



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Q: Bringing back Brandon Marshall, is he a guy that can come in and play right away?

Coach Gruden: "We hope so. We also added Will Compton, a guy that has played a lot in the league. We'll try to bring them both up to speed and also special teams is a big part of this, so we'll try to get them both ready to play."

Q: Do you have a time frame on Rodney Hudson?

Coach Gruden: "No. Don't have much other than he's in there getting rehab and hopefully he gets better soon. We sure need him."

Q: Is there a possibility for him to play this week?

Coach Gruden: "I'm not ruling him out, but he's hurting."

Q: Is Andre James hurt as well?

Coach Gruden: "He's got an ankle sprain. He didn't practice either, so we signed Erik Magnuson, a center. And Richie Incognito is a center also, so we'll be ready to go."

Q: Is it an ankle sprain for both Rodney Hudson and Andre James?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, that's what we're calling them, yes. I mean MRI's...I don't have the exact description technically, but we are calling them ankle sprains."

Q: What was the most challenging part of being on the road for so long and away from Oakland?

Coach Gruden: "Explaining it to my wife and friends, and everybody in this league that's never done it. I hope they do it to everybody in our division next year. I think everybody should have an opportunity to go on the road for six weeks. Somebody had a great idea for us to do it, I think everybody ought to do it next year. Honestly, it was tough. It was tough because they weren't close trips. They were overseas trips, they were across the country trips, every one of them. So, it was a challenge, but it allowed our team to bond and spend some time together and we benefited from it, and I was really proud of our guys the way they competed. Just a little sarcasm there is all it was, having a little fun."

Q: You had back-to-back games against top-notch quarterbacks that were hard to stop, now you have Matthew Stafford this week. How well is he playing right now?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, he's playing good, man. He's playing really well. You got to credit Darrell Bevell, the new offensive coordinator. They're doing a lot of things. They're in multiple no-backs formations. They sprinkle the no huddle in there, they have some really good play action passes. Stafford can scramble and he is really a talented player, man. And [Kenny] Golladay is coming on and Marvin Jones is a problem, and they drafted a really good tight end. They are doing a lot of good things and defensively their stats might say something, but they've seen Aaron Rodgers and [Patrick] Mahomes. They've seen some of the top quarterbacks in football also, so we'll have our hands full."

Q: Do you feel that by winning a couple games on that trip, you set yourselves up to be in the playoff hunt?

Coach Gruden: "Well, we feel like we're pretty good. I feel like we are getting better and that's all we can control. We are just going to try and keep getting better every day. We would have liked to have the



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last win, but there is a lot of teams in this league right now that are just hanging on. It's a tough business. We got a lot of injuries, we've had to endure some tough deals, but I love this team, I like the way we are competing, and I see improvement and hopefully we get some healthy bodies for this game because we need them."

Q: Would Erik Magnuson be a guy that's ready to go on Sunday?

Coach Gruden: "He's a smart guy. He played multiple positions at Michigan. He started a couple games in the NFL. Incognito can be the center, he's a great player. Incognito can play the center. Denzelle [Good] can play guard, but we just want to get some continuity. The only guy to start every game on the line has been Kolton Miller. We've had three different left guards, three different right guards and three different right tackles. And now potentially three different centers, so when you combine that with the youth at running back, the youth at tight end and then the changing of the guards at wide receiver, it's been tough on Derek [Carr]."

Q: What do you anticipate the atmosphere to be like from the Raider Nation on Sunday?

Coach Gruden: "I hope it's rocking. I hope it is. It's always the same to me. It'll be great to be at home and play in front of our fans. We can't wait to get out there."

Q: How have you seen Derek Carr benefit so far this season from having improved protection?

Coach Gruden: "I mean he's been pinpoint with a lot of throws. He threw some really good balls the other night that really weren't caught either. He threw some great passes down the field. He's like any other quarterback in this league, the better the protection the better the outcome, but he's playing well for us that's for sure."

Q: What do you see out of Brandon Marshall now?

Coach Gruden: "Well, today's practice wasn't a true gauge. Today, we use Wednesday's a little differently than maybe other teams. We try to get a lot more reps at less speed. We try to teach the game plan, let the guys master the plan and then Thursday we'll put the pads back on and get our guys flying around on Thursday's and Friday's. So, the big thing is getting him re-acclimated to the system. There's a lot of communication. The middle linebacker is the quarterback of your defense, so we lose [Vontaze] Burfict. We lost a big piece of our communication and obviously Marquel Lee and now Justin Phillips, so we need Brandon to get the system re-wired and we need him to communicate it so he can get ready to go on Sunday."

Q: What's the appeal of Terrell McClain, the defensive tackle you brought in?

