



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Head Coach Jon Gruden Senior Bowl Press Conference**

**Opening Statement:** “How’s it going? I’ll be happy to answer any questions that I can. Very excited to be back in Mobile and be with my coaching staff coaching these exciting, young players.”

**Q: Talk about the process of the Mike Mayock hire.**

**Coach Gruden:** “Well Mike and I go way back. Really excited to have Mike. He’s one of the hardest working guys I’ve met in football. Passionate, has a real desire, I think, to help us build our team back. I really enjoy every day. The process has been exciting, a lot of dialogue going on. The collaboration, I think, is off to a really great start.”

**Q: A lot has been made about how much authority he’ll actually have in the War Room. Have you guys discussed that at all?**

**Coach Gruden:** “I don’t know what’s been made of what; I could care less. He’s going to call a lot of the shots. Obviously, we’re going to work hand and hand together. We’re working very hard to see things clearly. I’m sure there’s going to be some disagreements, but he’s going to have plenty of authority to make the calls that are necessary for the Raiders.”

**Q: Would you consider moving down the board or up the board in the draft?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Yeah, well we did last year. We made a lot of trades during the draft last year. We realize that we have a lot of free agent players right now. We have a lot of needs on our team, and we have picks. With that being said, there’s a lot of possibilities. We’ll see how it all unfolds.”

**Q: What’s your thoughts on the pass rushers here?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Yeah, I like it. I like [Montez] Sweat, obviously, from Mississippi State. [Jaylon] Ferguson from LA Tech, very impressive. There’s a lot of guys. We have a couple of guys on our team, [L.J.] Collier out of TCU. There’s a lot of guys that are going to get a real opportunity to help themselves in this camp. We have a kid out of Boston College, Zach Allen, that I like a lot. He wears No. 2, he’s easy to find on the Boston College film. Those guys always get a chance to move up the board in Mobile.”

**Q: What do you see your coaching staff taking away once this week is over?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Well it’s just been great to spend time with players on both teams. You might eliminate four or five players from your thought process. Sometimes that’s just as valuable as moving four or five guys up on your board. You get a chance to see them behind the scenes. Who really loves it, who really learns it and who can really execute a lot of football that you’re putting in in a short period of time. So, it’ll be very beneficial to us.”

**Q: Can you speak on the advantage that you and Kyle Shanahan have over the other coaches in the league with this opportunity to coach the Senior Bowl?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Well this is the fourth time that I coached it, and it is an advantage, I think, because the pool of players is what it is every year. Sometimes it’s a deeper pool, sometimes it’s not quite as deep. But you’re going to get to learn 100 players and get some hands-on information that you couldn’t get if you weren’t coaching the game. We’ve drafted players from this game before, and I’m sure we’ll do that again.”

**Q: With all the draft picks that you have, you said you want to build this team up the Raider way. What exactly is that?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Is that what I said? The Raider way? Look we have a long way to go to get back to where we need to be. Obviously, the Kansas City Chiefs were in the final four. The Chargers advanced in the playoffs. We have to matchup with our opponents better. That’s on both sides of the ball. We have to get bigger, we have to get faster and we have to get better. That’s the Raider way.”

**Q: What was the hardest part of last year’s season with the reset?**



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

**Coach Gruden:** "Obviously there was a lot of hard parts. We struggled to win games. That was hard. It's not easy to lose. I think that's the hardest part of this reset. It's also exciting to have an opportunity to work with a group of guys that are fully committed to bringing the Raiders back."

**Q: On quarterback size:**

**Coach Gruden:** "I used to think that a lot until I saw Drew Brees twice a year in Tampa. Then I met with Russell Wilson coming out of NC State. Now I'm watching this kid [Tyler] Murray out of Oklahoma, and I am putting away all of the prototypes that I once had. I used to have a prototype for hand size, height, arm length, all that stuff. We're looking for guys who can play and do a lot of different things. They come in all shapes and sizes nowadays."

**Q: Any early assessments on some of the quarterbacks here?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, well I have four on our team that I'm focusing on. Drew Lock is a talented, quick arm customer at Missouri. I like [Ryan] Finley at NC State. I like his tape, has a lot of production. Daniel Jones is going to be a first round pick out of Duke. [He has] been well schooled. And we have [Trace] McSorley, not a big quarterback, but a tough guy. Got a lot of Rich Gannon, Jeff Garcia in him. Bulldog, fighter type quarterback. I'll become more and more familiar with the South quarterbacks. I did meet with Will Grier last night, and I'm impressed with him."

**Q: What about the guys protecting the quarterbacks? What have you seen from them?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well we're going to have our hands full. I will say this, we have some really good centers. I like [Garrett] Bradbury. I like his makeup. The center from North Carolina State is impressive. We have a couple of mysterious linemen that have had issues with injuries and what not, but we'll find out more about them in the coming days."

