



POSTGAME QUOTES

**Carolina Panthers vs. New England Patriots
Friday, August 24, 2018**

Carolina Panthers

***Head Coach Ron Rivera
Carolina Panthers***

RE: Jeremiah Sirles injury

It's a hamstring, we'll further evaluate tomorrow and go from there.

RE: Evaluating Taylor Moton and Greg Van Roten in pass protection and run blocking tonight

Well from what I can see I thought our offensive line as a whole played very well. I was very pleased with some of the things the veterans did in protecting the quarterback, giving him time to throw the ball, some things that we did right early on I was really happy about that. Pleased with the second bunch, would like to see us run block a little better, but man they did a nice job in terms of pass protection for the most part, and again, it's a tribute to how hard they work, but also to the coaching and I really appreciate what Coach Matsko and Travelle Wharton have done with those young guys.

RE: Cam Newton diving head first in a preseason game

I always worry about him, but that's him. He plays to win, and I'd much rather he didn't, but he's going to give us all he has because he wants to do his best out there.

RE: Injury worry concerning Newton in the first quarter

Well what happened was when he came down on his head, they obviously put him in the concussion protocol to check him real quick, and the truth of the matter was that the helmet had slid down over his eye. So once he cleared the protocol they just wanted to make sure the forehead area was ok, and the eye was fine. He was cleared obviously, and he came back in and finished up.

RE: Following the injury scare, on following drives Cam was able to keep plays alive with his feet and find open receivers

The consistency of finding receivers downfield is what we are looking for. Again, that's always been a part of his game, I don't think he gets enough credit for his movement in trying to find receivers downfield he did a very nice job with that. I think again, the more and more he plays within what we are doing, the more and more confidence he's going to have. I thought Devin Funchess stepped up and had a big game today, and did those kind of things that we need him to do. This is his kind of game, and he won out there which is good to see.

RE: What he saw out of his two starting rookie secondary players [Donte Jackson and Rashaan Gaulden]

I was pretty excited about them. We did some things I think we could've done better as a whole. I think we had to give them a little more tools too as far as the game plan was concerned. After we get a chance to really look at it, I'll be able to assess it better. I thought the things that Donte [Jackson] did are the types of things that you

want to give yourself an opportunity to make plays out there. I thought Rashaan [Gaulden] did some nice things. I thought again his ability to see the field and move and put himself in position showed. He still has a long way to go. He's a young guy that does some good things though. I like how he came up inside a couple times on the run, and I also liked how he controlled some of the communications that went on out there. We made a check and he got Mike Adams back, and he came down and fit the box nicely. Again, those young guys really stepped up and did some nice things.

RE: What he means by giving Gaulden and Jackson more tools

We did some things with our game planning, but I think we could've done a couple more things, but these are all things that you hold onto once you get into getting ready for the regular season.

RE: Explanation from the officials in regards to the clock towards the end of the first half

More so than anything else it was just that they missed it. It was one of those things where he went down, and they were hustling to get the spot and they made their call. I'll take this much though, it just showed us that we can hustle down and spike the ball, and still give us enough time to kick it so we got some good work out of it.

RE: Greg Olsen giving his opinion to the referees following his catch that resulted in the clock confusion

Of course he did, it was just one of those things, that again, that's why we're going through the preseason, it's preseason for all of us.

RE: Pleased or not with how the offense was able to run the two minute drill before half

Yes I was, I was very pleased. I was pleased with a lot of things, I was a little disappointed with how we got in the red zone early on and we had to kick field goals. When you play good teams like this, you have to score touchdowns in order to beat them. That's how you beat teams that have the type of firepower they have, especially with Tom Brady at quarterback. So, it's something we will go back and look at, and some things that we have to get better at and correct, because again to beat good teams you've got to score touchdowns.

RE: Defensive coordinator Eric Washington being fired up about the red zone defense

Yes he was, we have been good with it so far this preseason, and hopefully it carries over into the regular season. They did some nice things down there, and when you do that you give yourself a chance to win.

