

# Carolina Panthers Media Conference

Sunday, December 28, 2025  
Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

## Dave Canales

### Postgame Press Conference



Seattle Seahawks 27, Carolina Panthers 10

DAVE CANALES: First and foremost, gotta give a lot of credit to the Seahawks, coming out here playing tough all day, coming up with some big converges throughout the day.

And then from there I just got to talk about our defense and the amazing game they played to give us opportunities offensively. We didn't do anything with those. Part of that was just the Seahawks having great scheme playing together, making things difficult on us, but we made mistakes. We made mistakes on the offensive side and when you play a good team like this, you have to be able to take advantage. You have to do things right and that's what we have to look at in front of us there. Any questions?

#### **Q. How big an impact was T-Mac's illness and what happened on the interception with him and Bryce?**

DAVE CANALES: He was playing his butt off out there. He looked fast. He was doing everything. If anything, I would say just schematically just trying for me and for Brad, just trying to figure out ways to make sure we create access and opportunities for T-Mac. I didn't see a drop in his game in terms of his performance and all that. I love the fact that he was able to get out there for his teammates and do what he did.

The interception, underthrown slightly there in zone. Love played it low to high. Came up underneath it. We thought we had a nice concept to the boundary right there. There was some space and I think Bryce would be the first one to tell you he would like to be able to put that ball on a line on inside right there.

#### **Q. You weren't able to stretch the field that much, not even really a pass down field. Was that because of the Seattle defense?**

DAVE CANALES: They did a great job having discipline,

staying deep on a lot of our concepts. I think what you saw is a lot of balls go to the check-downs in different ways. They rallied up and tackled us really well. We didn't end up getting a lot of yards out of some of those check-downs, but, you know, when they play it right and the defense plays from depth and they stay on top and disciplined. Wasn't for a lack of trying. We called some passes to try to go down the field, and they did a great job of making the ball get to the check-down and rallied up and made some tackles.

#### **Q. Dave, what are the emotions right now? You saw Tampa Bay lost. You had a chance to win the division. What are the emotions right now with you and in the locker room?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, we definitely feel the missed opportunity but at the same time, we know it's in front of us, it's clearly defined. It was going to come down to this game, us handling our business and facing the Bucs one more time on the last game of the season. Couldn't ask for a better situation for this. The guys are excited and fired up about that and we got to get over the fact that we missed an opportunity with the Bucs losing that game, but our focus has to go to the next one really quickly.

#### **Q. Dave, third and 20, I believe, the facemask penalty on Jaycee Horn.**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah.

#### **Q. What'd you see on first --**

DAVE CANALES: It was unfortunate. He rallies up to make a tackle. He didn't really pull the facemask but there's contact there, you know. He grasped it a little bit and the official called it the way he saw it. Really unfortunate it happened in that situation where we could have had a chance to get the ball back and try to do something.

#### **Q. How do you address missed opportunities behind the scenes? We saw this with the Saints loss and you guys bounced back. How do you bounce back from a performance like this on offense?**



DAVE CANALES: Yeah, it's going to come down to some really basic stuff. From what I could tell live, just whether it was formationally or whether it was just the technique that was involved in what we were asking them to do, we have to make sure we clear those things up so we can play our best ball. Especially when you're playing a really good defense. We have to be sharp. We have to be on our stuff.

**Q. You touched on it, what was your assessment of Bryce Young's day?**

DAVE CANALES: I thought he was competing and he was making the ball go where it was supposed to be. Other than the interception, he was competing and giving us an opportunity and operating if what we were asking him to do.

I'll have to look at the film to get a full grade on it but I saw him out there competing. Making some plays with his legs. Critical fourth down right there on the touchdown drive to be able to get us a new set of downs so that we can stay in the flow of it.

**Q. Dave, on Legette lined up offsidelines on that fourth downplay, what happened there?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, the official tried to warn him. He was telling him he had his foot there. He was trying to let him know and Xavier didn't see what he was doing and thought he was okay on that, so we got to clean that up.

