

January 16, 2004

NFC FINALS
Carolina Panthers at Philadelphia Eagles
Pre-Game Day Press Conference

An Interview With:

BRIAN DAWKINS

Q. Your attitude this year going into this game for the third time?

BRIAN DAWKINS: All I can say is it's a lot more focussed. I know last year you are thinking having come to that game after playing the Rams the previous year that if we get this game out of the house... We got the game out of house but we don't go out and play four quarters of Eagle football. We played a good quarter. That's not going to get it done. I think going through the things that we have gone through the past years and also this season it builds you, it builds some character, builds some guys that are young and they have to grow up fast and that's going to help us this weekend, those guys who have to play early, they are going to know what is expected of them.

Q. What is the challenge for Carolina coming to this game the very first time; what are they going to face?

BRIAN DAWKINS: Well, first of all, you know they are going to face our fans. That's the No. 1 thing they are going to face. Not the No. 1 thing but one of the key things they are going to face. But they are going to face a team in us that's real hungry right now. Not saying that they are not hungry but we are hungry for this. This has been something that has eluded us a long time. Getting beat two years in a row and going through what we went through earlier in the season basically as being written off, it's going to be some pressure situations. Going to be some times in that game that you are going to have to either step up or shut-up. You are going to have to swallow whatever it is you need to swallow to make that play. A big lump in your throat, that's how much pressure is going to be in this game at times.

Q. Can you personally take any -- having that interception at the end of the game any kind of a way you guys won that game, do you think that carries over?

BRIAN DAWKINS: That's the way we have been doing it pretty much all year. Finding a way to win the game. It's not the prettiest win, not a blowout victory; it's a win, but it's a hard-fought,

you know, down to the last you know, wire, type of a win. Like I said, what that builds, it builds something in you; not just character, but it gives you that sense that I don't care what the score is in the game, that we still have what it takes to come back. If we just continue to go out and play and don't give up, you know, we have always said that we're going to continue to say it, you just have to continue to believe that what happened on that field it can be changed if you do go out and do your job.

Q. A lot of athletes are -- why were are you so open about pressure; how does it manifest itself?

BRIAN DAWKINS: Depends on how you handle it. I don't care about -- I love it. But if you are in a pressure situation that means you put yourself at a place as a player, as a team at a point that if anything goes wrong with that play, it can go favorable to you, or it can go against you. So that's really what pressure does to you. You know that, as a defensive back, if that ball is in the air if I go for it and miss it the receiver is going to catch it or he can catch it and score. So I have to make a decision, am I going to go for it? Same thing with the quarterback, it's a tight throw, can I really get it in there, do I trust myself to get it in there. It's just little things that happen in a game that you don't really have to acknowledge it but, you know when you are on the field in a three-point game and the other team has the ball, yeah, you get nervous. Depends on how you are, on how you are going to handle that situation.

Q. Fourth and 26 last week, were you looking at your guys or their defensive players on that play or combination?

BRIAN DAWKINS: Neither. I was just pacing up and down the sideline just, you know, all week here and saying that I knew 100% that that was going to happen, but you don't know 100%. I was just hoping that you know, something could happen that we was going to get a big play -- I knew it was going to be across the middle. I figured that. I was hoping he would be able to connect to somebody across the middle to keep it alive, to keep it moving. I was pacing up and down to try to look at everybody's eyes to see if it was not any fleeting hope.

...when all is said, we're done®

FastScripts® by ASAP Sports
t. 800.992.1889 f. 212.385.0349

visit our archives at www.asapsports.com

B. Dawkins - 1.16.04

Q. Missing nine games make you any hungrier?

BRIAN DAWKINS: I don't know if anything can make me hungrier. I will be completely just starved if that was the case, just -- I can't go get any more emotional than I get as it is. What it did for me, it gave me a greater appreciation for those guys who went out there and fought, that **Clinton Hart**, when he went out and the way he played in my absence week-in and week-out, you know, teams were saying he was probably the weak link and he continued to play. Now we are counting on that guy on special teams. He's doing that. Not only him but also other guys stepped up. For myself I have to be patient with what was going on, be patient and let everything heal up. When I came back I just had to get my legs back under me. For me it just taught me a little bit more patience.

Q. Is it difficult to deal with the possibility if you don't get it done Sunday this team may never get it done?

BRIAN DAWKINS: I am not even going to think about not getting it done. That's something that I am not going to let creep in my head. You can't let any kind of doubt creep into your head. I am not even going to get into that.

Q. Outside of Donovan being the obvious play-maker do you feel like your roster, on offense and defense, has a lot of different play-makers, different people step up at different times?

BRIAN DAWKINS: You can look at the way that -- how many guys have caught the ball on offense who have -- **Donovan**, he's spreading the ball around to different people. Yes, he's the key ingredient because the ball is going to come to him first before it gets to anybody so he is the key ingredient. But he's spreading the ball to everybody. Everybody on the offense probably has a catch. Tra even might have a catch or something like that. So he's spreading it around. You sleep on our receivers they can go up and make some plays. I know that firsthand in practicing with them. Defensive side of the ball, we have just been clawing and scratching and fighting. That's all I can say about this defense. You can look at the stats all you want, but when it comes down to winning tight and tough games, guys have stepped up, and while I was there and when I wasn't there.

Q. From your standpoint how much of a difference does it make if it's Davis in the game or Foster?

BRIAN DAWKINS: To me, I mean, you don't want to slight Davis because he's a Pro Bowl back. He's a guy that can carry the load. He's a guy, he can get the first down with speed and with power. But for me personally, you are going to have to tackle somebody, that's how I look at it. We're going to have a guy, whoever is in there, that guy is going -- they have confidence in that guy to get the job done so I have to go in and be ready to tackle whoever it is going to get the ball. I know, you know, with Stephen, that people are kind of sleeping on his speed but he can run. Foster is a little faster they think, maybe, Stephen can run. I don't really see too much of difference if Foster does play.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

...when all is said, we're done®

FastScripts® by ASAP Sports

t. 800.992.1889 f. 212.385.0349

visit our archives at www.asapsports.com

B. Dawkins - 1.16.04