RE: On the extended play of defensive ends Bryan Cox Jr. and Marquis Haynes

When you watch what they did, and you see the things that they do, they bring some energy to the group. They're very explosive guys, quick off the ball. Bryan Cox did some really nice things in the run game as well. Marquis Haynes is a guy that can give us some pass rush, some edge rush. Again, both young guys are doing great for us, and we will continue to evaluate.

RE: The status of cornerback Kevon Seymour

Well Kevon Seymour had a root canal.

RE: The two rookie secondary players [Jackson and Gaulden] were five years old when Tom Brady was a rookie, does it make Rivera feel old

No, hopefully it makes Tom Brady feel old. Wow.

RE: Taylor Heinicke and Garrett Gilbert's preseason performance so far

I think they're both playing well right now, and both guys are showing that they belong on our roster. Again, we have to continue to evaluate as we go forward.

RE: Cam Newton's performance through the first three games of the preseason

I think again, he's learning to play more and more consistent. He's making good decisions off of good reads, and he's finding the right opportunity to put the ball in there. To force some throws as opposed to holding onto it and waiting and waiting. He's done a nice job, he really has. I'm very pleased with his effort and the way he's worked. I think it reflects and shows on how this team has played so far. We still have a long way to go, and again, this is the preseason and we are just learning.

***Wide Receiver Devin Funchess
Carolina Panthers***

RE: Consistently moving the football tonight

The first drive was everything – 16 plays, I believe. We just came out. Coach Turner and Coach Rivera said we lost the toss, we're going to take the ball. We went out there and made a statement, a statement we needed to make.

RE: How he grades the offensive performance

It was solid. We still made some mistakes. I feel like we could've put up 21 points, the first group. We came out with that mentality to go and attack them, and that's what we did.

RE: Everything coming together in the third preseason game

Most definitely. We had a strong, solid week of practice. Coach Rivera has been on us – perfection, perfection. That's what we did.

***Carolina Panthers
Quarterback Garrett Gilbert***

RE: Relationship with Mose Frazier

Mose does a great job. He and I had a good little rapport last year in the preseason and that's continued on in to training camp and this preseason. He does a great job getting open and obviously finishing the catch and finishing the play.

RE: How they prepared for New England

Each week it's obviously different. Teams are working on things they've installed. Obviously we're working on things we've installed, so you see some different looks. You've just got to be good with your eyes and be able to recognize things pre-snap and then respond, if and when they change post-snap.

RE: Touchdown pass to Mose Frazier

He (Mose) did a great job at the top of his route giving his man a little something and worked his way open over the middle. He did a really good job with the route. The offensive line deserves a lot of credit for the job they did out front to be able to hold those guys and give me some time.

***Carolina Panthers
Defensive End Marquis Haynes***

RE: Performance as training camp has progressed

I feel like my first three games have been progressing. I'm getting better and better each game. The coaches see it and Mario and some of the veterans, they see it. I've got to keep on contributing what I can and keep on improving.

RE: His speed

Speed kills. I got to learn how to use my speed to my full potential. I've got the fastest get off and I've got to be able to use that to affect the quarterback and affect offensive tackles.

RE: Strengths of his speed

My speed helps me create the momentum towards the tackle so as he's getting off I've already got my fist two to three steps in the ground to where I can speed to power or set the edge up high.

Linebacker Luke Kuechly
Carolina Panthers

RE: His strong play in the red zone

Sometimes, the plays come to you. Sometimes, they don't. The one run play, the D-line got off and I was able to run to the ball clean and a lot of that has to do with those guys – Kawann and Dontari and the two guys on the edge. So sometime, plays come your way. Sometimes, they don't and a couple came to me on that one.

RE: Linebacker Shaq Thompson

Shaq's a stud and I think we've all known that. It's just when you have Thomas in front of you, it's tough but Shaq's played well when he has played at linebacker. You look at it in '16, he played at linebacker quite a bit and then he has played for Thomas and I in a couple spots and has always played well. He's around the ball, he's active, he's really smart and I think that's something that he doesn't get enough credit for. He really understands the game, the defense, he can play all four spots and he's a luxury that we have had for the last few years and he's actually going to have an opportunity to really get out there and play some backer this year.

