



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "I'll do a quick update on some of our injuries here in a second. I do have one roster announcement: We have released [LB] Derrick Johnson and have signed [LB] Jason Cabinda from our practice squad. I'd like to, again, thank Derrick Johnson. I talked to him last night. Obviously, it was a very tough decision for us. He did a great job coming in here and giving us some leadership, but we've made that roster change and we certainly wish Derrick Johnson the best. As far as injuries go, [DT] Frostee Rucker is improving. He has a neck strain and we hope to have him back for the Colts game. [G] Kelechi Osemele is making improvements. We are optimistic, but we will update you next week on his knee. [S] Karl Joseph is improving and was close. We were hoping he could play in London but hopefully we have him ready to go after the bye. [WR] Seth Roberts and [WR] Amari Cooper are currently in the concussion protocol. We think they are making progress. We will have to update you next week, obviously, we are still concerned. [QB] Derek Carr is sore, but we think he is going to be okay. [G/C] Jon Feliciano, with his ribs, is very sore. I think there is a chance we could get him back. [RB] Marshawn Lynch, we are concerned about, has a groin strain. There is a lengthy list of injuries and we will use the bye accordingly to get some men well, but I will answer any questions I can."

Q: You had some high hopes for [LB] Derrick Johnson when you brought him in. Why did it not work out?

Coach Gruden: "He delivered some of the things we wanted. Obviously, helping our young linebacking core. Guys like Marquel Lee, Nick Morrow and Jason Cabinda in particular. Cabinda had generated a lot of interest from other teams. We didn't want to lose him. It was a tough decision and we got to try and improve our run defense. We are going to give Cabinda a shot."

Q: Are you concerned about Marshawn's injury long-term?

Coach Gruden: "We will have to update you when we know more. He's going to be evaluated further but yeah, we are concerned about him and we are also hopeful that we can continue to use him. We will let you know next week."

Q: How big of a factor has Kolton's [Miller] knee injury been in his play the last couple of weeks?

Coach Gruden: "I think a little bit. I think it's been a little bit of a factor. [T] Brandon Parker missed all of preseason, basically, with an ankle sprain. He is just now getting healthy. I don't think either one of those guys were a 100 percent in London. It's a credit to them for going. Hopefully, the bye week is at the right time for them."

Q: What message do you leave the players with their time off?

Coach Gruden: "Well, I left them with a pretty clear message. I don't want to really get any further into it with anybody else. I'll say this, we aren't tanking anything. I hear the hatred out there, some of the rumors that we are tanking it to get a first round pick or a higher pick. We are not getting up at 4 o'clock in the morning to tank it. Ain't nobody tanking it. I don't know who wrote that or who said that or who thinks that, but that isn't the case here. We are going to continue to work hard, continue to build our team and that was part of the message."

Q: The way that the loss went down to Seattle...the fact that it's more of a physical defeat, is there a different way you approach the team after a loss like that?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, we will try to do that. There's no question they got the opening kickoff and ran it seven straight plays to start the game. They ran eight minutes off the clock, basically, and scored a touchdown. They set a tone in that game. We tried to run the ball ourselves. It was a rainy night, it was in London, we were going to run our best back with our three best runs. We made one yard in three carries, so the physical part has to improve and it's going to improve. We are going to do everything we can on the practice field to improve but it helps when you have healthy bodies. It helps when you have healthy lineman, certainly. We will try to get them healthy so we can do that."



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Q: How limited were you in the passing game because of the offensive line?

Coach Gruden: "I would say it was obvious that it affected the ability to drop back and look around and throw the ball. We got to block better than that. We got to play better than that. That certainly had an impact. No doubt."

Q: When you look at Kolton Miller's last games, how much do you factor in his injury?

Coach Gruden: "I think there's something to that. Again, I'm not reading the exact statistics, who's at fault for what sack. We study the tape. He was victimized by a hell of a rusher. That guy is a great player. We tried to send help when help was needed. [Frank] Clark is a great player. Hopefully the Pro Bowl voters notice that, too. His knee, I don't think is 100 percent. I think the Bye Week is at a good time for him. I'll reiterate he's going to be a great player. We're happy to have him."

