

Carolina Panthers Media Conference

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Dave Canales

Postgame Press Conference



Carolina Panthers 31, Los Angeles Rams 28

DAVE CANALES: I'm so proud of this group. The resilience, the finish, their ability to really just go blow for blow with an amazing team. First and foremost, got to give the Rams a ton of credit and what they did and what they brought out in us and that's what we needed. We needed that kind of challenge so our guys could rise to the occasion, make plays, have a more balanced attack and be able to play the type of offensive football we know we're capable of.

Defensively, the Rams put together some awe mazing drives, made some incredible plays, some throws, some catches. Got more than we wanted in the run game as well, the Rams did. A lot of stuff to clean up from that aspect. The big return early on, just some adversity that our guys had to face today but the able to continue to battle.

And I got to say, I mean, just Bank of America Stadium, the fans showed up in the weather. It was wet. They were loud and it was noticeable. The third downs especially at the end, we can't take those things for granted and the edge that it gives us on our rushes. Even the last rush that we got the sack fumble, they're up against the clock, there was a delay of game and that just gives us a little bit of an edge to get off the ball, to attack it and come away with a win.

Q. Dave, (inaudible) a short week, missing some really key players on the defensive side of the ball. The way the Rams were playing, not many people outside the building were giving you guys a chance. Can we just talk about the message in the locker room? Not only from you but from (inaudible).

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, the challenge was for the guys and Saturday night just saying we have seen the Rams' best football and they've been playing amazing. I said no one's seen our best yet. While they still made yards and they still did things. Our best football is still out there in

front of us and that's our goal, is to find it. Our guys came together offensively and really executed today and starting with the run game, offensive line, just calling those guys out Ikem and D. Lew and Corbs having an excellent day. Jake Curhan stepping in when we needed him to and Taylor Moton had to come out for a little bit and Yosh had a series in there, but he was able to come back in and finish but we can't do it without those guys because we were able to run the ball like we like to... (inaudible).

Q. What did you see on those plays?

DAVE CANALES: Just match-ups in Jalen Coker, Jalen Coker providing that first touchdown, knowing that we like the match-up outside and he's the guy that's been playing great ball and we haven't been able to really just make him come alive. He was still at four catches, so we still like to see him come away with a few more, but that one and then just being able to run the ball and showing play action for T-Mac's touchdown allowed us to get the one-on-ones, get the box the way we wanted it to, which is the design and the philosophy of what we do.

It was some of those third down runs that got us into those favorable situations that allowed us to be aggressive.

Q. A question about bouncing back, your team hasn't lost back to back games since the first two games of the year. Where does this resilience come from for your group?

DAVE CANALES: It's humility. It's playing games where we're humbled by not having great execution and knowing we have to get back to our basics, our fundamentals and execution and this is a humble group. It's the leadership of our team. It's Derrick Brown and Bryce and these guys taking one game and saying we can do better than this and rising to the challenge, making sure that we're being intentional with what we're doing every single day and how critical it is to execute on game day.

Q. Great run with Rico. Chuba, obviously tried to play through injury not that long ago but he looks like he's physically back right now. I know you've been trying to run two backs for a while but injuries have gotten in



the way. What has that allowed you to do, and did you get to kind of fully realize that out there?

DAVE CANALES: It's fresh legs when they go out there. For Rico it was a huge checkdown on the last drive. We didn't come away with points on the drive but putting the ball out there in his hands, whether it's a run or a pass, just get the ball into Rico and Chuba's hands and let them affect the game because of who they are and because of the aggressive style that they play with and so it's a dream to be able to have two guys that you can count on and I can call anything that I have on the call sheet and trust that it's going to get executed.

Q. Your fourth down plays, the touchdowns, what gives you the confidence, what gave you the confidence today?

DAVE CANALES: I always feel confident with Bryce in those situations. The bigger the stakes, the higher the moments. He stays the same in terms of execution, and it allows me to just call the best thing for that area, but, again, it's the balance of the run game and being able to give us those type of opportunities.

Q. Building off the fourth down theme, I believe the Panthers lead the league in fourth down attempts in going for it. I'm sure a lot of that is circumstantial but is there an overall principle that you believe, hey, it's fourth down, we're going to go for it?

DAVE CANALES: Well, who you're playing matters and certainly with the Rams and the high-powered offense that they have, it makes me a little more aggressive and Coach George Li and I have these conversations throughout the week talking about our strategy and who we're playing and if it would be good, what's it looking like on the other side? Let's try to steal a series here if we can. We came out with touchdowns. First downs I would have been thrilled with, but to come away with touchdowns is fantastic. To really capitalize on some of those single high one-on-one match-ups.

That's what we have been hoping our guys do, to be able to come away with those opportunities. It's single high, they're man-to-man. Somebody's got to win, and the guys found great wins for us today.

