



POSTGAME QUOTES

Carolina Panthers vs. Cincinnati Bengals
Sunday, September 23, 2018

Carolina Panthers

Head Coach Ron Rivera
Carolina Panthers

RE: His envision for offense with the hiring of Norv Turner

Yes. I really appreciate the things we saw today. I thought they did some really good things. Coach really gave Cam Newton some options, some opportunities. Cam made some great decisions. Christian McCaffrey ran hard, played well. I like the way Coach mixed up the different personnel groupings. I thought that was outstanding and really used them to our advantage and it showed. Bringing CJ Anderson in and running what we call 21 Pony with all the shifts, motions and movements led to some plays. To answer your question, yes, that is what we envisioned.

RE: Four interceptions today

I'm really pleased with what Eric Washington and the staff came up with. I thought they did a great job game planning and implementing the plan. I know it was a little shaky at first when they came out but they did some things and then on the sidelines I thought Eric and the coaches made some really good adjustments and decisions. We gave up a couple of chunk passes that we have to go back and look at and get those things corrected. I thought the pass rush really came up big. Efe Obada got an opportunity to play and really showed very well for us today. I'm really pleased with that. I thought Julius Peppers made some plays. Captain Munnerlyn came up with a nice play for us on a blitz. I really like the team effort that we got from our team.

RE: Today's game ball recipients

It wasn't hard. It really wasn't. Efe Obada got one and Donte Jackson got one just because the young man came back off of the injury and getting a couple picks like that and tackled the way he did too. Of course Efe making a couple of exciting plays too and that's really cool for him.

RE: McCaffrey's success in the passing game last week set up today's success in the running game

It may have. I think again, his ability to run the ball inside, he doesn't get enough credit for it. I thought some of the running plays on the inside were excellent, very well blocked. The offensive line again did a stellar job. I know we gave up a scary sack but other than that I thought the guys really responded and did a great job.

RE: Cincinnati's response early on to counter McCaffrey's receiving ability

That's a question for Coach Norv. He is calling the game according to his field, what he sees and the match ups he is trying to create stuff like that. I don't want to try and guess what he is thinking but along those lines, yes, probably.

RE: Have you ever had a player have a first NFL game like Efe Obada had today?

I have been around guys who have had days like that. There is a Mark Anderson who played for the Bears back in 2006. He had one of those types of games. It's really neat to watch guys get those opportunities to play well. Like I said, very happy for him.

RE: Decision to make Obada active after he hadn't been the last couple of games

What we have been doing to watching the young guys practice and Eric Washington and I talked about it and we felt we were going to tell these young guys whoever we feel strongly about their practice habits, we are going to give opportunities. Last week I thought Marquis Haynes out practiced everybody and then this week I thought Efe practiced very well. Eric and I talked about it and so we activated Efe. We also had an extra spot because of the injuries so we also activated Bryan Cox Jr. who had a good week. Marquis had a good week as well but again, just looking, I thought Efe deserved the opportunity.

RE: Rashaan Gaulden not playing defensively until late in the game

Again, when we knew the ball was going to get up in the air. Colin Jones is a very physical player, a downhill player and Gaulden has some athleticism and range. We decided down the stretch we were going to give Gaulden some opportunities.

RE: Devin Funchess responding well after drop

Without a doubt. That's the beauty of it. Cam Newton is developing a rapport with his receivers and he will come right back to those guys because he knows they have run their routes hard. They understand what it takes and makes plays. Just really pleased with some of the effort we got from our receiving corps. Those guys did some really good things and made some plays when we needed them, especially down the stretch.

RE: Aspects that come together to get a successful long running play

It is all about the timing of the blocking up front. Again, if the blocking is on time and where it needs to be you can get those creases and then they open. It's trusting that they are going to be there. If for whatever reason you miss a block or you are late getting to it, that crease will close and it happened a couple of times. When he hit those creases there was some really good blocking upfront. I'm very pleased with the effort and not just that, there is blocking down field. For the ball to pop, that means second level guys are making their blocks, tight ends and wide receivers. That is a big part of what we are doing. The wide receivers are doing a heck of a job blocking for us.

RE: Ryan Kalil

He is probably one of the most athletic centers I have been around. To see him get around the corner, run the way he does, it is pretty impressive.

