

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Friday, September 26, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Wrapped up another great week of practice. Great work by the guys. Focused. A lot of great energy out there and the challenge again is to show up on Sunday, let's execute, let's play our brand of football.

And we're ready to go. So we'll have our walk-through and get on a plane, and we're really excited about this opportunity.

Q. What ultimately was the deal with Xavier Legette? Obviously he had an injury that lingered, yet last week was questionable and now out this week.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's just day-to-day information, just checking him in the morning, seeing where he is at, and seeing if there was a chance to get him out there to do some stuff.

We didn't feel confident to be able to do that right now, so we just have to keep taking it day to day through the weekend and we'll attack it next week.

Q. There was no regression this week?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just day to day just trying to track his improvement and trying to make the best decision.

Q. Do you feel pretty good about the chances for T-Mack and Chuba?

DAVE CANALES: They were out there. They did some work. Again, have to see how they wake up tomorrow and kind of take it and we'll make the decision on game day.

Q. XL, physicalness not there yet in terms of his health, but how important is it for him right now to take this moment mentally while he's not playing and sort of refresh, maybe get a way from the struggles of why it's not clicking kind of thing?

DAVE CANALES: We're really just focusing on the physical part. When we get him back physical and we feel confident that he can get out there and be himself, that's

the focus. I think that with -- across the league, different positions, you know, there is -- there are things that players have to work through. That's no different for X.

Right now it's a physical thing we're focused on to try to get him healthy so he can be big and fast out there.

Q. How different is the challenge of preparing to start compared to preparing to back up and be a rotational piece?

DAVE CANALES: I hope there isn't. I know there is an emotional piece involved. I'll acknowledge that for sure. You know, when a guy is out there getting those reps it does lead to more confident play, but I try to ask all our guys, you got to be ready. You never know when you're going to be called to contribute.

We have multiple examples now on both sides of the ball really for guys to step in and to be ready to do that. So they have to take their mindset there, take their body there. If they're not getting the reps that's where the extra work comes in after practice and before practice and preparing yourself like I'm going to play every game.

Q. What happened with Chuba?

DAVE CANALES: Just generally just tracking some soreness and so we kind of limited him through the week. But, again, we had to in him through the week and just looked at it every day. So we'll take it from there.

Q. And did you see any progress out of McMillan this week?

DAVE CANALES: We had a good plan to just ramp him up with his reps and exposure, and, again, got him out there in a limited fashion today. We got to see how he wakes up tomorrow and make a decision for Sunday.

Q. Turk is -- he practiced for the first time since week one this week; questionable this week. If he can get back on the field, how big of a boost will he give this defense?



DAVE CANALES: Well, it's great. I mean, this is a team that -- this is a group that's been playing together now, kind of stacking these lessons. He's been watching and itching to get back out there and to play with his guys.

I'm excited to see him get back out there.

Q. Can you elaborate a bit on his role the past couple weeks? Even though he's not been on the field how has he been contributing in?

DAVE CANALES: Just great energy. It's every day at practice, it's in the game, just the high motor, high focus. Gets his mind right, ready to play, ready to go for it.

He understands what this game asks of the big men inside and trench warfare from our standpoint, from a football standpoint, and he just stands for all those things.

He's a major factor for us when he's out there because of the style of how he plays and chases the ball.

Q. Dave, (indiscernible) got about 20 snaps or so manage that opener before he came out. What did you see in that limited sample size from him?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, ability to get off blocks, make plays. Execute his assignment, and just a lot of juice. A lot of energy he brings to the group out there on the field, to the sideline. He really engages the group, and that's showed up.

I think it was in that sample size he had four tackles and most of them were coming off blocks to make an extra effort play. That's what we saw from him. That's why he's here. That's what we hope to see again.

Q. Who are your Top 3 receivers if T-Mack can't go?

DAVE CANALES: I'm not going to say that right now. We worked a bunch of guys and they're all ready to go.

Q. Is Dan Chisena ready?

DAVE CANALES: Dan just got here. Just checking his body right now to see where he is at. Obviously this is his first week practicing with us. He had a great week. I think Dan will have an opportunity to help us at some point if the opportunity presents itself.

Q. Patriots have said things positive this week about Christian Gonzalez being back out there on Sunday. What kind of challenge does he bring?

DAVE CANALES: He's a really good player. He's got

great size. He's got great speed. He's got instincts. He'll catch the ball if you throw it to him.

He's an awesome NFL player and I'm sure they'd be excited to get him back out there.

Q. On other side of the ball, turnovers come in bunches; guys have said that this week. I know you want them to be all about the ball. What's the balance between wanting them to go after them but not chase them and miss the play, if that makes sense?

DAVE CANALES: Well, it's just built into how we practice. It's muscle memory. First guy there for the tackle is making sure he's got his base in the right spot, that he's tackling with the right leverage, knowing where his help is at.

After that, we're attacking the football, and that's just a part of how we do it and how we practice and how we challenge them. The more chance you have to create those, to get the ball on the ground.

It's not just that, though. It's the full team pursuit, whether it's special teams or defense or even the offensive side, it's that full pursuit and energy towards the ball, that if the ball does end up on the ground, do we have enough people around the pile to be able to capitalize on those things.

Q. Jaycee mentioned yesterday something about trying to create consistency on defense. How do you create an intangible thing like that?

DAVE CANALES: It's communication first and foremost. It's effort. It's focus. It's details. It's in the meeting rooms. It's in the walk-throughs, communicating with each other, diagnosing the formations, what plays do they run out of this personnel and these formations, and being really locked in play after play.

A lot of that is time on task playing with each other, learning how to trust each other, and play off each other with their assignments.

Q. Dave, Thursday Night Football, final kickoff of the game, the Cardinals ultimately got a penalty because the ball didn't land in the landing zone. When you're watching that game, get the ball to the 40 yard line, does that give you any pause when you see that? Obviously that's something that you all are trying to do on your special teams.

DAVE CANALES: That's the risk, right? There is a risk that comes with putting the ball in the landing zone in different ways. That just comes with it. I think the



Cardinals have been practicing those kicks and expected him to execute. I like what Coach Gannon said: We can't put it all on one play, on one kick. This is a full team effort.

There were a lot of opportunities throughout the game that could have played out differently. But it's a part of that aggressive style that you're going for and that you practice, so you stick with what you're doing.

Q. A lot of starters and important pieces on this injury report this week.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

Q. What's your mindset heading to New England?

DAVE CANALES: Execution. Whoever is out there, we're asking them to -- first of all, sending them our confidence that we trust you, we have you out here for a reason, you're on this team for a reason. Just trying to give that energy to them. Whoever goes out there, we expect you to execute with the rest of the group.

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