



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders First-Round Draft Pick S Karl Joseph**

**Q: How much contact did you have with the Raiders headed into the draft? Did you expect it?**

**Joseph:** "It was kind of a surprise, man. I spoke to them. I had a real good interview with them at the combine. Since then, I really hadn't heard much. I know Mr. [General Manager Reggie] McKenzie was at my Pro Day. Also, I know Bruce. Bruce Irvin had been in contact with me this week, telling me that they've been asking about me, but I never really thought much about it. It was a surprise, man. I couldn't be anymore happier right now."

**Q: Are you in Haiti?**

**Joseph:** "Yes, sir. I'm in Haiti."

**Q: Do you have family there?**

**Joseph:** "Yeah, I was born here. Both of my parents were born here, so I still have a lot of my mom's family over here as well. I decided I wanted to come out here and do something special with my family, kind of enjoy it. Stay away from all the distractions, kind of come out here and enjoy with the family."

**Q: What was the reaction like when you got the phone call?**

**Joseph:** "They were happy. I can't really explain it. I almost cried. It almost came out [of] me, but I kind of stayed strong a little bit. Everybody in the room was happy. I couldn't explain it."

**Q: Where did you think you were going to go in the draft?**

**Joseph:** "I felt like it could've been anywhere. My agent told me it could have been from that 14th [pick] to almost early second round. I know there were a lot of teams like Atlanta and Tennessee and [the] Colts and Houston, those guys, Buffalo, they had a real high interest, Pittsburgh, so I knew it could've been in that."

**Q: Coming back from a knee injury, when will you be ready to go?**

**Joseph:** "Right now, I plan on being ready by training camp. The knee is feeling good, so I just have to keep strengthening it and getting ready. Man, I can't wait to get back, get in Oakland and go to work. Just get my leg better to 100 percent."

**Q: How do you describe yourself as a player?**

**Joseph:** "I'm a dog. I'm sure all the coaching staff will tell you that. I play with that intensity. I play with a chip on my shoulder. I'm very confident in myself. I play with a deep passion and love for the game. I don't think there's anybody else in the draft that plays with more passion than me."

**Q: Everybody talks about your hitting ability but Jack Del Rio wanted to make it clear that you can play the deep safety and break on the ball. Is that a part of your game that you think people don't realize you have?**

**Joseph:** "I think some people just get the hitting ability, but I think I can do it all. I think I'm definitely the most versatile safety in this draft and it showed. I'm so happy that the coaching staff with the Raiders took a chance on me. I told them once I picked up that phone, I promised they won't regret this pick. I'm going to show them why they picked me at this number one pick."

**Q: Was there any draw to going to the actual draft site and going to the red carpet and things like that? Why did you choose to stay with family? What was weighing on your mind when it came to what you were doing on draft day?**

**Joseph:** "Yeah, it was talked about. Everybody dreams about walking across the stage. But me, I wanted to do something that meant a lot more – being with my family. Being that I was born in Haiti and not too many people have actually done that. It's never really been done before so I wanted to come out here with my family and shed some light on the country, some positives about where I'm from and give the people something to be happy about, give my family something to be proud and happy about. So I wanted to come out here and just hang out and relax with my family."

**Q: How many people do you have there?**

**Joseph:** "I have a lot of my mom's family who's still over there. I have some aunts, uncles and cousins who still live out here. It was fun to be able to come out here and enjoy it and make them be part of it as well."



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**Q: How aware are you of the Raiders' tradition going back to the 1970's when Jack Tatum was a safety and they were known for intimidating and hitting?**

**Joseph:** "Honestly, not much. But I can promise you I'm going to get to know a lot more about it from this day on. I'm going to look into it. They had a great one that just retired. He was one of my favorites as well."

**Q: What's it going to be like to be the guy coming in to try to fill that hole?**

**Joseph:** "It's going to be a big shoe to fill, but I'm not looking to do that. He's obviously a future Hall of Famer, a great one and one of the greatest to ever play. All I can do is just come in and try to do my job and be the best Karl I can be."

**Q: How hard was it to watch from the sidelines during most of that season and were you worried at all that it would knock your draft status down?**

**Joseph:** "Honestly, yeah it was. When that happened, as a competitor, it hurt not being able to compete, especially at the combine seeing guys doing certain stuff. When it first happened, I was definitely worried about it. My family and my mom are very religious and I am as well. I believe everything happens for a reason and God has a plan and he's showing it right now that even though with the injury, a lot of people still thought very highly of me, and I'm just so happy that the Raiders staff is giving me an opportunity."

**Q: Where are you at with the recovery process with that knee injury? What have you been able to do physically?**

**Joseph:** "I've been running, been doing some light cutting and light change of direction, so right now it's been a very tough month with all the traveling, not being able to really focus very hard on my rehab, so right now it's just going to have to get right back and put all my focus and time into rehab right now and make sure I'm ready by training camp."

**Q: And you've been pretty comfortable doing all the stuff you've been doing?**

**Joseph:** "Yes, sir, I have. Like I said, this month [has] just been a hard stretch with all the traveling I've been doing with visiting different teams, so I haven't been able to get comfortable in rehab every day, but the knee is still feeling real good and real strong. I've been doing as much as I can when I can. I just really can't wait to get into the facility and just grind and grind. That's one thing about me is I'm a very great worker and I have very great work ethic, so I know once I get into the facility and start training and getting in a routine, I will have no problem with it."

**Q: How much longer do you plan to spend in Haiti? Do you know when you're going to be coming out to Oakland?**

**Joseph:** "I probably will be out here for a few more days. I told them I could come out to Oakland whenever they needed me to and they wanted me to stay out here for a couple of days and enjoy it with my family, so I'm going to enjoy a couple days with my family and fly back to the states and come in whenever they need me, probably right before mini-camp."

