

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Dave Canales

### Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: All right, really excited, really proud of the way that our players came out, played physical, were up for the opportunity to go on the road to play a team that what I saw on film played a really physical style of football.

Particularly from the defensive standpoint, you know, they really challenged us in different ways, and our guys were up for that challenge. You know, continued to find a way to run the ball. Coming out of the game possessing the ball 11 minutes in the fourth quarter. Certainly on top of that is Jaycee Horn's interceptions to give us more opportunities, and just staying focus and finishing; do right longer.

We took care of the ball, and was really proud of the special teams unit and some of the hidden yardage, you know, fielding the punts, Trevor Etienne giving us some good returns in the kick return game as well, the punt return game; you know, making our kicks, our PATs, our field goals were all critical a part of it.

But a collective full group win; physical style of play; something that we're all really proud of.

#### **Q. What can you tell us about Bryce's injury?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, going to go day-to-day on that right now and just really look at him each day. Just test the ankle in different ways to see if we can't get him back out there on Wednesday in some way, shape, or form.

So just going to take it that way and he's -- saw him this morning. Talked to him and he's like, let's push this thing and see what we got. So we're going to try to take that approach with it and just go from there.

#### **Q. To clarify, what is the diagnosis of his injury?**

DAVE CANALES: I don't want to get too specific in all the diagnosis of it. It's ankle injury, and it's something that we feel confident we can go day-to-day with.

Again, we are going to have to prove and go through some milestones with our return to play with our training staff.

**Q. You say day-to-day, but it was reported that he would not be playing this week.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

#### **Q. So he's out this week but you're still evaluating?**

DAVE CANALES: There are some reports out there, but for us, we're just going to go day-to-day on it.

#### **Q. Respectfully, Dave, is part of this competitive reasons you don't want it out there this early?**

DAVE CANALES: We're just going to look at it. If we can have Bryce out there on Sunday I would love for that to be the case.

#### **Q. Can you confirm if it's a high ankle strain?**

DAVE CANALES: It's ankle right now.

#### **Q. Those can tend to linger. JT just missed three games with that. Is there any concern about that possibility?**

DAVE CANALES: Could be. You know, that could be a possibility. Again, I think for us to be able to take an aggressive approach to this thing and see if we can get him back out there to do some work, we'll do that.

#### **Q. So he's not out Sunday? You all have not made that decision as a group?**

DAVE CANALES: Right now we're going day-to-day.

#### **Q. Another injury that we didn't get to ask you about. Damien Lewis. What's his outlook for the next couple weeks?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, Damien, same thing. We'll try to get him back on Sunday. We took it all the way to game day, tested the strength. We will have him in there doing some rehab, and the hope is to get him back out there practicing on Wednesday.



**Q. Dave, obviously Andy stepping into the role -- or if Bryce cannot go on Sunday Andy would be stepping into the role. After watching the film, how do you think he performed against the Jets Sunday?**

DAVE CANALES: Talking about Andy?

**Q. Andy, yeah.**

DAVE CANALES: Did a great job getting us to the right runs, making adjustments. Gave us a chance. They heated us up a couple times on third down, and he found a nice completion to Xavier on one. We took a sack. Miraculously pulled the ball back in to secure it so we could get into that situation to punt it and make them have to go the full field on that one.

And then of course on the last one, the go-ball to Xavier was a beautiful connection right there to get us into a take any situation. So I thought he came in and did a great job.

**Q. How does it change the process through the week when you don't -- when the quarterback status is up in the air?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we have to evaluate how much can Bryce do. Can he get out there and function in practice? And Andy is ready to go. He'll be rad to take on the game plan and to make sure that the whole process, the whole offense, all those things are moving forward as we have to make a decision.

**Q. Reps are important for getting ready for a game. Will you go into Wednesday thinking you got to get Andy ready just in case? Will he get the first team reps right away or how is that going to work?**

DAVE CANALES: He should always approach it that way, and we'll make that decision on Wednesday based on the physical ability of Bryce.