Q: Are you happy with the effort from your players?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah I am. I'm very happy with the effort. I have no problems with the effort. Very happy."

Q: Miller said his knee injury is similar to Kelechi Osemele's injury. Is that a case where Miller shouldn't be playing or that Osemele should be playing?

Coach Gruden: "We're doing the right thing. We're doing the right thing holding K.O. and playing Miller. They're both fighting through some difficulties like a lot of guys do in this league. Hopefully we get K.O. back soon. That'll help our left tackle play better. He's missed the last two games. Just so happens that our left tackle has struggled a little bit. When you're switching stunts and working combination blocks, it helps when you're working with one of the premier guards in all of football. I don't think you need to be a football scholar to know that there are a lot of things that go into the last two outings."

Q: You said last week that you regret Derek Carr throwing the interception but you don't regret the play call. Are there any decisions in your nine months here that you regret?

Coach Gruden: "Sure I regret some. I got a list of things that I regret. I got a list of things. I'm sure you do, unless you're perfect. I don't know. I don't think any of us are perfect. We're trying. We're working hard. I'm not going to never throw the ball on first-and-goal again. All my friends in the league do it. I don't really think it's living dangerously either. When it's intercepted and it's ugly like it was, it's going to be magnified. You just have to continue to go with your gut feeling. Go with your preparation. Be true to your gut. That's what I'm going to continue to do. There are going to be some mistakes and I'll take responsibility for all of them."

Q: How much time during the Bye Week do you spend diagnosing the 1-5 start. Right now is there something you feel like you could point to?

Coach Gruden: "Well we're diagnosing everything. Not only the plays we've called, the players we've used. The situations that we have had. We're still looking at the roster. We're looking around the league to find means to get better. [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] and I had a long meeting yesterday. I know that's a shock to some people. They don't think we have any meetings. I'm telling you, we're working hard to solidify this roster every day and improve ourselves and get the right people on the field. Those are decisions that we're looking at. We're going to continue to try to develop our young players. We're going to stay on the gas pedal and go as hard as we can."

Q: Do you anticipate more roster changes during the Bye Week?

Coach Gruden: "There's going to continue to be roster changes, certainly. On every team in the league. That's just the way the league is. Players get hurt. We'll see what the medical report is when we return from the Bye and we'll go from there. Hopefully Osemele, hopefully Joseph, hopefully Rucker, hopefully Feliciano and some of the others I mentioned are ready to go full tilt because we need them."



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Q: Rashaan Melvin expressed his frustration with his playing time. Have you talked to him?

Coach Gruden: "I haven't talked to him yet, no. I'm sure I will. I know Paul Guenther did. I heard there was a Twitter report out there. Melvin is on his seventh team, I think. He's had different techniques. Maybe he's confused, I don't know. I'll talk to him. But he has to play better. He's in a competitive situation. Perhaps he's frustrated, and I can't blame him."

Q: What did you think of Daryl Worley's play?

Coach Gruden: "We really like Worley. We really like him. We feel like he's worked himself into a good rhythm. Two of the passes that were caught down the field were spectacular throws and catches. You can't really fault the coverage. You'd like to see him pry the ball out of there. Hopefully he'll do that the next time. Sometimes you have to tip your hat to the other guy. They have players too. [Russell] Wilson made four or five throws and his receivers made plays. But we like what Worley is doing. Not only in coverage, but he's a good tackler. He's a reliable player. He's done well for us at right corner. We have to get [Gareon] Conley back after the Bye. He's another guy, a young guy who we want to see more of. I think you're going to see Nick Nelson soon, our fourth-round pick. So it's going to be even more competitive for snaps at the cornerback position."

Q: Would you anticipate Nick Nelson competing more with Leon Hall for the nickel slot?