**Q: Have you been out here to the West Coast before?**

**Joseph:** "Never in my life. Never been out there."

**Q: What's the farthest West you've been?**

**Joseph:** "Probably Arizona."



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### **First-Round Press Conference following the selection of S Karl Joseph**

#### ***General Manager Reggie McKenzie and Head Coach Jack Del Rio***

##### **Q: How do you evaluate Karl Joseph's passion on tape?**

**McKenzie:** "By watching the tape, you just see, you can feel his passion. You can feel his intensity in the way he plays. You can feel his toughness. He has a very aggressive mentality. He's versatile. He can play all over the field, and he'll run and hit anything that moves."

##### **Q: Was Joseph the best available at 14 or was he the guy all the way?**

**McKenzie:** "Picking 14, it's hard to decide who's going to be there. Let me tell you one thing, we loved Karl Joseph from Day 1. We were happy to get him when he came to 14."

##### **Q: Could he be a cornerback?**

**McKenzie:** "No. He's a safety. Yeah, he's a safety."

##### **Q: Where there concerns about his knee?**

**McKenzie:** "The medical is checking out fine. He's going to be ready to roll. Our doctors gave us the thumbs up."

##### **Q: Is Joseph going to be available right away?**

**McKenzie:** "We'll let him come here and let the doctors determine how much and to what level, but he'll be here. I don't know when they'll clear him, but the prognosis is good. He'll be ready to play this year."

##### **Q: How does Joseph fit in?**

**Del Rio:** "He's a guy that is very versatile. He can play at all the levels of your defense. He can come off the edge as a blitzer. He can play down in the box. He can play centerfield. He's a guy that does a great job taking angles, and he's a very effective and efficient hitter and tackler. He plays with great temperament. We just think he's a really good football player, and he'll have an infectious kind of personality and demeanor about himself. So, [we're] really excited to get our hands on him and looking forward to working with him."

##### **Q: Did you think about trading back?**

**McKenzie:** "If anything would have come up, I would have entertained it. We're just happy we got him. Wherever I got him, it wouldn't matter. He was our 14th pick, and we're happy to get him."

##### **Q: Are big hitters devalued with the rule changes?**

**McKenzie:** "Not devalued. That offense is still going to figure out where No. so-and-so is. So from that standpoint, there's value to the defense. Now the way the rules have changed, I don't think Karl will be different, completely change his style because of the rules. Coach is going to coach him how to keep continuing to take those angles, so we're going to do it right. We're still going to be aggressive, tough, physical, within the rules. It's just the way it is."

##### **Q: Did you guys consider Myles Jack at number 14 or was that a decision you made before the draft started?**

**McKenzie:** "I'm not going to get into guys we considered. Who we considered was Karl Joseph, and we got him."

**Del Rio:** "I can tell you all about that one." *(laughter)*

##### **Q: As Laremy Tunsil was going down the board, were you guys scrambling at all? He's a guy I'm sure you thought would be gone long before you guys picked. Was that something you guys were trying to react to in the room?**

**McKenzie:** "We were scrambling making sure we had the right phone number for Karl Joseph." *(laughter)*



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**Q: Everywhere you read, it talks about Karl Joseph being a big hitter. Is that type of presence something that you felt like this defense needed from the secondary?**

**Del Rio:** "We're looking to be really good on defense. We want to be a really good football team. Obviously we've talked about the secondary play and our desire to have it perform at a higher level. I think the temperament that he brings, the intensity that he plays with and the instinctiveness that he has, those are things that we covet. It should be a real competitive group. We've added a couple of guys in free agency, and now to be able to add a player like Karl, it's awesome for us. Now we get to work. I wouldn't take anything away from his ball-hawking ability, his ball skills, his instincts, his ability to read quarterbacks and catch balls, not just knock them down, but catch them. He's a playmaker. He's a playmaker that takes good angles and also tackles and is known for his hitting, but he's more than just a hitter. I think he's a really good football player."

**Q: Did he come out here for a visit or was it something you did on a remote basis?**

**McKenzie:** "On a remote basis."

**Q: The Raiders' search for a stadium is obviously making big news and taking a lot of time away from some people in the organization. Was Mark Davis less involved with this draft because of the other things going on? Were you and the other scouts able to insulate yourselves from all of that?**

**McKenzie:** "To answer your question about the scouts concern, those guys, we have one job, and that's to evaluate and communicate to players. As far as where we play and all of that, we talk about that very little. As far as that's concerned, we just worried about what we can control. As far as Mark Davis, Mark and I talk all the time. That hasn't changed from every year. He's put a lot time into the stadium stuff. He's been a whole lot busier from that standpoint, but as far as the football team, in free agency and this draft, it's just like it has been."

**Q: After Karl Joseph got hurt, the West Virginia coaches just raved about this kid, saying he was one of their favorite players that they've ever coached. Do those types of statements resonate with you that you'll be taking over with him at the next level?**

**Del Rio:** "Yeah, that's part of the background that the scouts really dig for and bring back to us and then obviously, as coaches, we get involved in the early spring and prepare leading up to the draft. When you have positive things like that, that just adds to the feeling that you have. You go in and look at the tape, there's good tape, and then you get feedback like that from the scouts and comments like that from coaches, that just bolsters your opinion."

**Q: Prior to the draft, you've been making some good offseason moves, adding players to the roster. How do you not let the move or the relocation affect this season?**

**McKenzie:** "Just staying on the course of what we're doing. We can't control where we play. We know we're going to be in Oakland this season and whatever happens afterwards is the future. There's no time for that right now. We're worried about this rookie camp, these OTAs and trying to put together the best team we can. If we start thinking about moving places, we're taking away from what we're here for and that's to get this team together and win some ball games."

**Del Rio:** "I'm really good at having tunnel vision, so we're locked in on being the best we can be right now, right here, where we are. We won't worry about things that are outside of our control. We'll let people who handle that, deal with that and we'll focus on the things we're in control of and that's the effort we bring every day. It's a special place, special people, and we've got a good team that needs to work, so right now, we're just focused on the work."

