



# HOUSTON TEXANS vs. OAKLAND RAIDERS



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## POSTGAME QUOTES FROM HOUSTON TEXANS

Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Office Robert C. McNair  
Head Coach Bill O'Brien  
CB A.J. Bouye  
T Duane Brown  
DE Jadeveon Clowney  
WR DeAndre Hopkins  
CB Johnathan Joseph  
OLB Whitney Mercilus  
RB Lamar Miller  
QB Brock Osweiler  
NT Vince Wilfork

### FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE ROBERT C. MCNAIR (Transcribed by Allie LeClair)

#### **What did you think about this game?**

"Well, that was pretty exciting. Oakland has a super, super ball club – a lot of talent. It was a tough game. I'm just pleased. We had no turnovers. That was the big difference. They had three, I believe. It's hard to win. It's not easy, it doesn't matter what the circumstances are. Everyone is happy in there."

#### **What did you think about QB Brock Osweiler's play today?**

"I thought he did a good job. He protected the ball. He moved the team when we really needed it. I thought he did a good job. He made some runs himself, so that was good. That's really what we want him to do; protect the ball and make a few plays and get some third downs. He was able to do that."

#### **There are reports in the national media that you were going to fire Head Coach Bill O'Brien if you lost the game. Is that true?**

"No, I don't know where they get that from. There's nothing to it. I'm not going to fire him. We are already talking about next year. Forget that. If I were you, I wouldn't repeat it because it's false."

#### **So Head Coach Bill O'Brien will be back next year?**

"Yeah."

#### **What did you think about the interception by DE Jadeveon Clowney?**

"Yeah, oh boy. What a play. What a play. He's just a terrific athlete. That showed again. And (Whitney) Mercilus. He had two sacks. He was outstanding. And our young guys in the middle of the line, (D.J.) Reader and those guys, they played real well. They are coming along. It just makes for an exciting year for us as we go forward. And our DBs, our young DBs are doing well. We will just keep grinding and try to get play out of special teams and defense and offense. Without turnovers, we can play with anybody."

#### **What's the football you are carrying?**

"(Johnathan) Grimes gave me that."

#### **How come?**

"He was just so happy, I guess. Anyway, I accept gifts from any party."

#### **What would be your thoughts on playing the Patriots again?**

"I guess we'll go to New England. When we went up there earlier, we shot ourselves in the foot. We had two fumbles in the first quarter and gave up the ball on the 20-yard line. Doesn't matter who you play, you can't win playing that."

**You could also be playing Kansas City.**



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"Yeah, well we beat Kansas City earlier in the year. Everyone talks about the playoffs last year. They forgot we played them this year and beat them. So, we are capable of beating any of these teams. We just need to play good, clean football, smart football. I think that's what we did today."

**What does it mean to you personally to be able to win a playoff game? There are still a lot of people that were picking you all to lose this game.**

"It gives me a chuckle. It shows you how wrong people can be."

**What about the job WR DeAndre Hopkins did today?**

"I thought he did a great job. He's a competitor and they always cover him close. They pull on him and they push him and they tug and they do all this. Most of that stuff doesn't get called. He just continues working and making big plays. I was proud of the way he played."

**HEAD COACH BILL O'BRIEN** (Transcribed by Katie Karsh)

**Can you talk about your team's performance today?**

"I thought overall it was probably our best game of the year. I thought there were times that weren't great obviously but that happens in every NFL game. I thought overall it was our most consistent game. I thought there were examples of complimentary football. I thought we were able to flip the field position at times, which helped us pin them deep, make them drive it and give our players a lot of credit. They executed the game plan well."

**What did you see from QB Brock Osweiler today?**

"I thought he had a good game. He took care of the ball. He executed the game plan. Basically, he spread the ball around. I'm not sure how many different receivers caught passes, but it looked pretty good to me. I thought the offensive line had a nice game for the most part. We had a couple breakdowns, but I thought they played better than they had been playing. I thought Lamar (Miller) – I think we rushed for over maybe 120 yards, which is good. I think anytime we do that, we have a chance to win in addition to taking care of the ball. So I thought that everybody on offense did a nice job today."

**What did you think about DE Jadeveon Clowney's interception?**

"That was a great play. I mean he's had a good year for us. He's an active player. We line him up in different spots. One thing about JD is he goes to the ball if that makes sense. He makes plays on the football even when he's getting after the quarterback or tackling the running back, there's a chance that he could get the ball. He's got that knack and that was a very nice play by him."

**Do you plan on starting QB Brock Osweiler next week?**

"Yes."

**Can you speak about the intensity and atmosphere in the stadium?**

"I think having a home playoff game for us is huge. I think that it obviously made up for last year a little bit. The fans here are unbelievable. We have the best fans in the NFL. It's loud. They stand the whole game. They're into it the whole game. They're just, they create a very electric atmosphere and I think our players really feed off of that. You could tell it was a fun environment for our players to play in."

**Is this what you envisioned the team would look like earlier this season?**

"Yeah I mean I thought it was our best game. I really did. I think the trick is can we do it again, but I think we've improved. It's a progress league. It's a league about improvement, trying to play your best football in January. Look I know that it wasn't like a perfect game, but I think that all three phases really contributed to the win and we played good, complimentary football. We were able to win the field position battle. We won the time of possession battle. We kind of did what we need to do to win the game, so it was good in that regard."

**How does it feel for you to get this first playoff victory at home?**

"It feels good. I'm just looking forward to the next game now, thinking about the next game, thinking about the schedule for next week and how we have to approach it depending on when we're playing. Sounds like maybe it'll be Saturday. I don't know when we're playing but we'll bring the guys back in here on Tuesday and we'll get going. I'll figure out by the end of the weekend who we're playing and where the game will be and things like that, so we're excited about it. I'm not really thinking about myself. I'm really proud of these players. I've always been proud to be



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the head coach of this team and with these players. They play so hard and we work them hard here. I think it's a great reward for them to get a playoff victory."

