

Matt Hasselbeck
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(On what that win does to the confidence of the team...) “It wasn’t a get-over-the-hump game to us. It was a one game season, lose and go home to us. I think it was exactly the kind of game that we thought it was going to be. It was going to be a tough game, a physical game. It was going to be a little bit frustrating at times on offense because of how good they were defensively. To stick it out in the end and come away with a win was a great feeling.”

(On his relationship with Jake Delhomme...) “There is always a bond between those quarterbacks that went way late in the draft. The day-two guys just kind of stick together. I think our mutual friend would be Mike McCarthy. Mike McCarthy was the quarterbacks coach of mine in Green Bay. Then he went to New Orleans and was his (Delhomme) quarterbacks coach. The first time we saw each other was probably the quarterbacks challenge or something like that. I think he is a great quarterback. I think he has had a great year and he is a funny guy. He is hilarious. His wife is very sweet. He is a guy you definitely root for. I am happy that he has had success.”

(On being a late round pick...) “I would say that is the only thing really separating myself and Trent Dilfer from being really good friends. I just can’t get over the fact that 1st round pick, pre-madonna. Everything has been given to him from day one. He got invited to the draft.”

(On how the Panthers looked yesterday...) “I watched the second half. I tried to watch, my kids had other plans. I will get to see enough of the film this week. From what I know they have some incredible weapons on offense. Defensively they are well coached. I know we always say that, but it is really true this time. They are very, very well coached. You know it, they are coached by guys that are very well respected and their talent level is above average. They have very, very good players at every position whether it is d-line, linebackers, secondary. We don’t expect anything different. You are playing in the championship game, you would expect to be playing against the best. I think these guys are the best in the NFC that we could be facing.”

(On Julius Peppers...) “You have to know the scheme that they are trying to play. Just try to attack the scheme. Obviously if you ask the guy that was going up against him all day, he is studying him all week long. For me, I am just studying the scheme and knowing the personnel and match ups, that kind of thing.”

(On how much time he will put in studying the Panthers ...) “I will be prepared the best I possibly can by game day, either way. It is just a matter of how much time you have to put in during the week. Some teams you have to put in a tremendous amount of time and energy and other teams, they say, ‘Hey, we are just more talented than you.’ We are going to lineup and do what we do and we are going to do it really well. Those teams you don’t have to necessarily spend the time studying their film as much as you just have to make it happen on game day.

(On what defenses Washington was playing against him...) “Sometimes they just rush three and dropped eight, which is totally contrary to what we have seen. We had seen them bring a lot of pressure and so we were prepared to handle that and when they didn’t bring the pressure it was a little bit of a surprise. When they did bring the pressure we handled it.”

(On Washington celebrating after Alexander was hurt...) “There is always a certain amount of talking smack that goes on in a game. I think that everybody in the NFL - once they realized that a guy might have a real injury, it obviously ends there. It reminded me a little bit of the Dallas game a couple years ago when Darrell Jackson got his bell rung a little bit. That huddle came together. It can be a little bit of a deflating thing when one of your key guys gets hurt and goes out. It was a little deflating for us. They had the momentum. They were playing more physical than we were at the time. Our crowd just rallied, our crowd started this ‘MVP’ chant and quieted them down. It is an intimidating thing, our crowd. It got us going a little bit. It doesn’t hurt that Mo Morris is one of them most popular guys on our team. So he steps in the huddle and everyone kind of gave Mo (Morris) a pep talk. ‘Hey man, this is what you have been waiting so long for, here is your shot. He did a really good job.’”

(On if he felt he needed to shift his game once Alexander was hurt...) “Not in terms of X’s and O’s or running the ball more or taking chances or trying to make more plays. Not at all in that way. In a sense, I felt like it was going to be more important than ever to stay focused. I have told this story this week when Trent Dilfer got hurt. In that pre-season game when he was a starter and hurt his knee. The stadium went quiet. I came into the huddle, I was thinking about his knee and how serious it was. I really wasn’t focused on playing football at a high level. I learned from that experience when he got hurt the second time and I had to go back in. I just felt like that at that time the most important thing for us to do as an offense was to really focus in on the 11 guys that were in the huddle. There is nothing we can do to help Shaun (Alexander) at that point. We just had to be focused and I did what I could to get everybody to be there.”

(On if weather was a factor...) “A little bit. I would like to say it wasn’t at all but those balls were slick. When Shaun coughed that first one up, when I got the snap, I said to myself, ‘this ball is wet.’ It is a real thing. You just have to do the best you can and know that both teams are playing on a level playing field.”

(On having Darrell Jackson back...) “It is hard when he is not able to practice. Even though there is that chemistry there, it is still tough. Having him back and really having the whole team back was great. Everyone was healthy enough for the game and if you look at the touchdown pass to Darrell - it was just one of those things where he and I were on the same page. He was just supposed to run a straight go-route by the guy and to me, I have had that same kind of look with him and I have thrown it behind him and a little low. He made a great adjustment and he knew where the ball was going to be. Having that experience with him is really valuable. It is really a huge advantage for us that we have been together for so long.”