



Las Vegas Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Josh McDaniels

Opening Statement: "Well, hard fought win. Again, credit our guys for hanging in there. We didn't start the way we wanted to, obviously, but kept battling. That's a good football team, they're well coached, they got a lot of good players. And I thought we just hung in there and made some plays when we needed to. I thought defensively we did a good job in the red-zone, keeping them off the board there in the red zone, caused the turnover that kind of jump started us there in the third quarter. I thought we hit the quarterback and affected him a lot today on defense. The offense, again, didn't start how we wanted to, but I think we eventually figured out how to run it. And then made some chunk plays certainly in the passing game that helped us. Football season after Thanksgiving and I think our guys are kind of starting to figure some things out here. Still got a long way to go, a lot to learn, but I think we've made some strides."

Q: I imagine you're pleased with the defense giving up only one touchdown, three sacks by Chandler Jones, winning the third down battle and keeping them out of the end-zone. What went into that today?

Coach McDaniels: "I mean, we were a little bit more aggressive. I thought Pat [Graham] really called a good game. I thought the defensive staff did a nice job of putting together a plan today that we could kind of keep them off balance a little bit, play a little bit more man-to-man coverage, went after them a little bit in the blitz game. And then we tried to get them into some situations where it wasn't second-and-three and second-and-two, where they basically can do whatever they want. So, I thought we forced some longer yardage situations where our guys could really kind of pin their ears back and pass rush. I thought [Jerry] Tillery showed up again inside. Bilal [Nichols], some of these guys really kept the middle of the pocket compressed so our edge guys can make some plays. And again, it's a complimentary pass defense. If you're not tight in coverage and don't stop them from making those quick throws, then the rush sometimes can't get there. So, I thought our guys did a decent job in coverage too."

Q: Is this team that you envisioned in July, that this is what we can be?

Coach McDaniels: "Yeah. I mean, again, I think every week is its own week, and this week is obviously going to be a very unique one for us. But I think when you start out you have to have an idea of what you want it to be like and what you want to look like when you're doing it right. And you never play a perfect game in football, it's an imperfect game. But I think that the way we compete, how tough and physical were attempting to play in all three phases. Again, we ran the ball well. I thought we stopped the run decent today. And then I thought we covered kicks. All three of those things are what we point to when we talk about toughness. And so, I think our team has really bought in and believed in the way to try win that way. And I think you start to see some of the fruit of their labor here as we're moving through the season."



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Q: When you have a guy like Davante Adams and Josh Jacobs, how much does that take the operation to a whole other level?

Coach McDaniels: "It takes it to another level, that's for sure. I think when you talk about those two guys; whenever you call something that they have a good chance of touching the football, you feel pretty good about it, and they are the reason for that. They come through over and over and over again in critical situations. I thought Josh made a lot of hard yards today. I mean, it wasn't like they were like gaping holes that he ran through and wasn't touched. I thought he really fought his way through the line of scrimmage and kept his legs going and really had an opportunity to churn out a few hard yards. And then Tae [Davante], I mean, what do you say. I mean, he just keeps doing it over and over again. Derek [Carr] gave him some chances and he comes down with them. Two really, really gifted football players."

Q: Derek Carr seems to be really active line of scrimmage recently. Is it a growth for him learning your offense and then being able to manage it the way he has at the line of scrimmage?

Coach McDaniels: "Yeah, definitely. I think he works extremely hard. They present a lot of issues relative to communication. And probably the thing I was the most proud of today, I don't know if I'm 100 percent right on this, but we didn't get sacked and we didn't lose a yard in the running game. And offensively, this is a defense that they create issues before you even snap the ball because they line up in so many different unique alignments and fronts and locations. And then you got Derwin James [Jr.] hovering around there somewhere. And then they pressure and blitz. That was a huge key for us last week, is to be able to get up there, identify what we're talking about, what we're going to block, and then get a hat and a hat and give our offense an opportunity. And I thought Derek really did a good job of studying film, taking the coaching this week, and then applying it along with Andre [James] and the entire offensive line, tight end and fullback. I thought they really kept the runners clean at least to get to the line of scrimmage and then I thought they did a good job of protecting Derek."

Q: Does that process for Thursday's game start right now?

