

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Coach Dave Canales

### Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: A beautiful day. It was good to get back on the field getting ready for our next opponent. Division opportunity here, NFC opportunity, all those things. For us every single game it's so important that we have the same approach and trust in your process, trust in the way we go about our work and communicate with each other.

On a sidenote, just really excited for Charlotte FC this Friday. Big playoff game, big excitement here in the building, so pulling for those guys as well.

#### Q. Rico?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

#### Q. What's the extent of his injuries?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, he's just working through some stuff during the game. Wanted to be smart about it. We're counting on him this weekend, and so wanted to make sure that we get him on the right track so he can get out there tomorrow, get some practice reps and all that.

As he continues to emerge as an important part of what we're doing, we have to make sure we get him to game day, he's ready to go, and that would be the plan.

#### Q. Doesn't sound like a whole lot of concern then about him being ready for Sunday.

DAVE CANALES: No, just being smart about it. Taking all the information in and saying if we can push this thing back another day, get some rest and recovery, RTP, get him back out there tomorrow practicing in some fashion, with the whole intent the getting him ready for Sunday.

#### Q. Asante Samuels visiting.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

#### Q. What started that whole process and have you been able to watch him yet?

DAVE CANALES: So I haven't watched him on the field working out. Brought him in to meet him, talk to him, take him through the whole process. Really nice conversation with him.

A fantastic player for the Chargers for a while. Has played in our scheme. All those things. It's part of our process. When there are guys out there that are coming being back from injuries ready to go, you know, let's look at all of them. You never know. It's a long season, so just keeping all of our options open.

#### Q. Obviously you want Rico to be healthy. You talked about how important it is to have two really good running backs because it's such a violent position. Does that affirm that belief of yours with him dealing with this injury?

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. If it's Chuba rolling out there I feel great. Very confident in him being able to execute the things the way we want them to be done if it came to that situation.

And also Trevor Etienne. He's done a great job. He's continuing to grow as a returner and did an excellent job last week in pretty challenging conditions fielding the ball for us. All that hidden yardage is so important that we take advantage the catching the ball first, and whatever we get on the return is a bonus from there. He just keeps improving that way, too.

#### Q. Why do you think taking away that play calling responsibility for Rozeboom has freed him up seemingly to be more of a playmaker?

DAVE CANALES: Honestly, it was really more about just Trevin's leadership and his growth in this defense, his understanding of our concepts and what we're doing and his ability to connect with the guys. It was really more that, you know, giving Trevin the opportunity to be back there in front of the huddle; get the information communicated to the guys that he's been playing with now for a year and a half.

And so that was really the opportunity.

Now, on the flipside, that does free up -- you know, you got a crazy man out there with long hair flying around everywhere and it let's him just kind of get the call, pin his ears back, and go play football. He's done a great job of that, too.

**Q. Dave with the right guard position, you obviously have a bunch of different options with Jake doing what he did and Cade coming back, Austin.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

**Q. How do you guys parse through who would be the best option to start but also who could be the most convenient from a depth standpoint considering how often you are having in -- game issues?**

DAVE CANALES: That's are all great questions, all stuff we have to talk through. We expect Austin Corbett to come in at right guard and play for us. That's his natural position. Made the center move because we asked him to. Has done a fantastic job of being able to give us flexibility inside.

It's always so valuable. Even Chandler this offseason. We put the ball in his hands and snapped him a bunch just to continue to develop those guys, the inside players available who on game day. When have flexibility for a guy to play a guard or center spot, it does help you a lot in those different situations.

**Q. Now that the offensive line seems to be getting healthier, how valuable has that evaluation of the guys that maybe you weren't expecting to play as much been -- how important will that be moving forward?**

DAVE CANALES: It is. It's very important for us get all the film we can, to see the guys operating together, communicating, and how they respond to different types of defenses, and you know, can we continue to stay within our scheme and run the things we count on with different guys in there.

We have got to look at a lot of guys. Just talking about Jake Curhan, I don't know, what was it, five or six plays into the game all of a sudden he's in at left guard. D-Lew comes back in. Then he's popping in at right guard.

