

**January 16, 2004**

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

**An Interview With:**

**DUCE STALEY**

*Q. Talk about your role this year in light of everything that's happening, this might be your final year with the Eagles, just the way as a man you really stepped up this year to help this football team?*

DUCE STALEY: And I had fun. I know it's kind of hard for you to believe that, considering how the year started off with the hold-out and everything, but once Andy and I had a chance to sit up to and talk about it, put it all behind us, I moved on.

*Q. How would you characterize the different pressures on these two teams in this game; Carolina, a young inexperienced team; you having been to this the last two years. Compare the two.*

DUCE STALEY: I really don't want to compare both because we got a lot of pressure on ourselves, that's enough to think about. From my point of view being here three years now, nothing less but a trip to the Super Bowl is inseparable right now. I am pretty sure you will hear from the other guys, the other guys on the team, Bobby, Troy; they will tell you the same. We have been around here now through the tough years through the 3-and-13 years, 5-and-11, got a bad taste to our mouth. Going to the Championship game for the last two years we still got that bad taste in our mouth. So we are trying to get over the hump. Carolina got its own challenge. That's something we can't worry about. We have got to control what is in-house.

*Q. You started the season 0-and-2. Coincidentally or not, you also lost a lot of other guys from the previous teams. Do you think that was a factor at all that it took time for the locker room to gel?*

DUCE STALEY: I think so. We lost some key leaders last year, so being able to have certain guys who got to step up and kind of fill those shoes. That's what we did. A lot of guys stepped up. They play on the field and off the field. Things were ugly starting off 0-and-2. I made a joke the other day. I was telling a guy you know, we didn't take the paved road; we took the dirt road because

you guys kind of wrote the articles out there that we were supposed to start off 2-and-0, move on maybe finished 14-and-2, just a storybook season but it didn't start that way and of course it ended that way. So we are thankful for that.

*Q. Do you think this team kind of maintained the mentality of being -- starting out 0-and-2 and kind of always fighting from behind? Seems like there's a big part of that 0-and-2 start in you guys now?*

DUCE STALEY: It's a lot of heart and determination and desire on this team and character. We all will fight until the end and we showed that. We started off 0-and-2, we took it one game at a time. If I am not mistaken we played Buffalo after that, and we took it from Buffalo to San Francisco, and that's nine in a row, so that's something that was special. Being able to close the season out like we did, is special. So we lost to two good teams. Looking back at those games and I tell the players all the time that we beat ourselves and that's the toughest thing about this League; you can go in and matchups are great, things look good on paper but when you beat yourself it's hard to swallow.

*Q. You and (inaudible) did not run with a great deal of authority last week against the Packers. You play what many people considered to be one of the premier defensive lines in the National Football League. Why would you expect to run better against this team --*

DUCE STALEY: We're not going to change anything. Predominantly we are a passing team just to let you know that. Coming out running the ball is definitely an attitude. You definitely have to get your chances to prove yourself. So anybody that was watching the game last week, saw how many chances we had to run the ball, just in case you weren't there. I don't know. I just think it's all attitude, you know, this whole game is an attitude, so that's something that we got to go out from the kickoff and just try to develop certain attitude and hopefully that will dominate the game.

*Q. Fourth and 26 play, how long will you remember that?*

DUCE STALEY: Forever. Saved the season. I will always remember that. No matter what happens, after this game, what happens after

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the season is over, fourth and 26 will always live on in Philadelphia history. You will read a few books around here in a couple of years and fourth and 26 will definitely be in the books.

*Q. Did you notice that at all, things that you could notice that defenses did to you guys, you talk about how Brian creates matchups; could you see it on the field?*

DUCE STALEY: Not really at first. I am pretty sure we will see more of it this week going back to the previous game when we played those guys.

Brian was able to get certain matchups on the safety on their backer; he was able to win. That's because of the different packages we brought to the game. This week is different. We are doing a few things that's different but not a lot. Like I said in the beginning, Brian, we definitely miss him.

DUCE STALEY: Corell and I are definitely going to try to fill his shoes.

