Panthers wide receiver Armanti Edwards is a man of few words, and a man who has enjoyed few opportunities to let his play do the talking since joining the NFL in 2010. But when Edwards does talk,

he means what he says.

"I was walking into the stadium the same time he was, and I looked at him and said, 'Armanti, are you going to make a big play today?'" Panthers left tackle Jordan Gross said. "He said, 'Yeah. Watch me.' "

All eyes were on Edwards early in the fourth quarter when, with the Panthers backed up to their 9-yard line, he advanced the ball to the opposite 9-yard line in one fell swoop. Edwards' 82-yard catch and run put the Panthers in position to increase their lead to 21-6 on their way to a 21-13 triumph over the Washington Redskins.

"It felt great," Edwards said. "All of the games except one that we lost, we were right there in the fourth quarter. It feels great to be able to put one away."

Edwards looked an unlikely candidate to deliver a knockout blow. A record-setting quarterback at Appalachian State, he took on an uphill battle in trying to become an NFL wide receiver.

In two-and-a-half seasons, his most extensive action had come as the Panthers' primary punt returner in 2011. He made his only career reception earlier this year, a 12-yarder at Atlanta in Week 4.

Sunday, he was back in the spotlight that he so often shined in during his college days.

"He's a guy that's come every day to practice and worked hard and never complained about his role," Gross said. "Obviously he was a work in progress, going from quarterback to receiver. It was neat to see him make a big play because he's definitely deserving of some attention for all the work he's done."

Edwards said he's felt capable of making such a play all season, but opportunity hadn't knocked. It did Sunday, when Edwards was among just four active receivers for the Panthers with Brandon LaFell out with concussion-like symptoms.

After wide receiver Kealoha Pilares suffered a shoulder injury on a kickoff return late in the third quarter, the Panthers turned to Edwards.

"It's a play we've run about every game," Edwards said. "It was open on them in the first half, so the coaches said we were going to go back to it, and they stayed in that same defense like we were hoping.

"It was pretty wide open."

After quarterback Cam Newton faked a handoff to running back Jonathan Stewart, he spotted Edwards open down the left sideline. Edwards caught the ball in stride around the Panthers' 35-yard line and kept going, getting a big block from fellow wideout Steve Smith around the Redskins' 45 that further sprung him before cornerback Cedric Griffin brought him down inside the 10.

Two plays later, Newton scored on a 1-yard run.

"It was very big, not only for him but for us," Newton said. "That game was right on the cusp of somebody needing to make a play. Armanti's number was called with Kealoha going out, and he stepped right in and didn't hesitate.

"My first read was Smitty, but they rolled the coverage to him to take him away, like they had been the whole game. Armanti seized the moment."
This could be a turning point for Edwards' career, or he could go back to waiting for his next chance. Edwards hopes for the former, but he'll remain the kind of team player that every team needs if it's the latter.
"I just go out every day in practice and practice like I'm a starter," Edwards said. "I've learned to be patient, to wait my turn. When my number is called, I have to do my best to help the team."

**Photo Courtesy: Armanti Edwards,**