

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: All right, beautiful Charlotte day. Charlotte in the fall, can't beat it. Unbelievable, great environment for us to get outside, enjoy each other's company, keep pushing or football forward.

Really focused group returning back to the field. Guys working on their communication, talking to each other and working on chemistry and timing. That what we're doing. Just an excellent day for us to get out there.

Q. We saw Bryce get to work on the side. Did you get much of a chance to see him, and what was the report from the trainers afterwards?

DAVE CANALES: I saw a little bit of it. He did more than yesterday, so that's good. That's our plan right now. Each day try to push him a little bit more, see if we can get him out there in a different capacity. He wasn't able to practice today but was working on the side. Was able to do some movement stuff. We will take to take it day and make the best decision.

Q. So he is officially day-to-day still?

DAVE CANALES: Yes.

Q. And you're not prepared to declare Andy Dalton the starter on Sunday?

DAVE CANALES: Not right now. Andy did take all the reps today with the group. You know, Hendon Hooker and Mike White are here. First day to look at Mike in person to see him throw. He did a great job.

Hendon handled most of the scout reps there. The whole group, they're all just pulling for Bryce. Bryce as well. He's pushing and he's trying and he's determined to try to make himself available for Sunday.

We have to take it day-to-day and make a decision when it comes down to it.

Q. Anything specific that you're looking for on the

ankle? Is it cutting? Is it planting? Is it driving off the throw?

DAVE CANALES: All of that, right? All of that. Everything that's required to play the game the right way. You know, you can make certain modifications, but at the end of the day you have to play ball. We want to make sure he's able to do that, and we'll keep evaluating him.

Q. Dave, you said on Monday ya'll were going to look at different quarterbacks. What about Mike stuck out, and what do you like about having him here?

DAVE CANALES: My experience and history of just watching him. Just really fluid throwing motion; a guy that's got experience; has played some pretty important games over the course of his career.

So the experience is a great thing. Heard a lot of great stuff about him. His reputation preceded him coming this way. He was interested in coming and being here in case we get to a situation where we might need him long-term, and so just good to be able to get my eyes on him for the first time.

And also he has a little Bills background, too, so just trying to compete any which way we can.

Q. I was going to say, besides all the physical stuff, how much of a benefit can that be? He was just there last year. You pick his brain? What do you think...

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, you can try. Our defensive staff, myself included, just talking to him about things he might have seen here and there. You know, there is no secret code involved here. He's a Panther right now. So trying to compete and get as much info as we can.

Q. Can you speak of Jaycee and his two interceptions on Sunday, the leadership that he is showing after signing the big contract?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just a really incredible competitor. The way that Jaycee approaches every game day, and I mean, this isn't public knowledge, but he went into the

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Patriots game pretty sick and he had to get some fluids and overcome that part.

You know, like I talked to him afterwards. He played his butt off in that game and never -- didn't find out about that until afterwards. He just kind of said, you know, like my dad called me and said look, nobody cares if you're sick. They're going to go after you regardless. You got to go out there and play.

So he brings that mentality every week to challenge everything he wants to be at the point of attack. He wants quarterbacks to try him and get him those targets. He came up with two big plays. I think it just speaks to the whole collection of the athlete, brain, competitor, and then his ability to track the ball like a receiver.

Really incredible catches on both of those to get his eyes around on the first interception to accelerate where you could see his top speed getting in phase and coming down with a really hard catch, whether you're a corner or a receiver on that one.

Q. As a former wide receiver, how would you grade his one-handed interception?

DAVE CANALES: I try to tell guys two hands for beginners. He doesn't have a lot of catches in his pro career. Anyway, he came up with the catch and secured the ball. That's what we cared about, and gave us a chance to put it away in that one.

Q. How better prepared are you talent-wise with the defense, offense, for a guy like Andy to step in and have success than you were a year ago?

DAVE CANALES: I think it's a collective thing. It's about our processes, how we handle the work week. Those rhythms are very familiar to our players now going into our second year.