### **Can you talk about QB Brock Osweiler's performance and winning this game after the season that he has had?**

"I think the league is about adversity. I think it's adversity that you face as a team, adversity you face as a coach and then obviously the players. Each individual player during the year faces some type of adversity whether it's an injury or maybe not seeing as much playing time or whatever it is, so I think he handled it like a pro and he went out there today and played well."

### **You could play the Chiefs or the Patriots in the next round. Can you talk about what those games could mean to you?**

"I mean those are two great opponents. Obviously both teams have had excellent years. They're very good at home. Very tough atmospheres whether it's Arrowhead or obviously Gillette. Both of them will be huge challenges. I think the big key for us is to just take care of our own business in here during the week. Let's work to put together a good game plan. Let's teach the game plan. Let's have good practices and then let's go to wherever we got to go and let's see what happens."

### **Can you talk about your team's success in making things difficult for Raiders QB Connor Cook?**

"Yeah I mean we make it difficult on a lot of quarterbacks. I think that the guy's got a future in this league. I mean he completed some passes. He had some nice plays in there himself. I think our defense makes it difficult on a lot of people. We have a good scheme and more importantly than that we have a bunch of good players and guys that play good team defense. There at the end, one thing that was kind of cool to me was to watch the vice tackling that was taking place at the end. I thought that was just a really like a clinic on how two guys make a tackle, keep a guy in bounds. I thought it was just really, really well-executed by our defense and our defensive staff. They've done a great job all year."

### **What did you like most about what you saw from your offense today?**

"You know look, I like the fact that we were more consistent than we have been. I think we can still be better. There's always improvement to make. I thought that the attitude on the sideline was great. These guys were into it. They were frustrated when they didn't make a first down and they knew that they could do better at times and they did. They went out there and they did better and they played a good, solid four quarters of football."

### **Do you want to address your future with the Texans or is that out of your hands?**

"I have a five-year contract here. I have two years left on my contract. I'm looking forward to coaching here and I'm looking forward to getting ready for this next game. I think it's a great win today for our team and I'm just really proud of our players and I think that our players, like I said earlier, they work very hard so get to this point. They dealt with the ups and downs and you know they're where they are right now. At the end of this weekend there will only be eight teams left and I think that's a good accomplishment for this team right now, but there's more to be done. There's more to play and I know these guys will come in ready to work this week. I'm excited for that."

### **Can you discuss the improvement on punt coverage?**

"That was a huge part of the game. I mean to be able to flip the field there especially like in the second half when they kind of had field position on us and we weren't able to flip it and then finally we did. We drove it a little bit. We stalled on the drive and we punted and we pinned them deep. I thought the addition of Don Jones to our team has made a big, big difference. Shane (Lechler) obviously has punted great this year. I think Akeem Hunt, guys like that. Stephen Anderson made some nice tackles today on special teams. So I thought our coverage units and that's important in the playoffs. It's important in any game but especially in the playoffs. Our special teams continuing to play well will be big. We had a punt return for a touchdown. We ran into the kicker. I'd say that's more on me than it is on Whitney (Mercilus). We had a nice punt return set up there and we just weren't able to capitalize because of a penalty, but I thought overall our special teams played pretty well."

### **Can you talk about QB Brock Osweiler's accuracy in today's game?**

"He got into a good rhythm and he was able to get off to a good start on a lot of drives. Not every drive, but you know a lot of drives he was able to get off to a good start and that's always a good sign that he's getting into a rhythm and he feels it and he moved the ball well for us today."

### **Have you noticed improved accuracy from QB Brock Osweiler in practice day-to-day?**



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"He had a good week of practice. He definitely had a good week of practice. He works very hard. He prepares very hard and he had a good week for us."

## **Can you talk about the importance of momentum and having something to build on?**

"Look I think momentum is important during the game. There were times during the game where we needed to get the momentum back and we were able to do that and I think obviously momentum is important during this time of the year. You gain some confidence. You win a playoff game and you know you're still playing. That's such a great feeling to still be playing at this time of the year. It just gives you a second wind and I know everybody's excited about it."

## **What do you think it means to DE Jadeveon Clowney to come out and play like he did after all that he has been through over the past two years?**

"I'll let him speak for himself. I think the guy's had a good year. I don't think he thinks too much about how the other guy's playing on the other side. I really don't. I think that that guy's a good player and JD knows that. JD has done a good job of taking care of his own business this year. He's really stepped up and made a bunch of big plays for us in the passing game and in the running game and it has to continue. That's the big thing. Our best players have to be at their best during this time of the year, so we need to keep having games like that from all of our best players."

## **CB A.J. BOUYE** (Transcribed by Christiana Johns)

### **What happened on your interception?**

"I was in the zone. I had my eyes on the quarterback, and I was like 'I just want to end it.' I'm trying to make more plays, but I knew the rush was going to get there so I'm glad that I was able to seize the opportunity."

### **What does this game say about the defense?**

"It's funny. When I hear Coach (Bill O'Brien) talk about it – and this is no shot at anybody – but this game is about respect, and I was watching the NFL Network early this morning, and I tried to stay away from it but one of the guys was saying in order for (Connor) Cook to win, they're going to have to find a way to get (Amari) Cooper on the Texans' corners, because he's better than all of the Texans' corners. I text Kevin (Johnson) right then. I took that personally, and I was telling everybody in here and they took it personally because it's time that they respect us as a team, period. And that's the thing. We know we're about to go up – wherever we're at – to New England or Kansas City are two great teams, and we have to be at the best at our game, because they both have great teams."

