



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Head Coach Jon Gruden**

**Opening statement:** "I'll be happy to answer any questions that I can. I don't have a lot of updates."

**Q: You traded Ryan Switzer?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yes, yes we did. We have traded him to Pittsburgh. I believe it's a fifth-round draft choice."

**Q: Was it basically a numbers issue?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, you know I think so. I think he's a good player. He deserves an opportunity. Want to help him, obviously, get going, learning a new offense. Dwayne Harris is going to be our kick returner [and] punt returner."

**Q: You were excited when you first got Switzer. Was there anything that changed between now and then?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No. We have a good opportunity to get a good pick for him today. It was good for the Raiders. I think he's a good player. I think he's going to do well. I think Dwayne Harris is going to do well for us also. It comes down, as you said during camp, special teams is a big part of the fourth, fifth receiver. That was the case again this year."

**Q: Is there any update on Griff Whalen?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Turf toe. That could be a couple of weeks. Could be a few weeks."

**Q: What did you see from Seth Roberts?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I thought he did some good things. Some of the balls didn't go his way, but he was open a few times. Did a nice job blocking. Did an excellent job running some routes. It's good to see him back out there. We'll try to get Seth a lot of work here in the next couple of days. It's good to have him back on our offense."

**Q: Besides Harris' return skills, what do you like about him?**

**Coach Gruden:** "He caught five touchdown passes a couple of years ago from Eli [Manning]. He's a capable guy coming in there in the slot. He can go outside. He showed some separation when he did play the other night. Had a good return called back. He's a versatile player. We can hand him the ball. We can do a lot of things with him. He's tough. He was just hurt last year. That was why you didn't hear from him. He's a Pro Bowl special teamer. I really think a couple of years ago when the Raiders lost [Andre] Holmes, and [Brynden] Trawick and [Daren] Bates, I think it really hurt their special teams. We want to try to get a couple of core guys that [assistant head coach/special teams coordinator Rich] Bisaccia can count on every week. We'll start with Harris."

**Q: What have you made of Fadol Brown?**

**Coach Gruden:** "He did a good job, didn't he? I like Fadol Brown. He practices hard. He's come the hard way up. He's had a lot of injuries. He was on the team last year. I don't think many people knew who he was. He has quietly gone about his business. His factor grade. Forget about the sack and a half he was rewarded, I thought he closed out the Detroit Lions with the strip at the end of the game. His factor grade, pressures, penetrations, pursuit plays, was very, very good for a defensive end. I know he didn't go up against the Packers first team. I know he didn't see Aaron Rodgers, but it's all relative. He did a lot of good things."

**Q: What did you see from Donald Penn on film.**

**Coach Gruden:** "Some good things. He had the obvious fumble play. I'm sure people will point to that and say it wasn't a good performance. But I thought for his first time back on the field in a long time, going against the first team in the Packers, I thought he did some good things."



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**Q: Are you confident that Kolton Miller**

**Coach Gruden:** "I am. Yeah, I am. I think he's improving every week. He's going to have his hands full all year, just like every left tackle does. Especially every rookie left tackle. We are really, really excited about the man from UCLA. He has a great future in this league."

**Q: Do you view Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie as primarily a cornerback or can he play safety for you guys?**

**Coach Gruden:** "That's what I love about the acquisition. I think he's a corner. I think he's a guy that can play the nickel because he's played the nickel. You can put him in there in a dime position. He can play deep. He's played in every defense known to man and he can still run. He has size and length. Right now he's mastering our defense. We'll try to get a few snaps, hopefully, from him at Seattle and see what happens."

**Q: Are you going to have some tough choices on the defensive line when it comes to making cuts this week?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think so, I think it will be tough. Do we keep nine? Do we keep 10? And then [Frostee] has come in here, if you watch the first play of the game the other night, his pursuit – he's still got long speed to go get it – he's versatile, he can play inside or out. He knows the defense. [Tank] Carradine had his best game, Fadol and Calhoun can play special teams. So, there's some really good candidates. We're excited about it."

**Q: I'm sure you would love to have that additional problem with Khalil Mack being in the mix, too. Is there anything to update with Khalil Mack's situation?**

**Coach Gruden:** "That would be a great problem to have. I don't have anything to update unfortunately."

**Q: What has been the biggest impact of not having Mack here?**

**Coach Gruden:** "His playmaking, his leadership, his presence. Great players, like Mack, have all of those things going for them. They make people around them better. They make offenses account for you. If you're going to account for a Khalil Mack, you probably have to double team the guy and someone else is not going to have to deal with that. So, there's a lot of things that a great player brings to your football team. Hopefully, that's sometime soon."

