

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Monday, November 10, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: All right, looking at the film, having some conversations. That game was not good enough in all the different phases. Certainly you talk about the critical variables for how we have won first, and first and foremost it's about the ball. We turned it over twice, really three times. Had a roughing the passer call, an early interception on the first drive. Kept us alive and took advantage of that one.

And then on the defensive side we didn't get the ball away from them. Got to give credit to the Saints. They had a game plan. They stuck to the game plan and out-executed us in some really fundamental ways.

You know, looking at the kick game I thought we covered well. I thought the return game was solid. We did have blocked field goal which ended up back in our hands right there.

So we had opportunities. Defense gave us more opportunities. We did not have a balanced offense yesterday. We tried to get the run game going like we always do. They did a great job. When we transitioned to the pass, mixed results; not enough explosive.

That's the other area. It was eight explosive to two as far as our two offenses go. That's a big flip right there. The fact that our defense was able to settle in and really keep the score the way it was -- typically when you flip an explosive day like that it leads to more points, but we did not respond well to getting the ball back to finish that way.

So we just have to look at our process and say, hey, we got to get back to work. We got to make sure we take the lessons from this game, the positives. There is some good stuff on film. The effort was great. We played physical really in all phases. We looked fast and physical during the game.

But it came down to fundamental execution, and that's where we have to take our focus to right now.

Q. Couple offensive the players noted after the game that practice was kind of sluggish or, I mean, not as successful as you typically have during the week. How do you see that manifest itself in this game?

DAVE CANALES: Really we just have a standard for how we work. When it's not up to standard, it's my job as the head coach to make sure they're aware of it. I made them aware of it.

You know, I've been in the league for a while now and I've seen -- sometimes you have a bad practice and you play great on Sunday. Sometimes there is a fantastic practice and you don't get the results you want.

So I have to look at both things. When there is a similarity and it leads to something, it gives me an opportunity to point to the fact that every single week is a championship opportunity. Every opponent. Every opponent requires all we have and our focus and our energy to getting prepared for those games.

Q. When you consider Bryce's skillset, when you're throwing outside the numbers or in the middle of the field, how are you seeing those successes and failures differentiate from each other?

DAVE CANALES: We have a bunch of metrics we look at for where the targets are happening in success. In general this is a group effort, starting with the coaching staff, as we put game plans together to get our guys in the right positions and make sure that the pass game reflects what Bryce does with confidence.

That's really where our focus has been and will continue to be so we can get this group playing together and feeling that chemistry. There is flashes of it, but it's not consistent enough for where we want.

Q. When you say with confidence, do you think Bryce is confident taking those deep shots? Are they being called? What's going on with that?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's a mix of all those things.



Q. What needs to happen for your deep pass game to open up a little bit?

DAVE CANALES: Chemistry. Timing. It's everybody. It's protection-wise. It's finding the right opportunities coverage-wise, and then just the timing and rhythm me-to-you factor, getting those guys down and there giving them opportunities to make those plays.

Q. Is it fair to criticize the lack of vertical threat that you guys had? Xavier Legette had a post that was wide open; ball got hit up. There were opportunities there. There have been drops. There have been play mishaps. Are you pushing the ball downfield with your playcalling or do you feel like there is a disconnect with the production?

DAVE CANALES: In general I think it's a group effort. Calling more of them, yes. Let's get some more opportunities. Would love to have those explosive plays come alive. I will call them more when we have more success and those things come alive for us.

We have to keep working together and keep taking those shots in practice and make sure we feel comfortable with them and certainly for Brad and I just looking at the pass game, the coverage contours and what they're giving us. Pretty simple when they're playing single high and everyone is at the line of scrimmage.

We got to make the most of those opportunities when we have them so that we are a balanced offense. And so it does play off of the run game, which we got going, but now let's get the pass game going so we really can be attacking and the offense that I visualize for us.

Q. We saw you calling and Bryce taking more shots late last season. Why have you gotten away from it? Is it as simple as what you said about getting reliant on the success of this run game?

DAVE CANALES: By numbers-wise we're about the same. I think it's just a matter of chemistry, the full group getting comfortable with those and making them come alive.

Q. Is Bryce comfortable taking those deep shots?

DAVE CANALES: We'll have to just keep growing as a group and make sure the time on task, trust factor, the me-to-you factor, all those things grow.

Q. What do you think will help the trust factor? When you say trust factor, do you mean between wide receivers and Bryce or coaching staff and Bryce, play calling and Bryce?

DAVE CANALES: All the things. You know, it happens in practice. We've had these things come alive in practice and we have to make sure they make it to the game.

Q. If you're not seeing the success in the vertical game is there a way to alternate your approach to open up more YAC opportunities?

DAVE CANALES: That could be a strategy as well. There was some good throwing and catching on some of the short intermediate stuff. But I do know you want to stretch the field at times, and we get these vertical shots called that we try to make sure that we're attacking the right coverages.

From there, it's just confidence and me to you factor and working on the chemistry that happens in practice.

Q. You mentioned numbers being an issue yesterday.

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

Q. Through the season your opponents have 68 points off turnovers, which is the most on the league. What needs to be done offensively in order to take care of the ball, and even defensively in those sudden-change situations to try to limit that or be an issue?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, our defense has done a good job responding to some of those by minimizing what type of points by keeping teams to field goals, but there have been some touchdowns and scores that way. Generally speaking our guys have had good ball security. We're talking about the pass game of course with Jimmy's fumble on the jet sweep. You know, that was a technique thing. We've talked and worked through that.