### **How big was it to start the game and come out strong, especially that interception to get out front?**

"It was very big. I was trying to stay in (Jadeveon) Clowney's ear, because at the end of the day he just changes the game. Like I said, we miss J.J. (Watt), but he's just that good of a presence. He shows you why he's No. 1 overall. I told him toward that last drive, 'Man, just be great because at the end of the day, people don't know what you went through off the field, what you had to hear from everybody else.' So just for that, just what to see what he's doing week in and week out consistently, it's a big thing. For him to get that turnover started everything right."

### **Do you think that people still doubted this defense even though you were ranked No. 1 going into the playoffs?**

"Most definitely. I've heard things like we have the No. 1 defense but the Raiders have better playmakers. They do have playmakers, but we just wanted to show the world that we're just as good. Even though we don't have J.J. (Watt) like I said, we have plenty of other guys on our defense that are ready to make a play, and that's what we did today."

### **Are you guys playing with an us-against-the-world mentality?**

"Most definitely. (Bill O'Brien) always tells us that. Like I said, he's always motivating us. Our DB coach staying on us from Week 1 until now. Even in the playoffs, it has always been hard. So just to be able to compete, that's one thing that we've been doing. Just trying to show the world that we're good on defense."

## **T DUANE BROWN** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

### **How special is this win?**



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"It's a very special win, total team effort, best football that we've played all year at the most critical time. I can't say enough about the effort of my guys. We just stayed in it, started fast. We had a moment there where we couldn't get much going, but we just kept plugging. The defense did an excellent job, as they've always done, and we were able to get a big win."

### **What do you think of the job done by QB Brock Osweiler today?**

"Excellent job, man. Excellent job. (He was) doing a great job of getting us into the right plays, making some big-time throws, seeing (DeAndre Hopkins) in those one-on-one coverages and giving him a chance, and then running the ball in there at the end. Just the energy he brought, the poise he had: great job by Brock (Osweiler) today."

### **What did Head Coach Bill O'Brien say to the team afterward?**

"Just total team effort. Great job in all three phases. He's very proud of us, at the same time, we know we have a bigger goal to accomplish. This is the first step to getting there, and just keep going."

### **What did it mean to score that touchdown at the end of the first half?**

"It meant a lot, it meant a lot. Being able to have a two-minute drive and getting some points there, getting some momentum going into the second half, it meant a lot. I think we took a little bit of air out of (the Raiders) going into halftime."

### **How big was the defensive performance today?**

"The defense did a phenomenal job, and that's what we've come to expect from them all year. And (Jadeveon) Clowney, he's just been doing what he's been doing all year: just being disruptive, being a game-wrecker. It was a big play by him. A lot of turnovers that they forced, sacks, a lot of negative plays and giving us great field position to work with all game. They've been very instrumental to our success, so today was no different."

### **After all of the ups and downs of the season, what does this mean to you?**

"It means a heck of a lot. There's been a lot of ups and downs, a lot of adversity. We've had to do a lot to produce, especially on the offensive end, and to be able to come out today and have the kind of performance we had, to jump out and get that early lead and have a decisive victory – not come down to the last two plays, nothing like that – but to be able to have a decisive victory at home in the playoffs, there's no better feeling right now."

## **DE JADEVEON CLOWNEY** (Transcribed by Alison Chastain)

### **Can you take us through your interception?**

"Film study. When 30 (Jalen Richard) came into the game, we knew they like to get the ball to him. He's a screen guy, he ran away from me. If he didn't cut me, I knew he was going to throw the ball so he didn't go for the cut like I thought off the rush. I made a play on the ball."

### **What did it mean to you to have this type of game today?**

"We are just trying to find ways to win out there. Everybody stepping up today with the defensive backs locking up and the whole front line getting to the quarterback. It was an all-around good win, offensively and defensively."

### **What was it like for you to be able to get this playoff win today?**

"It was good. We needed it. We aren't just here for the playoffs. We are here trying to win games and move forward. That's what we were able to do. No matter what the outside or critics said. We know what we have. We are going to keep fighting all season, just like I tell you every time I talk to you all."

### **On the interception, what did you see specifically?**

"30 (Jalen Richard) was in the game and they like to get the ball to this guy on screen plays and draws. When he ran, they ran away like a roll pass, he was trying to block back but he didn't block or cut me so I said I am going to guard him and they threw the ball back for a screen and I took it."

### **How critical was it to make Raiders QB Connor Cook uncomfortable in the pocket?**

"It was good. DBs locked down. Up front, we wanted to disguise really well and mess them up. He couldn't get a good read. He was holding it some. It worked good for us. We held them to like – how many yards? We got the win and that is all that matters."





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### **How much fun are you having right now?**

"I'm just happy to be out there. I have been through a lot. For me to come out here right now and help my team win is big. I'm happy."

### **What does it mean to you to have this kind of playoff game at home?**

"It means a lot. These guys picked me number one and they saw something in me. Things didn't go well earlier in my career, but I am on the right track now. Things are coming together. I am healthier. I am playing good ball and we all have come together to play good defense."

### **Any extra feelings going against someone like Raiders DE Khalil Mack from your draft class?**

"Anytime you go up against somebody in your class, you try and outperform them. He is a good player. He does just about the same things. We have to go out there every play and compete no matter who is out there. I don't care who were playing, I compete at a high level. That's just my game. That's just how I play the game."