That part allows us to lay the foundation for fundamental improvement and execution. It's the communication. It's all the carryover on the offensive line as well; guys that know each other and can go in there and function with a different combination of guys there.

We also have a number of young players who are catching up to what we're doing and finding rhythm and timing. If Andy does have to play, have full confidence being able to call the game the same way I would normally call it and have the balance and be attacking and aggressive in our spots.

So he gives us an opportunity to keep pushing our football

forward, which I love.

Q. Does that continuity allow you to maybe wait to make the decision on Bryce a little bit longer than you would've a year ago?

DAVE CANALES: This is just going to be about Bryce's health. If he's ready to go, he's going to go. The rest of the factors, they all want Bryce to go, Andy included. While he would love to get out there to play, he's chomping at the bit. At this point in his career he's like any chance I get to get out there, whether it's finishing a game or going into a game, he's got a lot of gratitude about the opportunity potentially.

But we've got to do what's best for Bryce first and foremost. We'll go from there.

Q. Even though guys in this league are obviously durable and you would like to most likely have Bryce back, how much -- how do you weigh that as you're making that decision? Because what's coming in is one of the top pass rush defenses in the league. Is that something that you consider a lot more this week?

DAVE CANALES: I kind of expect everybody's best. We have to make the best decisions for NFL football games, which every single game there is pro players on the other side when you're playing them. This is going to be about Bryce's health, and regardless of who is out there, if he's ready to go we'll ask him to go out there and execute like he always does.

Q. Should the D-tackle have been penalized on that sack of Bryce that injured him?

DAVE CANALES: Live it didn't look like it. As you replay it and replay it, he put his foot out there to get him down. That could constitute a foul. I just though live looked like Bryce was just trying to get away and they kind of tripped up on each other.

I didn't really see any malice that way. Yeah, that's kind of how I felt about it.

Q. Would've been -- tripping would've been the call?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I think so.

Q. Now that you've had a week with both running backs back, how do you expect the game plan to maybe differ from last week, or stay similar to that?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I like the fact that we went into the fourth quarter with two really physical and fresh backs.



I love that. I love that for finishing games. I love that for how long a season is.

When you have two guys that you really trust you just play football with both of them. They each had a little bit more bounce to their step today and that's what I want. I want both those guys to be 100 miles an hour, empty the tank on every carry. That's the attitude we have to have.

Q. Would you like for them to alternate the series? Would you explore maybe changing that approach depending on what the defense is showing you on Sunday and how the game is flowing?

DAVE CANALES: I want both guys to just keep rotating in and just giving me everything they have for the whole time.

Q. Following up on the running backs, is there any concern with the rotation that they don't have time to gain a rhythm, gain momentum?

DAVE CANALES: That's always a consideration. I think if you brought any back in here and asked them that question they would love to have the volume of carries to be able to build things up and set things up.

I'm of a mind I want our runs to be full throttle every time. I think when you have the benefit and the opportunity for us to be able to throw in two guys that run with the same type of energy, the same type of toughness, then that's what you do.

Q. ... has been particularly vulnerable against the run. (Indiscernible.) I know it's also important to run the football. This week particularly with Josh Allen being over there, how important is it to establish that and kind of control the clock this week?

DAVE CANALES: We're going to be balanced. We're going to try to play off our tendencies. We are certainly going to run the ball in some fashion. You got to be able to throw it, too, to be able to flip the field, take advantage of explosives, which does allow you to do that and get field position and create first downs.

So we'll be balanced and we'll be multiple. At the same time, if the run game is going really well in the last couple weeks when we've had some success with the run game, you can lean on that more at times.

I expect to see the Bills' best. They're coming off a bye week. I expect that every week. You're playing a team that has a bunch of veteran players out there. They play hard. They play together.

The fact that their numbers have come out the way they have, I see a really -- a team that's playing tough and rallying to the ball and playing physical.

So I expect that from them.