But I think in general it starts with the protection up front, making sure, and then it goes to the pass unit, making sure we are where we are supposed to be when we need to be there, and Bryce is making good decisions in the pass game.

Certainly some of them are sack fumbles as well that we shared between him and Andy. We got to just do a great job in the pocket securing it. Sometimes you take a sack. That will happen. But making sure we're emphasizing it the right way.

Q. Do you have an update on Trevin Wallace?

DAVE CANALES: Give you an update on Wednesday. All the injury stuff.



Q. When and how did you first realize last week's practice wasn't up to the standard you like to see?

DAVE CANALES: I'm keep all those conversations in-house. I just believe when things aren't to our standards it's my responsibility to address it with the group and speak truthfully to the guys so that we understand what our standards are, what we are expecting from each other.

Q. What do you make of why that happened?

DAVE CANALES: I don't know. Could be the game before, the travel. You know, maybe it was the Victory Monday. Maybe that's not a good strategy for us, but it worked the week before. Giving the guys a little bit of chance to pour a little bit back into the cup. It's not just a physical thing. It's a mental and emotional thing where you allow the guys to have a little space to recuperate and be ready and focused to come back to work.

We have to make sure we have the ability to handle that.

Q. A lot has been made of the success you guys had down the stretch last year. Defensively you guys didn't have that success, but during this first ten games you guys have dropped basically a touchdown off of your points allowance on defense. What are you seeing from that unit? Why has that unit played better over the last six or seven games?

DAVE CANALES: Some key players joined us. You know being talk about Tre'von Moehrig. We have Turk Wharton. You know, edge players. Nic Scourton is doing a great job week to week continuing to improve.

You know, it's a group. Added a couple guys in there, but at the same time it's focus and communication, guys working together. You know, coming out of this game there was some really important drives that our defense got us opportunities back and we appreciate that. Now it's time for the offense. Let's go. Let's make sure we can have that balanced offense this we visualize together.

Q. Have you heard guys acknowledge the confidence boost from a win, in Lambeau, in that environment, and even (audio cut out) How to you preserve that confidence coming off a loss like yesterday?

DAVE CANALES: Wasn't just the Green Bay game. We've won games this year playing good, complete football games, defense, offense, special teams. That's how we've found success, and we have to make sure that we replicate that part. What has led to our success? Starts with the run game on both sides and playing it better.

Where we can be special is when we take strides in the pass game on offense so that we can be balanced and explosive and flip the field to give us more opportunities down there in the red zone.

Q. We've heard you say it's on me a lot. During losses, how much of the losses do you personally take on yourself and how do you kind of process that?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I take on everything that I can as the head coach. It's my responsibility certainly with the offensive side of the ball and making sure we have a cohesive offense that makes sense, that has balance, that tackles the defense the right way.

So when we've a game like yesterday I take it personal first and foremost, and then it goes on down the chain and then we have all of our communications with the coaching staff and then we ask the players, hey, here is what we could have done better; now here is what you could have done better from a technique standpoint specifically.

That's our process. That's how we just try to speak the truth in love and be honest with the guys and understand that we have their backs, we want their best, and we feel like these techniques will help you have success in the future.

Q. After you had (indiscernible) really step up when you had receivers struggling and he would help them along, has anybody taken on that role this year with some of these guys?

DAVE CANALES: We got a great group. We got a great group of veteran guys on the offensive side. They're all supportive, working hard. You know, there are people that -- David Moore is still hanging out. Hunter Renfrow has been amazing just in terms of talking to the guys, having conversations. Bryce just bringing the guys together. Working on the side during the defensive period. We're doing all the right things. I expect we'll see the results because of the work. I believe that the work leads to good results.

Q. Speaking of Bryce, we've seen him after losses where he's been more melancholy. Yesterday he seemed kind of angry. Did you notice a change in his demeanor postgame yesterday than in previous losses? And then as a head coach, how does that translate to you when you're talking to him, especially on a Monday?

DAVE CANALES: I can't say specifically, but we'll follow back up. We have our Monday afternoon conversation. We get on the phone and just connect about what we saw,



what we're looking at going forward. We'll make sure we connect on that.

Q. You went from having four quarterbacks on the roster, practice squad and otherwise, to two. Are you bringing Hendon back or what are you going to do?

DAVE CANALES: We'll bring one of those guys back this week.

Q. Going back to your time in Seattle and looking at the progression you guys had, have you seen any kind of kind of comparisons, similarities, to this team knowing you've had some of the ups and downs this season as you guys progressed back then?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, I think philosophically it was the belief in playing a physical brand of football, which starts with stopping the run and being able to run the ball.

I know that that process takes some belief and buy-in from the group. You know, while it may not be the coolest thing for wide receivers to be blocking a bunch, it's required and it's very important. Our guys understand that. We're growing to appreciate that part more.

But the trade-off is when we do this, let's make the pass game come alive and pay off for all the times we head in there and all of a sudden safety thinks they're blocking me and I'm going behind them on a route and all that.

So that whole thing really plays into itself, and then it also just makes for really physical practices where the defense is seeing those runs and they can pride themselves on being tough and physical.

So it's a mentality that we're committed to. But there is a complement to it that we're working on and need to make come alive, because the best teams I was on in Seattle there was a great balance and we were finding explosives at a higher rate. That's what we're tasked with and that's what we're attacking right now.

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