

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Coach Dave Canales

Weekday Press Conference



DAVE CANALES: Another beautiful day in Charlotte. Got back out on the grass. Guys are focused and ready to go. It's a blessing to be able to get out there, and it was upwards of high 60s and low 70s, just a perfect day to get work in. A lot of joy on the grass, guys understanding where we're at and what's in front of us, and the focus was there. Really excited about it.

Q. I know the injury report won't come out until later but didn't see Cade Mays out there today. Can you shed light on what happened yesterday and the plan going forward?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, finished practice and just wasn't quite feeling right. When we looked back at it afterwards, looked at the film, you could see where he was starting to get a little bit tender and sensitive on the ankle, so we evaluated him afterwards, and today just didn't feel like we could get him turned around, so we're going to shut him down for this week.

Q. That means Austin at the --

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, so Austin will go in and play center.

Q. Any possibility of promoting Nick Samac to the center --

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, that's the plan right now is to get Nick back up there so we have two good centers ready to go.

Q. And then at the linebacker spot, how is Trevin -- I know he's week to week, but on Thursday you talked about, hey, we've got to figure out where Trevin is before all these other dominos can fall. How has Trevin Wallace progressed?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, didn't feel like we turned the corner quickly enough to feel confident to put him back out there, so we weren't able to get him work today, so looks

like we're going into this weekend and Trevin will not be playing.

Q. Does that mean Krys Barnes is going to get a third --

DAVE CANALES: Yep, we'll get Krys Barnes up, Claud will be ready to go, Muma played a couple of snaps last game, so the guys are ready. Brought in Jacoby Windmon who's been with us before on the practice squad. So just making sure we have enough bodies in that room to get that done, and of course you understand the implication on special teams, making sure we have these guys available to cover kicks.

Q. Just curious, Brock Purdy comes back last week after not being a part of that conversation for most of the season. Is there a challenge of knowing that a quarterback is really good but you don't have a ton of film on him this year? How does that impact y'all's game plan?

DAVE CANALES: The good part is we have a lot of film on him over the years, and looking at their system, they really just continued to build with Mac Jones and still attack with the same type of concepts, and Brock got back in there, and they look fluid. They look like they're together and picked up right where he left off with Christian and certainly Kittle and some of the other guys, a really good group of pros in the wide receiver room, guys that he's worked with before.

We expect their best, and we're going off of what they did recently, but we have a lot of information on what they've been doing in the last couple of years, too.

Q. Going back to the offensive line, it seems like y'all have had a new lineup every week. Does that feel normal now, having something different every week?

DAVE CANALES: It's pretty common league-wide. Specifically for us with some of the changes we have, there's two ways to look at it. For me, I'm always looking at opportunities for guys to show us what they can do and how they can help our team win. These are great



opportunities for these men, and they work so hard to have these moments to get into games, to help their teammates, to advance their careers. So when they happen, we count on them.

We approach every game that way at every position. If you're not the starter, you have to have that mindset to be prepared. You may not get all the reps, but you've got to be ready to go, and that's paid dividends by being focused and working on it and having all the communication that happens in the building with the coaches.

Q. Trevis Gibson is a guy that y'all got from the 49ers earlier this year. Has he been able to shed any light on how to stop this offense? How have you been able to use him as a resource this week?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, really valuable just to be able to talk to him from a defensive standpoint, certainly, and then from special teams, as well, because he was a contributor for them in the coverage and return units. Some things. We try to compete, we try to use all the information that we have in house. We're just happy to have Trevis and the impact that he's had, being able to give us a good solid pro, getting in his rotations, playing the run game well, and showing some flashes of rush, as well.

Really grateful for that part of it, his contribution that way, and then all the bonus stuff, we asked all the right questions and tried to dig what we could.

Q. I know that Carson, California, is far away from San Francisco but still in California. Do you feel any personal sentimentality going back to your home state?

