



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther

Opening Statement: "Another good opponent coming in. Last game at the coliseum. We're very excited to play in it. Hopefully our fans show up in full force. It'll be a sad event but at the same time very exciting for our team."

Q: How did you breakdown the last game against the Titans? Do you come down on your guys harder after a game like that or are they so hard on themselves already that you just correct the mistakes and move on?

Coach Guenther: "I'm always hard on our guys to be honest with you, but I'm also realistic on some things. I have a high standard for our guys, and I hope that each guy on our defense has those same high standards. There were just too many big plays. Along the way when you're giving up that many big plays, you can't win a ball game. We had the early turnover, the early stop in the second half, but it wasn't enough. We've got to play better this week obviously in all three levels of the defense."

Q: When you say realistic, what does that mean?

Coach Guenther: "You know, we have some different moving pieces in there. Some new guys were thrown in some spots they haven't played in a while. Some guys that had been here for a couple weeks didn't play nearly at the level I hoped. That's what I'm really talking about."

Q: Do you expect to see a lot of Daryl Worley on the back end this week?

Coach Guenther: "Daryl has been a guy all season we've moved around. He's a multiple guy. He can play all the spots: nickel, corner, safety...smart guy, he understand the system, so he's a good piece to have."

Q: Some of the players said after the game they weren't surprised by what they saw from the Titans, but they still weren't able to stop them. What did you see in terms of any themes in regard to the big plays?

Coach Guenther: "I just think the leverage and coverage really. When a team's able to run the ball like they did, and then also work the play action, it becomes difficult on some things, but you know, there's no excuse. We just didn't play good enough at any level of the defense. Obviously, we didn't expect the outcome that we had. We've got to play a lot better and that's what I expect."

Q: What did you get from Marquel Lee in his first game back?

Coach Guenther: "That's another guy that I'm talking about. He hadn't played football in a long time. We don't play a lot of base defense anymore in this league, and Tennessee presents some of those base fronts, those base packages, and I thought he did a pretty good job really in 10 weeks, I think, it's been since he's played. He did a good job for us for the snaps he played."

Q: Considering you've released D.J. Swearinger, what's the missing component at that safety spot and how do you hope a combination of guys can help remedy that area?

Coach Guenther: "D.J. [Swearinger] was a good guy. He tried hard, he studied hard, he was a good teammate, but we just felt like we had some guys on our team that needed a chance to see what they can do. You know Dallin Leavitt, Curtis Riley, Worley at some spots, Isaiah Johnson. We've got to get him going. So, there's some younger guys we invested in in the draft that we have to see them develop and play and see what they can do on Sunday's for us."



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Q: Do you expect to see Dallin Leavitt in the secondary between now and the end of the year?

Coach Guenther: “Yes. I mean Dallin’s a good player. I mean he can play. I don’t view him as just a special teams guy, at least on the defense. When he gets his opportunity just like anything like Trayvon [Mullen], some of the other rookies, Maxx [Crosby], those guys, when they get their opportunities to play, they’ve got to make the most of it. If he gets an opportunity this week to play, hopefully he does good and makes the most of his opportunities.”

Q: What are things Leavitt does well?

Coach Guenther: “He sees the field good back there. He really does a good job of reading the quarterback in the fifth step, seeing where the quarterback’s supposed to go. He’s a good blitz. He’s a good tackler. Obviously, you see him on special teams in the open field. He makes a lot of plays that way. He’s a guy that just needs an opportunity to go do it.”

Q: You’ve had injuries across the defense, but you’ve really been chasing the safety position since Johnathan Abram went down. How much has not having that stable guy back there had a domino effect on everything else?

Coach Guenther: “It does. I mean you know losing Johnathan in the first half of the first game. We were really looking for big things from him. Losing him and Vontaze [Burfict], really the battery of your defense, the middle of your defense, and then losing Karl [Joseph]. You have moving pieces there and that’s what I was alluding to earlier. When you have a lot of different guys in there that have to be on the same page as the checks or formations, whatever it may be, that becomes difficult. You’ve got to try to keep them up to speed. You’re at a dilemma where, do you keep it simple and let them play or are you able to do a little bit more and hopefully they can understand it when things are moving and you have moving pieces. So that becomes the challenge of it.”

Q: What’s been your most consistent approach? Have you been able to give them stuff or have you had to keep it simpler?

Coach Guenther: “I’ve tried to keep it a little bit more simple, more dialed back than I normally have done things in years past just because of the moving pieces and some of the new faces we’ve had at all three levels really. That’s the challenge each and every week when you’re sitting here on Mondays and Tuesdays putting the stuff in. I’m trying to think like the players would think. ‘Hey, can they handle this? Hey, if this happens, do they know the adjustment for that or the adjustment for this?’ A lot of times you want to let these guys...just tie them up, play sound, stay on top in the coverage, play good in the run fits and let them go.”

Q: With some of the younger players, do you want to constantly challenge them even if they reach a certain point? Do you want to keep challenging them over the course of the season?

Coach Guenther: “Yeah, I really try to do that with all the players. I mean, we’re not a finished product yet guys. We know that, and we’re just trying to get them better each and every week. I think there’s a fine...there’s a thermometer to that whereas a young player, you try to push them, but you can’t push them so far over the top that they get gassed out. You just try to do it incrementally as time goes. You say ‘hey, he’s ready for the next challenge, let’s put it on them, and so on and so forth. It really depends on the players. You know, going through it, I can just tell you in my first year in the NFL 18 years ago, I can remember this time of year. I was like holy cow we’ve got four games left. The players, I always



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remind them, you've got to get extra treatment. You've got to take care of your body at this time of the year because they don't understand that because they hadn't gone through it in college."

