

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Monday, September 15, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Robert Hunt has a torn biceps, and he's going to be going on IR. We're going to leave the window open for him to be able to return, but it's going to require surgery, so he'll be out for a while.

Austin Corbett had an MCL at the end of the game, and he'll also go to IR with the possibility of returning. Two studs, two guys that we count on, in the locker room, on the field. Their leadership, their positivity, their hard work, all those things, we're certainly going to miss those guys being out there.

They'll be around us, and I kind of hit them right afterwards and just be like, hey, we're going to need you, we're going to need all of you to be around here and continue to encourage the guys. So Cade Mays will be at center and then Chandler Zavala will come in and play guard for us in Rob's spot.

Q. When you say they might return, are we talking like months from now? Can you give us any rough timetable?

DAVE CANALES: I can't give you really specific timetables on all that. I think that's kind of going to be a result of, like, the follow-up and the treatment of it. But I think we'll give you guys more specific timelines sometime this week.

Q. I have a question about Xavier Legette. Obviously he's struggled in his first two games. I wonder if in the same way when you sat Bryce down after two games last year to let him reset, if that could be an option for Xavier, or if not, where and how you think he's going to improve.

DAVE CANALES: I believe in Xavier. This is a guy that I truly believe, because of the way he's wired, the way that he works at it, the way that he continues to train -- he had a great week of practice. He played better. He had some opportunities on the field where the ball didn't go his way.

I tried to get him a few early touches. They didn't amount to much, but as the game kind of went on, a few of the

other targets, they were close plays. He didn't make them, but I think it's a matter of just finding opportunities.

I believe in him. I believe that he's approached this the right way and just continues to work.

I'm going to continue to encourage him and be in his corner and push him to keep striving for that and keep working on his chemistry with Bryce because he's got the talent. I think at times he can be hard on himself and he can be really critical of himself, and I want him to make sure that he knows he's supported, that we've got to play ball, let's go. There's that balance of pushing him and there's that balance of also saying, you got this; remember who you are.

Q. In that case, supporting him means probably keeping him at roughly the same number of reps and just counting on it to work out better?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

Q. Wanted to follow up on Legette. There's a video of him on one play yesterday where you can see in a hurry-up offense, Legette is just walking back to the line of scrimmage taking his time and Bryce is really trying to hurry him up. Have you talked to him about that? Are there any repercussions from that? Is that an example of where he's lacking right now?

DAVE CANALES: I think it's the nature of the mode we were in. We subbed T-Mac and Xavier out quite a bit in that second half because we were in tempo with the lead that the Cardinals had, so both guys were pretty gassed during that time.

But that's something in general we talk to as defense, offense, whoever that is. We want guys to be hustling. We want guys to show up and do their job.

Q. With the offensive line, I know you guys talked about it was a strength coming into the season, having everybody back. What does this mean, because these are two of your major leaders that you're losing?



DAVE CANALES: Yeah, definitely. We're going to miss those guys. They'll be with us. They'll be around here. But we'll miss them on the field.

I think about Cade and the opportunity for Chandler coming in there. But these are -- between Austin and between Rob, these are two guys that I lean on also just for messaging and for the toughness and the fight and the discipline to just continue to go back to work. We'll certainly miss those guys that way.

Q. Just to be clear, Austin is going to have surgery also?

DAVE CANALES: I'm not sure. I'm not sure on that. I think they're still kind of evaluating that whole thing. But it's significant enough where those are all the discussions right now.

Q. Is it a torn MCL --

DAVE CANALES: I don't have -- I'm sure we can get more specifics on that for you.

Q. You guys brought back your whole offensive line for a reason, and you obviously didn't want this to happen, but how confident are you in that depth, and any consideration to playing Brady at guard?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we've got to evaluate all the guys. We've got to kind of see how the week goes. But right now the plan is to get Chandler in there and to be able to -- we'll have Cade, so get those guys back out there playing together.

Q. Could you just speak to that decision in the off-season by Dan and you and Brandt to bring all eight or nine of these top guys back?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it was the versatility of the group, starting with Brady, being able to play really all five positions to some degree in different spots or another, but that flexibility was huge; Cade being back here as a center, to have that competition and the guys going back and forth throughout camp, competing for that spot; Chandler was going to be here, and just kind of seeing where Chandler's future is as a young guy who's really finding good football; Yosh who we signed the year before as a free agent. That group, just the way that they work together, the way that they -- the camaraderie they have, they're by number and by size the biggest group that we have on the team, and they just have a lot of personality, and we just -- it was a really cool thing to be able to bring all those guys back.