**Q: Senior Bowl is known for being essential the biggest job interview for players heading into the draft. What has been your message to the players this week?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Just be yourself, No. 1. Try not to be scripted. You're here for a reason. These guys had great college careers. They were selected by a panel of people here in Mobile that have done a phenomenal job over the years bringing in the right kind of guys. These guys love football. They're productive players. I encourage them to be themselves. Just try to make themselves available to every team. Try not to be a grouch. When you're doing these interviews, even though they're asking you the same question over and over and over, you have to treat each interview individually. Have some fun with this and be yourself."

**Q: What kind of things do you want to see out of Drew Lock this week?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I want to see him handle some different types of offense. Underneath the center, in the shotgun, in the no huddle offense. I want to see him communicate. A lot of these colleges use a silent count. They don't get in the huddle. The communication, the recognition of the defense and then the execution is what I'm after. I like to see him do that at a very, very high level because that's what the top picks have to do."

**Q: On this quarterback class:**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't know yet. I don't think anybody expected [Patrick] Mahomes to throw for 60 touchdown passes or Deshaun Watson to walk in as a rookie and tear it up. Nobody really expected that, I don't believe. But with Murray coming out, with the men you'll get a chance to see here in the next couple of days that question will be answered shortly."

**Q: Drew Brees said he was looking at his playbook from 2006 and couldn't believe how much the game has changed. Do you find that the game has evolved drastically since your first time coaching?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah a little bit. There's not any split safety coverages anymore. You don't see a lot of that stuff. The RPO's has come into the NFL. It certainly has changed. I think Drew will tell you there's still some concepts that were good in 2006 that are still good today."



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

**Q: What's been the biggest difference since coming back in regards to scouting?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Obviously the offenses that you're watching, the quarterbacks are doing different things. They're all in a no huddle offense. They're all in the shotgun all the time. A lot of the information comes from the sidelines. You see them looking to the sideline to get the information. Those are the biggest changes I think."

**Q: What have been your impressions of [Andy] Isabella and some of the other receivers you're coaching?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Isabella, I like Isabella. How do you not like Isabella? I like this Penny Hart we got from Georgia State, too. We're going to try to keep those two men in the slot this week. Not exclusively, but we're going to try to look at those two guys in the slot. We'll see. We have some intriguing, big receivers that I don't know a whole lot about yet. But they did seem to learn quickly and they do seem to have some talent."

**Q: You saw the end of the NFC Championship game, do you think the NFL will change the way they review pass interference?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't know. I talked to Sean Payton yesterday. It's a disappointing way to lose a game. I don't know what the ramifications of that are going to be. We all saw it. We all know there will be some action taken I'm sure."

**Q: You said Garrett Bradbury was impressive. Do you see him as only a center at the next level or can he move across the line?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well I just got here. I haven't coached him one day yet really except for the meetings, but I see him as a center. I see the man as natural center. He has communication. He has command. He has athleticism. I know he has some guard in his background. For that reason, I think he's going to help himself here because he can play three positions."

**Q: How much do you think the hire of Kliff Kingsbury will help Josh Rosen?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't know Coach Kingsbury. I do know this, he knows how to move the football. If I was Rosen I'd be excited. He's a gunslinger. Kingsbury was a heck of a quarterback himself. I'm sure he'll energize Rosen and the offense. I'd be surprised if he didn't."

**Q: What position is the easiest to make the jump from a small school to the NFL?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't know if it's easy at any position. I've seen it done across the board, but I'm not going to say it's easy. It's tough. I went to a small college. It's hard to make the adjustment as a coach from a small college to the NFL."

**Q: How much conversation do you have with Mayock this week in regard to what he's seeing and what you're seeing?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We meet after every practice. He's in the meetings with us. It's exciting to have a guy that you know for a long time that has very, very similar energy and passion and enthusiasm for what we're trying to do here. There's a lot of common ground that we share. We collaborate after every single day."

**Q: Has he said what the biggest challenge has been for him to move into his new role as general manager?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No. I mean look he's going to learn quick. He's a quick study. He's been in every building. He came and visited me when I was coaching Tampa Bay and Oakland in the past. He's been in every building in the league. That doesn't mean he has a whole lot of experience as a GM, but if you know Mayock, you know he's going to be a quick study. I saw him talking to Ozzie Newsome last night. He's always on a mission to get better and improve himself and the Raiders."

**Q: What's the quarterback trait that if the quarterback doesn't have he's a non-starter for you? What's something that you need to see a quarterback has before you start working with him?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Talent. You have to be able to make the throws. You have to have some mobility and you have to have the intelligence. Athleticism, arm talent, intelligence, if you don't have those three things, this is not the league"



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

for you. Really everybody in the NFL and major college football has some arm talent and some intelligence and some athleticism, but how much. That's one of the things that the good scouts do, they determine that."

**Q: How much stock do you put into this game?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think across the league everybody will tell you they look at the Senior Bowl practice tape, the Senior Bowl game film over and over and over. They watch the matchups. Watch this left guard against this right defensive tackle over and over and over. I remember sitting here with Al Davis, we did that. He'd put the Senior Bowl on for the 44th time. I would say, 'How many more times are we going to watch that game.' But it's a tremendous value, great tool because you see 1-on-1 matchups that you'd never see if you didn't come watch this."