*Q. When was the last time you saw Donovan outwardly nervous?*

DUCE STALEY: Probably the first time he hit the field back when he was I guess second year, first year. He played once I guess in his rookie year. I remember during the week for his preparation he was nervous. That's a good thing coming from **Donovan** when he's nervous because everything is kind of on his shoulders as is, so for him to come out nervous, he always perform well.

*Q. Is there a difference in the focus or attitude this year going into this game versus the previous two years?*

DUCE STALEY: I think so. You look back over last two years, St. Louis game, being there everybody kind of -- once we got into the Playoffs like, okay, they are going. Maybe they will win one. They will be out but we were able to get to that game. That was special for us. But we wasn't able to close the door.

Looking back last year, we got a chance to like -- some major goals, winning NFC East and go on and get home field advantage, definitely left a bad taste in our mouth not being able to close the door:

This year, the book is still open. We are trying to finish this chapter, hopefully we can move onto the Super Bowl, but I just think the attitude around here with the players is definitely different. We have been through the storm. Hopefully we can come out and be victorious this week.

*Q. How would you describe the group of you around **Donovan** who consider yourself play-makers and how many of you there are - maybe you are not as well known - but you also step up at different times and do different things?*

DUCE STALEY: A lot of us, starting with the lines, it's the small things. You saw last week when, you know, receivers were going downfield, maybe it was a busted play or whatever, linemen kept blocking, **Donovan** was able to run for a long run. So even with the linemen to the tight ends to the running backs to the receivers, we just believe. We believe that five (Donovan McNabb) is going to make a play. That's what he has been doing all year so we believe in him to guide us through this thing.

*Q. Anything **Donovan** can do that would surprise you?*

DUCE STALEY: No. I think I have seen it all. Just being around, seen him develop as a rookie, seen him develop as a man, seeing him develop as a good player, you know, a great player nothing would surprise me.

*Q. The pressure you guys faced, how important is it for you guys to be loose when you get out there?*

DUCE STALEY: It's imperative. I think you want to be yourself. We talked about this and coaches kind of alluded on it. We know we have got to go out and be ourselves. To me in certain situations pressure is good, you know, usually you got your back against the wall, you are going to come out fighting. From certain people that's what you need. You need pressure. But I am the same. I am going to come out and fight every game.

*Q. You repeatedly said you won't be back. Even though your overall numbers were down, do you think you actually made yourself more valuable next year in the things you were able to bring to this team this year?*

DUCE STALEY: I don't know. I leave those questions to be answered by you guys. I have no idea. I just -- the opportunities that I had, I took advantage of them. That's all I know. At times even when Brian went down in the Washington game I just tried to take advantage of what I got, and it worked this year, so you can't complain about it. It's not even about that. It's about us winning as a team. That's what we've been doing all year. Offensively we will go out and get it done as a team. So I think that's what we

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need to piggy-back on. We need to remember the times when things wasn't going good, you know, when we were 0-and-2 and we kind of got in that rhythm with things and kind of moved on. We need to remember what we did right. That's important.

*Q. Do you think things last year went almost too easily for you, almost as scripted because -- (inaudible)*

? DUCE STALEY: Nothing is easy in the NFL. So like I said, we have goals. We have goals on this team that, you know, we try to reach. We had four goals this year. You, of course, wanted to win the NFC East, make it to the Playoffs, you wanted to win the Division Crown, you want to have home-field advantage and you -- ultimate goal winning the Super Bowl. If you are able to attain some of them goals along the way, you know, because of how the League is, because of how free agency is, you know, these teams are pretty much equally matched. Nothing is easy. You have got to scratch and claw to fight for everything.

*Q. What does the ENYCE on your shirt stand for?*

DUCE STALEY: You want to borrow it? It goes with your hat. This is New York City. Whatever you want to make up for the other E's, you just use it. What is your name.

*Q. Jerry.*

DUCE STALEY: Can't be Jerry. I am sorry, Jerry. You can still get the jacket if you want it.

*Q. Winning the way you did last week does that help you in any way going into this game?*

DUCE STALEY: No question it does. A lot of people count us out as they should without a doubt. Just being able to continue to fight though, continue to believe, like I said in the beginning it shows a lot of heart, a lot of character on this team. So going in, it pressure as far as you don't want to be in that position again. But on the flip-side of that it's a good thing for you.

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