

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Monday, November 3, 2025  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Dave Canales

### Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: I'm really proud of this group. Again counting on all three phases when we needed them to at the end of the game to play the style of football we want to play. Being able to run the ball and play physically, challenging a really good team.

Was just really proud of the way we came out of the locker room at the half with the mentality, let's finish. Let's finish by doing right longer, and that's what happened. Took the whole time to get it done, but it was a great effort by the group.

**Q. Curious, what is your philosophy on the NFL trade deadline? How does a 5-4 record potentially change or enhance your viewpoint on the trade deadline coming up tomorrow?**

DAVE CANALES: Philosophically speaking it's value, need and value. All those things kind of taken into consideration as we look and talk about who could potentially help us at this point.

I also understand there is a lot more that goes into it, but it's got to be fair value. Things have to match up. The need with what you're willing to give up for that; understanding that as we put this team together and build it, all those picks in the draft are really important for us as we continue to build this team.

But, again, to me I don't take the record into consideration. I'm trying to win this game. We're trying to win, trying to beat the New Orleans Saints this week. That's got to be the focus and mentality for me as a coach.

And then of course Dan has a take in all the things this terms of the future of the team, weighing that with the challenges we have in front of us.

**Q. During your shared time in Seattle you traded for Duane Brown, but you mostly traded for defensive players midseason. Is there like an easier draw for defensive players because you can kind of put them in**

**a little bit, maybe a little bit more in the playbook for offense?**

DAVE CANALES: That's a good point. I know that there are challenges on both sides with bringing in a defensive player understanding that there is a lot of scheme, certain positions are a little more forgiving, say, running back for example.

Pretty much it's their directional calls in the run game. Protections can be different from team to team, but that's a pretty seamless plug-and-play there.

I think on the defensive side when you talk about pass rushers, while they're learning all the different calls, when you're in four down situations, you know, or whether you're rushing five and you got a player rushing an edge, that's an easy transition as well.

I think the conversations are more the positions that require a lot of communication, right? Those can be harder unless they're coming from a similar scheme.

**Q. You spoke yesterday of the players capturing the mentality, winning a big game on the road. With the Saints and Falcons coming up next, do you believe it's time for the players to start stacking consistent outings and going on a run?**

DAVE CANALES: I was really proud of the way that we took on the challenge of going to Lambeau Field, playing the Packers, a really good team, a team that I respect in all regards, a head coach that I really respect, in a hostile environment. Being able to get the win, took the whole time to get that done.

Capturing the things that we have learned. This is what our football can look like when we take care of the ball. We had one turnover but got two from them. Had some other opportunities. But capturing the style of play, I thought the style of play was amazing in terms of our run game on the offensive side.

Defensively guys flying to the ball, showing up aggressively with violence. You know, Derrick, again, just leading the

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charge for chasing the ball down. Had some amazing stacked monster plays coming into the perimeter with screens.

We just want to try to recapture that on a weekly basis.

**Q. Can you quickly just speak to the job that Ickey did against Parsons?**

DAVE CANALES: Ickey did an excellent job. What I want to talk about mostly is the whole group. Really trust these guys to execute the game plan. We had a game plan to get the ball out quickly, and Bryce accomplished that for us.

He was very decisive. The receivers were running fast, presenting themselves in the time that we needed to. You get one hitch and then it's time to go and make a decision. Bryce got some first downs with his legs.

Our offensive line did a great job in terms of just giving us enough time to get that first read, second possible read, and then getting the ball out.

But it also speaks to the run game, being able to have that balanced attack and making yards. Rico had an excellent day picking up first downs at times to give us a new set of downs and really just running violently.

The more you run the ball the more you can take a little bit of football out of the defense to have them out on the field longer. It all plays into it. I just thought it was a great balance of just the offensive attack last week.

**Q. Dave, following up on the Micah kind of strategy, was there anyone throughout -- early in the week was there a game that you watched, without giving away too much, that helped you formulate what looked to be a very -- what was a very successful strategy?**

DAVE CANALES: Really it was all the games. You watch the impact that Micah has on games, whether it's chasing the run game down, slippery at the point of attack, pass rush moves in different spots. He shows up in every single game, so we had to take a collection of all of it and try to put a game plan together that allowed us to have success, that allowed us to get the ball gone in pass situations.