Coach McDaniels: "Yea, it's Wednesday night. We just told him in there, it's Wednesday night for us. You do at least one of these a year, maybe once a while you do a second one. But it is what it is. We knew this was on the schedule, it's not a surprise. The coaches did a great job of working ahead Friday, Saturday and probably a little bit this morning just to prepare and be ready to go for tomorrow morning. The great thing about a Thursday game is both teams are in the same boat. So, we're going to cram, they're going to cram, and nobody's going to do a whole lot physically in the next few days and try to get as healthy as we can get. And then go out there Thursday with as much energy as we can bring and go play the best football we can on Thursday night."

Q: Your team has played its way into playing for something now. How proud of you that they didn't hang their heads and they kept at it and worked their way into this spot?

Coach McDaniels: "I mean, I'm definitely proud of them. We never really discussed records or where we stood, and we're not going to do it this week either. And reality is, nothing has been decided. Nobody's this or that, or in or out, or whatever. And it's really just about playing and coaching your best football. And if you can do that and improve, I really believe that the teams that are ultimately going to earn the right to keep playing are the ones that play the best after Thanksgiving. And so, that's our goal each week is to try to figure out a way to do that and hopefully keep stringing them together."



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Q: Nate Hobbs returned today. How did you feel about his presence on the football field, as well as some of the younger players that stepped up like Sam Webb and Isaiah Pola-Mao?

Coach McDaniels: "Yeah, we used every one of them. It's great to have Nate back. Nate is a unique guy. He brings a skill set that is super competitive, great toughness. I thought he did a good job of matching some of their receivers tightly in man-on-man coverage, tackles. Just plays with a great effort on every snap. And yeah, we had a lot of young guys out there; Dylan [Parham], Thayer [Munford], Isaiah, Sam, Luke [Masterson], Matthew Butler, Zamir [White]. So, I mean, I think that's what this time of the year is about. You can never predict who's going to be banged up and not able to play, and guys are always ready. They're all preparing to play every week and I think a lot of those guys stepped up when their numbers were called today."

Q: Three wins in a row, what does it mean to you that these guys believed in you and trusted you?

Coach McDaniels: "I mean, obviously, that's speaks to their character. We've always just tried to be consistent with our approach; win, lose or draw. We're not going to change that this week because we won today, or we won three in a row. I think if you treat them with respect and continue to try to help them improve as football players, I don't know what else they could really ask of you. Give us a chance to improve and get better and try to provide them with a plan that gives them a chance to win. And that's always worked for me wherever I've been, and I've seen a lot of great people utilize that. I think we have a great group. I mean, our captains are phenomenal. I've said that over and over again. But we have a lot of great guys in that locker room that continue to work hard and believe and improve, and they've never doubted it. When you lose, nobody likes the feeling, but I think how you respond to it's probably more important than winning. So, we responded I think the right way, and now we've kind of figured out some things and have more to figure out going forward."

Raiders Quarterback Derek Carr

Q: Can you talk about the pride you have as a captain on this team and in that locker room?

Carr: "I think the character was on full display today. And watching our guys bounce back – I mean, we turned it over again, twice. Why, or the reason, it doesn't matter; it's what we did. We just make it hard on ourselves and then seeing everybody bounce back and keep believing, keep playing. Defense was playing great for us, keeping them off the scoreboard and all that. It's good seeing both sides of the ball helping each other and playing that way, and the energy on the sideline was unbelievable."

Q: How much of this has been being able to learn a system and then now be able to enjoy and play football?

Carr: "If I'm honest, we're still in the middle of it. We're still learning. There's still things happening. It's not as efficient as I want it to be yet, and that's frustrating. But we're trying our best and we're winning three in a row. We're winning football games and that's what matters as we're figuring it out. But to see guys – we're starting to get there and we're starting to get some things dialed in and right. Sometimes it takes us a little longer than it should, but to see the energy doesn't change. There's no one stressing out, there's no one pressing because we all believe in what we're capable of. And we saw that on full display in this game again, just like last week."



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Q: Josh Jacobs had some hard-fought yards, but the offensive line didn't have many negative plays as far as the run game. What did you think of Josh's effort today?