**Q: Is there anything you can share about the conversation you had with Karl?**

**McKenzie:** "I can tell you this; he and his family are extremely excited just by the background noise. He wanted to spend time with his family. He's in Haiti at this point, so we more than likely will not have him come in tomorrow,



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so you guys won't get a chance to see him on the stage, it doesn't seem right now, but he's extremely excited and he's happy to be a Raider."



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### **Raiders Second-Round Draft Pick DL Jihad Ward**

**Q: Where were you when you got the news? What was the setting like?**

**Ward:** "I got the news when I was at my D-line coach's house and the rest of the rush members, the D-lineman, the coach's family, coach [Mike] Phair was there and it was just exciting. I was waiting for the phone call. I'm officially a Raider. I still can't believe it to this day. Wow."

**Q: Did you have any contact with them during the pre-draft process?**

**Ward:** "Yeah, I had contact with them. They liked the way I worked. They were just telling me how everything was going on. They liked my work ethic and to keep grinding with it and to stay hungry with it. It isn't over for me. I'm happy to be a Raider."

**Q: Did you visit out here?**

**Ward:** "No I haven't. Actually, I visited in California but it was in Los Angeles, to be honest with you, because I went to [visit] JUCO at [Los Angeles] Pierce [College], and I have a couple of JUCO players over there, they wanted me to come visit to workout with them and chill with them, but that was my first time. I've never really been to the West Coast like that to be honest with you because I'm more of a city guy, Philadelphia."

**Q: What do you consider to be the strengths of your game?**

**Ward:** "You know passer-wise and fighting with the D-linemen, rushing the ball and do what I do best, just make the team win. I just love competing; that's what I like to do, and I'll have more of that. I'm just so excited right now. I'm so speechless. It will come. I'm really speechless right now."

**Q: I was reading one of your bios that you made the change in junior college going from safety and wide receiver to the defensive line. What brought about that change? Did you just become too big for the other positions?**

**Ward:** "Yeah, I was just really getting big. I was playing wide receiver and defensive back at the time, and I started learning defensive end my senior year of high school and it just kept developing as I got bigger. I was more of an offensive player playing tight end in JUCO and defensive end fitted me. My JUCO coach told me about it, and I was just with it. I just wanted to get out there on the field. It didn't matter what position, I just wanted to get out there. After getting heavier and heavier, just maintaining my speed, and I was really a D-lineman going on in JUCO, so I was just sticking with it and sticking with it. I'm still learning the game."

**Q: Was that something that they gradually introduced or were they still using you on offense and letting you play some defensive end or did you become a full-time defensive end right away?**

**Ward:** "You know, for certain plays they had me at tight end... Yeah, most of the time they had me at tight end and then my freshman year going into my sophomore year, I was starting to get a little feel for the D-lineman and when you're in JUCO, you have to find out what position that you're going to face when you get to Division-I, so they chose D-lineman and I was with it. I liked D-lineman better and we just stuck with it."

**Q: Did you think you would get drafted this high? Were you surprised when you got the phone call?**

**Ward:** "I was more surprised at getting the phone call and that the Raiders were giving me the opportunity. When the phone rang, I was patiently waiting for the phone call and my heart kept beating every time it rang. It didn't matter what round the call came in as long as I am in there. I am stuck with it. I am stuck with the Raiders. It didn't matter if it was the third or fourth round, I just could not wait to get that phone call. This is a dream come true and I still cannot believe it to this day."

**Q: It looks like your numbers went down last year. Is there any reason behind that?**

**Ward:** "Everybody doesn't always have a good season. Numbers don't lie at the end of the day, but that is how you learn from situations. You learn from it and get better and don't give up. There is still time to shine out there. Everybody knows that I didn't have the best numbers last season, but it is all about getting better and learning



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from your mistakes making sure you don't have those mistakes again. I am here to learn from the vets on out there, the D-linemen, with [Bruce] Irvin and them, one of the best head coaches in the NFL, and I'm just ready."

**Q: Did the Raiders talk to you about how you might fit in on the defensive line?**

**Ward:** "I can play either side. After talking with them, I will do anything I can do to make the team better – three technique, inside, pass rush, or setting the edge. I want to win. I will do everything in my power to win. Put me at tackle, I'll play. They want me to set the edge, I will set the edge for them. I am just here to be a part of the team and make the team great."

**Q: What kind of player do you see yourself being at the next level?**

**Ward:** "I see myself getting off the ball, being one of the good pass rushers out there and be a great run stopper. I just want to be one of the best D-lineman out there. I just want to be one of the best D-lineman and feel good with the D-line that I'm in right now. You've got Irvin, as I said, one of the great D-lineman out there, so it's just a good feeling. The strength for me is that I just keep fighting. The effort is there. The effort is there."

**Q: You went through a lot in junior college just getting yourself from practice and back. In what ways has that shaped you and affected what you are trying to do now?**

**Ward:** "I still have that mindset with me. I still have it. I still act like I am in JUCO. I just keep grinding, keep staying uncomfortable, and staying uncomfortable is staying focused. If I do something good, don't even worry about it; that's in the past. What's next? I just have the same mindset as I keep going. I don't want to hear the good stuff that is coming out. I want to hear the stuff that I need to work on. That is the part of being a good defensive lineman. So, I am just having the same mindset that it isn't over. Every day, my mindset is just that it isn't over. I still will push myself to where I need to be to this day."

**Q: What did it take to win Illinois' Wright Commitment to Excellence Award?**

**Ward:** "It just takes hard work, just grinding out there to do what you have to do. I'm very excited and just [inaudible] staying uncomfortable, every day, just staying uncomfortable. You just keep going and going – it doesn't stop. So as long as you have that with you, you should have no problem."