This is a player that I respect so much, and running the ball, you know, we could potentially -- in that situation we could throw some different things at him, but it was really our guys just coming together, executing the plan that gave us an opportunity to be successful.

**Q. And then quick follow up. Is today the first Victory**

**Monday you've had since you came here? If so, what was the reason behind it?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just talked to the leadership group last week and wanted to make a statement about where we were heading going forward. Told them to be heads up and don't be surprised if we have some Victory Monday types of situations.

I think it's important with this stretch as we talked about, where every Sunday, 1:00 for a lot of weeks in a row. Just want to go try to give a little bit of mental space, the physical space obviously for recovery, but then there is mental, emotional, and a spiritual part to reconnect with yourself, reconnect with your family after you got your work done here; then we can regroup and take the next step.

At this point now, we're seeing what concepts are working for us in all the different phases, and we can target those things in a focused manner and be efficient with our time.

**Q. Congratulations on your win.**

DAVE CANALES: Thank you.

**Q. Wanted to ask you, back in training camp when you first started you talked about this being the type of team that other teams don't want to play. How close was what you saw on Sunday to that, what you envisioned?**

DAVE CANALES: We're just one week at a time. We're looking for our group to play to the standard we have for ourselves. That's what matters the most to me. It's not about messaging or sending any message to anybody else but ourselves. Can we recapture the process and the excellence in the week it takes to have positive results on Sunday.

We got to stay locked into that mentality so we can return and get back to work.

**Q. And going back to your decision to go make Rico the (indiscernible) back, I know you talked about he's had excellent games, running violently and that kind of things, but was there one thing in particular that stood out that you say, this is what makes our offense go?**

DAVE CANALES: I just love when he runs the ball. He runs physically. You know, when he finishes his runs, makes the DBs have to show up and make decisions about whether they want to put a shoulder on him or not. Gets the group going, and the guys get really animated when he finishes runs in a violent manner and want to get behind and push.



He's done a great job of that consistently with the opportunities he's had.

**Q. Was your understanding that two punts were allowed or -- on the penalty that Rico took?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we got to be smarter in that situation. You know, we got to make sure we understand the rules. Might have to call up Keegan-Michael Key and make sure I get some clarification on that part of it.

From what I understand, it's any kind of movement that way, any weapons, is going to get flagged. We got to be smarter about that.

**Q. You mentioned that physicality and that violence. How do you, during the course of the season, especially getting to November, December, during the course the week make sure that you guys stay violent and physical during the course of the season? And I guess from a health standpoint how do you maintain that and so many injuries you've had up front?**

DAVE CANALES: Can't worry about that part of it. Have to make sure we're smart with how we work our guys. As long as we have opportunities to pad up, you got to play physical football at least once a week to make sure we have the edge, the pad level that's required to play that way, the technique that's required to play that way.

At the same time, you look through your schedule during the week and try to find small margins, try to just put a little bit back in the tank so that we can play that way on Sunday and play for as long as we need to.

That's what I was proud of too with the group, is all the way through the game, through the finish, offense, defense, special teams, it was a group that's flying around, playing this game full speed, with great effort and violently the way it's supposed to be played.

**Q. I wanted to also ask about Rico. It appeared that he was limping in between plays there in the second half. Is there any update on his condition? Generally speaking what did it mean for you to -- or what did it mean for him to be able to persevere through the pain like that?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we will give all injury updates on Wednesday. He was able to finish through the end of the game; was working through some things. And just really proud any time the guys can, are able to go back in there. You know, Damien Lewis missed a little bit of time; came back in; finished.

Just a couple different guys that had to work something out and said, this team, this game, this moment is too important to me. I'm going to be back out there for my guys and make that happen.

**Q. I imagine that's the same thing for Chandler Zavala as well.**

DAVE CANALES: What was that?

**Q. You said you're not going to give official injury update until Wednesday. Same thing for Chandler?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. Cool. Final question from me: What is it about Bryce Young playing really well in the fourth quarter, finding his best football, particularly on the final drives?**

DAVE CANALES: He's comfortable in those moments. He believes he belongs in these moments; I believe he does, too. As we collectively as a team put ourselves into high-stakes situations and high-stakes moments like that, that's when we count on all the guys to execute. Certainly Bryce is at the forefront of that.