RE: Where the team is moving into week one without Thomas Davis

Yeah, we are going to miss having Thomas. Thomas is the leader of our room, he's the leader of this team. We are going to miss having him around. Shaq will do an excellent job, but when Thomas gets back, he's going to be hungry and he's going to be fresh. So I'm sure he's going to be working his butt off those four weeks he's off but Shaq is the luxury that we've had and with Thomas not here, it's going to be a bummer. You always miss a guy like Thomas in the locker room, at practice, in the meeting rooms, on the field – he's a guy that's very difficult to replicate. His presence is felt wherever he is at and we're going to miss him, I'm going to miss him. But Shaq will do a good job and our guys will step up and then Thomas will come back fresh after he is able to come back.

Tackle Taylor Moton
Carolina Panthers

RE: Consistently moving the football tonight

Ultimately, just want to come out and get better. Just focus on doing my job each and every play.

RE: The injuries along the offensive line

Absolutely. I think no matter who comes in there, I think that they're going to be ready to go. We have a great coach who makes sure we're all on the same page and doing the right things. Ultimately, whoever goes down, I know we have someone to go in and step up to the plate.

RE: Cohesion along the offensive line through injuries

I think we're a tight-knit group. I think we have a lot of chemistry between each other so when we go out there, I think that whoever has to go anywhere, we're ready to rock and we're all on the same page. Having leaders like Ryan Kalil, he does a great job making sure that the chemistry is how it's supposed to be and we're all working together as one.

RE: The first drive of the game

It was good. I know we wanted to come off the bat and start strong, and I think that we really did that. We moved down the field pretty well so we'll continue to build on that.

Carolina Panthers

Quarterback Cam Newton

RE: Head-first dive in the 2nd quarter.

A lot of things were going through my mind. Most importantly I was thinking to myself, "It's preseason, it's preseason. What do I do? I want to get a first down, but I want to bring this plane in as smoothly as possible". As I'm thinking all that, my man went low and I tried to avoid the hit and helicoptered out of there or whatever. The helmet came down on my eye. So, I'm not feeling the best right now.

RE: How would you describe the landing?

It could have been better. It was a lot going on. A lot of malfunctions from the cockpit. Buttons were getting stuck. Oh my goodness, it was bad. It was real bad. All-in-all the offense really played well. We just have to find ways to punch it in. Getting points is good, but getting touchdowns is better. The inopportune penalty from the false start, just a lack of focus and obviously understanding the time and the place. A young guy in Ian [Thomas] who's busting his tail each and every day and went through it through practice. He'll get better, we will get better as an offense in knowing that we had a lot of opportunities that we could have gotten touchdowns and we just have to execute better.

RE: Did you know you were fine in the tent?

I'm still fine, it's just my eye hurts if you can't tell. There wasn't swelling by that time on the field, I just kept telling them my eye hurt as if someone poked me in my eye. The helmet just came down and it didn't feel good.

RE: Sidestepping the rusher vs. leading head-first.

Just moving the football, I don't think anybody is complaining about that. Whether it's me running, throwing, blocking, catching, whatever. My job as the quarterback is to move the ball downfield and, however it comes, I'm a fan of it.

RE: Was it good to live action the two-minute drill?

It really is and for us to get a questionable call at the end. Not only that, us respond and still get lined up and be able to have one second left on the clock. I'm not sure what happened, but I'm sure it will be reviewed. At the end of the day, I'm happier with the fact that we didn't let it deter us from clocking the ball and keeping that one second on the clock. We don't know, it may come back up during the season and everyone having the wherewithal to get to the line of scrimmage and get set is very pivotal.

RE: 68 percent passing completion in the preseason.

I just want to win. That's it. That's all I want to do. I just want to win. I want to put myself in the best position to make sure I am my best self to accommodate this team and win a lot of football games.

RE: Have you ever had a shiner like that before?