RE: What the win provides going into the early bye week

It makes life a lot easier, that's for sure. It can provide some momentum. I really do, I really think it can. I really appreciate the way the guys took last week and practiced last week and prepared themselves for this game. There has been a lot of tough things going on here in the Carolinas and I just really appreciate the way they focused. It was kind of a nice deal for our guys to go on break with a win.

RE: What needs to be addressed with team defensively in the red zone

Again, we are playing against some pretty good offenses and that's the truth of the matter. Atlanta is a heck of an offense and did a nice job. Unfortunately, we came out on the losing end last week. But this week, I thought our guys played hard and fought. We gave up a couple of plays. That's going to happen. I'm just going to be honest about that when you watch it on tape. Now there are some things we most certainly do need to look at and I know we have about six days as coaches to take a look at it and kind of come up with some ideas.

RE: Heat a factor in today's game; affecting Luke Kuechly's cramps

Oh yeah, it was sneaky humid. You know the way Luke plays, he leaves it all on the field. So, we had to treat him, get him taken care of and he came back and finished up the game for us. David Mayo played the mike linebacker for us and that was really good to have a young man like that in position, ready to roll.

RE: Defense's excitement on sidelines on Efe Obada's performance

Absolutely. Whether it was Efe making a play or we got the interceptions from Donte Jackson, stuff like that. When guys make plays, to see the infectious attitude of just excitement, I think that is a big part of team football.

RE: How do you continue to improve offense with an early bye week

The truth of the matter is just practice. That is all we can do. We will practice, get these guys away from football for a few days, let them relax and then bring them back. We will practice smartly next week in terms of preparation for our next opponent.

RE: 21 Ponies

It's just the idea of having two running backs in at the same time with a tight end and two wide receivers. Again, it gives us options whether we hand the ball to CJ Anderson or we give it to Christian McCaffrey or Cam Newton throws it to one of those two guys, throws it to the tight end or wide receivers. It just gives us the opportunity to put a guy in a position out there that they have to account for him.

RE: Ian Thomas' comfort level on the field

He is getting more and more comfortable. I think Cam is getting more and more comfortable with him. I'm pretty excited about his development. It is one of those things that we know when we get Greg Olsen back out there with Ian and Chris Manhertz, I think our tight end group can be pretty formidable.

***Quarterback Cam Newton
Carolina Panthers***

RE: Today's performance

It was a great team win. Winning at home is very important, very pivotal for us and our success. For us to get a win heading into the bye and get a lot of guys mended up, it's pivotal for us to come back and pick up right where we left off.

RE: The offensive line

At the end of the day, you've got a job to do. It doesn't matter who it is, it doesn't matter if we pick up somebody tomorrow, their expectations are to come in and play and give effort and that's what those guys have been doing. Yeah, we've got a lot of guys that probably weren't our prototypical line when the season started, but they're doing a hell of a job and you can't tell a difference. It's obvious that there's going to be a lot of pressure – good pressure – to see guys playing with confidence, knowing exactly what to do and we're still expecting big things from guys that are still there.

RE: Christian McCaffrey's performance

C-Mac is a ballplayer. It's hard for a lot of people to label him, they want to say he's this but playing like today, he's obviously not just a receiving back, he's a total running back. He shows signs that this is not a fluke, he's been doing this his whole career – collegiately as well as professionally. The fact that we have a special talent,

you can't really gear in by using packages for him, he's in there every single down and the more comfortable he gets – not only in passing routes but in blocking protections as well – that is a big thing for our offense to have.

RE: Whether today's offense is what Norv Turner wants

We spoke momentarily afterwards and it's just keeping defenses off balance. Keeping a balanced run game, balanced pass game, taking shots when they're there, guys making contested catches, guys blocking on the perimeter, guys busting their tails all over the football field offensively and defensively. A very stingy defense, any time a ball is popped up in the air, guys aren't looking to bat it down, they're looking to create turnovers. When you've got a team playing confident like we're playing, it makes us hard to beat but as we go into this bye week, we know we can't let off the pedal. We have to mend up, get guys back, get guys healthy, keep guys healthy that are healthy and be ready to go when we get back.

RE: How things picked up going into the second quarter

One good thing: we didn't deter off our game plan. We went three-and-out which isn't good early but that didn't force us to panic, we stayed on our plays that we already had pre-determined and seeing what the defense gave us through that allowed us to keep finding different openings as well in the defense.