Coach Gruden: "We like McClain. He played for my brother in Washington and was a really good run gap payer for the Cowboys in 2016. We think he fits the 4-3. Corey [Liuget] just had some lingering bouts with his health and we needed to get one more big body in here that can perhaps help us, and hopefully McClain can be a quick study. Be ready to go soon."

Q: You brought back Isaiah Johnson this week off of Injured Reserve?

Coach Gruden: "Yep. Hopefully he can play against the Chargers. We're excited to see him play. We think he's got a big upside, big."



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Q: The last couple of games almost every time you've scored a touchdown, you've given points right back. How is that something you can deal with?

Coach Gruden: "Scream and yell. And scream and yell. (*laughter*) We get the momentum going and then we can't seem to put all three phases together, and it's too bad. But we need to get some turnovers from our defense, some three-and-out stops, better field position certainly. It'll come, we just got to keep staying together."

Q: How do you feel like Trayvon Mullen did?

Coach Gruden: "Pretty good. He played 58 snaps and I thought he did some pretty good things. He's just got to stay low. Sometimes he has a tendency to get a little bit high in his backpedal and you can't do that in this league. Not against Matt Stafford, he's looking for you. So, he's doing good. He's getting better and needs to keep playing and I think you'll see gradual improvement from him."

Q: Did you know Maxx Crosby was this complete of a player when you drafted him?

Coach Gruden: "Well, he's a great player in the Mid-American Conference. You can't argue with his production there, but his signature is effort. Not many guys in the league play that hard, that long. There's a great player in Houston, J.J. Watt. I'm not comparing him to Watt, but I'm just telling you Watt plays with incredible down-to-down effort. It's amazing. It's his stamina, it's his conditioning and those are things that we love about Crosby. He plays as hard as he can play, and he can play a long time at that speed. And that's one of the reasons why he's getting to the quarterback. We'd like to see him get the quarterback down more and I think he will, but it's his stamina and his effort right now that is his strength and calling card and as he continues to improve his arsenal he's going to be a good player for the Raiders."

Quarterback Derek Carr

Q: Kolton Miller is the only guy on your offensive line that has been playing for every game, when you think about all the changes and how well the offensive line has played upfront, what does it say about them as a unit?

Carr: "They've done a fantastic job. They've worked really hard, I can tell you that. Those guys from top to bottom, we've had a lot of people play, right? They've all done really well for us. You have to credit them and their work ethic. You have to credit [offensive line] Coach [Tom] Cable and [assistant offensive line coach Lemuel Jeanpierre] 'Lem' big time for getting those guys ready, because of a lot of this game is mental. A lot is understanding just your assignment. A lot of mistakes happen – especially on the offensive line in this league – when guys aren't sure on a call, or guys aren't sure on a look. Our guys have been very sure. That clears some things up. So, a lot of credit to those guys – coaches and players – because they have done a really, really good job."

Q: Along those lines, you could have a new center this week, we do not know for sure. How difficult is it to adjust to a new center?

Carr: "It literally will take you like five or 10 minutes, it's really repetition. Going through a practice on how do they step on a certain play, how do they step on this play, and you know I have so many years playing with Rodney [Hudson] that I can do that in my sleep. With Andre [James], a lot of reps. In training camp, this offseason when we were giving Rodney his rest, rightfully earned and things like that. And then with other guys, we're always taking snaps with everybody. [Head] Coach [Jon Gruden], he's big on



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rotating guys no matter if it's first-team reps, second-team reps, it doesn't matter. We're going to rotate guys and we're going to get reps in. So, I've taken my fair share of snaps with a lot of guys and I feel very comfortable with that."

Q: It sounds like Richie Incognito took some snaps today, is that true?

Carr: "He's done it before. He did a little bit today, but we'll see. We plan on hopefully having all of them. We'll see, maybe they can all snap."

Q: What did you learn about the team during the six-game road trip?

Carr: "That we're a very close group. This is probably the closest group I've ever been around including the year when we went to the playoffs. This group, it's a special group, very young, exciting group, very good if you're talking about laying a foundation for something. A very good group to have, vets, young vets and rookies included. It's going to be a good group here for a long time. There won't be as much turnover as the years keep going on, that's for sure. You have some guys that are going to stick and stay, that's for sure."

Q: You have been sacked eight games through the first seven games this season, do you feel much better right now than you did a year ago?

Carr: "I absolutely do. You try your best to take care of your body, right? Last year was really hard, even being my own fault, it was tough because the guys that are hitting me are not defensive backs, they're much bigger than me. That's why I guess we squat and things like that. I definitely feel different this time. This year I feel fresh as can be with all of the games that we have played already. That's a credit to our offensive line. We joke around all the time, I always go around and check on them all the time and they're sore, all these kinds of things, (and they say) like, 'how do you feel?' 'I feel great actually, thank you for asking.' *(laughter)* That's all that matters to them, so it's good."