**Q: What's your physical status? How quickly can you be on the field?**

**Ward:** "I can be on the field very quickly. I had a little knee injury earlier in the season, actually got better. They said I was going to miss four games with that and come to find out I was back the first game. So I was quickly moving. I didn't really worry about the injury. I was just out there grinding with my brothers that were on the D-line. I'm 100 percent clean on that one. I'm pretty good. I'm healthy."

**Q: So you're not going to need surgery?**

**Ward:** "No. If the situation is, again, if it's a situation that needs to be handled, yeah, I would see what's going on with that. If it doesn't need to be... If nothing is wrong with it, then it shouldn't be right for me to have surgery and stuff like that. If it's fine, it's fine. We can see what's going on. If it's wrong, then we just have to fix it."

**Q: Which knee was it?**

**Ward:** "It was the right knee."

**Q: What was the specific diagnosis?**

**Ward:** "It was just a little, small tear in the meniscus."

**Q: But you don't need surgery right now?**

**Ward:** "Well, I had a surgery earlier in the season. I just had a scope and it was pretty fine. They had to MRI ever since. If I need to get it checked out again, we can check it out. I don't want to be at camp or on the field then they



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see my knee is messed up. We can check it out again. It depends what the team... If they want me to get it checked out, we can get it checked out. I feel fine. It is what it is. If I need surgery or something like that, then I'll get it."

**Q: How did you approach the Ohio State game where you were getting double-teamed?**

**Ward:** "You know, just do what you have to do to win games. They had a lot of good offensive linemen at Ohio State and it's all about competing. I wanted to be out there. I wanted to stand out there. If you want to be great, you have to go against the great. Ohio State O-linemen, they're all good O-linemen. Of course I got double-teamed a lot, but it's just football. That's what happens when you're in the three technique or in the five technique. Those guys are good. I was just out there just trying to prove myself and leave my mark. I wanted them to remember me after the game and let them know this guy is tough."





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### **Raiders Third-Round Draft Pick LB Shilique Calhoun**

#### **Q: Did you have an idea you were headed to Oakland before the draft started?**

**Calhoun:** "Not at all, honestly. I know that when I came out to visit Oakland, I came back home and talked to my family. When I got back, I kind of told them I kind of felt like it was the same as Michigan State. I felt like it was a place where I fit well and a place where I felt like I was at home. I'm happy that Oakland picked me up and I'm ready for this opportunity."

#### **Q: Where do you think you can fit in with the pass rushers on the team and learn from them?**

**Calhoun:** "Yeah, definitely. I think they're all very experienced guys. Even Khalil [Mack], he's just grown a lot, I think, in his second year. He's definitely taken his talents to great heights, even from just playing at Buffalo. I watched Bruce Irvin back when I was in college. He was somebody that I definitely looked up to and the same with Aldon [Smith]. Three guys, three premier guys that have a lot of talent and also have a lot of knowledge. I look forward to coming in, learning from those guys, just trying to soak it all in like a sponge and definitely trying to go out there and compete. I definitely want to be on that field in any way that I can. So hopefully I can learn something from those guys, add it to my game and then attribute it onto the field and make plays and make it so our pass rushing corps is dominant."

#### **Q: Do you feel comfortable playing multiple positions?**

**Calhoun:** "Definitely. I feel like I'm a very versatile player, I can play multiple positions. I definitely do believe that the SAM works for me. If you want to put my hands in the dirt, that also works. I think that I can play multiple roles and that I can contribute to the team in many different ways. If he wants to put me at tailback, I can also play a little tailback as well." *(laughing)*

#### **Q: Can you talk about your decision to stay at Michigan State for another year? What was it like to have the year that you did in 2015?**

**Calhoun:** "Honestly, last year was a great year for us. I definitely thought about coming out, but the opportunity for me to gain my degree, I felt like that was very special for not only me, but for my family. You know it's a blessing to be able to play in the NFL, but it is not for long and that's kind what we call [it] on our defensive line, the not for long league. Nobody can ever take your degree away from you and that was a special moment for me. So, I decided to come back and take that up and definitely take a hold of that opportunity. To come out after such a great season... I mean, we didn't end it so well, but it's so many great memories that I had over that year, being at Michigan State. I think that it kind of helped me develop as a player as well, develop my knowledge, develop my skill and help me understand what I need to get better at. [It] gave the scouts an opportunity to see me once again and see that I can get better each and every year and that I can compete on a high level as well. I'm just thankful to have that opportunity. It was a great year, definitely, for the Michigan State Spartans."

#### **Q: What was your degree in?**

**Calhoun:** "I'm a C.J. major, criminal justice."

#### **Q: Do you think you can be a major contributor immediately like previous draft picks?**

**Calhoun:** "Definitely, definitely. I'm a natural competitor, so coming in I'm definitely going to want to contribute in any way that I can. Yeah, I see myself as someone who can come in and play on Day 1. I definitely don't feel like I'm going to take any steps backwards. Like you guys said earlier, I have great guys ahead of me that can lead me, definitely show me the ropes and get me out there early so that I can perfect my play on the field."

#### **Q: Have you followed the Raiders' offseason?**

**Calhoun:** "I haven't really followed the offseason much. This is definitely a team that can go far. I think that we have the opportunity to, and I think that we will. I look forward to the season, but the season has to come and we have to compete before I can really feel like we're making those steps forward."



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**Q: Over the last few years, the Raiders have drafted a lot of guys that are “no drama” kind of guys. Is that how you would describe yourself?**

**Calhoun:** “Definitely. I definitely think that I am one of those guys. I don’t get into trouble. I think I am well-respected. I think I am a respectful young man. I think that I am all about my business. I definitely want to get after it. You can tell that from the degree I obtained at Michigan State. As a C.J. [criminal justice] major, you have to stay out of trouble. If you want a job in that field, you have to have a clean background and also I have been raised by two great parents who showed me the way. They’re not saints at all, but they definitely showed me how to be a respectful young man and to get after business. My mom is definitely one of the hardest-working people I have ever seen, so she has instilled that in me since I was young. So, I am definitely someone who is going to come in there and get after it. You are not going to have to worry about off-the-field issues. The only thing you might have to worry about is maybe I’m making too many plays.”