Coach Gruden: "I think that's a great position for Nelson. I think he has the traits to be a really good nickel. I think Leon Hall is one of the premier nickels in the last 10 or 11 years of football. He's had a great guy to watch. There will be some snaps for Hall inside. I think you'll see him step up and play a little bit at left corner as well because he has some range, he has some versatility and he's 100 percent healthy now, ready to go."

Q: You talked about Melvin briefly, but how do you see the morale in the locker room?

Coach Gruden: "No, I think Melvin is no different than a lot of guys. When you three-putt a green, don't you throw the ball into the trap sometimes? I mean when you lose a fish on the hook, don't you get ticked off? He handled adversity and sometimes in an emotional way. But Melvin is a good kid. He's a good kid. He's given us some good snaps. He's just in a competitive situation, and we're trying to help him improve. That's all I can say. I like the morale on our team. They were in there lifting weights this morning. We have a good nucleus of people here. I'll just let the Raider fans know out there, we're not very good in the win loss column and I don't know how it's going to go for the next 10 weeks, but we're working hard. We have a good group of guys and they're going to be fun to watch."

Q: Where have you seen growth with your young defensive linemen?

Coach Gruden: "It's hard on them. It's hard on them. These are three rookie players. I don't know if there are three rookie D-Lineman or two rookie tackles playing this much on any other teams. Physically, it's a challenge. They're going up against full grown men in their 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th years. They're in the trenches. They're seeing schemes and combination blocks that are difficult to deal with. I thought [Maurice] Hurst did a good job of recognizing the traps. I thought he got off blocks. I saw [Arden] Key get his first sack. I thought PJ Hall was finally flying around again like he was in training camp. I think they'll continue to get better. I know they have to prove that. I'm excited about the rookie class. I've been accused my whole life of hating rookies and liking old players and now I'm playing 10 rookies. What do you say to that, America?"

Q: How comfortable are you with your rookie kicker and punter?

Gruden: "I'd like to get more confident. I'm not happy with the way Johnny [Townsend] has punted. I'm not mad at Johnny but he's got to flip the field for us. We start every drive at our 20. We need to knock some of these teams back to their own 6 and see how they like it. We've got to flip the field. We've got to win the field position battle, I'm tired of saying it. You get the football at your own 20, your own 12 every possession. It's ridiculous. We've got to do a better job of not only creating field position, but I think Townsend can be a more explosive weapon for us. I know he's got a new longsnapper and I know the



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elements were different the other night. There are some things he's dealing with. In his first game, Lee Smith snapped as the emergency snapper. Now we've got a new snapper. He's going to be fine. Our kicker, we need better kickoffs. We need to get some touchbacks. I talked to [Sebastian] Janikowski after the game, the damn guy is still getting touchbacks. We need touchbacks. We've got to improve. We're working hard at it and that's all I can say."

Q: Where have you seen the biggest improvement from Derek's play?

Gruden: "I had a long meeting today with Derek. The results, they need to improve. I know that. He's the strength of this football team. We're going to get him to play better. He's on my watch. I said it when I got here: if he doesn't play better, I've failed. This guy is a good player that can be great. We've got to protect him better, so we can really see what he can do. We've got to protect him better, obviously. If we do that, I think he'll showcase what he can do. He was 29-32 at Denver, threw for 450 yards. Come back to beat Cleveland. There is a lot to work with there. I'm excited about it."

Q: Was any of the negative runs in the beginning of the game on Marshawn?

Gruden: "We didn't block him well enough. Missed a block on the back side, on the play side. Lynch is running well for us. Sometimes when you play football, 10 guys do the right thing but one guys misses a block or one guy lays off the ball or one guy gets knocked backwards. Sometimes what could have been a good play turn into a one-yard gain or a loss of one. We're going to continue to keep working and we'll update you on the medical part of our team next week."

Q: Just to clarify, is this something that you are concerned is longer term?

Gruden: "No, I just said he has a groin that we're concerned about. He's going to be evaluated further. I don't want to say anything other than any time a man like this is sore, I'm concerned. We'll get him checked out and get it to you as soon as possible."