### **Everybody is talking about Head Coach Bill O'Brien's future, is there anything that you guys represented that you guys wanted to go out and do this for him?**

"I haven't heard that. I don't know anything about that. I'm talking about the team right now. As a team, we're good. We're holding it together. I didn't know anything about it. We wanted to do this for us. We fight every game. We are trying to win every game. No matter what is going on with that, we out there playing for each other and trying to have fun. We got the win."

### **Do you take an extra sense of pride your defense played well against one of the best offensive lines?**

"We slapped them in the first game and it got away in the fourth quarter. Coming into this game, they had a few guys banged up. That was good for us. We went out there and really tried to get after them again. It paid off for us today, we got the win."

### **To play them twice and hit them in the mouth, it obviously says a lot about this defense.**

"It don't take much. Just line up and hit them in the mouth."

### **Does the tip-drill in practice usually go the same?**

"We practice it every day too. It goes just the same way. I tip it like three times and I usually score. I didn't score this time but I usually score."

### **Why didn't you score on that play?**

"Dude grabbed my foot and I was trying to kick him in the head and everything. I was mad. I was trying to. I told Vince (Wilfork) if he was in the game, I would have pitched it to him. But I didn't want to pitch it to anybody but Vince. I wanted to see the big man rumble for a touchdown."

### **WR DEANDRE HOPKINS** (Transcribed by Julien Demers)

### **How special is this for you and this team to win this game?**

"It's good, but we got a game next week."

### **Third playoff win in franchise history. Can you talk about the moment?**

"It's a great moment. Everybody is excited, but we got a big game next week. Can't get complacent."

### **Can you talk about the job QB Brock Osweiler did today?**

"He did a great job today. He held his composure the whole game coming out starting off fast."

### **Talk about the series where you had two big catches and a touchdown?**

"My coaches and Brock (Osweiler) trusted me to give me the ball. We knew we would get one where only I could get it. We saw some things in the red zone against these guys that we could take advantage of. We went out there and did it."

### **After last year in the postseason losing the way you did and having this type of performance here, can you talk about the difference of emotions of what's happening this year?**



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“Well a little bit about this team, we don’t talk about last year. The emotion after this win was amazing.”

### **What did you think of the atmosphere in the stadium with the crowd?**

“It was great, it was great. Just to see everybody cheering – old fans, young fans – everybody waving their towel. A lot of young guys hadn’t played in a playoff game, but it was definitely one to remember.”

### **When you get into the playoffs, you never know what can happen. You guys are in the second round of the playoffs.**

“We’re playing a good team next week, not sure who it is, but we’ll be ready.”

### **How big was it to get off to the fast start?**

“It led us to win the football game, so very big.”

### **Your offense was doing its job. Talk about your defense’s effort?**

“Those guys are going to go out there and do their job, everybody knows that. From the starting guy to the guy on the bench, they come in and everybody makes plays no matter who it is.”

### **CB JOHNATHAN JOSEPH** (Transcribed by Julien Demers)

#### **How nice was this one?**

“It was big. We were playing well at home all day. Obviously, we lost a close one to them earlier in the year. I think today guys came out with focus, knew it was going to be a hard-fought game. Offense, defense, special teams put a great win together.”

#### **What are some of the things you were able to do to rattle the rookie quarterback (Connor Cook)?**

“Showed him different looks. The front did a good job of putting pressure on him all day. In the backend, we tried to be disruptive and challenge the receivers all day and make plays when we had the chance.”

#### **Is this the first time you’ve been feeling like yourself in a while?**

“A little bit. First day I had the chance to come out and play without a rib protector on and things like that. I think overall, Romeo (Crennel) did a great job of putting us in situations as you see today.”

#### **What about that play from DE Jadeveon Clowney in the first half?**

“He’s been playing great all year. Every week is something different with him, but glad to have him on my team. The more those guys can put pressure up front - him, (Whitney) Mercilus, across the board the young guys, (DJ) Reader, (Joel) Heath – it makes our job easier in the backend.”

#### **You have had a lot of ups and downs this season. What does it mean to come out and not only get a win, but get a decisive win in the playoffs?**

“It’s big because in the NFL, I think when it gets to November, December, and a quarter into January, you want to be playing your best football. I think throughout the course of the year, there’s going to be ups and down, but you all are heading towards one goal, and that’s to be playing in January and playing your best then.”

### **OLB WHITNEY MERCILUS:**

#### **Does the defense rally behind things like that when people are negative against you?**

“The entire team plays behind it, no doubt. We take that to heart. Nobody really gives us a lot of credit or anything to come out here and play the way that we do and continue on this playoff race to get to that Super Bowl.”

#### **Talk about being in the playoffs and being able to get to the quarterback so much.**

“I did it last year, I did it this year and just continued that on, that’s it. Just being able to read my keys, studying, preparing all week long and just being able to go out there and play fast without thinking.”

#### **What does it mean to be part of the third win in playoff history for this franchise?**

“It means a lot, but it doesn’t mean squat at the end of the day because we have to go out and do it again next week.”



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### **Considering what happened last year, what does this win mean to this team?**

"Well, we faced the Raiders earlier in the year. We knew that we were capable of beating them and we understood that we didn't play all four quarters. We came out here, we did that today and beat them all four quarters. Really, the defense playing stout, special teams playing great and offense making plays, huge plays, when we needed them."

### **What are your thoughts on DE Jadeveon Clowney's interception?**

"It was nice, it was athletic. It just fueled the entire team. It added fuel to that momentum that we were having. The offense went out there, did their thing, capitalized on it and we just got rolling."

### **What do you say to the people who will doubt you next week?**

"It's OK. We're just going to continue to be us, play hard like we do always, continue preparing each week and coming out here proving ourselves each week."