Carr: "He's unbelievable. I've always said he's one of the best in the NFL, especially the way he's running with that mindset and that mentality. He's been unbelievable. But he'll be the first one to tell you that the tight ends, [Jak [Jakob Johnson] and the o-line deserve so much credit on what they're doing and giving him just even a little space. I turn around sometimes and I'm like, 'I don't know.' And then he squirts through and he's up there on the safety. He turns a two-yard run or a three-yard run, into eight, nine, 10, 12. It's those little hidden yards like, 'Oh, good run.' No, you can't overlook how special that is."

Q: Your connection with Davante Adams is special as well. What right now is really clicking between you two that wasn't necessarily clicking earlier on in the season?

Carr: "I think we're winning, if I'm honest. He's well over 1,000 yards, he's well over 10 touchdowns. Everyone said that none of those things would happen, and we still have a lot of football left. When you win, everything feels better, if I'm honest. There are things that we're working on constantly because we never want to feel like – even if we're having big days – we don't ever want to feel like we have it. So, we keep that constant pressure on each other. If I don't throw it perfect, I'm like, 'Hey, let's go throw it again.' If he doesn't feel like it was perfect, he's like, 'Let me run that again.' We keep that mindset. But I think as we win now, now it's like, 'Oh man, they're figuring it out, and it looks great.' Forgetting the big days that he had prior to us going on this win streak."

Q: The last time you were up at this podium, you got emotional and kind of put it out there. Do you feel like the guys in the locker room and everybody else in this operation responded accordingly?

Carr: "It was a quick three weeks. I feel like, for me, I think it was just the frustration and the anger of certain things that I don't regret. Things needed to be said, things need to be handled. When you love a place and you love an organization, when you love something so much, you put your heart into it. To see the way we've responded since then, it's a proud moment for me. I'm happy about it. But we've got a long way to go until I feel really good about it."

Q: The defense gave up one touchdown today against a pretty good offense. I'm sure you're standing on the sideline pleased about that, right?

Carr: "It's unbelievable. It makes playing quarterback so much easier when you go out there and you don't have to force something because you know it's going to be a shootout. Or you don't have to try and make a play when it's not there and make a bad decision and things like that. The way they played today, if they can play like that – I mean, I've always said it, defense and being able to run the ball and throw it efficiently, that's what will help you win and get to the playoffs, and hopefully win a championship. The way that they played today was unbelievable. The way that they tried to get after the quarterback, the way they rushed and covered, the way they worked together, I mean they're such a good football team. The Chargers are unbelievably talented and for our guys to play that well was really impressive."



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Q: When you see someone like Chandler Jones to have a game like he had, what are your thoughts on that?

Carr: "I just know it was a relief for him. But we're in a day and age where numbers are what compare people as good players or bad. Fantasy points, good or bad, and things like that. The way he's been playing the run this year has been unbelievable. The way he's set the edge. There's a lot more than just a stat, a touchdown, a sack. He's played really good football. Obviously, as a pass rusher, you want sacks. You want to get the ball out and you want to do those things. I know that there was some kind of relief there, but it's not like he's been playing bad football. We have two good rushers on the outside and people chip them all the time, they're doing different things. Sliding with one and chipping the other. So, to see that kind of break free for him today, it was really cool."

Q: On a short week, does preparing for the Rams start right now?

Carr: "Absolutely. Today is Wednesday. The main thing is I didn't get hit in the ribs again, so I'm happy about that."

Q: In the locker room, Davante Adams said one of the biggest differences from earlier in the season until now with you and him is efficiency. What's gone into the growth in that area?

Carr: "A lot of hard work. We're trying our best and we knew it'd be a growing process. We haven't played with each other in a decade almost. And even though we've trained together, we were both training for different things. Working this offseason, and working this season, the best training is in the games. It took time, but also, I think that everyone's feeling better about it because we're winning. When you're winning, then the numbers are, 'Oh wow. They're a top ten passing offense. They're a top five rushing offense. Davante's having a huge year.' The winning helps that. Numbers don't matter until you win, and then it's exciting. And we know that, that's the NFL. But I think for us, we just try to keep the mindset that we will never get to where we want to get to. And if we can keep that mindset and keep striving to get to where we want to get to, and just having that feeling of, 'Man, we've never made it.' I think we can get better as we continue. But he made some unbelievable plays today down the field for us, and that one handed catch was one of the most ridiculous things I've ever seen in my life."



