

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: All right, great day, great focus and finish to the week. A lot of communication happening out there. The guys are excited about this opportunity to play at home, bank of America stadium.

You know, just looking at them, the guys are talking to each other, holding each other accountable to stuff and working on things, and I love the direction that this team is going in terms of just the growth and communication.

Q. Dave, how does Jalen Coker look? You feel pretty good about his availability?

DAVE CANALES: He looked great. I think we're still going to have to make a game-time decision on that one, but he just took a little bit more each day and he looked fast, he looked explosive. We have to make the best decision and combination of guys to help us this week.

Q. And will it be Yosh or Moton?

DAVE CANALES: Yes, yeah. T-Mo couldn't get turned around quick enough. Did not practice today. Yosh took the reps during the week. He's ready to go.

Q. With the way Prescott is performing and the Cowboys defense rebuilding, this has the makings for a shootout. How important is it for Bryce to get off to a good start?

DAVE CANALES: It's important for us to play our version of football: stay balanced, make sure we're mixing or runs, play-action and all those things, and execute for four quarters.

It's important for us to come out, start fast, and also just continue to maintain and finish those drives that we been looking to finish and put it all together.

Q. Lewis and Christensen, they graded out really well against the Dolphins. What do you expect out of them?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just the consistency of that group working together and communicating. You know, they have a lot of chemistry they been working through for a while and we're counting on those guys to do it again.

Q. How confident are you -- you talked about the running back situation being a good problem. What sort of week did Rico have, and do you think he can build on last week or will that be tough with them potentially zoning in on him?

DAVE CANALES: Just looking for him to do the same thing: run with violence; make the most of his opportunities. We're counting on the whole group. It starts up front, but we're counting on the tight ends as well tied into all the things, and then the wide receivers to get their hands on people in the run game.

I just think the energy that Rico brought to how he finished some of those runs, you know, should inspire the whole group. It takes all 11. Let's all come off the ball violently. Just ties in all those things when you run the ball aggressively like that.

It should help our play-action game come alive.

Q. Looks like you'll be able to get JT back. How big an addition of him to get back in the offense?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, again, JT will be a game-time decision. We had to look at him throughout the week and see what he could handle there. So we're -- be really excited to get JT back out there when we can. But we have to make sure it's the right thing for him right now and the right thing for the team.

We'll put our heads together tomorrow and look at all the information, look at the practice film, and just talk to the trainers and everybody, all hands on deck to make that decision.

Q. This is a team you faced last year. How much has their defense changed obviously with some of the trades -- Micah Kenny coming in -- what does that front look like now this year?



DAVE CANALES: The structure is similar. It's a four-down starting point, a 4-3 defense, and with a couple different players that they've added to their team, some veteran players, and then of course Kenny Clark, Dante Fowler, and it's a group that's just figuring out how to play together.

It's very similar to the combination of guys that we've had come in and play as well, so I understand the challenge to get a group to play really good football together, but this is a group that has a lot of good faces and a lot of good names over there.

So I expect their best and we always do every week, every Sunday. We're playing against pros. We prepared that way and we're expecting their best.

Q. How encouraging was the pass rush kind of coming to life with that last week?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it was great and it really speaks to how we play the run and getting more pass rush opportunities. The more opportunities we got, the more guys got into their toolbox and got into their technique of the rushes and to see their protection plan and what they were trying to do.

I believe that it's just that complementary football. You got to win first down to get to second and longs, to get to longer third downs where we can get into our blitzes, get into our pass rush combinations.

Q. Following up on the pass rush, Prescott has like a ridiculous three percent sack rate this year; been tough to get him down. How cool would it be for a Nick to get his first sack against Prescott?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, great. It takes all the guys. It takes the full effort of the group, but also to rush with discipline and understand that Dak is a mobile quarterback as well and he can get off the spot and make plays.

So we have to be disciplined about how we rush it but got to have everything you got every single time. Yeah, can't wait for Nick to get his first sack. But he's been affecting the passer in his opportunities and that's the cool. Really affecting the passer, it helps the entire unit.

Q. You anticipate Taylor being a one-week deal?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I hope so. We're talking about it that way right now. We'll reevaluate him. He'll get treated through the weekend. You know, we'll take a look at it Monday and see what it looks like going forward.

Q. The Mike Jackson injury was that new today, the ribs?

DAVE CANALES: That was something that just kind of lingering on him. He practiced all week with it, something that he's dealt with in the past so he's familiar with it. But we felt confident that he would be able to do his job well and he didn't miss a rep this week. You know, so we're counting on Mike.

Q. Dave, you probably been asked this, but what's the status of Jalen beyond -- what is your outlook on him entering the week?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just going to make a game-time decision. We dosed him with more plays each day to see how he could handle that, and then we'll make a decision sometime tomorrow or on Sunday, you know, about his availability this week.

Q. ...facing his old team. He's a competitor; wants to do well. Something you're going to be facing in December when you play Seattle. How much extra do you think you'll put into this game and will it take away from that at all?

DAVE CANALES: I hope it's never extra. I hope you get everything you got all the time from all of our guys. They understand that is the expectation. The expectation is that we regard and respect every opportunity to go out there and put great football on film regardless of who we're playing.

Happens to be a lot of coaches that I know on this other side as well. When you have an opportunity to compete against people you know, it's exciting. At the same time you have to be focused on the scheme. We have to be focused on executing our game plan well.

I expect Rico to do the same thing. This is run the runs the way they're supposed to be being be on your protection cues and run with violence.

That's always expectation for our whole group. I'm sure we ask that at different times, but we have to approach every one like this is the greatest opportunity of our lives, this game right here.

Q. I know I respect Dallas' defense, but they do have statistically the worst defense in the league; their offense is the best offense in the league. How much pressure does that put on your offense to be locked in and take advantage of any opportunity that might exist with their defense, which has been a little bit all over the place this year?

DAVE CANALES: This game is about execution. Expecting the guys to go out one play at a time and execute the play. It's no further than that. Can I get full effort? Can we do our jobs one play after the another? That's the expectation for us as a staff, to execute a game plan and for our players to go out there and play the way we know they're capable of.

Q. When you know a player and you coached a player and they are on the other side, is there any advantage in game planning when you know that player well?

DAVE CANALES: There can be. If there are some holes in a player's game that you can try to exploit, you try to use all the information that you have at your disposal.

That's a part of the nature of competition, the beauty of our game, is when you have a little bit more information how can you use that. At the same time, it just comes back to one play at a time and executing. That's hard enough as it is in a league where there is a lot of talent.

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