**Q: Do you anticipate that being done by next weekend?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't want to put any timetable on it. This has obviously been a long a process that has been grueling for both parties and fans and me personally. We're just hoping we can get him in here."

**Q: What do you look to see out of Manuel and Cook to cease the backup quarterback role?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Ball security, number one. You can't turn the football over. He turnovers have been very preventable. We've worked too hard on anti-turnover drills every day before practice even starts. We're banging these guys, we got footballs with strings for trying to pull it out. We've turned the ball over too many times. That's number one, and we have to complete some drives, throw the ball more accurately. We have to throw the ball consistently better, take better care of the football and move the offense. That's what we want to see."

**Q: You said the other day you weren't sure if the backup quarterback is on the roster. Will you look at bringing anyone in for the backup quarterback position?**

**Coach Gruden:** "There's a lot of things I don't know. I mean, I don't know who is going to be released at every other position on the team. I don't know if we're going to make some trades. We're in this business to try and improve every position. We're going to try to be wreck less and aggressive trying to improve this team. We'll see. I don't know who is available yet and I do know what we have to do now and that's what we're going to focus on."

**Q: What are your impressions of Azeem Victor?**

**Gruden:** "He's a physical player, no question, a physical player. He's got to clean up his play on special teams and has to improve in coverage, like most young linebackers. A lot of the time at Washington, he played as an edge rusher. He's inexperienced in terms of all the different types of coverages we play, recognizing formations. I think that's the big two areas we want to see him improve at in Seattle. He'll get a lot of chances to do that."



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**Q: How has Martavis Bryant progressed?**

**Gruden:** "He's progressed. He's progressed some. I thought we had him downfield a couple times the other night. Unfortunately, we didn't see him. He's been on the practice field the last four or five days, great, which is good news."

**Q: What's been the change in Connor Cook over the last couple of weeks?**

**Gruden:** "I think the second time out, very first play snapped over his head. Not a very good way to start when you get hit right underneath the chin to start the first round. I think the play around him has to be better, too. Some of these backup linemen have to give him some better looks in the pocket. Some of our receivers, they have to separate better. It's up to all of them. But, Connor has to take better care of the ball and he's had some chances to make some throws because I've seen him make them on the practice field. I think he's capable of completing more passes accurately."

**Q: How do you approach this short week?**

**Gruden:** "We've had a unique practice already started today. Not everybody is going to play. A lot of the veterans aren't going to play at all. We don't want to just put them over here for three or four days while we wait for the preseason to end, so we're trying to creatively keep our veteran players focused on what's ahead over the next 10 or 12 days. We've isolated the men who are really playing for a job here and the game-plan that we want to try to execute at Seattle. We're kind of splitting people up a little bit, trying to accomplish two different things like most people in the league right now."

**Q: On some level, is there some preparation for the Rams?**

**Gruden:** "There might be some level. Somewhere."

**Q: Mike Nugent has been working the last few weeks exclusively as your kicker. What have you seen from him and do you think it's possible that he can be your week 1 kicker?**

**Gruden:** "Yeah, it's possible. Very possible. He's an 80 percent kicker for 13 years. I don't know what the exact percentage is, but he's a good kicker. He's been a good kicker for a long time. You don't make it in this business unless you are. He's got the mental toughness, the reliability to overcome a bad game or a bad kick. Right now, he's the leader in the clubhouse because Eddy [Piñeiro] is not healthy."

**Q: What has been the biggest adjustment for you this time around?**

**Gruden:** "Just putting the team together. I don't want to lose sight of that. We have to find the right 53 players before we can even worry about the Rams. Unfortunately, some of the young players we have not been able to get enough out of yet. I do like our rookie class. I think that was paramount, getting our rookie class in here and get some contributions immediately. I think we're going to get that this year. Some of the previous classes, we're still in the process of getting more out of those groups. Trying to just keep the right 53, that's the number one challenge."

**Q: Has the scheduling now made you have to adjust to some of that?**

**Gruden:** "Not really. I've had to adjust... as a broadcaster, we have to make adjustments, too. But I've seen it. My brother is in the league, all my friends are in the league. My coaching staff, they've been in the league. We've tried to take ideas from Green Bay, from Oakland, from all over the country, the Rams, the Dallas Cowboys, and put together a schedule that hopefully our players will tell you has been beneficial to them."