### **RB LAMAR MILLER** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

### **What does it mean for you to score a touchdown and get a win in your first playoff game?**

"It feels good just to get a win in the playoffs. Having the opportunity to play next week is always great. I think on the offensive side of the ball, I think we did a great job once we got in the red zone to get touchdowns. Our main focus for this week is once we get in the red zone, we have to get touchdowns instead of field goals."

### **Can you take us through your touchdown run?**

"They were in man, and I just felt like I could use my speed to get to the outside, and that's what happened."

### **How good did it feel to get a touchdown?**

"It felt good. Once I saw the edge get sealed, I just felt like, 'Keep running to the outside.'"

### **How do you think QB Brock Osweiler played today?**

"He played great. He led us to the victory. He got us in the right plays once we were in the red zone. Today, he kept his composure with just moving us down the field."

### **Was playing in the playoffs everything you thought it would be?**

"Yes. This is my first time playing in a playoff game since I've been in the league, so just getting a win is always great in my first (playoff) game."

### **Have you seen a difference in QB Brock Osweiler since he returned to the starting lineup?**

"I think he was just being decisive and making plays. He's always been the same guy every day, and today he just led us and he helped us put points on the scoreboard."

### **What do you think of QB Brock Osweiler's running skills?**

"I think he did a good job. He gave (the defender) a little one-two step and he got in the end zone, so it was good."

### **QB BROCK OSWEILER** (Transcribed by Carrington Gilbert)

### **What does it feel like to be able to get this playoff victory at home after being benched and having to find your way back to being the team starter?**

"It means a lot. But more importantly, it means a lot to this football team. I think when we all came together in April for OTA's, when we all came together again in July for training camp, this is what we all had envisioned. We envisioned a great season, envisioned an AFC south championship, and we envisioned making some noise in the playoffs. This is exactly what we expected out of this football team and just being able to get the job done means a lot."

### **What was your mentality going out there?**

"My mentality going into the game was, one, have fun, enjoy the moment. It's hard to get to play in a playoff game like this. To play in a playoff game at home, in an atmosphere like this. So, enjoy the moment and have fun. From





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there, just do your job and fight every single play. Just try to put your team in position to be able to win the game in the end. Ultimately, just go out there and rip it. Just rip it and have fun, believe in what you see and cut the ball loose.”

### **How can you account for your improved accuracy?**

“I think it just goes back to having confidence in my teammates. And what I actually just said as far as, believing in what you see and then rip it, cut it loose. Don’t have any hesitation. I trust that my teammates, the skill guys, they’re going to be where they are supposed to be. Whether it’s man, whether its zone coverage and they are going to make me look good in the end and that’s really what happened today.”

### **This is the 7<sup>th</sup> time you’ve played the Raiders, were there things you noticed in the game tape or just knowing their overall system that helped you today?**

“I think we had a good feel as far as personnel and what they were trying to do scheme-wise. But in a playoff game and anytime you see a team two, three times in the regular season, you’re going to see unscouted looks. We certainly saw that today, it’s all about how you react to those, how you communicate on the sideline to make adjustments. But certainly when you know the personnel of the team, it’s usually to your benefit moving forward. “

### **When you started connecting with WR DeAndre Hopkins on that one drive, what are your thoughts on the timing you were able to build on that drive alone and some of the throws you were able to make?**

“Hop (DeAndre Hopkins) is a tremendous football player. Obviously, I’ve known that for a very long time. There’s certainly been some ups and downs as far as getting him the football throughout the course of the year. But I think the one thing that you were really able to see today was that Hop and I were on the same page. We were on the same page because our coaches put together a great game plan. Hop and I were both very comfortable with it. We were both on the same page of what he was going to do versus certain coverages and anytime I can get the ball to Hop, I’m going to do it. That’s really what you saw today.”

### **How confident are you feeling now going to the second round of the playoffs? How good are you feeling about the football you’re playing after these two weeks?**

“I’m very confident. I’ve always been very confident in my abilities as a quarterback, as a leader of a football team, but more importantly I have confidence in this team. This is a tremendous football team. I think what you saw today out of our defense, that’s second to none. That’s a hell of a performance. Our special teams stepped up and made big plays all day long. Obviously, our offense did as well. I thought there was great complimentary football. You saw our offense line making big holes all day for the backs. They kept me protected and allowed the skill guys to go to work. This was truly and ultimate team victory and I’m very proud of this football team.”

### **Can you take us through the touchdown to WR DeAndre Hopkins?**

“It was just one of those deals. It was a great call by coach, there were a couple options within the play, but ultimately Hop ran the route based upon what he felt was the best leverage from that corner and really made my job easy. I just had to lead him and he caught the ball. It was a great play. “

### **What was that feeling when you crossed over into the end zone and you had been able to use your legs to run for a touchdown in the playoffs?**

“For me, I’ll do whatever it takes to help this football team win games. You know that’s always been my mentality from a very young age. I don’t mind going out there and getting a little dirty if you will. On that play, it was just one of those deals where I really wanted to throw the ball to Griff (Ryan Griffin), but he did a tremendous job of taking the last defender with him and really I just had to outrun one guy. It was a great sell by the backs, the offensive line. And like I said with Griff, without him running to the back pile on, I’m probably not getting in the end zone there.”

### **NT VINCE WILFORK** (Transcribed by Stefan Nolet)

### **What did you think about this win?**

“I think it was a good football win from the whole team; complete win. We played three phases of the game, and we played well. We played for 60 minutes; we were able to finish. We were able to do what we wanted to do offensively, defensively and special teams. That’s what this game is all about at this point in the season. You never know who is going to make the play or what play is going to determine the outcome of the game, and I think everyone around just played a good, solid football game; a team football game. This is a great team win for us in the playoffs.”