**Q: What would you do with your criminal justice degree if football wasn’t in the picture?**

**Calhoun:** “I got a job opportunity from one of my professors. She told me once I am done with football, she said, ‘Come back and they pay for the police academy for me.’ So, that would probably be the first thing, and then where I go from there, I am unsure. I might take my studies a little further and go back to school. I am not sure yet, but I am going to take it slow and steady, but that is in the plans as well.”

**Q: Tell us about you getting this big draft call. Did you have a big draft party, what was the environment like when your phone rang?**

**Calhoun:** “I was actually with my younger brother and my family as well. We were just kind of relaxing and watching TV and watching the draft, and we were going through it and analyzing players that I played against. We were just talking about how they’ve been great players and we’ve played some really good teams and just the opportunity to have my name called would be special. When I saw the phone ring, I saw California and I thought, ‘Hold on, I know this number.’ So I just started smiling instantly because I was like, ‘Maybe this is my opportunity here.’ I told no one else to call me at this time, don’t give me any calls right now. I’m waiting for a specific call, so once I got that call, I just couldn’t stop smiling. I was so happy. My family was happy. My little brother was yelling in the background. I’m like, ‘Calm down! I can’t even hear them!’ But it was definitely a special moment for me and my family and we look forward to making more great moments with the Raiders organization.”

**Q: So you were actually studying tape and preparing when they called?**

**Calhoun:** “Yeah, of course. Studying up early!”

**Q: You’re known as a pretty polished pass rusher. Can you surprise some people against the run as well? Or is that a part of the game where you do need some improvement?**

**Calhoun:** “Honestly, I think I can do multiple things. I haven’t been in a situation to do those other things and so people automatically assume that I can’t do them, but I think once I get to the facility, people will see that I’m versatile and I’m able to do multiple things and I can contribute to the team in many different ways. I think that I can drop in coverage and also I can rush the passer very well. I can stop the run very well, so I look forward to definitely going out there and proving that on gamedays, but I think that I can honestly work at everything. I’m not perfect at anything that I consider my craft, and I’m always going to work on being technically sound and trying to improve at every part and area of my game, so I definitely need improvement in all phases, but I think that I’m versatile enough to do exactly what the Raiders want me to do.”



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### **Day 2 Press Conference Following the Third Round**

#### ***Head Coach Jack Del Rio***

##### **Q: What was the appeal of the two guys you drafted today?**

**Del Rio:** "Well, start with 'J-Dub,' with [Jihad] Ward. I think we think he has a great upside. We think he's a big, athletic defensive lineman that can play multiple positions. He can play a five technique, defensive-ended five technique. Move inside and play a three technique. The reason I speak to the upside, he's relatively young at the position. He was more of an athlete-type guy that is fairly young at that position, at the defensive line position. So he has a chance to really grow as he learns technique. On film, he's a guy that stays on his feet, chases the ball, plays hard and does a great job finishing, getting off blocks and making plays in the run game in particular right now. We'll need to develop him as a pass rusher. He's more of an interior defensive lineman, will play some defensive tackle and possibly some closed end. [He's a] good, big, active guy. Shilique [Calhoun] is more of a, kind of an in between defensive end or a SAM linebacker. He's an end-of-the-line kind of guy. He'll have versatility in that he can play the SAM linebacker for us or the LEO position, which is a defensive end. He's a very productive young man, really understands how to rush the quarterback. He's been an All-American and he's been a very productive guy at a good college program. We feel good about fortifying the front. That's what we were able to do today, add strength and depth and competition to the front."

##### **Q: How much was defense emphasized coming into the draft or were the guys you picked the best that were available?**

**Del Rio:** "Yeah, it wasn't like we orchestrated to come out with that being the case. We have a lot of areas where we feel like we can strengthen, add competition to the roster, add depth and it just has worked out in that way."

##### **Q: Did concern about Mario Edwards Jr.'s situation play a part with today's pick?**

**Del Rio:** "No."

##### **Q: Is the mindset of you can never have enough pass rushers play into the picks?**

**Del Rio:** "Yeah. You've looked at our depth chart, right? I mean, we still have a lot of work to do on our football team. There's a lot of opportunity to better ourselves and we're going to continue to work at it any way we can. I think for us, the hype surrounding where we are and where we see ourselves as a football team may be in two different places, but we see a lot of work in front of us and opportunity to make it much more competitive at many spots on the roster. That's really in all three phases."

##### **Q: What does Ward's back story say about him?**

**Del Rio:** "I think when you get a chance to talk with him, you'll find that he's probably closest to Amari [Cooper]. He's going to choose his words carefully, very serious young man. He's come through quite a bit to make it where he is now, having an opportunity to join the Oakland Raiders. It's a special story. Clearly, those kinds of stories are a lot better than some of the others that you hear. It's all part of it. We're not just looking for good stories, we're looking for good football players. When you have a good player who has talent, who has upside, who has athleticism and has shown the desire and the traits that you're looking for, you know that he's going to come in and be a good teammate and work his butt off. That's a positive for sure."

##### **Q: You look for stories, too?**

**Del Rio:** "Good stories, not bad." *(laughing)*



### ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: You talked about the transition Ward made position-wise and how he is still relatively new there. Is this a situation where you are going to have to pick and choose where to play him or is he a guy you think can come in right away and make a big impact?**

**Del Rio:** "He should. He will have a chance to. He'll have to earn that through his effort on the field but we are going to give him an opportunity to come in and join this football team, be himself, and find his place on the team. As we do with all of our guys, we ask them to be great teammates first, to come in here, work with respect, come to work every day ready to give everything you have and to compete and earn your way. We will let him do that, as we will all of the young men that we're drafting this weekend. We select these guys, they're prospects with the opportunity. We will sign some after the draft and have some undrafted [players] come in and really give them the same opportunity in terms of... We'll do it on the field. We'll figure it out on the field."