**Q. As a guy who has been a wide receiver coach and quarterbacks coach and overseeing both of them, why do you think that Andy has zoned in on Legette as much as he has in game and in the past? Why do you think there is a comfort level there?**

DAVE CANALES: Maybe his history. You know, AJ Green, big bodies, throwing to those guys. Had a good group of receivers, tight ends in Cincinnati in his past, so maybe it's that comfort level of just seeing that big frame and just getting him a ball within his frame that he can do something with.

But I love that chemistry. I love the fact that even if I go back to last year, Jaylen Coker makes our team because of the way that Andy was throwing to Jaylen during our look team and our card offense really. Showing what he could do and really showcasing Jaylen's ability.

So and then if it he goes out there and it's Andy playing, you know, having an opportunity to play with T-Mack and Coker and Xavier is pretty exciting and the group is growing.

**Q. MetLife notoriously and annually is ranked lowest in the league for its turf and its safety in the turf. Was there anything to indicate turf played a role in Bryce's injury?**

DAVE CANALES: I don't see that as being a role. Just speaking of just being there, got fond memories of playing in that stadium a bunch of different times over the course of my career. Super Bowl 48, winning a championship there with the Seahawks.

It's always been kind of a cool place for me to go to, New Jersey, New York, right on the border. You wake up and you're on the Hudson. It's a kind of surreal environment.

Then of course just the history in the stadium has always been great.

**Q. You don't think turf was a factor?**

DAVE CANALES: I don't think so.

**Q. How big of a factor was the defensive player's foot landing on Bryce's calf? Did that kind of -- was that the reason he got hurt?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I think that was the nature of the injury.

**Q. How would you assess your series for series running back plan after watching tape?**

DAVE CANALES: For me, you know, it was great to just be able to call the game the way that it was supposed to be called. I didn't really have to overthink any of the plays other than a couple we had special for Chuba, couple special for Rico, and a couple for Trevor that didn't end up playing itself out in the game.

But in general just allowed me to just stay in the rhythm of my calls, go to the next one, and not have to overthink who was out there.

**Q. Derrick Brown has had some pretty special**

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**performances. What was it about his performance in this game that stood out to you when you watched the film?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it was a dominant performance by Derrick. But again, I have to attribute that to the whole group. It allows Derrick to play across the line of scrimmage, in and out of gaps when we're setting hard edges.

Got to give a lot of props to Nic Scourton, DJ Wonnum Princely when he got in there, Boogie Basham had a couple reps. We even used Thomas on some pass rush stuff.

So rotating group of edge players, and then those guys inside. Turk had a couple nice plays coming off blocks. A'Shawn, Bobby Brown, and the whole group together. They're executing the run game plan well together; then it just finishes with effort. You saw some great effort by Derrick, not just in the run game but in the pass game; chasing the quarterbacks to minimize some of the scrambles, getting them out of bounds on a four yard gain or a five yard gain because of the effort to chase them all the way and push them out of bounds.

Those are the types of plays that really elevate the whole group, and this is the standard of effort that we're looking for from our team.

**Q. With Jaylen Coker back yesterday, we saw Jimmy was active. What went behind that decision?**

DAVE CANALES: Just a combination of guys we were using in different roles. I feel strongly that when Jimmy is out there he gives us an element of speed, horizontal and vertical stretch. Jaylen Coker really throughout camp was one of our most reliable receivers working with the first group and the second group, making plays.

Wanted to see that come alive. Jaylen made it through the game. Didn't have a lot of production, not a lot of catches and I think one target, but just the way that he was violent in the run game, the way he ran his routes, came out of the game feeling strong, feeling ready to go, and excited about building on that.

**Q. Dave, just to be clear, will you bring in another quarterback this week?**

DAVE CANALES: We're looking at that right now. Again, this is all going to kind of be determined on the full evaluation to see where we are with Bryce.

**Q. As someone who would compete for potentially**

**starting position or more of a backup to Andy?**

DAVE CANALES: Probably more of a backup, uh-huh.

