

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Just got a chance to go through the film a couple of times meeting with the staff today. We're looking at just the first four games and then in particular the last game, spending time there, looking at the execution really in all phases. We were out-executed by the Patriots. We got to give them a lot of credit for executing a great game plan.

While we didn't turn the ball over offensively, we gave up a pretty good amount of explosives, certainly the punt return for a touchdown, the second big punt where they won the field position there. And then gave up some explosive plays defensively.

Offensively, we fizzled out. We got into the fringe, into the high red zone area and six or seven plays, miscues, sacks, missed protections and blocks, penalties and those things really kept us from playing this game more balanced where we can go possession by possession there.

So we're looking at all that and we're taking a good snapshot of these first four games to so where we're at schematically and from a personnel standpoint so we can go forward and get back to work.

Q. Do you guys plan to make any adjustments, roster-wise, or operationally coming out of these meetings?

DAVE CANALES: We're looking at all that. We're trying to figure out to make decisions on who can help the team right now, so that's kind of the spirit of the day, is to dive into those things and see if there's a way that we can help our team.

Q. When you look at the wide receiver group, T-Mac's off to a really nice start, but beyond him, you have over two plays of 20 yards or more at that wide receiver position. Your wide receiver group is averaging roughly seven yards per catch. How can you open up the offense for the rest of the group? Or is that even possible given the offensive line struggles?

DAVE CANALES: It's something that we're looking at to try to create more explosives and try to get that yards per up there. Right now just looking at the combination of guys that we use, the style of passes that we use, we're evaluating all that right now.

Q. Good afternoon, Coach. On Hunter Henry's touchdown pass down the sideline. Smith-Wade attempted a punchout instead of attempting a tackle or simply pushing out of bounds. Jaycee Horn appeared to turn and yell something after. What kind of teaching moment is that for a young player?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we teach first guy in's got to make the tackle. Second guy look to punch that ball out. Make sure we secure the tackler first before we go making attempts at the ball right there. So love to see him put his shoulder on him, a right shoulder tackle, knock him out of bounds and we'll keep playing football.

Q. In the first quarter yesterday, you guys were up 6-0. You had the ball. You were across midfield in Patriots territory on a third downplay and you called a running play and that didn't work out and obviously the next play happened to be the punt return, which kind of seemed to change the whole game around with the touchdown. What were your thoughts when you were calling the running play on that third down right there and what were you looking for?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I thought we had an advantage in some of the fronts we were getting, and I thought we had a clean look right there to try to steal some yards, potentially get us into a four down situation where we could keep the drive going and try to get a touchdown out of it, so we were kind of in that zone right there. The run did not work out. They stopped us right there so we were forced to punt.

Q. Was the initial thought trying to keep the play going like getting fourth down or trying to get a little closer for a field goal though?

DAVE CANALES: Both. You could accomplish either thing in that situation and we thought we had an advantage but it didn't work out.



Q. You mentioned y'all were looking at things schematically, are you sold on the three-four? It's been a couple of years, almost a couple years with you and three years here and it's really not stopped a whole lot of people in the last few years. Is there anything your personnel to fit there or do you need to make some changes there do you feel like? Because your defense looked like it was kind of off.

DAVE CANALES: I like our system. I think it comes down to execution. I believe that we just need to figure out how to put our best 11 guys on the field and ask them to execute.

Q. And also, the look of depth, is that being revealed a little bit? Because you have to move guys from special teams to play on defense and offense, how is that impacting the whole team right now?

DAVE CANALES: We're asking all the guys that we call up to be ready to perform and execute. We're asking them to take to the coaching, to get out there, and we're trusting them for these opportunities to show us how they can help the team and guys are getting those opportunities and we're being able to evaluate the guys based on how they can help us or not.

Q. Chuba is a guy that seems to get better historically his best games have been when he's had 18 or more carries. You seem rather committed to sharing these carries in the back field reps wise...