**Q: Are you surprised what Ward has been able to do so far considering that he is still relatively new to the position?**

**Del Rio:** "There is a lot of upside and growth potential there because of some of the technique stuff that he will learn. He is not a raw player. He played against Big Ten linemen and he has moved along the line. He has played all the way out as a nine technique all the way down to into a three technique. He has been exposed to a lot of football. And, defensive line is not as complex as playing quarterback. We think we can help him grow as a player and we like what we are starting with."

**Q: Ward mentioned he didn't have a productive season last year. Did he stand out at the Senior Bowl? Is that what caught your eye?**

**Del Rio:** "Just throughout the season... He's not a big stats guy, if that's what you're talking about. We thought he played very well in some of the games that he played throughout the season. The whole body work is what we look at. It's not any one exposure. He's going to be a good football player."

**Q: How is Jihad medically or physically? Can he get on the field right away?**

**Del Rio:** "All of our guys, we expect to play this year. All of our guys have checked out fairly well with the doctors, so we feel good about having them all ready for action in 2016."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Fourth-Round Draft Pick QB Connor Cook**

#### **Q: How surprised were you when the Raiders called?**

**Cook:** "I was pretty surprised because I think Dallas was interested in me and they were trying to trade up and I think they couldn't do it. Then as soon as I saw Oakland trade up, I was talking to my agent and he said they were taking a quarterback. Looking at it, Derek Carr is obviously a great quarterback. [I'm] going to go in there and learn from him, trying to compete obviously, and you have great guys on offense. You have Amari Cooper, you have some other guys and your playmakers at running back and tight end and all that other stuff. I'm glad that I found a home. It was a little bit of a wait, but I'm glad the whole process is over. The whole coaching staff, the ownership there, [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio, [General Manager] Mr. [Reggie] McKenzie, talked with [quarterbacks] coach [Todd] Downing already. I'm just happy to be a Raider. I'm looking forward to it. Being out in California is a little better than Ohio weather-wise. Just looking forward to it."

#### **Q: How tough were these last two days seeing other quarterbacks getting picked ahead of you?**

**Cook:** "Yeah, anytime you see another quarterback get drafted in front of you, it hurts. I'm a competitor. Obviously, I think I'm one of the best quarterbacks in this draft class, but nothing is ever easy and nothing is ever perfect. Everything that I've been able to accomplish at Michigan State is never easy. Going on to the NFL, it's definitely going to get a little bit harder and more difficult. It's definitely not going to be easy. Obviously, seeing all the other quarterbacks go, it hurt, but I'm just ready to be a Raider and ready to get to business."

#### **Q: Does being available on the third day humble you?**

**Cook:** "It's a lot of motivation. I would say more motivation than anything. Like you said, seeing all the other quarterbacks go when you think you're a pretty good quarterback, it just motivates you. I'm going to go into this league with a chip on my shoulder and try to earn everything that I achieve."

#### **Q: What was the conversation like with Todd Downing?**

**Cook:** "Oh it was really laid back. He was just saying that he was looking forward to getting an opportunity to coach me, looking forward to me getting into those facilities and getting to know everyone, and just congratulating me on being a Raider."

#### **Q: Did you hear from fellow Michigan State draft pick Shilique Calhoun yet?**

**Cook:** "Oh yeah, I called him right away and we talked for a little bit and congratulated each other. I told him, 'Hey man, looks like we can't stay away from each other for too long,' and he was laughing about it, but it's cool being close to a guy like that. He was in my class, came in with me at Michigan State. Everyone in Michigan State, our whole class was super tight, so getting an opportunity to still be with him, it's a blessing."

#### **Q: What do you know about the history of the Oakland Raiders?**

**Cook:** "That it's up-and-coming. Obviously, they competed for a Super Bowl back in the day against [former Head] Coach [Jon] Gruden and Rich Gannon [was] at quarterback. They had some really good years back in the day. Now they're up-and-coming with [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio and [General Manager] Mr. [Reggie] McKenzie, all those guys with the young and up-and-coming core group of guys on the team. I'm looking forward to it. There's nothing but good days ahead with this organization. I'm looking forward to being a part of it."

#### **Q: A lot of people have been questioning your leadership skills. What's your response to this and what you can say about your leadership skills?**

**Cook:** "I don't think you can win that many games and be that successful at a program without being a leader. I think all that stuff was so far from the truth. Everything will work itself out. People want to talk and say all that stuff, but they've never even sat down to talk to me or get to know me as a person. We were successful for a reason and that's pretty much all I have to say. I'm just looking forward to this whole new journey and getting a chance to be a part of a great organization and go out there and compete."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Fifth-Round Draft Pick RB DeAndre Washington**

**Q: Did you have any pre-draft contact with the Raiders?**

**Washington:** "Yes, sir. I actually met with them at the combine, with [General Manager] Mr. [Reggie] McKenzie and [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio. I had a chance to meet with them a few times. I'm excited to be a part of Raider Nation."

**Q: Whose NFL game would you say you emulate?**

**Washington:** "Maybe Maurice Jones-Drew type. You know, small and compact, but very physical at the point of attack."

**Q: Did Jack Del Rio compare you to Maurice Jones-Drew?**

**Washington:** "No, he never gave me a specific comparison. It's just a guy I've heard along my career."

**Q: How does the Texas Tech offense compare to an NFL offense?**

**Washington:** "I think guys don't realize we actually ran the ball quite a bunch too. So, I think playmakers make plays, at the end of the day. I'm excited to be a part of this Oakland offense. I look forward to doing big things."