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Chargers Head Coach Brandon Staley

Q: Can you talk about trying to protect Justin Herbert and the pressure the Raiders were getting on him early?

Coach Staley: "Yeah, it was tough out there. The rush was coming, they had a lot of different designer looks. They brought a lot of cover zero tonight. There was just a lot of different personnel groupings in there, there was a lot of people in there. I thought that we were good at times and then at times a little bit leaky. Didn't run the ball well enough. But I thought he (Justin Herbert) managed it well. I thought he was able to protect the football, but he was on them, for sure."

Q: How much did the pressure limit what you guys were able to do or call on offense?

Coach Staley: "We were trying to make adjustments based on some of the looks, making sure that he was protected, making sure we were giving enough help to our tackles, and then do enough to get our guys open. So, I thought we made some good adjustments, but just didn't do well enough today."

Q: Do you feel like the third quarter kind of snowballed a little bit with the fumble and then the quick scores by them?

Coach Staley: "Yeah, the third quarter was where the game was decided today. Coming out of the half, we had a good screen going, we fumble, and then we give up a tough pass in the end zone. It was really a good throw and catch, we were right on him. Give credit to them. And then the next drive, it's a two-play drive, it was kind of the one punch on the flea-flicker. Bryce [Callahan] kind of pulled up at the end, but that was the story, those two big passes, and give credit to them."

Q: You guys had the fake punt and the fumble but weren't able to get points on either possession. How big of a swing was that?

Coach Staley: "Yeah, that was big. We didn't capitalize on our opportunities in the first half, and I thought that was kind of the story of the first half, was we weren't able to capitalize on big opportunities. Those two plays that you mentioned, and then defensively, we were playing at a really high level. So, I felt like we had some opportunities to probably make that a bigger lead than what we had, and that was another big part of the game, was that first half not coming up with enough points."

Q: Can you take us through the decision in the first quarter to go for it there on fourth down. You guys hadn't moved the ball much, but then you did try to convert that?

Coach Staley: "Yeah, I mean, we liked that down and distance. We liked the match-up, Keenan [Allen] versus 39 [Nate Hobbs]. They just made a play, and we didn't."

Q: When Keenan Allen grabs that touchdown from Justin Herbert, there was plenty of time left. Did you sense the guys were thinking, "We can do this.?"

Coach Staley: "I think when we knocked that one down – number one, no one's surprised that we made that, but two, I think everyone had a lot of confidence that we'd get a stop and be able to get the ball back with enough time to go on a drive. And that's exactly what we did. We were able to get a big stop and get the ball back to our offense, and they were moving it. We had a really good chance there to tie it or go for two to take the lead. So, I thought our guys competed in the fourth quarter and gave us a chance."



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Q: What was Zion Johnson dealing with?

Coach Staley: "He was dealing with a shoulder injury."

Q: How do you think those young guys, especially on the offensive line, played given what they were up against?

Coach Staley: "I thought those guys competed like they always do. They're trying to play tough. We were trying to make some adjustments throughout the game with some of the looks that they were giving us, and that group always plays tough for us. And those guys, the more they see, the better off they're going to play. And Will [Clapp] give us everything he had, and so did Foster [Sarell]. I'm proud of the way our guys always play. They always play hard and tough."

Q: Drue Tranquill came out at the end. Is he dealing with anything?

Coach Staley: "Not that I'm aware of."

Q: How about Sebastian Joseph-Day?

Coach Staley: "He's got a knee injury, and we'll know a lot more tomorrow."

Q: How do you think you guys played against Josh Jacobs?

Coach Staley: "I thought we played well early. I thought that we missed some tackles in the second half, which led to most of his yards. I thought that we were in good run structures but missed some tackles, which he does. He forces people to miss. We had to defend a lot of plays there in the second half, but our guys are up for it. We need to get more than one guy there at the tackle because he does break tackles. We did a good job of it in the first half and not a good enough job of it in the second half."

Q: At this stage in the season, how frustrating is it to continue to see the missed tackles?

Coach Staley: "I mean, no one's out there trying to miss. I know that. He's [Josh Jacobs] a good back and you know that that's going to happen. I really felt like we defended well in the first half outside of a couple passes. But in the second half, it was a little bit up and down, especially in the run game. And guys just got to tackle better, making sure we wrap up and making sure we get more than one guy at point of attack."