**Q. (Inaudible) for Legette. More concerns or do you still feel confident with him?**

DAVE CANALES: Just keep playing ball. Keep playing ball, keep working on the fundamentals.

**Q. Did you find yourself peeking at the scoreboard at all? Did anyone tell you the Bucs score?**

DAVE CANALES: Not at all. For us it was going to be about playing this game all the way through the duration of it and right until the game got 17 points away from us there at the end, like down ten points with time on the clock felt like we had a good opportunity to make that happen. They got a big sack on us to really create a fourth-and-long situation.

They made it difficult there, but for me, it was just, like, let's compete. Let's find a way to win. We need all those reps. We need everything we can. Every series matters for this group, so wanted to try to take this thing as far as we could.

**Q. The game was out of reach by that point. You took some knees at the end of the game. Why did you do that?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, ran the ball on the first one, and for me, like at that point, 17 points down with the amount of time we had, the important thing for me is to make sure we get to this next game healthy at that point. My brain never went there before that drive, but once they scored that last touchdown, I knew what it was.

And Rico looked good today running the ball when he had chances to touch it and so did Chuba. I just wanted to make sure that we're able to go into this next game at full strength.

**Q. Did you request for the score not to be shown in the stadium?**

DAVE CANALES: They gave me an option, and I really want to treat it like any other game. I wanted to make sure our guys were focused on the task at hand. It's every play, every series that matters right there. Didn't want anybody looking around trying to figure out what was happening based on the score of that one. Let's play our best football. That's the got to be the focus.

**Q. What's the status of Ja'Tavion Sanders and also how him not being there, how that impacted you not being able to use the three tight end personnel group that you use often with the run game?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, definitely took some of our game out of there. We were able to use Jake Curhan a little bit in some of those spots.

JT suffered a broken ankle, so he's going to get surgery tomorrow, I believing, and we're going to miss him a lot because he's been so versatile, a guy that we can really count on.

**Q. Dave, what could you and Brad have done differently, you mentioned to push it down field a little more?**

DAVE CANALES: Yeah, just try to isolate the safeties maybe one-on-one in the middle of the field. They did a great job matching us on the outside and Coach Macdonald did a great job of mixing the types of coverages. Played a little bit more man than they had shown on film. So where we're trying to attack some of the fire zones and different things like that, we shifted to some more runaway type of concepts in case they threw the man out there.



So I think it's just a combination of things, dialing in when they are making this transition, where are those oddballs coming from and making sure we can execute in those spots.

**Q. The resiliency you guys have shown bouncing back from losses like this has been pretty consistent over the last two and a half months. At some point, are you worried that that's going to take its toll? That you've always had to be bouncing back, and is there anything, signs that make you feel like this team could do it one more time?**

DAVE CANALES: It's just who we are. The guys will look at the film and we'll be able to make some corrections and move forward and that's been the response from this group. I don't expect anything different this week.

**Q. You've talked about these championship opportunities for a couple weeks now. How has that prepared you for what is a win-or-go-home championship opportunity?**

DAVE CANALES: It's to have that mindset, to know that each game truly is a championship opportunity. Here we had one today against a fabulous team and we couldn't have asked for a better situation here to see where we're at and to see if we can call it up and play a really good team and come away with it. We weren't able to do that but we have another opportunity in front of us.

The guys will be used to having this championship mindset. The way I see it is we've been playing playoff football for over a month and every single one of these games has mattered. That's the approach that we have to take. It heightens the focus and the guys come in ready, ready to work.

**Q. Dave, they haven't announced kickoff yet. You guys could be a candidate for Saturday. Do you have a presence?**

DAVE CANALES: Either way I know that if you play Saturday, if we do win that game, it allows you to kind of have a normal week of prep in case you are the Saturday wildcard so there's an advantage there. But we're comfortable with whatever slot they'll put us in and we'll adjust accordingly with our week. Thank you.

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