Q: Are you getting more out of Dion Jordan than what you expected? He hadn't played football in a long time. Is he a find for you if he stays on this path?

Coach Guenther: "No question. I really like the skillset of Dion [Jordan]. He's a smart guy. He can do a lot of things. He can rush. He can play the run. He can drop in coverage. He's really athletic. Hopefully we can keep him going and keep him around here for some time."

Q: What's kept Nick Nelson from having as much of an impact this year than you would have liked and what do you need to see from him these last few games?

Coach Guenther: "He's played some outside and some nickel last year. You know we drafted him as an outside corner but we didn't have any nickel depth, so we kind of said hey, that's such a unique position in there, we kind of let him concentrate on that position. In the spring, when we had Lamarcus [Joyner] in there and Nevin [Lawson], we kind of kicked him outside and settled him down in there. He's played both nickel and corner for us. He's another guy that needs an opportunity, so if he gets his opportunity hopefully he can make the most of it."

Q: Have you had any second thoughts this year of moving Joyner back to safety?

Coach Guenther: "Again, same thing. The nickel spot's so important to us. I was just saying earlier about Marquel [Lee], not a lot of teams play mainly three receivers so the nickel spot's really an 80 percent, 85 percent position for us, and it's a unique position. We've really, the first year, just tried to concentrate him on doing that and then maybe next year once he kind of gets that, we'll move him back here to safety as a chess piece."

Q: Head Coach Jon Gruden mentioned that Gardner Minshew can really move around and scramble. How have you prepared to face him?

Coach Guenther: "Yeah, he does. He'll move around in the pocket a lot. He's an accurate passer. He seems like as a rookie quarterback, it's not too big for him. He's obviously won some games for them. It'll be a big challenge. They've got the big back back there, so having to defend the run and the pass with him scrambling around becomes a very challenging thing."

Offensive Coordinator Greg Olson

Q: What can you tell us about Josh Jacobs?

Coach Olson: "He looked great. He's been a pro and obviously he's shown that he can play with injuries. He's had different nagging injuries throughout the season, but he's a tough player and again that's a part of the reason why we drafted him."

Q: Is he back to where he was before last week in terms of his readiness?

Coach Olson: "Yeah I think so. There's nothing noticeable that I noticed today. We just feel good about him right now."

Q: Is Hunter Renfrow able to practice?



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Coach Olson: “Yeah, they’re excited. He was able to go through individuals today and routes. Just no contact, but he looked great, so it’s good to have him out on the field. Brought a little juice to the offense. They’re excited to see him out there.”

Q: What have you seen in Renfrow’s growth this year from when he first got here?

Coach Olson: “We talked about it before, I just think he’s more comfortable in his role really, but more comfortable in the speed of the game. I think that’s probably one of the biggest differences for a lot of these college players, is getting up to speed. I think when he had some success early on, I think that’s helped his confidence and he’s just playing at a higher level because of that I’d say.”

Q: Where do you think Kolton Miller has made the most improvements?

Coach Olson: “If you went back and watched last season I think as a coaching staff and [offensive line coach] Tom Cable would probably say the same, he’s stronger. He’s able to anchor much better than he was a year ago, but probably his development in the weight room and the strength more than anything. Again, that would be a question for Tom or even for him, but you don’t see the push that you saw a year ago on that side.”

Q: You guys have been pretty good on the first possession and early in the game and then the third quarter it’s always a struggle. Any idea why that is happening?

Coach Olson: “Yeah, obviously we spend a lot of time looking at that, we’re aware of that and it’s been something different every game. It’s not something that you’d say every week it’s the same issues. We’ve had different issues, so we’ve had different issues with that coming out and we’re aware, and we address it with the players, we put ourselves in different situations out here as if we’re coming out for the third quarter. So, it’s just more of ,really, a lack of execution and so it’s just making sure that they’re in the right mindset when they leave the locker room for the third quarter.”

Q: What did you see from Brandon Parker last week?

Coach Olson: “Again, much like Kolton, I think he’s improved from his rookie season. He’s not there strength yet as Kolton has developed, but he put on a lot of weight in the offseason and he’s gotten better. But he’s still getting better, still developing.”

Q: Did you see Miller’s knee bother him at all last season?

Coach Olson: “No. We never once and has never made an excuse for his play or his performance. He’s always owed up to his performance, but I’m sure that had something to do with it as well. Because of the knee injury, he was unable to spend as much time as he probably wanted to in the weight room working on his league strength, but he never ever complained or used it as an excuse.”

Q: What have you seen from Tyrell Williams the last month or so? Are there still lingering factors from the injury?

Coach Olson: “Yeah, we see that. It takes him awhile. Plantar fasciitis, it’s a pretty significant injury, but he’s battling through it. He’s taking medication before every game trying to manage the pain, but certainly every week that’s something he’s had to deal with.”



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Q: Losing one of your tight ends is pretty significant for you guys considering how often you deploy them. Can you use the new guy right away and how much are you going to miss Foster Moreau?

Coach Olson: "We'll have to. Foster was a huge loss for us. As you guys know, he played the wide tight end and he was playing it very well. I mean, he was another one of our young players that was getting better every game and to have that injury this late in the season certainly will hurt his offseason development. We're not going to minimize the loss of Foster, but we'll have to ask for other positions as we say, 'when someone goes down, someone at the other positions needs to step up,' and whoever comes in, whoever we bring in, is going to have to fill that role."

Q: Can you use the new tight end right away?

Coach Olson: "We haven't decided that right now. Obviously, it's very difficult in Week 13, but we'll wait until Sunday to decide who we're going to have up and what personnel groups we'll be using."