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I just believe with the players we have in the back field, if we can sustain drives, if we can play these games that way, then we have a full speed runner, a violent runner every time. I was proud of the way the group ran the ball yesterday in terms of the effort and the way that we finished the game. Obviously not in the right situation that we want to be in, but to be able to continue to run violently with great energy. When we have guys that can affect the game that way, that's the what we want to do.

Q. So Chuba's calf injury did not play into the reps yesterday?

DAVE CANALES: No, it did not. It was a factor in our minds but in my mind, I wanted Chuba to just go out there and give us everything he had.

Q. And then, Dave, where are things with Coker and Legette this week?

DAVE CANALES: They're progressing. We'll gather more

information. Xavier had a good day today but, again, we're going to have to take that. Xavier day-to-day and week-to-week with Coker to see where we're at as we challenge them with more of a load that simulates what a game might be. Because the first step is to get the player healthy. The second step is to make sure he has the endurance and the resilience to be able to handle significant reps.

Q. I know that Mike asked you about personnel changes when it comes to players but have you thought about making any changes with any of the coaches? And then what's your philosophy around mid season coaching changes or coaching shakeups?

DAVE CANALES: We're still gathering information right now about who we are, who connect play with and what schemes are working for us and as we continue to build off of those, right now just sticking to the core concepts of what we're doing, so I don't anticipate any changes.

Q. Would you say this team has an identity? And if so, what is that?

DAVE CANALES: I can say that this team has an identity to play heart with great effort and physicality. That continues to show up. We need to become a team that executes consistently, that carries off what I thought were two really good weeks of practice. One lead to a great game. One lead to a really poor performance.

As the head coach, I'm the common denominator. I have to make sure we're in a great head space so the guys can be focused and execute consistently.

Q. Just looking at your return game yesterday, I know David Moore went out there on that first play. How did that impact you guys the rest of the game? I saw with obviously Trevor getting a return there on punt return and Hunter Henry. How might that impact you moving forward with him week-to-week with that elbow?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we have been giving David Moore, Hunter Renfrow as the backup for D-Mo in some of the those low go punt situations, kind of middle of the field with the potential backed up scenario so this is an area where Trevor caught that ball inside the 10-yard line. We would love for him to locate where he's at and let that ball bounce and see if it goes back in for a touchback. If they pin us, we'll play it from there, so an area of growth for Trevor for sure.

Q. In each of the first four games this season, whether it's been at the end of the first half or end of the game, you guys have had opportunities to get points in a

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two-minute drill but haven't come away with any points in those situations. What have you seen from the two-minute offense that has not gotten you into the position where you can score?

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DAVE CANALES: I think just time on task, trust, execution, guys being where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. Bryce will come up here and be the first one to tell you he would love to have a couple of those throws back. Some near misses. We have been able to hit those when we have those opportunities, but these are plays that we know and plays I expect we'll execute in the future.

Q. After each loss you've brought up the failure of execution. You don't plan to make any coaching changes. What are the steps for accountability when you see a guy struggling or maybe at a position or missing a run fit consistently or doing something like dropping passes or making mistakes? How do you hold a player accountable in general when you see that happening?

DAVE CANALES: We address it. We tell the truth about it. We talk about it as a team. It's addressed in their position groups and then eventually if someone is not performing, then we have to make the decision on who we play and who gets to go out there and ultimately, that's what matters. It's about playing time. As we continue to gather information, we have to make those tough decisions at times.

Q. Given what you said, that Coker is still week-to-week and obviously two other injuries at wideout; A, is Dan going to bring in some guys to work out? And B, does this expedite Jimmy Horn's development or his playing time?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we'll get to see Jimmy Horn. He's got a great opportunity. We're excited about it. We want to make sure he's able to go out there and give us significant reps and we'll carve out a role, because there's certainly things he can bring to our offense with his speed and ability to carry the ball and make yards.

So I'm excited for Jimmy to get this opportunity this week.

Q. And will Brady Christensen be starting going forward at guard or is that dependent on Chandler's status?

DAVE CANALES: That's the plan right now, but, again, we have to work through the whole report to see where we're at and Brady gives us options at both places.