**Q: Why did you feel the need to reach out to Sean Payton after his team's loss in the NFC Championship? Did you sympathize with him?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I'm not going to get into what we talked about. Sean and I worked together a long time ago. I was involved in a playoff game that ended in dramatic fashion and so is he now. He and I will have a couple hotdogs and a couple of glasses of coke here and talk about things in the future I'm sure."

**Q: Do you ever get over a loss like that?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No, I don't think so. I mean if you really want to dwell on it, you don't ever get over that. It's the last time that team will ever be together. It will never be the same. Those guys fought as long and hard as they could, and it will sting forever."

**Q: How valuable is it to get time with the other team at the Senior Bowl?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's very valuable. Kyle Shanahan is a good friend of mine. I've been sneaking into his meeting rooms trying to meet his players already. We are going to work together, the North and the South, the 49ers and Raiders coaching staffs. I think we are going to really go out of our ways to help each other get some time with each of these players because it's all about the players, it's not about the coaches."

**Q: In terms of playbook, how much is going to be out there and how much is going to be scaled back?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, there is a limitation on what you can do. Thank God, because Kyle would have every play and formation known to man. You got to be in a 2-by-2 formation with two receivers over here and two receivers over there. No trips, no motions, no shifts, so it's restricted, but we did try to put some volume in. Some three-step drops, five-step drops, play action, move the pocket to stimulate everybody."

**Q: When a player like Patrick Mahomes shows up in your division, do you feel like you need a star player like him to compete?**

**Coach Gruden:** "When Mahomes shows up, the only thought that pops into your mind is resignation, really. I can't get over how he performed. In bad weather, good weather, in adversity as a first-year starter. I can't get over it. I think it's one of the great accomplishments I've ever seen. I was just kidding about resignation. We got to matchup better. We got to improve our coverage. We got to improve our underneath coverage. We got to deal with [Travis] Kelce and Tyreek Hill and a lot of problems that they present other than Mahomes. When they get a lead, they have the pass rush that can close you out with Dee Ford, Justin Houston and Chris Jones. We got to deal with that as well. Anyways, we got a long way to go to get there, but yes we got to do a better job of matching up against Mahomes and the Chiefs."

**Q: How big of an opportunity is the Senior Bowl for players coming from smaller colleges?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think it's huge. I think Carson Wentz proved a couple years ago it doesn't matter where you come from. There has been a lot of obscure schools represented here. I think these guys have a chip on their shoulder, some of them, and they want this. This is the only chance they can get to prove that they belong with the big boys, so keep an eye on a lot of these schools that aren't your Power Five conferences."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: After a decade away, was there one moment where you said to yourself, this is where the game has changed the most?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't think it really has. You are still managing people, you are still teaching, you're still motivating. It's about people. You win with people. You got to acquire the right guys on your staff and on your team. You have to really work through the new collective bargaining agreement, I think that's what is most different. The preparation is a lot different. Practices, training camp, offseason programs are dramatically different, so you got to really take advantage of the time that you do have as you develop your team and your system of football."

**Q: On roster decisions:**

**Coach Gruden:** "That was tough. You are making decisions on your roster on players that you never met. Some of them are obviously salary cap related, that you have no choice with, but how would you like to make a decision on a man's future when you can't even talk to him? I don't understand that."

**Q: How was Brian Callahan in his first year working with your offense?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, here is an announcement for you, Brian Callahan is no longer with us. He's going to go with the Cincinnati Bengals. I believe he is going to be the offensive coordinator of the Bengals. I'm really proud of him and happy for him, and happy for this opportunity. We are shorthanded right now. We've lost a lot of quarterback guys over the years and a lot of them have done great things. I'm sure Brian will do the same."

**Q: How much value do you place in a quarterback that can make plays happen when things break down?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's unbelievable. You got to defend two plays. [Chiefs Head Coach] Andy Reid is a heck of a coach, he calls some good plays, but they don't always work and when he calls a play that is covered and there is nothing there and Mahomes gets a 28-yard gain for a touchdown out of it, it's sickening, isn't it? It's maddening to people that aren't fans of the Chiefs, so I think everybody is looking for the duel threat. Obviously, Tom Brady has made a living doing it a different way, but Mahomes is on a cutting edge of different that is for sure."

**Q: Any recollection of [Bengals Head Coach] Zac Taylor and the short time you spent with him?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, Zac was on our team in Tampa and has a lot of close relationships with Mike Sherman. I believe he married Mike's daughter and Mike Sherman is a good friend of mine and I think a great coach. The kid grew up as a very good quarterback, as a [University of Nebraska] Cornhusker. He grew up in a football family, he's been well-trained in the NFL, and I'm really excited to see what he does in Cincinnati."

**Q: What do you remember about the year that Sean McVay had on your staff in 2008?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, he is the same guy he was then as he is now. Really relates to players well, loves to be in the building a lot and study. He's one of those guys that does the preparation but has unique way of presenting the information where the players look forward to coming in, and they believe and trust in him. He's an energetic, enthusiastic great guy, and I'm really thrilled for him."