**Q. One thing real quick. Wanted some clarification. You mentioned like Tracy was saying, take the ball so the wind can be in our back in the fourth quarter. If you win the toss and get to take it, do you then get to choose where you're defending as well? What's the process there? I guess I'm a little confused.**

DAVE CANALES: On whether to receive or it kick and defer?

**Q. No. Like if you win the toss and you're electing to receive are you then choosing -- because you mentioned you wanted to do it with the wind in your back in the fourth. Are you then choosing which end zone to defend as well?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah. To give us a chance, if you defer then you're giving the other -- the opponent the ability to decide what they want to do with the ball. So a little different than what we normally do. We would normally kick, defer, and/or give them a chance to have the ball in the first half.

And then we like -- typically we like the thought of coming out of the half to have a chance. If we do, we know we're a good two-minute team. If we have a chance to get a score before the half and then you're receiving in the second half,



sometimes you can double down right there and it does help your chances to win. Just a little different strategy just based on the weather.

**Q. Just one other thing real quick. We're seeing more and more with having guys like T-Mack, Jimmy, Coker, XL on the field. Have you had a wide receiver group before that was this young? What are some of the pros of having guys at this part of their development?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I love the energy, love the way that guys take into basically just improving their game on a weekly basis. I love seeing that growth. The guys are hungry. It's interesting how throughout the course of this season different guys have shown up. T-Mack has kind of been consistently producing his own way. Xavier will have a game, and I'm expecting a big game from Jalen Coker at some point coming up as he continues to show what he's doing out there. He looked great again blocking and looks fast out there.

But at the same time, these guys understand there is a lot of learning to do, and it's not just about knowing what the plays are. It's not just about knowing how to run the route. It's also about the adjustments that happen when they do something you're not expecting.

Just being really decisive in those moments. That's where I see our learning curve, the next step for us as a passing group is just being able to attack, even though it may be a mask type of coverage where they thought it was one thing and they throw something else at you.

Those types of reactions come with time. It's time on task and playing fast on your feet. I believe that's where we're headed.

**Q. I wanted to ask about that 19-yard run that put you guys in field goal position. Rico said after the game that Bryce kind of sold that he was maybe trying to tell Rico to protection, but they really always knew it was a run. Can you just take us through that play? And also, Bryce kind of throwing off defenders that that way.**

DAVE CANALES: Not really. What I will say is I was glad that he pressed the run the right way. He set it up and then kind of ripped it, finished with good ball security right there. Just love the way that he hit it with speed.

Other than that, third down, try to give a pass formation and see if we could have some success on the run, try to keep teams off balance.

**Q. Did Rico give us a little bit too much information?**

DAVE CANALES: Probably, probably. (Smiling.)

**Q. That was actually kind of my question, too. Micah Parsons said after the game they were expecting a pass on that play. Can you talk about the misdirection you guys were able to hit the Packers defense with, not just on that play but throughout the game?**

DAVE CANALES: I thought it was important for us to stay balanced. Got to give a lot of the credit to Brad. Brad did a great job just piecing the plan together to give us a little bit of balance to where it wasn't just always under center run game. There was some gun, some pistol, some under center, some different balances.

Just trying to protect the plays, whether it's run game or pass game, trying to protect those formations that we really like and trying to protect the best runs that we have to just make sure that while teams know you're going to do it, not necessarily when you're going to call those plays.

I got to give them a lot of props, and also Harold Goodwin, just the job they did building that plan and trying to create a little bit of indecision. We really respected this defense a lot. Not just from the edge play out of Micah Parsons and Rashan Gary, but it was also Edgerrin Cooper on the inside and Qua Walker. They have an amazing ability. They're big and fast, and when they know a runs coming it's hard to stop them. You guys saw that at the end where we ended up with basically two zero-yard runs because we got pretty predictable. They knew where it was going and they made it really challenging to even make a yard in that situation.

So it called for us to have that little bit of balance and misdirection and try to slow those guys down because the group and how much we respected them.

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