The experience that I've had with Jake over the years, he's given us plays at tackle in the past and he's done an excellent job that way. Played some big tight end, you know, pseudo Brady. Like Brady give us that. Other than the center position, we haven't -- I haven't had experience

with Jake at center.

The flexibility, the coaching.

Again, I have an opportunity to talk about Harold Goodwin, Joe Gilbert, Dean Petzing who on-boards the guys as they come in. They sit with Dean in the office and talk about the language. Here is our calls in the run game, hers is our calls in the pass game.

These guys are all hands on deck. The way I see it is the position coaches from the top down and Dean Petzing, you coach from the bottom up; the guys that aren't getting those reps, let's make sure they're continuing to track with what we're doing so when these opportunities come they're ready to go.

**Q. Bryce's numbers aren't great, yet the team is still winning. What does that say to you?**

DAVE CANALES: Great team football. Just winning in all three phases, playing together, complementary football. I think he's doing an excellent job of getting us to the right runs, right protections. You know, again, put him in high stakes situations he comes through for us with a couple big throws in that last drive to complement with Rico's run at the end.

Continues to do a great job that way.

**Q. Are there times where the numbers don't really give a full picture of a player's contribution?**

DAVE CANALES: It's wins and losses. Those are the only numbers that count to me. While I know Bryce will be up here and be the first one to tell you there are some passes along the course the season that he would love to have back, at the same time, this is a group that's growing together. The young, skilled group that we have with T-Mack, Xavier, Jalen Coker, who looked a week better. I think I alluded to that.

I got to do a better job, Brad and I, just getting Jalen going. There wasn't a lot of passes to go around last week. We had I think 20 passes on the day or something like that.

Jalen made the plays when we needed him, so...

**Q. Wins and losses as a number, I mean, Bryce has had -- if you view QB stats as a thing, he came into the season with six wins as a starter. He could tie that this weekend if you guys were to win. What does that say about how the offense has kind of worked around him and how he's worked in the offense?**



DAVE CANALES: Honestly it starts with Bryce, and Bryce is the one that leads the charge. He's the one that pushes the urgency in practice talking to the guys, being engaged all through each day. It's that type of leadership that he continues to bring to the team.

You ask him, he'll tell you, I just want to win. Whatever that takes to win, that's what he would like to do, and wants to win with his teammates. I know the guys feel that. There is a sense of confidence when he's out there.

**Q. Haven't DJ Wonnum really get on track yet. What's been slowing him down?**

DAVE CANALES: Opportunity I think. Just different scenarios, different situations. We're counting on DJ. He has done an excellent job. Gives us a lot of flexibility in terms of stunts and packages. He's a very cerebral guy and really playing the run tough on the edge. He sets edges for us like we count on, and then that just let's Turk and DB and A'Shawn and Bobby and those guys cut it loose on the inside.

**Q. What would you say about the benefit you were hoping to see out of the Victory Monday what additional day off. Anything you notice in terms of energy or attitude or the way the teach is approaching it back today?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, they handled it great because we had an awesome Wednesday. That's always the litmus test, right? How do we come back to work when they get that time off.

With that being said, we would a huge percentage of guys come in get their lift in, say hi in the office as we were going about our game planning business and all that.

To me it's about the results of the day. It was a focus group today. A lot of communication, a lot of great stuff happening. For me that gives me the confidence that they've handled this right and it's a sign of a maturing team.

**Q. How does game planning look or change when your opponent has two major contributors?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, you do have to like look at the -- how are they using those players and who might they put into -- because basically we're not going to just completely go away from the core of our systems regardless who is in and who is out of there.

So we try to look through the roster to say, who could fill that roll in some way, shape, or form. Rasheed Shaheed is

a fantastic player. He has a lot of speed down the field. They use him a certain way with jet sweeps.

But they have a lot of other players, so we have to consider that part to say, who might fill that role and be ready for those adjustments.