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## **How big was it that the defense continued to get off the field on third down?**

"That's good. We wanted to keep them backed up on the chains, knowing that our third-down defense is pretty good. Our pass defense is pretty good, so our goal was first and second down to play real solid, especially in the running game expecting them to run the ball with the type of offense that they have, and I think we did well. I think we dictated the game. We made plays when it counted, and that's a credit to this defense."

## **Can you talk about the tone the defense set early?**

"That's the thing: it's playoff football. We knew, if you lose you go home, and I think everybody understood they had to play well. We practiced well all week. We all understood what it was going to take to win the ball game, and we played. We prepared well, we trust one another, we did our jobs, and you know what? We walked away with a great team victory. And at this point, you never know what play is going to be in what situation, because at this point in the season, there's not going to be a lot of mistakes with teams in the playoffs. They're good football teams, and when you get a chance to take advantage of miscues, you have to take advantage of it, and I think we did a good job of that today."

## **Can you talk about advancing to the next round of the playoffs?**

"We're still in and we live to fight another day. We give ourselves a chance, and the most important thing right now is to win. Wherever we play next, we'll be on the road, but that's what it is. That's playing football, and like I say, we're going to have to do a real good job. We have to go out there and expand our preparation next week; be better. We're going to enjoy this one, but at the same time, understand we have to be ready to play a good football team, whoever it may be, next week, and play well on the road."

## **POSTGAME QUOTES FROM OAKLAND RAIDERS**

**Head Coach Jack Del Rio**

**QB Connor Cook**

**WR Amari Cooper**

**DE Khalil Mack**

**RB Latavius Murray**

**RB Jalen Richard**

## **HEAD COACH JACK DEL RIO** (Transcribed by Nathan Edwards)

### **Opening Statement**

"Well, our season ended sooner than we really wanted. Got off to such a great start. Winning 12 games is not easy to do. It just came to an abrupt end the last two weeks. Not able to do enough as a team to carry on or continue on. Came into this game with two key areas that we were looking at. Win the turnover battle and out-rush the opponent. That is really a recipe for winning on the road in these playoffs, and we just didn't get that done. I thought we fought throughout. Looking to come out at halftime when the game didn't quite start the way we wanted. We fought and battled and were hanging in there. Came out to start the second half and thought if we just get a spark and get started that we can take off and go from there. But didn't really get anything. Couldn't really get it going. Weren't very good on third down. Had a few drops. Overall, just not what we wanted. Not what we were looking for. I'm proud of our guys. We've got a good group of guys who worked hard. Obviously, we'd like to continue on. We're not going to be doing that. Questions?"

### **Did you just have too many losses to injuries to be able to win?**

"It didn't help. Certainly didn't help. The way all competitors look at it is we're going to do what we can with who we have and expect to succeed. That's the way we're always going to approach it. We're never going to yield. We're never going to surrender. We're going to go battle whoever we're playing. Look to compete and look to find a way."

### **How tough were some of the adjustments with LT Donald Penn out?**

"Yeah, we missed Donald (Penn). Donald had a great year for us. He had a Pro Bowl year for us. He was hoping to make it back. He just wasn't. He's just to where he can almost walk normal, but he can't quite do more than that. As much as I love the way he fought to get back and how much he really wanted to, obviously, you lose your Pro Bowl left tackle, that was a blow."



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### **Was there any thought of going back to Matt McGloin at quarterback?**

"I asked at halftime. The coaches really felt that there were other things that were kind of contributing and that there wasn't going to be a big change based on changing the quarterback, so we stayed the course with it. I know he got a lot of experience in the game in the last game and a half. He did some good things, and then he did some things that he'll certainly learn from."

### **Was the first interception for the touchdown a nightmare scenario?**

"Yeah, it led to outstanding field position for them. (Jadeveon) Clowney made a heck of a play. We have our guy out there, Khalil (Mack), who had that kind of play against Carolina. Those special athletes, you have to be careful around those guys. He just batted that ball to himself and made a hell of a play. Regardless of how it occurs, protecting the football is so huge, so important. Valuable lesson there."

### **Can you talk about the disruption caused by DE Jadeveon Clowney and on the other end OLB Whitney Mercilus?**

"I thought they did a nice job. They're a good front. They've had a good defense all year. The front was really what generates a lot of pressure. So, yeah, (Whitney) Mercilus played well. We knew he would be a factor coming in, somebody would have to deal with."

### **What did you think about how QB Connor Cook played today?**

"It was his first start – on the road, in a playoff game, against the No. 1 ranked defense. It was a tough draw for him. We had hopes that we'd be able to do enough around him that he wouldn't be called on to do as much. I think we ended up throwing it 45 or more times in the game. That's not the design. I can assure you that. We'd like to go into this game and pass it 20 or 25 times and run it the other 45 or 50 times. It got out of whack there. Once you're behind like that, you're playing catch up and you're not able to get some of the things you want to get done, done. So, we got a little bit out of whack there."

### **QB Connor Cook had some nice throws that were dropped. Has that been a problem throughout the year?**

"There have been a few drops. Obviously, a lot goes in to that, and we'll make sure we take a good look at it and make sure that we're working on cleaning that up. We want to be friendly for the quarterback and catch as many of those balls as we can. Part of this is the quarterback putting it in a good spot where it's a little more friendly for the receiver to catch it. We had a few too many drops."

### **What did you think of the performance of QB Brock Osweiler?**

"Have to give the victor the spoils. They earned it. He was able to do enough to hurt us more than I'd like to see. We played against him before and were able to sack him and not let him do as much as he did today. I don't think we sacked him today. He was able to hook up with a couple of receivers and do a little bit of damage. It was good enough for him to earn a win, for sure."

