

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Sean McDermott

Visitors Postgame Press Conference



Bills 40, Panthers 9

SEAN McDERMOTT: Glory to God first and foremost. Great to get a win.

Really thought the players and staff did a phenomenal job starting on Monday. I mean, the process is the process. The preparation piece had to be where it needed to be.

Players did a phenomenal job, as I said. The coaches, the leadership group, phenomenal job getting out in front of our team and leading.

The preparation piece, as I said before, is why we got the results we got today.

O-line and D-line, the run game obviously offensively, trying to take away their run game defensively where it starts up front.

James Cook, another big day. Doesn't happen without wide receivers, tight ends blocking down the field. Want to make sure I mention that, praise that part of our effort.

Different attitude, different energy. Finishing plays. Really was more 'how' in terms of how we do things. Then the takeaways on defense were big.

Good team effort. The time is yours.

Q. As a head coach, to see your running back fighting for points...

SEAN McDERMOTT: I know the value of being a two-dimensional offense. I love the run game. I don't think I've ever said that. I do value physical football. It starts up front, whether you're throwing it or you're running it. I will say that, I love physical football so...

That's where the game starts. Our front did a great job today.

Q. (Question about James Cook.)

SEAN McDERMOTT: There was an attitude that came with that, right? He breaks through into the second level of the defense. You have wide receivers, tight ends blocking. He's of this mindset he's going, he's going. Again, that's a collective mindset. I thought Coach Kromer did a phenomenal job putting it together. Great job.

Q. When did you make the decision Max was going to be ready to play?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, just through the week, it was just more of this would be ideal if we could get it there, but understanding, again, where he was coming from, the time that he missed, just like I said during the week. So just wanted to be patient. It's hard when you want him out there. But we owe that to the person, to the player.

I thought he came in today and did some good things. Big hit on the sideline.

Q. How much of a spark was Mike Hoecht?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, good to have him, it really is. He's a tone setter for us. He walked in, I think we talked Monday or so. He's just great. He's a leader in his own way. Even though he's only been here just now one game, in theory, he understands how the game's played. Just a guy that we can add up front for us. Gives us an edge.

Q. The decision on Jordan Hancock to get him the ball? Take us through the strategy and philosophy of that.

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I mean, there's probably not anything specific other than getting him going. He's a young player that's played nickel and safety both for us. Just getting him going a little bit and seeing what he can do. Thought he had a really good week.

I mean, these young players, they're going to make some mistakes. The way that they practice, the way that they prepare, that's part of them learning how you do things.

Then the veteran players helping them, as well, is



important for us.

Q. Did you have a conversation with Michael on Monday?

SEAN McDERMOTT: I can't remember exactly, but...

Q. Was there a conversation with him or did he come in and say something?

SEAN McDERMOTT: No, we just talked. Monday we had that kind of practice deal. Then I think I grabbed him off the field and said, Hey, here's some things I was thinking about.

He was like, Yeah, hey, I'm with you, whatever you want.

Again, a player coming off of not having played, similar to Max, but obviously a more veteran player, felt more confident that he'd be ready to go.

Again, everything in moderation approach, with Larry, with Michael, with Max. I don't know the final rep counts on those in terms of how it turned out, but that was the goal.

Q. You mentioned finishing plays. Is Greg forcing that fumble...

SEAN McDERMOTT: Huge. When Greg plays nasty football, he's really good. Then our defense goes up a level. So that was a big-time play right before the half there. Obviously the half, the field goal that was missed. Big-time scoring and momentum for sure.

We get the ball after half, so that was huge.

Q. A lot of fans observed on the broadcast that it appeared like you were maybe calling the defense. Were you?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Bobby and I have done it together, we really have. That will continue. Bobby's a great coach. We've done it together. We'll continue to do it together.

Q. Why have you guys been so good coming off the bye?

SEAN McDERMOTT: I mean, I don't know. I don't know. If I knew that, I'd do that every game (smiling). But yeah, Lord's will, I guess.

Q. What is your thinking regarding Terrel Bernard, dressing him, not playing him?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, just kind of where we were,

trying to get him freshened up. It was more medically where he was versus anything to do with him not performing or anything like that.

This was my decision, my decision only. Just felt like we needed to get him freshened up a little bit. Then the linebacking room overall was can they play, can they not play. Came down to the wire on the four we dressed. Some of that was medically, as well.

Kind of forced our hand a little bit, too.

Q. Is it like an emergency only situation?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Yeah, I mean, that was kind of the deal. If we had to, to get him in there. We got some guys, there's some injuries.

Q. James, the first half, obviously doing what he's doing. The passing game, especially in the first two quarters, was slow to come around. Was there anything that you saw that was leading to that?

SEAN McDERMOTT: Just looked like we were a little bit out of rhythm. Then I thought Josh really caught fire after that. The value of a competitor at a high level, to be able to do that, is impressive, right? Josh is wired that way. It was good to really see him come out after half and really get into a rhythm.

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