**Q. Go back to Bryce for a second. What kind of -- we may not see behind the scenes what he's doing, leadership or whatever, that's making a difference out there, that's kind of intangible stuff.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's on the field. It's in the meeting rooms. It's constant communication with his guys about small adjustments in our pass game. As we get into different areas, third down, red zone. Hey, if we get this looking, this is what I'm expecting. Just real ownership of our concepts. That's what I want. That's what Brad and I want.

We just love when the guys come to us and say, hey, can we move this split down a yard for this type of leverage or access. If this happens, can we do this. Working through those scenarios, I love that. I love the ownership part of that.

Then it's on the field. It's in practice. I think human nature is to -- as the practice goes on and gets longer and longer, there can be a dip in the energy. It's the quarterback's responsibility to snap guys back in. He's done a fantastic job of that, to keep the group focused as we continue to finish these days.

**Q. Princely coming back -- you mentioned the other week him finishing that game when he had the rib thing. What have you seen from him and his development over the course of a rookie year?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, taking to coaching. He's getting coached hard. AC Carter does a fantastic job talking to the guys, keeping them accountable for their responsibilities. These are things, sometimes in the games you see something for the very first time. We plan for certain concepts; they throw something new; we have to make adjustments.

It may be the first time he's seen that. What I've seen Princely do is take the coaching and apply it. Again, for him to continue to battle back, dealing with the ankle, but to get himself back out there today and really it was his work through the weekend and Monday that really gave us the confidence to put him back out there.

He was here. He got great rehab while we were in Green Bay. Showed back up on Monday, was ready to go.



Proved that he could move around enough to get back out there and practice and did a good job today.

**Q. Dave, you know recent history of winning around here; it's been a while since you got to the post-season. A win like that over Green Bay, a top team in the NFC, or was coming in, what does that do for this team's confidence? Did you see this week, maybe in practice maybe today guys coming out with, hey, maybe we can surprise people?**

DAVE CANALES: Well, you just got to be truthful about it. We won the game. There is a lot of stuff we got to clean up and there were things, there were instances in the game that really gave the Packers a couple of opportunities; namely, they caught us with 12 on the field, which was a big emphasis. We know that he do that.

Those are the types of things we have to continue to clean up. You know, on the offensive side, just some penalties on a fourth and one and having clean hands in those situations.

Coach Caldwell hit me up after the game as was like, you know what this win means, is that you won five, you didn't win four.

To me it's like that's the next-game mentality. Let's go play the next one. We have a hungry team facing this week that has to be the focus. This group to your point I can feel the confidence as we grow because of the understanding of what we're doing, the speed of play, the communication, and the trust.

Those are the things that I'm looking for to gauge. And really like as far as just making any statements it's like that was one game. We have to go and replicate that, because when we do play and take care of the ball, take it away from the opponent, limit the explosive and get a few, play really good on special teams, it leads to good results.

We have to capture those things, capture the process that leads to wins, and that's the most important part.

**Q. I was going to ask about Tre'Von Moehrig. We're heard a lot of fun descriptions of just the difference in his personality on the field, but how would you describe what his impact has been?**

DAVE CANALES: He just plays with a real urgency. He loves it, bottom line. If I could say one thing about Tre, he loves football. He loves to be out there at practice and during the game. We had a cool moment at the half. He could feel it. I was like, feels like you're going to get one. He was like I think so too. He keeps putting ball up there.

Sure enough, picks the ball off, has a nice return comes running over pointing. It was just he's looking for opportunities to make a big hit to make a play. Really brings an explosiveness to what we're doing on the defensive side.

**Q. You all celebrate him in any way for the defensive play of the week?**

DAVE CANALES: We just recognize it whenever our players are recognized publically, and try to make sure like -- and they th understand too it's while one guy may get the praise it's a group playing together. It's a defense that was four for five really. Kept the offense one for five in the red zone playing together.

When it was Rico, it's about the offensive line. It's about the tight ends and the receivers blocking downfield. You know, it takes a full group to get that done. And certainly in the special teams as well. When our guys have success, let's spread that love and let's make sure that we understand we do this collectively, and it's because we're playing good football that that's things emerge and people recognize our players.

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