Q. You mentioned the bye week. What are things as a coach you can work on when you have that extra week to prepare?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, the physical recovery part of that. There is also a mental recovery where you get to step back and look at what's happened, what's transpired in these first six or seven games, do self-scout and see what concepts that you've been leaning on that may be working for you. Let's continue. So it's a start-stop-continue exercise really.

Things that you kind of come into the season thinking this is going to be a big part of what we do. If it's not having success, you move on. It just allows you to evaluate and take that step back and say how can we improve our processes and move our football forward.

Q. How nice was to get Damien Lewis back out today practicing?

DAVE CANALES: It was great. Great to see him out there, get some individuals, pop in and out of team periods and get some reps and just gain the confidence he needs to feel good to be able to go on Sunday.

So tomorrow will be a more physical practice with the pads. We'll be able to expose him to all that and see how he comes out.

Q. We also Robert Hunt out there working to the side. This is his first time being on the field. I know he's still on IR. This is his first time being on the field, right?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

Q. How is that progress coming along?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, he's coming along. They say he's ahead of schedule. I think we get told that a lot, but our guys really push it. I've noticed over the years that the guys that believe that they heal fast end up healing fast. You know, that just puts you in a positive mindset to be able to get after your rehab, push the envelope, and say, hey, we had this prescribed for you today. Can I do a little bit more? Is this good enough. Can we stop here?

David Moore is another one really attacking his rehab. Both guys are really in there pushing each other. It was



good to have Rob on the grass moving around. They're working on all the range of motion stuff. We'll see where we are. I think his timeline is somewhere around the bye week. That could be something down the road.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

DAVE CANALES: We call it Tell the Truth Monday. Whether you win or lose, you got to look at the tape and the areas we need to improve. You celebrate the things we did well, and what we try to do is show film of the practice and preparation showing up in the games.

This just solidifies the process. This solidifies what it takes to find your best. I just love that Derrick is really connected to that part of it. Regardless what happens guys, tomorrow we show up and we go right back to work. They have Tuesdays to recover their bodies, reconnect with their people, and then we are back on the field on Wednesday with our game plans ready to go.

That's the mentality you have to have. This is a long season. You have to be able to show up again every single Monday, show up again every Wednesday and capture the work ethic and go through the week that way. So I love that our leadership is focused that way.

They certainly understand that we haven't seen our best football. We have not. We have seen glimpses of it, excellent play in areas, but there is so much more out there for us.

We should just continue to be trying to improve our processes all the way through the end of the season.

Q. On Derrick, so much has been made of his play this season, but what has his return done for A'Shawn? What does A'Shawn do for Derrick?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, Derrick just presents problems, whether he's on the front side of a run, backside of a run. You saw the sack production last week. Couple of pass breakups at the line of scrimmage. Those are disheartening in ways. It's just the way that he works every single down when he's out there, and we get him out there. We get him off the field when we can.

When he's on the field he gives everything he has. Two of the most impressive plays of the day are just sideline to sideline chases of the quarterbacks, forcing them to go out of bounds at five or six yards, minimizing explosive runs.

That's the type of effort it requires for a full unit to play together and find your best. He brings that out in the whole group.

Q. Dovetailing off Steve's question about the offense and time of possession for you guys, flipping that, a Josh Allen led offense, where does the danger lurk with them? Where does it start with them and what you guys try to take care of?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I think a broader comment is just what a good football team this is and a good football organization, starting with the head coach, Coach McDermott, someone I really respect. They play with a lot discipline; they play with toughness.

You can tell they value those things in every phase, on offense, defense, on special teams. It just shows up on tape. These are guys that want to do right and they want to show up with energy and be physical. They want to have that be their identity.

And so that part kind of matriculates throughout. If you look at this offense, yes, it's all centered around Josh Allen, but this is a really good running team. They've had very productive run games pretty much consistently throughout the year. They can attack you in different ways. He can attack you with his legs.

They have balanced run game and they have a bunch of skilled players dependable for him. They understand the scramble play. They get open for him; keep working. They know that's a part of what they do.

So there is a lot of challenges that they present, a lot of things that we have to be disciplined about, and staying connected to their receivers through the down.

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