Q: Did you have any message for them after the game?

Coach Staley: "Yeah, we're 6-6. Just like I told you, we didn't capitalize on enough opportunities today. We had plenty of them today. Didn't capitalize on enough opportunities in the first half and in the third quarter. You turn the ball over, give up a big play. Give up another big play and then you're battling for the rest of the way to come back. And so, we're 6-6, and we've got five games left. The AFC is really tight. We need to put this one behind us and get ready for Miami."

Q: Do you get the sense that your team can put this one behind them and move on?

Coach Staley: "Yeah, we've done it plenty of times this season. We've had plenty of tough losses, we've had plenty of adversity this season. And our guys are made up of the right stuff and this game is going to be the same as it's been all year when we faced a tough loss."



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Chargers Quarterback Justin Herbert

Q: How challenging was it for you today, especially going with an offensive line with three guys who are technically backups?

Herbert: "It's unfortunate that we didn't make enough plays today, kind of got off to a slow start. I thought the defense did a great job of getting stops all day. They got a couple turnovers, that was big for us, and unfortunately, we didn't capitalize on those."

Q: Was there a challenge in trying to adjust to the guys at right tackle and center? For you as a quarterback, how challenging is it to get in a flow when things are just different up front?

Herbert: "I thought they did a great job of battling. It's never easy going up against a front seven like that. They're very talented, they're very well coached on that side of the ball. It was a tough day for us, but those guys stepped up, they battled, and I really respect that from them."

Q: To not get points after the fake punt and the fumble early in the game, how much did they set you guys back?

Herbert: "It's a long game, there was plenty of time to score in the second, third, fourth quarter. Unfortunately, we didn't make enough plays today."

Q: Does consistency concern you guys? You come up with a spectacular play with Keenan Allen, how do you guys try to manage being more consistent throughout the game because you seem to always pull out spectacular plays when needed. But obviously you don't have enough time to continue to do that.

Herbert: "We're just trying to move the ball as much as we can, convert on third down, limit turnovers, and push the ball downfield. Get the run game involved and just do the things that we know that we can do."

Q: Big picture, falling to 6-6 and with two very good teams coming to town, what's your take on where this puts you guys in the bigger picture-playoff race?

Herbert: "There's a lot of football ahead. We've got five more games left, and a lot of football. And it's unfortunate we dropped this one, but we're going to show up tomorrow, we're going to get better, and we're going to watch the film on this one. And we'll get ready for our next opponent."

Q: Is there anything you say to the team after a game like this just to make sure you guys put it behind you quickly and move on?

Herbert: "Just move on. Thinking and worrying about this one isn't going to help us with the next one. We've got to watch the film and get better from it and move on to the next one."

Q: It took a little while to get Keenan Allen involved. Was that something they were doing?

Herbert: "Just put it in play, doing everything we can to get the ball moving. Going through our reads and progressions and get the ball to the open guy. We could have done a better job with that, but I thought that Keenan did a great job battling all day."



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Q: What was the environment like, the noise level? It seems like towards the end of the game there, it's a pretty hostile place to play?

Herbert: "It's another NFL venue. We've got a lot of respect for the Raiders, and we prepared the silent count all day. So, we felt like we were comfortable and ready for that."

Q: The pressure that you were facing today was much different than what you were facing in Week 1 against this team. Can you just talk about how rough it was out there again, especially in the first half.

Herbert: "They've got a really good front seven, and they're really well coached. It was unfortunate that we didn't make enough plays today and fell a little short. But those guys up front did a great job of battling and fighting all day. And this is one of those things that you have to watch and get better at and learn from."

Q: When it comes to the analytics, I believe over the first four or five games compared to the last seven, the efficiency has dropped off on both sides in terms of production, yards allowed, yards gained. How do you get back to that, or do you not worry about that and just find ways to win? Or do you have to get back to the production you had early on in the season?

Herbert: "I haven't been made aware of any of those statistics. I've just tried to focus on being a quarterback for this team, a good teammate and doing everything that I can. That's something we will address; we'll watch the film, and we'll get better at. But it's definitely something we could address."