Q. Did you ever see any difference in Bryce when a game went the way last week's game went? Do you see any difference in him personality-wise through the week?

DAVE CANALES: I do not. No. I see the same type of intentionality. We had great conversations early in the

week and he's like I'm going through my process and we have our checkpoints. After Wednesday for the base game plan, Thursdays with the third down. Fridays and then we wrap up on Saturdays kind of this is how we're going to win this game and we have those conversations and he's executed it and he continues to lead out there, which I'm really proud of him for.

Q. You mentioned Derrick Brown's leadership in helping to get to this point. He had the deflection on the first interception and a strip sack there. What have you seen from him not just today but throughout the time that led to you guys getting to this kind of moment?

DAVE CANALES: There's a resilience and depth of character with Derrick where he's not concerned with what's happening on the other side of the ball and when the offense might be struggling for a series or two, you're going to get the same Derrick Brown regardless, whatever the score is. We're up, we're down. You're going to get the same Derrick Brown and that's what I love to point to for the whole group.

Guys, let's just continue to do our job well. Let's continue to empty the tank every time you're out there on the field, whether it's in practice or the games. That's what continues to show up for Derrick.

Q. Different starting offensive line combinations you used today and it just never seems like those guys are a liability. Nothing is perfect necessarily, but what is it about the way you're coaching them, that Joe Gilbert's preparing these guys that you're running all these different combinations out there and they're getting the job done?

DAVE CANALES: It's just work ethic. It's Goody and Joe. It's the way that they structure the meetings. They're always talking. When you go out there on the field, whether it's a defensive period, you're going to see the offensive line on the side working on something. They're going to be working on a what-if front, a what-if pressure with our protection plan. It's during special teams, they're just constantly working, constantly talking. It's that type of comradery and communication that it requires to play really good football.

Q. Prior to that strip sack, you only had one hit on Stafford. It looked like you played that pretty straight, that third down where Derrick got in there. What did you see and what was the concept there?

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, again, I got to talk about our fan base and the noise, the crowd noise, it matters. It allows



us to just get a jump. We're locked in on the ball. They are basically going off of movement and well. It just gives us an advantage and it felt like we got a jump on that rush.

They protected really well for most of the game. Some of those big shots they had down the field were far beyond the two and a half, three seconds that I'm preaching for the offensive side. Stafford was able to evaluate. Whenever you give him a chance like that, he'll find a completion somewhere but they stayed with it and our mentality is finish. Every single opportunity we get, you're going to get everything we have.

Q. Did you see Hubbard being used as much as you used him... (inaudible).

DAVE CANALES: Absolutely. It's just the way the game played out. We had more attempts. We had more opportunities and then it really came down to some third down conversions and then also some third down runs and Chuba has been our primary third down back right now with the protections, but we also run the ball some. That's a great opportunity to just make sure he gets his touches.

Q. How much satisfaction do you get out of the fact you have the saying it's all about the ball. No turnovers and the preparation for how much wet ball, cold weather, how do you simulate that?

DAVE CANALES: It all starts with the ball. It's how we approach it during the week. It's about the habits. We're constantly, our coaching staff, they're constantly on the defensive side talking about the number of attempts that we get at the ball and offensively we have to make sure that we're wrapping it up in traffic and the guys were great about that today.

Q. What was your reaction on Mike Jackson getting into the end zone?

DAVE CANALES: Unbelievable. First career pick six for Mike, which was really kind of -- I was a little bit shocked but, again, I look back and I was with him for a long time in Seattle and he had some interceptions. I could never remember him running one back. Just a great payoff. The fundamentals were right. His feet were in the ground. He broke on the ball perfectly and came away with the score, it was awesome.

Q. Can you speak to the job Ransom and Smith-Wade did stepping into the starting lineup?

DAVE CANALES: Up and down. I thought Chau Smith-Wade did a really solid job today, whether in base or nickel. Lathan was working through some things. There's

stuff to clean up but he played physical. That's what we count on from him. He showed up making hits in the run game, in the pass game. Had a nice sack. He's a dynamic player. He brings a lot to us and the challenge for him is to continue to be connected in the back half he and Nick Scott, having that communication.

I just kind of ribbed Nick afterwards, come on, you got to get your guy going. There was a couple of things that we could have covered down better in terms of who was where but generally showed up and made his plays.

Q. Bryce, I think it's 11 now fourth quarter overtime game-winning drives. What has he been able to do and what are you seeing from him in those situations?

DAVE CANALES: It's the consistency of play and the thing that I appreciate the most about Bryce is regardless of the moment, regardless of time in the game or the score, when I put the ball in his hands, he stays the same. He stays even. His use are in the right place and he executes the play and finds his best available receiver. That's the part I love just being able to count on with Bryce.

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