**Q. You were pretty effusive of your praise of Hendon when you brought him in. How has he looked?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, Hendon is a guy I'm really excited about. Loved him through the evaluation process coming out of Tennessee. Spent a couple years in Detroit getting really good training there in a system that's similar to what we do; looking for the right runs to get to; some of the actions, there is some carryover there.

And so really looking to build off that. He's done a great job for us just continuing to gather the information to get himself ready to help us at some point if we need him.

**Q. ...there is something to winning ugly. Is that character building to kind of grind it out and win the game like you did yesterday?**

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. Find way to win. Find a way. In this particular game we were going to continue to try to find ways to run the ball. Our defense was playing phenomenally. Our special teams unit was playing together. And that was the mode. That was the mode that we were in.

For the guys to answer the call, and when you look at the film, there is just some really physical play happening on both sides and it was just a beautiful thing.

The guys were -- their defense all the way through to the last series, you know, giving everything they had, throwing the kitchen sink at us. The offensive guys handling that part and defensively forcing them into some pass situations and watching our guys come through and make plays.

It's really exciting, the way that the full group, all three phases are coming into play. I know our fans will be out there really early in Bank of America Stadium to see this week. We're really excited about the Bills coming in here and this opportunity.

Again, we need these opportunities as we continue to grow our team. We need these opportunities to prep us for the long haul. Really excited for that.

**Q. On that note there was a big contingent of Panthers fans there yesterday, too. What was it like on the road to look up and see that support?**

DAVE CANALES: It was great. It was great. There was a pretty audible "Keep Pounding" at the end of the game as



the guys finished and as we were going into the tunnel. It was really exciting, really comforting and encouraging to see our group travel out there to be in New Jersey with us there and to be able to witness that type of a win for the guys.

**Q. You said Bryce said to you that he really wants to push hard on this. Is there any more insight on how he's approaching this all mentally and maybe from yesterday into today on how he's doing with the injury?**

DAVE CANALES: Not really much to add. Just going to have to take it one day at a time literally and just see where we are at. Again, the approach is going to be if Bryce can go, we want him to go.

**Q. Dave, along the Bills game that you referenced, been a long time since this franchise has hosted a game that kind of has a little juice to it frankly. Do you want your guys to be fired up -- obviously? And then do you view the Bills as something of a measuring stick for your program?**

DAVE CANALES: I think the focus has to be week to week. The challenge is to go 1-0. Let's attack our game plan and trust our process, the way we work during the week, capture that part of it. This shouldn't be any different.

The focus has to be there. We can't waste energy on anything else, any other statements or anything like that. It's going to be about the fundamentals of football. It's going to be about taking care of the ball and stopping the run game, which they've shown they've been able to have success with.

And this is a good team. This is a really good, complete football team where all their processes are in place, offense, defense, and special teams, the coaching staff, a group that we have a lot of respect for. It will call on our best and we should approach that every single week.

**Q. Dave, to go back to Joe's question about looking into a potential quarterback but also having faith in Hendon, do you feel like he's not ready to be the backup on game day at this point? Is that why you would have that conversation?**

DAVE CANALES: That's are always conversations that we have to talk about and think about for Dan and I to do -- to make sure we're putting our best group out there and we're evaluating all that.

We're looking at who is out there. We also have to

evaluate what Hendon has done in the last couple weeks as he's been with us.

**Q. You said yesterday before you watched film that you liked alternating series with the running backs.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. So after you have seen the film now, Rico did have statistically a lot more production. Do you anticipate any sort of change this week?**

DAVE CANALES: I anticipate we'll go the same way. To have both guys who really I trust and to know that this is Chuba's first game coming off a little bit of time off, I fully expect both guys will continue to give us the confidence to call whatever we need to call in those situations. I'm glad that Rico contributed the way he did, but also Chuba had a couple really nice runs.

Had a really nice screen play where was there a little bit of confusion in the communication with the line standing out there as statues. There is a little bit of uncertainty there was a go-call on the screen or not. They're keeping that under wraps right now. I'm glad the outcome was right.

I'm excited again to go out this week with two backs that I really trust that will run with the type of style that we expect.

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