RE: His fumble recovery

I've been bashed before for not jumping on fumbles, so I just wanted to make sure, come hell or high water, I was going to get that fumble. Just trying to create good habits.

RE: Donte Jackson's confidence and play

Coach has said it numerous times, we embrace egos. Especially if it's controlled. Any time you've got a guy that's feeling confident – if you don't have confidence in yourself, who in the hell do you expect to have confidence in you? That's how we feel. It's not like it is conduct detrimental to the team or it's taking away from somebody else's preparation. Donte's been a person who has come in and surprised me just off the mere fact of his learning ability. He just sits back, on the field he's a different person but when we're in meetings he's extremely quiet and very observant and you respect that as a vet looking and seeing guys take notes and see and gauge the tempo of the team. He's been asking questions, doing his job and making great opportunities when they're there to be made.

RE: Efe Obada's performance

Opportunity. Opportunity knocked on his door and he opened it smiling. Another quiet person but when I come in – I try to do my contrast therapy, hot tub, cold tub – and I'm big on meditation, seeing yourself doing certain things, putting good energy into the world and every time I see him in there, he has his eyes closed. He's very intellectual, super smart, practices extremely hard and for him to kind of be a developmental player, not having the big university, just the guy that came aboard and really looking at it and looking at guys and trying to see how to practice and how to go about being a professional athlete and to see him have a day like today, the sky's the limit for him.

RE: The offensive line and the offense's 230 rushing yards

We want to impose our will. We are a team that can attack a defense many different ways and as we go about it as the game progresses, I see the body language of the defensive line and the body language of defenders and they're wearing down. Just another achievement for the offensive line to see them gaining confidence as the game goes on, to see them finishing blocks and allowing running lanes to open up. You try to create good habits as the season goes on.

RE: How it feels to break the tie with the Bengals

Great. Really good. They started off on fire. I remember what you're referring to, last time we played them, every time we had something, they came back with something and every time they had something, we came back with something, so for us to get a win today is big. It's a sneaky win for us, very big for our confidence going forward. That was a good team that we played today, we understand that and they were coming in extremely confident, 2-0, and we wanted to just play Panther football – be very stingy on defense, opportunistic on offense – and that's where we got us.

RE: His unsportsmanlike penalty

The defender just kept slapping at the ball. He kept slapping, tapping, missed, slap, miss, slap, miss, so I just gave him the ball. I didn't know that was taunting, can't do that. Kids, if you're watching, don't do that at home. I was more embarrassed off the mere fact that I got a penalty because I'm always the preacher of "focus, hone in" as I'm taking the walk of shame back to the bench, I was like "I need to listen to my own self talk." But I'm just happy that our defense bailed me out and we were able to get the ball back.

RE: Ryan Kalil's effort on the 24-yard screen pass to CJ Anderson

That's not something that I'm surprised about. Kalil is a guy who effort is his thing. He's not overly big, he's not super strong; his mental approach to this game, that's his edge. I'm happy for him.

***Cornerback Captain Munnerlyn
Carolina Panthers***

RE: A big win going into the bye week

It definitely is big, it will leave a good taste in our coaches' mouths. We know we still have a lot of work to do, and a long season to go.

RE: The game changing when Bengal's wide receiver A.J. Green left the game due to injury

Oh man, you never want to see guys get hurt, I don't want to see guys get hurt because I want to compete against the best. It definitely changed the game, we just tried to make it tougher on the guys they had out there.

RE: Starting to get the feel for what this team is about

Well, not yet we still have a lot of work to do. You know, we aren't going to quit. We know one thing, we aren't going to quit. We are going to keep pressing through anything, just like everybody says, "Keep Pounding." We are definitely going to keep pounding no matter what, and I think that shows everytime we step on the football field.

***Running Back Christian McCaffrey
Carolina Panthers***

RE: Getting the win

It felt great. I think it obviously starts up front. Those guys did an absolute unbelievable job all day getting after their guys and they continue to do it all game long. When we can get in a rhythm running the ball it opens everything up. Definitely a lot of fun today.