Yeah, back in middle school. I had one of these, but you should have seen the other person and what they had. I'm just teasing, but no man. I feel it growing too. It's like the pressure in my eye. I'm the unincorporated assigned coach for swag on the Carolina Panthers. I'm still looking to find a person to send these invoices to because I feel like I'm responsible for a lot of people upping their swag, which leads into better game play. That's a different story. I'm not used to seeing myself feel like this, you know? So it's getting to me, but what to do? I'm just going to find a lot of ice on this off day and soak in it.

RE: You only missed 4 plays, why not take more time to recover?

No, I only know how to play this game one way and a lot of times it becomes my curse, but in more ways it's my gift. Like I said, if this was a regular season game I kind of question that happening to me because I was really thinking like, "Man, it's preseason". You know I always tease folks with the analogy with playing too nice. I was nice that time. That's over and done with.

RE: What did Norv [Turner] say about your eye?

Who, Norv? That's my guy. It's funny because you guys' stereotype of Norv is kind of how I thought Norv would be and it's completely opposite. Norv is very mild-manner, jokester that I wasn't expecting, but he comes to the side... No, his son comes and he just said a couple of expletives kind of joking about my eye and I was like, "Oh my God I know I look ugly". That's just how this locker room is and we respond to it. I really appreciate him. It starts with Norv as the coordinator, but it trickles down. We get a lot of work done and he's on everybody to play extremely fast, play physical, and not only that have fun doing it. With that mentality, you can't lose. We want to do right by that and have the professional approach each and every day.

RE: Have you upped Norv's swag?

You know the old analogy, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. I'm trying to work on his son for the most part. He's got a shipment coming in next week, so hopefully that'll help big time.

***Carolina Panthers
Tight End Greg Olsen***

RE: Referee's call before the half

They were very good about it, they were very professional about it. After halftime they talked to Ron, they came up to me. I think from their angle they thought I got touched while inbounds. They were very good about it. It happens. We would've like to have had another attempt at the end zone, but at least we were able to at least spike the ball and get the points. It happens.

RE: Cam diving head-first in a preseason game

There's no difference to him. He was thinking about getting that first down. I'm just glad he's alright.

RE: First group's offensive performance

I think we were good moving the ball. I think we might have only punted once. I thought we should have done better. Our first red zone our heads popped off, we didn't do a very good job down there executing. We need to be better there. Then we settled for another field goal on the second drive. Then we punted and ended with two minutes. Not getting any touchdowns with the first group is not ideal, but I thought we moved the ball. We controlled the pace of the game for the most part throughout, so some good things to build on.

***Wide Receiver Torrey Smith
Carolina Panthers*****RE: If the Panthers are capable of winning the Super Bowl**

Absolutely, but you have to work, you have to earn that. It doesn't just happen by the preseason. I think overall in camp, we had a solid camp as a receiving corps. I think that in the preseason, we have done a good job as well. But it's only as good as it is in the regular season. Everything is a lot harder in the regular season and execution and everything is a lot more key.

RE: What stood out most since camp started

I think just growth. Being able to see other guys grow. Seeing DJ be able to play all the different positions. Curt grow with his confidence and playmaking ability. I guess most of the younger guys. You know what to expect out of Funch since he's been playing a few years now. And J-Wright, he knows this offense better than the coaches that are here that aren't Norv. It's kind of what you expect. I think the biggest thing is just the growth from the younger players.

***Wide Receiver Jarius Wright
Carolina Panthers*****RE: Cam Newton going air born for a first down**

It shows what kind of guy Cam is. We all know it's the preseason and he didn't have to do that, but it was a third down and Cam wanted to stay on the field. It shows what kind of guy he is.

RE: Winning the game

It was good. You know, it's like a dress rehearsal for us so we wanted to come and we wanted to show what we can do against a good team, so we're pretty confident and we like the way we played.

RE: Moving the ball

It definitely gives us confidence going into the season. Playing a great team like that, great defense, a lot of great players, a lot of really good players – so for us to come out play the way we did, against a team like that, it definitely gives us confidence going into Week One.