Q: How has the protection affected what you are able to do as an offense and what you are able to do personally on the field?

Carr: "Well you know, I try my best every time I stand up here to be as honest and as open as I can. You have to play quarterback a different way when there's not as much time. You can't go to the third and fourth progression. You can't drop back against the Bears, try to look off a flat defender and throw a 20-yard sail route. You can't do that kind of stuff. You have to get the ball out, you have to move faster. I was talking to Tony Romo when he did our game, that was something that we both laughed and joked about – you can be a completely different player when you have that kind of time to be honest with you and you can throw different routes, have different schemes, have different game plans. You can do a lot of different stuff. We're going to go as that offensive line goes, they are the best players on our football team by far. We're going to go as they go."

Q: You have taken more deep shots in the last couple games. Is that a product of knowing that you are going to have more time?

Carr: "We're just getting different coverages to be honest. Again, I sit here and try to explain things to people somethings and I get labeled with check-downs. So, I just don't waste my time anymore, we're getting different coverages."

Q: It seems like the play action has been more effective this year. Was that a priority for you guys?



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Carr: “Yeah, you’re right. I think every team, when training camp starts and you finally get to put the pads on, every coach goes, ‘We’re going to run the football.’ There’s some out there, I mean I’ve been on teams where we try and it’s just tough. There’s been tough years where you can’t run the ball, play actions aren’t there as much. So you have to play a different kind of football and it’s harder to win that way. If you look at the championship teams year after year, they can do one thing well and that’s rush the ball. Whether they do it a lot or not that will depend on what the coach calls, but they can at least do it efficiently to set up those play actions.”

Q: What do you think the energy is going to be like on Sunday?

Carr: “Oh it’s going to be rowdy, I know that. I think our fans miss us, and I think we miss them. We need a home game. We need to see each other, that’s for sure. We miss one another. I can’t wait to see our fans when I come running out the tunnel, there’s nothing like it.”

Q: With the stretch coming up at home, do you feel like you’re in a position to make a run?

Carr: “Absolutely. We never have a doubt. We know we have a good football team, we just have to put it all together. All three phases, every game. Be efficient, be clean. Try and eliminate the penalties, all that kind of stuff. If we can do that, we feel very confident we can play with anybody. Right now we have to take care of business this week and try to get a home win against a good football team.”

Q: What have you seen from the Lions on film?

Carr: “They’re very good. Again, numbers don’t mean anything to me. People throw out numbers, what they’re ranked in this and that. You turn the film on, these guys are a good defense. You see a few plays here or there where you’re like, ‘Oh that skewed the numbers pretty big based on the day they actually had.’ They’re very good, very talented. Have big, free agent acquisitions all over the place on defense. We know what their offense can do. Like I said, when you turn the film on you’re like, ‘Wow, they run, they fly to the ball, they hit, they’re physical.’ They’re going to bring it, so we better bring it, too.”

Q: Despite all the changes at receiver and the offensive line this year, there’s still been success. Why do you think that’s the case?

Carr: “I really think it’s whenever you can get the play caller and the quarterback and as many guys on the offensive line continuity as much as possible, you’re playing the game much faster. We’re able to do more. We’re able to handle more on our plate. Whereas last year we maybe didn’t have the whole menu. We were in this box, now we’re in this box. Whereas now we can get to more things. I think that’s really helped us. Then you add our versatility at the skill positions. I don’t think the NFL does a good job of this anymore, where when a coach comes in they don’t get to get the roster how they need it to fit their scheme. And if they don’t have the players that they want to be able to do certain things, that doesn’t even make sense. It’s already broken. He came in and he’s just getting guys that fit what he wants to do. We’ve talked about our tight ends. Our receivers in the run game and pass game. Our running backs pass game and run game, pass protection. You just get a whole bunch of guys that fit what he wants to do, that allows us to be able to be versatile and still be able to move the ball.”

Q: There has to be growing pains to get to that stage, right?



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Carr: “We dealt with it last year. We watched it, it was hard. There were some plays where I’m dropping back and I’m like, ‘Wait, what was that.’ Let’s be honest. We’re adding something early in the season, ‘Oh yeah, that was it.’ And we’ll get a completion on it, but I was like, ‘Glad I remembered right before the snap.’ Now we’re just playing football. Again, we talked about how big the offense is and how much it is on the quarterback. Us quarterbacks were joking about it today, all the things we installed today. Just how much there is every week. When you’re able to do that over a period of time, which I hope the NFL will do with other young quarterbacks like this organization has done for me, is give people time. Give them time under one system and just see that it’ll get better. You get people in there, it gets better. I think we’re starting to see the fruits of time together.”