

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: All right, we're excited about this weekend. Excited to be home again playing in front of our fans here at Bank of America Stadium.

There is just a lot of the excitement with this group, the type of football that we're continue to go build together and the progress that we're seeing weekly really for our group.

So any questions?

Q. I guess doubtful is 75 percent chance he doesn't play. I guess you go into this not expecting him to play.

DAVE CANALES: He's been -- he's made progress every day. We want to keep our options open right now. Don't want to rule him out. Just want to say, okay, we woke up today; he feels better than he did yesterday; tomorrow we'll move him around.

We rested him pretty good today. He had two good days of work on that ankle. So we'll take a look at him again tomorrow and make the best decision from there.

Q. Pressed into duty, how do you expect Hooker to perform?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, excited about Hooker, excited about Hendon being here, being in tune with what we're doing, continuing to do a great job for us when he got his opportunities on the scout stuff, and really into the game plan.

And you know, this is why we brought him here. To have another developmental person in the building that has talent and that has an ability to know our words, know our system, and be able to go in if we needed him to.

Q. Will he back up Andy if Bryce is unable to go on Sunday?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, Hendon will be the backup.

Q. Dave, realistically, how tough would it be to put Bryce out there without having had any team snaps?

DAVE CANALES: It would be tough. For me, Bryce and I talked early in the week and said, hey, let's just push this thing. Every day let's see where we are at, and for my own sake, for the team's sake, all the guys are -- they're pulling for Bryce to be out there to play with us, play with this group.

Again, we got to be smart, but I think it's wise of us to just take it day by day and see if we can get him back out there and continue to build and continue to push our football forward.

Q. Dave, Hendon can't be an energy quarterback; Mike can't be an emergency quarterback unless they're on the 53-man roster. What plays into that decision if you do give Bryce the opportunity but also probably want that extra insurance?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, that's an option. That's an option to put one of those guys on the roster and have that emergency third available. It's something we would consider if we have a good turnaround and feel like Bryce can go out there. If not, we'll go with our two quarterbacks.

Q. A lot has been talked about the running back rotation. Also interesting is the offensive line shuffle. There has been a lot of different combinations. Can you confirm that Lewis will be back?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, Damien will be back out there on Sunday. He had a great week. The group did a fantastic job in the training room. Getting the strengths back in the shoulder that's kind of the first thing with any injury of any nature, is making sure we have the range of motion and the strength for the stability part of it.

He had a quick turnaround this week. We were able to get him out there. He practiced the whole week and looked great. He's got a great look in his eyes. He's excited to be back out there with the guys.

Q. What would be the argument for playing Bryce

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without taking a snap all week in practice?

DAVE CANALES: Just continue to build on where we are with our group and the progress that I keep seeing weekly. This group of skill players, you know, getting Coker back, it's the whole picture to me. It's the balance of where we are with our run game, continuing to develop our pass game.

We have had great moments where T-Mack has a great day, Xavier has a great game last week. Each guy is learning how to contribute.

For me it's about the continuity. If he's strong enough and ready to do that I would love to just continue to build with Bryce being out there.

Q. But isn't there a risk in doing that? If the ankle wasn't strong enough to practice him all week, why put him out there in a game?

DAVE CANALES: That's all stuff we're considering, right? That's a part of it. That's why we got to do the right thing and the smart thing for Bryce first and foremost. Also just wanted to keep the option open.

Q. Coker had a quiet debut last week. Did you expect him to get more involved with the offense going forward?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, absolutely. That's just the way that the game played out. He played his role. I thought he did a great job playing his role. Didn't get a lot of opportunities. Had a chance in the red zone on a touchdown. Kind of had two guys in the same spot.

Xavier made a play for it. That ball was going to go to Jalen. He won on the route. He did some good things away from where the ball was going, so I expect him to just keep building off that.

Q. Curious what it looked like, Mike White played the role of Josh Allen this week.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, that's part of that. It was a good balance to have -- we needed to get Hendon out there playing, so he carried the load of most of the full practices.

But to have Mike available for the walk-throughs, to operate, to get the timing of the motions and snap points and really make it come alive was -- it was excellent.

It was a good opportunity for us to make to look as close as possible to what their concepts may look like.

He did a fantastic job doing that.

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