Q. Bryce seems to see the field really well, and I think

he's an accurate passer, but what happened late in the game yesterday? For instance, are there times -- he had difficulty getting the ball out. He was being rushed quite a bit. Are there times because of his size it might be a hindrance to him being able to see what's in front of him and being able to get rid of the ball? How do you think that affects him at all?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it certainly affects shorter quarterbacks. Sometimes you can't see. Sometimes you move for vision. There are ways that you learn how to play football, and I've been around a couple of guys who are at or around or just under six feet. Those do present challenges, but I thought Bryce did a good job playing rhythmic football yesterday.

Q. Is there anything you think could have been done different in that last sequence of downs? It seemed you had momentum, obviously you got that onside kick, it looked like it was a great opportunity to win the game. What do you think exactly went wrong at that point?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we'd love to score. I thought they had some nice rushes. Of course I've watched it now three times and just kind of looking at what could I have called here, what could I have called there when they did this coverage and I'm standing in the back kind of trying to evaluate the coverages live and get us to the best possible plays there.

I'll be rethinking that drive at least for today a couple more times. But I think execution all across the board, calling the right plays for the group, the protection, making the plays that we had so we can matriculate the ball down there.

I thought I was a little bit aggressive on some of those opportunities there, but once it got into like the 3rd and 15, 14 world, we had to kind of chunk it down. We had to try to chunk it down a little bit.

Q. When you look at the run game the first two weeks and of course now considering the loss of Austin and Hunt, is the key to get it going, just kind of sticking with it until it breaks through, or do you have to adjust things as you go into this next week?

DAVE CANALES: I really think it's about how many possessions you have and what the score is, and that always starts to make decisions for the mode that we need to be in offensively, and for the last two weeks, we've made mistakes early in games on both sides of the ball and put us in situations where we're going into half with a pretty good deficit and I'm in a different mode at that point. That

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

affects the run game. That affects the balance that we want. It affects the mix of play actions, screens, runs, different attacks, different approaches that we can have offensively.

I think really that's it is just getting back on schedule, playing good football will allow us to have that balanced football that we want to play.

Q. I wanted to ask about the defense for a second. Trey McBride and Elijah Higgins combined for eight catches for 123 yards, obviously the Cardinals' tight ends. What do you attribute their production to?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I've got to give the Cardinals credit. Good scheme, good attacks, good match-ups, and then on our side of it, we gave them a few. There was just some communication things that we could have been better at, which we're talking about currently and just working through with our guys.

But I've got to give that group credit. It's a talented tight end group, starting with McBride, and I thought Drew Petzing did a good job of scheming some things up and finding match-ups in our defense, so that's certainly something we'll emphasize this week.

Q. What does it say about Bryce for him to have a difficult start to the day and then end it in the way -- perhaps without the last drive, but ending it the way he did?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I think it's just a collective thing. Bryce represents kind of the belief of the whole team that we'll finish. We're going to finish. We're not going to quit. We're going to keep fighting and scrapping.

I look at that second half and I see three phases of the team playing really good football, outside of really one drive, the opening drive of the second half for the defense.

I saw a full team play together in all three phases, and it took all three to fight us back to give us a chance to win the game there at the last drive. I'd love to see that drive be finished as well.

With all the challenges of the day, it was just Bryce coming back to me, checking in, okay, I got these next couple things I'm thinking about, right before the series, and he's got the same look on his face and he's ready to go attack, and that's what I love about him.

Q. I just want to know what the corresponding moves are going to be now that Austin and Robert are going to be going on IR?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we're still working on those right now, and then we'll give you guys an update as soon as we have those.

Q. I just want to be super clear on Austin. You said he has an MCL and you weren't sure if it was torn -- should we call it an MCL sprain?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's a grade 3 MCL sprain and then the specifics of the treatment and all that, I just don't have the specific information to give you all right now.

Q. I know you said you're holding out maybe some hope that Robert could come back, but what about Austin? Is he pretty much done for the season?

DAVE CANALES: No, I think both have a chance to get back at varying times.

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