### **Is it difficult to look back on the season and have this abrupt end?**

"I don't think you can eliminate the abrupt ending you don't want, but I don't think you can dismiss what we accomplished. We had a great beginning. We won 12 of our first 15 games, so that's outstanding. We just had an abrupt ending, and that can happen in this league. If you're in the playoffs, they're one and done. You've got to win to advance, and we knew that. Like I said, I'm proud of our guys for the year we put together, the effort that we put forth. There's no question about the fight and the willingness to commit to what's good for the team. I saw countless examples of that throughout the year where guys were giving it up for each other and that's a great thing to have. Super proud of our guys for that. As I told them in there, this is just the beginning. We're just getting started. We need to learn from what we feel and the experiences that we had throughout this year, both good and bad, learn from it and go forward. Ready to do more."

### **Do you feel like in some ways you were a little ahead of schedule in terms of what you accomplished this year after where you were last year?**

"Well, just depends on how you're looking at it. We've come a ways, for sure. For me, it's about pushing for more, and that's the way I'm wired. We're going to continue to push for more."

### **What happened to WR Michael Crabtree?**

"He suffered a concussion and went in the concussion protocol and was not able to return. That was that on the injury front."



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## **Were you happy with how your early blitzes went or did you not get home enough?**

"I thought we were fairly effective going after him. The plan was to be a little more aggressive. I thought we did that. So, yeah, that was part of the plan going in. To me, the defense was kind of similar to what it's been a lot of the year. That is, we had stretches there where we got consecutive stops, we're getting the ball back and we're staying in the game. When you had 4 (Derek Carr) back there, that might be enough for us to score a couple and get ignited and then we jump ahead and then we're able to close games and things like that. We just weren't able to hit that ignition and get that going where we were able to capitalize with the consecutive stops and those types of things. Some of the bad parts also showed themselves, where it's just a matter of the wrong leverage and not taking care of a responsibility and then maybe somebody over-pursues and we give up a cutback run that goes for too many yards. We allow a receiver to get open where really it's not an ability-based thing, it's like losing leverage, losing focus on the leverage and not playing together properly there. So, you give a couple of those plays that to me mar what could be a really outstanding effort and it ends up being OK but not what I'm looking for, not what we need to have. That'll certainly be a focal point going to next year."

## **Is this something a team needs to go through?**

"Well, if you could skip it I would love to skip it, you know? I don't know the answer to that other than to say the way I approach it is you go forward, you believe and you teach and you grow and you continue to add and you grow stronger and you know what you want it to look like and you keep pushing for it. Do you end up having some growing pains? Typically, I would say probably, yes. But does that mean I'm going to sit here and feel good about it? No."

## **What do you think of Texans Head Coach Bill O'Brien as a head coach?**

"That's not my job to evaluate Bill. I have a lot of respect for Bill (O'Brien). I think he and his staff have done a good job this year and over the last couple years. But, that's the Texans. They can worry about that."

## **QB CONNOR COOK** (Transcribed by Adam Rauch)

### **What were the most challenging things to deal with in regards to the Texans' defense?**

"(I got) pressured a little bit and it got to me sometimes. But, it falls on me. There were one or two where I held on to the ball too long and I just need to get it out of my hands and to the backs, check it down, stuff like that I can improve on. They had very good coverage on the outside. They play very good defense and the windows were tight, and again, that falls on my shoulders to deliver very accurate balls to our receivers."

### **What did you see on the screen pass that Texans DE Jadeveon Clowney intercepted?**

"It was a great play by him. Me, trying to make a play in a hard situation like that, I just have to be safe and throw it away. He's a great athlete and he made a great play on it. But I have to be safe."

### **What about the other interceptions?**

"The one I overthrew Coop (Amari Cooper) on was a great route by him, had him wide open. I think I tried to throw it too hard. I could have just laid it out in the middle of the field and had him go run up and make a play on it. Got excited seeing how open he was and just sailed it. The last one, on fourth down, (I) threw it to Dre (WR Andre Homes) before he broke to the outside. (I) was just trying to make a play."

### **What do you think the issues were on third downs today?**

"Just not executing. Like I said, they were playing some good man coverage and they were playing a soft zone, (I) tried to check it down to the running backs and tight ends and make a play on it. But then, me, I was holding on to the ball too long, taking a sack or just not making a good pass."

### **Do you think your inexperience served as a factor?**

"Who knows? Maybe. But, for myself, I look at it like I was going to come in here and I was going to play really well. I was confident in the game plan, I was confident in the guys around me and that I could rely on them, and I think sometimes I just tried to do a little bit too much out there at times. I have high expectations for myself and to come in here and play like that is not a good feeling. I want to give my team a better chance to come out and win. But, it's a learning experience and we just have to move on."

### **What did you learn?**



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“To be more accurate obviously. Don’t sail it over guys’ heads and throw an interception. Get rid of the ball quicker and use my check downs.”

### **What do you take from the whole experience?**

“It’s not easy. Very difficult position to play at quarterback. You have to know a lot of stuff, you have to come in and prepare your butt off. I thought I did that leading up to this week. It’s just hard to go out there and win and compete in this league. Even earlier in the year when we still won but thought we could have played better, we said, ‘hey, enjoy wins because it’s hard to win in this league.’ It just goes to show you, it’s hard.”

### **Did you feel like you got into a rhythm?**

“Yeah, we got the tempo going. I thought the offensive line, receivers, tight ends, everyone was gelling. I thought running backs were gelling during that time. We were getting up and we were moving. We were moving the football. Thought we could put some more points up.”

