: I thought he played fast. I thought he looked very comfortable out there one-on-one outside. We moved him around a little bit. He showed an ability to be able to handle that. He and Bryce were on the same page timing-wise, so I was really pleased with the way he played. I'd love for him to come up with the big touchdown in the end zone, shot down the field, but he ran a beautiful route on it, and he really gave us a chance to have some explosives down the field and to just have a consistent

target.

Q. What's the outlook on Ickey now that he's kind of a week further into this process?

DAVE CANALES: He had a great workout today. I think with this thing, what I'm learning is every day is a huge leap in that direction. I expect him to be back this week. I hope he is. But we're going to put him back out there in practice in a limited fashion and make sure he's pushing on people and feels confident to go.

Q. You guys have talked about being a developmental staff. On offense, it seems like a lot of the young guys are getting playing time. On defense, not really. What goes into the decisions on, hey, we want to have success or do we want to develop these guys?

DAVE CANALES: Well, I'm pushing that. I'd love for all of our young guys to play. I really believe that it's so valuable for those guys to be out there. Are they going to be perfect? No. Will every rep that they take be valuable and beneficial for their future? Yes.

I would love for those guys to get opportunities out there so that we can see what we have, and then also just knowing it's a long season and a lot of people are going to play at different times. It'll help us going forward.

Q. What kind of conversation have you had to have with EJ?

DAVE CANALES: Just collectively as a staff, it's just like, hey, guys, let's play these young guys, we're going to need everybody.

Q. Is there a sense of redundancy between Lathan and Trevin just from the standpoint of having them next to each other? We saw you guys run big nickel, but in a two-safety set, is there any redundancy there?

DAVE CANALES: I think that they're both pretty versatile guys, so I don't think it's completely that way. But I think Lathan will get his chances, and as he continues to do the right things and show the type of play style that we've seen from him, I think he'll give us confidence to give him a shot at some point.

But right now, I like the group the way they're at, and we just have to continue to get better at our football.

Q. I know the run defense was a concern last year. How much did not having Morgan in there impact things? Also, what did you see on tape, giving up 200?

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DAVE CANALES: I just saw a couple of explosive runs, to be honest. I thought that we played the run consistently pretty well, but I thought that we gave up big plays. We gave up a 70. We gave up the reverse touchdown. Then we gave up a couple of explosive runs in the four-minute. Those ones hurt because we talk about finishing. We talk about just continuing to play right regardless of what the situation is, and they got a couple of explosive runs there late.

I think you add those three up, that's about 100 yards. You don't want that. That's how these days happen.

But I just felt like if the guys were in the right spot, we were playing stout up front, we were playing with technique, and then there was a lapse and there was a big play. That's the NFL. We have to be consistent about it.

Q. (Indiscernible) obviously has played this defense two times last year but also he's got a background with the Rams and obviously Evero. They really attacked the box in the middle of the field early. Why do you think they were able to find success there?

DAVE CANALES: Great scheme. I give a lot of credit to Liam and to that stuff. Shane Waldron, a guy that I know, that we have history with. John Van Dam, Chad Morton. Keli'i Kekuewa was with us last year as well. It's a really good staff, and I thought they did a great job of preparing those guys to play us and executing.

Q. Sometimes when you look at the tape it might not be as bad as you thought it was or not as good as you thought it was. Where did you land?

DAVE CANALES: I landed disappointed and encouraged, and that's really -- I can sense that from this group as well. I can sense that they know that we have a team that can be good, that can play a really good brand of football. I can sense that from the feeling I got in our team meeting. The look in their eyes, the disappointment afterwards, but also the sense of like, guys, we can do better than this. I think we have a really talented group on the offensive side. I think we have a really talented group on the defensive side. Our special teams unit is covered well with a bunch of young guys out there. They protected well in punt protection and some of those things.

I think the pieces that I saw watching the film directly afterwards, getting up this morning and watching parts of it with the offense, parts with the defense and having our conversations, I just feel good about this team. I don't feel good about the team that we put out there on Sunday in terms of the execution and the fundamentals.

When it's things that I feel like we can coach, when it's things that I feel like we can help them with, I feel very confident that this group will be able to come together and play good football.

Q. What did (indiscernible) say about -- how did he feel about the performance? You said you did not like the team that was out there. What did he say to you afterwards?

DAVE CANALES: We had some great conversations.

Q. Both JC and Nick Scott mentioned yesterday, the danger can be if guys start merging today with what happened last year, so that's what we have to protect against. From your position as the head coach, how do you protect against that?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, you just build. You build and you grow. That's what these weeks are about. It's so valuable.

The game has a way of just telling you the truth, and so we go right to it and say, guys, this is where we're at. This is us; let's own what was out there today, and then let's get back here, let's make corrections, and let's improve daily. Let's continue to push our football forward and own the things that we own and find new mistakes to make, find new lessons to make. Let's move beyond the things that we've grown through and we've become very proficient at in all those things. I think that's the mentality for the group.

Q. Looking back at the two interceptions Bryce threw on Sunday, the one going to XL, did the route look right depth-wise, and then the last one was just off Rico's hands; did that feel like that was -- curious what you saw on both of those plays.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just the safety jumped out of the middle, cut Xavier off on the over route. We asked the receivers to be friendly. Bryce has to see the safety. I think that one is pretty clear, cut and dry.

Then the check down was just a little bit off mark to Rico's left, but again, Bryce is finding a little window to sneak the ball out of there, so I think that's a chemistry thing. I think we just have to continue to grow with each other and find those lanes where I have a visual confirmation, here it is.

Q. Could he have slid on the one where he fumbled?

DAVE CANALES: I think he kind of stumbled a step before. It looked like he kind of lost his footing and was going forward already, and in those situations we try to teach our guys, going to the ground is vulnerable. We teach our defensive guys the same thing. When guys are



going to the ground, the ball can be vulnerable, so Bryce just has to lock that up with two and try to shield himself in that situation.

Q. When he got here, he was pretty open talking about how he didn't play baseball, he was not a natural slider. Is that something that you need to work with him on?

DAVE CANALES: Maybe. Yep.

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