**Q: Have you had any continuing problems with your previous ACL injury?**

**Washington:** "No sir. One hundred percent."

**Q: Coming from a pass-heavy offense at Texas Tech, how comfortable do you feel coming out of the backfield and with blocking assignments?**

**Washington:** "I take that personally, man. I think if you watch my film, anytime I get a chance to take on a defender, I play with a chip on my shoulder when it comes to that part of my game. I definitely take that personally. I look forward to protecting Derek Carr or whoever the quarterback may be."

**Q: Do you find that at your height, you may have an advantage in pass blocking?**

**Washington:** "No, I think it just comes down to willpower – pass blocking is all tenacity. If you deliver a blow instead of take a blow, you're going to win a lot more than you lose."

**Q: What does it mean to be drafted to the Raiders, a team that has a major need for you?**

**Washington:** "It's huge, man. The Raiders are a rich-tradition organization – tradition runs deep. I know they have some die-hard fans out there, so I'm looking forward to getting out there and competing and having some fun and doing some big things for the Raider Nation."

**Q: Who are you watching the draft with and what was it like when you got the call?**

**Washington:** "It was a pretty exciting deal. I'm actually down in Houston, my hometown with family and friends. When I got that call my heart kind of dropped because I saw the California area code. I wasn't really sure who it was, but I was excited it was the Raiders. I felt comfortable with their staff. I look forward to going out there and making big things happen."

**Q: What do you know about Michael Crabtree?**

**Washington:** "I just know that he's the most talked about guys when you come through Lubbock, Texas. You talk about receivers that are just, you know, players, Texas Tech players, period. He's that guy, one of the first names that rolls off anybody's tongue. I've actually never met him personally, but definitely look forward to being with another Red Raider up there in Oakland."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Sixth-Round Draft Pick LB Cory James**

#### **Q: What position did you primarily play this year?**

**James:** "I was inside for half of the season and I moved to defensive end for the rest of it. And a little bit of SAM for the remainder of the season."

#### **Q: Do you think your versatility is one of the reasons the Raiders chose you?**

**James:** "Yeah, I feel like I do. I feel like versatility really helps with special teams and everything too. I feel like I have pretty decent speed, so I feel like – special teams and everything – [I] could help the Raiders and everything."

#### **Q: Have they told you where they want you to play here?**

**James:** "Of course I'm going to start off in special teams and everything. But I think... Whenever I went on my visit, they wanted to try me out at like a WILL/SAM position. That's cool. And special teams too."

#### **Q: How did your visit with the Raiders go?**

**James:** "It was good. The facility was nice, the general manager was cool and everything. I liked the coaches and everything, [linebackers] coach Sal [Sunseri] is one of the best in the business. I'm just happy to get over there and start helping the team out in any way possible."

#### **Q: What was today like for you?**

**James:** "It was surreal, man. I'm so happy, so blessed; God really blessed me. I'm so happy. I'm still at a loss for words right now but I'm just so happy right now man."

#### **Q: Why did they move you from outside linebacker to inside linebacker and defensive end?**

**James:** "With the coaching change and everything, I felt like the coaches wanted to try me out and see what I could do over there. As the season went on, there were injuries to the defensive line and everything so they had to move me over there to put more depth in that position and everything, so that's really how it worked out."

#### **Q: What caused the move from outside linebacker to inside linebacker and defensive end?**

**James:** "With the coaching change and everything, I felt like the coaches wanted to try me out and see what I could do over there. Then as the season went on, there was an injury to the D-line and everything, so they had to move me over there to put more depth at that position and everything, so that's really how it worked out."

#### **Q: Were you able to find a position that you prefer? Rush the passer from the outside or drop into coverage?**

**James:** "They both have it [inaudible]. Like really rushing the passer you can really get more sacks and playing middle linebacker you can rack up a lot of tackles. They both have their place for them. I really like both of them. I could play anywhere, even special teams, too."

#### **Q: Do you hang your hat on never missing a game in college?**

**James:** "Oh yeah, man. Colorado State really teaches us to really fight through your injuries. That's pretty much what we all do throughout the season and everything."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Seventh-Round Draft Pick G Vadal Alexander**

**Q: Did you know that the Raiders were in on you? Had you had prior contact with them leading into this?**

**Alexander:** "I actually didn't have much contact with them going into this, so it was a little bit of a surprise to get that call from them."

**Q: You played both tackle and guard. It sounds like they're looking at you as a guard, is that right?**

**Alexander:** "I think so. I'm not sure, but I think so."

**Q: What position do you feel more comfortable at, guard or tackle?**

**Alexander:** "I've grown a love for both of them, really. So, I don't really have one favorite to be honest with you."

**Q: Are you willing to play in both the guard and tackle positions?**

**Alexander:** "Absolutely. Absolutely. No doubt about it. It's something I'm definitely willing to do. Just work my butt off; whatever the coach, coaching staff wants me to do. Wherever the coach wants me to play at or perform at, I'm more than happy to oblige."

**Q: You've been a starter in an SEC program for a long time. Are you surprised you went this late in the draft?**

**Alexander:** "Yeah, I'm surprised I lasted this long. It's something I wasn't expecting, but God has a plan. I'm a firm believer in my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Everything happens for a reason in my mind, but I absolutely am surprised I lasted this long."

**Q: Do you have any idea what may have contributed to you slipping into the seventh round?**

**Alexander:** "I'm not entirely sure. It's something that I really look forward to asking my agent and figuring that out, but I'm just happy to be a Raider, man. I'm happy to be here. I was meant to be here, so I'm ready just to put the work in and go. It doesn't really matter why, it just matters that I made the trip, I made the decision to come out as a senior, and the Raiders liked me enough to want to draft me – that's the only thing that matters."

**Q: Do you know anything about the Raiders blocking scheme and how do you fit into that?**

**Alexander:** "To be honest, I haven't looked at any tape of the offense particularly, so I couldn't tell you their scheme, to be honest. I know that I can fit into their offense because I'm very versatile with that. I've played tackle, guard, zone schemes, power schemes, multiple schemes – I can do it all, in my opinion. I'm looking forward to whatever they need me to do."





## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Day 3 Press Conference Following the 2016 NFL Draft**

#### ***General Manager Reggie McKenzie***

##### **Q: Can you talk about trading up for Connor Cook?**

**McKenzie:** "Can you believe I traded up? (*laughing*) It's a situation that you look at the board, and it was a good player that we still had up there. It was a great opportunity for us to explore trying to get up there. We found a partner and we made the deal. He's a good player. We just felt like he was too good of a player not to try."

##### **Q: What's the importance of drafting a quarterback?**

**McKenzie:** "Well it's always important to have depth. We usually kept three quarterbacks when I was in Green Bay for a long time. You can see the cycle, even as early as last year, guys went down [with injury]. So you want to make sure you have guys prepared. Like I said, he was a good player still sitting there Day 3. We had a good grade on him and we just wanted to seize the opportunity to at least try to get a good player in here."

##### **Q: Are the reports about Cook's leadership less of a concern since you already have Derek Carr established as your leader?**

**McKenzie:** "Derek's our quarterback. Whoever we bring in, we're just looking [at] can he help us? Can he add to the depth? Can he help our team? That was the only reason we went after him. That was of no concern. No."

##### **Q: What did you like about DeAndre Washington?**

**McKenzie:** "He's the one guy that every time we watched him play, it was very difficult for the first guy to get him down. He had power, quickness and he had speed. He was the kind of the guy that can do it all. He's tough, instinctive. We just thought he was a really good football player. We think he's going to help our team a lot."

##### **Q: Do you see the comparison others are talking about between Jihad Ward and Mario Edwards Jr.?**

**McKenzie:** "Well you know, no. To me, they're totally different. Mario's been playing this position probably since he could walk. Jihad has been playing defensive line for a handful of years. You can count them all on one hand and still have fingers left. They're different. He's just so raw at the position. It's a little different some of the things they can do. We just thought he was a good football player with a great upside. We just jumped at the chance to be the team to have him, coach him up and see how far he can go."

##### **Q: Can you discuss DeAndre Washington's strengths and weaknesses as a pass protector?**

**McKenzie:** "Definitely getting out into an open space is one of his strengths – his ability to make guys miss and take it to the house. People want to pick on him because he's a hair over 5-foot-8. As far as blocking and all of that, he's playing tough enough. He understands the game. We're not worried too much about that."

##### **Q: Can you talk about the future of Cory James as a player on the Raiders?**

**McKenzie:** "I'm sure we're going to try to figure that out. He has played a lot of positions. We'll see. For the beginning, we'll let him play off the ball and see if he can play weakside linebacker, teach him both inside linebacker spots, and nickel. But he's definitely going to have to try to make his money on special teams. He has a lot of versatility because he's so athletic. He can run. He really loves playing football and you can really see that in his play."

##### **Q: How important was it to find a running back during the draft process?**

**McKenzie:** "You just can't go through the whole season with just one running back. With all the production, that can't happen. We felt like it was important to add someone and we think we got a really good running back in Washington."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: How fine is the line between drafting for immediate versus future need?**

**McKenzie:** "Well, immediate need, you really don't want to draft for one year. You want to make sure whoever you draft is going to help you for the duration. So, I really do not want to draft for the immediate need. Now, I'll take a shot in the seventh round when we need a returner or something that's going to satisfy something quickly. But we still want that quick-need fix to turn into a long-term fix. To answer your question, the intent is to always look long term. When he gets on the field, it's up to him. But we want the guy to be here for a while."

**Q: Was Vadal Alexander a guy you were surprised was still around in the seventh round?**

**McKenzie:** "Yeah, because big guys, they usually get taken. We felt really good about that and we like big people."

**Q: Do you see Vadal Alexander as a guard or a tackle right now?**

**McKenzie:** "He's going to work both. The versatility is what we liked about him."

**Q: With no cornerbacks drafted, what does that mean for the future of DJ Hayden?**

**McKenzie:** "For any of those guys, we felt like we had a good group. We wanted to add a veteran, and it would have been nice to maybe draft a guy too, but if we didn't like him at that spot, we didn't reach. We think we've got a lot of guys that can compete at cornerback. We're just going to throw them all out there and see who can take the job. It wasn't an intentional thing to do, to not take a corner. It just didn't work out that way."

**Q: Are you going to exercise the fifth-year option on DJ Hayden?**

**McKenzie:** "We'll probably make that decision soon enough."

**Q: How do you see the inside linebacker spot right now? Will it be Malcolm Smith or Ben Heeney?**

**McKenzie:** "Coach is going to figure that out. Malcolm [Smith] can do it, [Ben] Heeney can do it. We've got some guys that we can interchange. It depends who steps up at weakside if they want to move Malcolm. Heeney can really do both. We've got some guys that are versatile, so we'll just play that by ear. The key is just putting the best two inside linebackers out there. Which combination works best, that's who they'll go with, but they'll work through that."

**Q: What do you think of what Ben Heeney was able to put onto tape last year and also where is Neiron Ball in terms of his health? Is he going to be full-go for the offseason program?**

**McKenzie:** "Yeah, to answer your question about Heeney, he's great. We felt like he's shown more than enough that he can play, at either spot, even nickel, so we like what Ben brings to the table. And Neiron, he's doing everything, he's good. We expect him to be ready to roll."

**Q: Given the state of your roster in terms of depth, is it easier to draft players as a project in the second round like you did this year with Jihad Ward because your starting lineup seems to be full of pretty quality players? Are you more willing to look into those deep developmental prospects now than three years ago?**

**McKenzie:** "Don't get me wrong, he's raw, but I don't want him to take a redshirt year. Our coaches are going to coach him up and we expect him to play. As far as taking chances, as far as the philosophy of it, that wasn't the intent – not at all. We were trying to get some guys who we felt like could help us in 2016."