RE: Game week preparation

I prepare the same each week. I look at a lot of different things, but you know overall when you get in on game day, your preparation is over and you can kind of figure out what they're going to do and who they're going to have out there. After that it's just kind of play fast, no more thinking, and just go out and ball.

RE: Having CJ Anderson as another option in the backfield

It's huge. He's one of the hardest guys against the other team because he can do so much with the ball in his hands. It definitely means a lot to us. I saw a couple of zone reads where he took two guys with him; some of his fakes opened up creases for me and vice versa. That's a good tandem and we just got to keep moving forward.

RE: Bengals defensive presence

As an offense we just want to move the ball forward. However that is, in the pass game or in the run game, whatever's working we're going to stick to it. There were definitely a couple of plays where you could tell they emphasized some of the routes, but if guys are getting open down field and we're moving the ball in the run game, then we're going to stick to that.

RE: Patience running the ball

I don't think a whole lot as soon as the ball is in my hands so I kind of just try and feel everything out. Once you know where everybody's going, it can kind of slow down for you.

RE: Spending the weekend with the Smoker family

That was a blast. It was really cool, them being able to come out here and spend a little of time with them. It's a good one for them to go to for sure. I'll probably see them after this for a little bit too, but definitely meant a lot to me. The whole Smoker family, I can't thank them enough for coming out here, all the stuff they've been through. It was good one for them to see.

Cornerback Donte Jackson
Carolina Panthers

RE: Backing up his "swagger" with strong performance on the field

Just knowing that I'm building that confidence for my teammates and getting out there. They're expecting me to go out there and back it up so that's what I've got to do. I'm blessed.

RE: Confidence level in regards to being able to play today

I was very confident. I was very confident. If I wasn't confident I wouldn't have told you guys that last week after the game. Great training staff had me in there doing training, treatment all week. Early mornings. That game that I just played was really just a shout out to those guys in the training room, man, to make sure I was getting back right.

RE: His interception

I was like, "I appreciate you [No.] 14." He was being very generous out there.

Defensive End Efe Obada
Carolina Panthers

RE: Successful individual performance accompanied by a win

None of this would be as sweet as it is if we had lost. The victory just makes it so much sweeter.

RE: His preparation over the past couple of weeks

Honestly, for the last couple of weeks I've been working my ass off. You know, I've praying and hoping that I do get an opportunity and when my name get called up, I just knew I had to make the most of it. You know, I buried my head all week, I done my film studies, I studied and some of the things that I saw was just instinctual. I just knew that it was coming.

RE: American football

I found out about American football four years ago, that's because the Dallas Cowboys, they came over to London and I had the opportunity to have an unofficial work out with them. Then the following year they picked me up and then I started believing, soon I came out to America and just the rest is history. Obviously it hasn't gone the way I wanted it to, as smooth as I want it to, but I stayed on it. Consistent. Kept improving every year, and thankfully the Carolina Panthers gave me the opportunity. This is just the beginning; I'm filled with adrenalin right now and I'm happy, but you know this is just the beginning. I have to be consistent, I have to keep going. Winning this game isn't the goal for us, winning this game isn't the goal for me, so just keep going.

***Defensive End Julius Peppers
Carolina Panthers*****RE: The defensive performance today**

I thought it was a great job. I thought it was a great job by everyone. You have these games where they take on a little personality, we had a little back-and-forth right there, but I thought we shut them down in the second half and did what we needed to do.

RE: Being proud of Efe Obada's performance

Yes, he did a great job, and it couldn't have happened to a better person. That's just what happens when you're a good person, and you work hard and you get your work in. Those types of things [today's performance], good things happen to you. Everyone, the whole team is proud of him.

RE: Responding to Coach Rivera challenging the defense following last week's performance in Atlanta

We always get challenged after a loss, even after a win we challenge ourselves to get better and make progress. I thought we had a great week of practice and preparation for our opponent, and it showed out there today.

RE: What is likeable about Efe Obada

I like everything about him, he's built very well with a lot of power, and a lot of speed, and I think the most important thing is he works on his craft every single day.

RE: Efe Obada being a younger version of Julius himself as a player

Yes, definitely. He's developing, he's grinding it out, and I'm just really happy for him. I'm glad I got to see his performance out there today.

RE: The sideline celebrating Efe Obada's interception being a testimony for how great of a teammate he is

Yes definitely, definitely, he's a great guy, he works his butt off, and got the game ball. Everybody is showing him a lot of love, and it's well deserved.