DAVE CANALES: I love going back to Cali. Being in Seattle for 13 years, playing the Rams every year, playing the Niners every year and going back there, the ball just grips kind of nice in that weather and it spins just right. Certainly In-N-Out will be a part of this trip for me, Double-Doubles for everyone, animal style fries. But the whole family is coming up, so this will be a great moment for us. My nephew, Elisha, he plays for the Fresno State Bulldogs, and he's a redshirt freshman. He's redshirting this year, but a good opportunity as my daughter is a sophomore in high school to get around a campus and take a look at what he's doing out there.

The whole family will be out there. It'll be a great experience. I'll see them a little bit in some tiny windows. This is a business trip, as you know, and we're focused on this game. The opportunity is right in front of us, a conference opponent, a team that I really respect. That will be the focus, but it'll be great to see my family and know

that Lizzy and the crew is out there, as well.

Q. It's been a while since this team had a winning record at Thanksgiving week. What does that speak to the work and the preparation and how far you've come to have these meaningful games at this point of the year?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's about consistency and the improvement that has to happen throughout the year is what I'm most proud of. We've battled to be in this position that we're in, and now the challenge is to keep that focus and to continue to get better.

The teams in this time of the year going into the end of the season that can find a way to improve fundamentally are the teams that set themselves up for success. We have to be that. We have to make sure that our principles, the things we care about show up every day at practice and then show up on the games late in the season right now.

So I'm just really proud of the group. I'm really proud of this team that battles and fights every game all the way to the end to try and put us in this position.

Q. Your evaluation of Corey Thornton, what do you see about him and maybe the scheme versatility that he brings being a big guy maybe in the slot covering tight ends or big receivers?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, he did a great job for us last week. He stepped in and helped his teammates and made some plays. He made some impacts knocking the ball down a couple times, making some plays at the nickel and the safety position. So gives us a little versatility there. He can also play outside, so that's also a good reminder that if he had to go outside, he could.

This also just speaks to the hard work. This is a really competitive young man, a focused young man. He looked around. He saw what Mike Jack was doing early on, the habits of taking -- Mike Jack taking care of his body, how he studies, how he goes about his business. He's very serious and professional that way.

That's the challenge we always have for our young players is if you don't have a process, look around. You'll find a pro out here that has a great process, and you can emulate some of those things. The hard work is paying off for him, and the goal right now is to just continue to stay humble, stay hungry, be focused and be locked in with your teammates and communicate on game day.

Q. Chuba has one of the best pass blocking rates for a running back in the league. I don't think he's given up



a pressure all year. As he gets more and more comfortable coming back from the calf, is that a way to get him on the field more, maybe RPOs or something like that?

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. Anyway we can use these guys we try to, and Chuba, it's from his study habits. He's really conscientious. He's into it, and he talks to the guys. When our offensive line group is going through pressures, Chuba is down there talking to the guys, where should my eyes be on this one. If Bryce edits the protection, being connected to all that, and he's right in the middle of all of it.

Q. What do you do on long flights? Do you fall asleep? Do you watch movies? What's Dave Canales' routine?

DAVE CANALES: A little bit of each, just try and shift my focus from the call sheet and the rhythm of the calls, how they should come off. Brad sits right across the aisle from me, so we're talking. Then for a long flight, shut it down for a second, watch a movie, maybe read a book or something.

But it does give us an opportunity to be able to sit there and just look at the type of attack, and while I love playing games at home, I know there's this cool element of all being together and around each other so much when we travel, in the hotel, on the planes, coming back, the conversations that happen in those moments are really critical to building a team and building chemistry. So I enjoy being on the road.

I see our guys, they really enjoy it, as well. I look at this one, and it's a long flight, we're going all the way across the country. We have to be able to handle these types of trips for what happens in the long-term to set ourselves up for championship opportunities.

So this is a great one for us here, and we'll certainly enjoy the trip and enjoy the Monday Night Football experience.

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