### **WR AMARI COOPER** (Transcribed by Taylor Turner)

### **This is obviously a very special regular season football team. For it to end the way it did, can you describe the disappointment and emotions around here in the locker room?**

“Obviously, you want to win in the postseason, so you can be the last team standing. It’s very disappointing to get this far and not have it end the way you want it to end.”

### **Why wasn’t the offense able to get cranking like you guys have? What are your initial impressions there?**

“We just didn’t execute the way that we should’ve. I know, me personally, I could’ve helped Connor (Cook) out a little more, but it’s over with now. There’s nothing that I or we can really do about it.”

### **I know nobody likes to blame it on injuries, but are you just a little bit disappointed that they didn’t see the 100 percent Raiders that the whole league has seen all year in this playoff game?**

“Yeah, of course it’s disappointing, but it’s a part of the game, unfortunately. Teams would like to stay healthy, but it’s not always that way. Nothing we can do about it.”

### **What do you think this team takes away from this whole experience with this year, building up to be a playoff team?**

“We have to finish. That’s what we’ll take from it. You can have the best regular season, but the postseason is even more important. You have to win.”

### **It’s pretty fresh still, but is it too early to take something positive from this season? The fact that you guys got where this organization hasn’t been for 14 years?**

“Yeah, you just said it. This is our first playoff game in 14 years. If you want to take something positive from it, that’s what you would want to take from it.”

### **You already knew what QB Derek Carr meant to this football team, but did the last two games really prove how valuable he is to the Oakland Raiders?**

“Yeah, of course. Anytime you lose your starting quarterback, it’s tough. It’s tough.”

### **DE KHALIL MACK** (Transcribed by Adam Rauch)

### **This was a tough way to end the season.**

“A lot of adversity hit us, we didn’t handle it well and you see the results.”

### **Do you sense that QB Derek Carr’s injury played a big part in the loss?**

“Obviously, when you lose an MVP, it takes a toll. But, we wanted to rally and focus back in. You could tell it was a big hit for us.”

### **What are you most disappointed about? Are you disappointed in the way the season had to end?**

“Most definitely. You definitely want to finish the season a lot stronger than we did. At the same time, defensively, that hurt more than anything. There were a lot of things we gave up today that we shouldn’t have.”





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**Head Coach Jack Del Rio challenged this team these last couple weeks to come together and help the backups come along. Why do you think that didn't happen?**

"There's a lot of different things. We can't make any excuses, but obviously Houston was the better team today."

**What's your biggest takeaway from this season?**

"The biggest takeaway from this season is that we've got to help the offense, defensively. We weren't able to do that on a consistent basis, and that's my fault and I take that."

**RB LATAVIUS MURRAY** (Transcribed by Christiana Johns)

**Were the Texans as the No. 1 defense as advertised?**

"Yeah, I give them a lot of credit. Great defense. They did what they had to do."

**On the drive that was ignited by the 51-yard punt return from RB Jalen Richard, it seemed like you had lightening in a bottle. Is that a fair assessment?**

"Yes. When anybody makes a play and gives a team a spark, obviously you want to take that momentum in to score. We were able to do that."

**What are your thoughts on the way this special season ended?**

"It just hurts. To put so much work into something, and for it to end this way, it just hurts."

**Do you think the last two games showed how valuable QB Derek Carr is to this team?**

"I don't think we need any games to show how valuable he is. He's valuable and will always be, but he wasn't out there. We had all the things we needed to go out there and win the game, but we just didn't do it."

**Is it safe to say that injuries caught up with the team at the end of the season? Too much to overcome?**

"Injuries hurt, but injuries happen in this game. We're not going to blame injuries whatsoever."

**But it wasn't just injuries. It was injuries to key players on the team.**

"Like I said, injuries happen. It's the next man up mentality. That's just how the game goes."

**How big was the interception from DE Jadeveon Clowney at the beginning of the game?**

"It was huge. Coming out and opening up that drive that way, to give them the short field like that, it was obviously a big play for them."

**Is it too early to think at this point that this being a young team has hit its stride? Can you look at it that way yet?**

"Oh yeah. We did some good things this year. So yes, but it didn't end the way we wanted it to end so it's disappointing. I'm not in this game to lose whatsoever regardless of any of the things that go on. It doesn't matter. We did some great things this year, but it's disappointing regardless."

**RB JALEN RICHARD** (Transcribed by Hector Castellort)

**Tell us about 51-yard punt return, because for a while it looked like you guys had caught lightning in a bottle.**

"It's just one of those things just making the play. A lot of things I do I really can't explain sometimes. I am out there playing; God has blessed me with a gift. I go out there and try to make an impact, be the sparkplug for the team every chance I get the ball in my hands. I embrace that role because now I see, like I get out there, get ready for the punt return and it's third down and everybody is looking at me, like 'Come on, Jalen.' I embrace that and I take that with pride. I love being the sparkplug for the team and I look forward to continue to do that next year."

**You ignited two more explosive plays and the next thing you know RB Latavius Murray is in the end zone.**

"That's the name of the game. You have to be a good team in all three aspects of the game; special teams is a big role in it, so whenever you can get in ... The way I am taught is to get the offense their first, first down,





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whenever it is a punt return. So, I look for the ten yards, and get us that first down, give us that momentum and get us in a role. To continue to do that, I am blessed with it, I love the game and I love my teammates.”

**On that punt return, is it one of those things where you are in the film session, “Oh wait a minute back that up, let me look at that again.”**

“I mean, maybe I will have to look at it again. I was hoping, I really was hoping one of my guys was going to block the guy that kind of hit me. I was kind of waiting for him to do it and then he didn’t do it and I was like, ‘Aww, he hit me.’ I was able to keep my balance, spin out of it and get around the corner to the left. You know, that was just me being me, just trying to make a play every time I get the ball in my hands.”

**-END-**