RE: This week feeling like a bounce back game following last week in Atlanta

I guess you could say it was a bounce back, we did some things better this week. We still have to improve on some things, I'm not exactly sure what those things are yet, I have to watch some film and look at the stats. I thought overall it was a solid effort by the whole team.

RE: The importance of the win going into the bye week

All of them are important, you need to win all of them so we don't find ourselves in a position where you're fighting and looking from the outside when the playoffs come around.

RE: Efe Obada coming a long way since his arrival in Carolina

He's come a long way, that's a credit to defensive line coach Brady [Hoke] and defensive coordinator Eric [Washington].

RE: The start of his Hurricane relief foundation

It's going great, I'm not exactly sure about the numbers and all of that right now, but it's going well.

RE: His teammates being donors to his foundation

Yes, we had a couple of guys donate. There were many names, but we had great support from the team, and hopefully you guys will all be able to support. Go to Panthers.com, and there's a link on there where you can donate. So far so good, trying to just get these people some help.

RE: Possibly going to eastern North Carolina, Pepper's hometown, to help the community

Everything is still up in the air right now, that's one of the reasons this thing [the foundation] has been started, so people actually on the ground there can get the funds and the things that they need. I do especially want to go see it for myself.

RE: Assessment of the young cornerbacks playing big roles on the defense

It's always a process, it's always been a construction. They have been getting better. Donte [Jackson] is quick and full of confidence, with a lot of speed. He's playing pretty well for us on the year. James [Bradberry] has been steady so far, he's a physical guy. It's a great combination out there, I like it.

RE: Seeing Efe Odaba having to wait for his opportunity three weeks into the season

He's always been hungry, just waiting for his opportunity. He got it today and took full advantage of it.

***Safety Mike Adams
Carolina Panthers***

RE: Importance of turnovers

Turnovers. That helps the offense, put the offense in scoring position, then that's a three-four-point swing.

RE: Efe Obada's performance

I'm so happy for him. He was screaming, "they don't know me, they don't know me!" And I'm like, "you're right, they don't know you. You're from London, you're from London," so making jokes with him. I'm just so happy for him. To put it all in perspective, he worked hard, he worked his butt off. He's finally got an opportunity, he made the best of it.

***Center Ryan Kalil
Carolina Panthers***

RE: What's it like to watch Christian run around like that?

It's ideal for an o-line, that's what we strive for. We talk about having 100-yard plus games and Christian's a heck of a running back. He did a great job all game. I thought our group did good, but at the end of the day he is a very, very good running back. He has great vision and great patience and he knows how to hit those holes and he has a lot of pride during the week and it obviously paid off.

RE: On the offensive line coming together and finding its groove

We have to continue to work. We thrive on being called a makeshift o-line and we'll just continue to do our job. All we can do is just do our job and I'll tell you what, John Matsko does an incredible job with the guys that we brought in.

RE: How nice was the rebound victory

I was pretty sick to my stomach about last week. I thought we should have finished out that game and it didn't happen. We went back to work this week against a really, really good defense and came out victorious, so that's all you can ask for.

RE: On keeping Geno Atkins and the Bengals defensive line quiet

When you have a guy like Geno [Atkins], you have to look for him every play and so you have to have an answer for him. I think we did a good job on some of our formations to take him out of the play, but at the end of the day he had a lot of one on one blocks with Tyler Larsen and Greg Van Roten and I thought they did a great job against him. Our look team gave a great look all week. He is a special player.

***Linebacker Shaq Thompson
Carolina Panthers***

RE: The bounce back win

It was great, we knew last week wasn't us on both sides of the ball, but we bounced back today and got a win at home. We always talk about defending our dirt and that's what we did today.

RE: Seeing Donte Jackson perform well despite missing practice time this week

Even though he didn't practice, his preparation was there in the classroom. He got all of his mental work in the classroom, on the field, and you see it showed up today. He did a great job with two of those takeaways for us, and he balled out.

RE: Watching Efe Obada's performance today

It was amazing. Man, you could just see it in his eyes he was ready. Right before that sack I told him, "Big time players make big time plays," and next thing you know, he got a sack. He was balling the whole game, shoutout to Efe.