



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden Owners Meeting

Q: What do you know now that you wish you would have known your first year back as a head coach?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know, that's a good question. I feel like a first-year head coach every time I come to this league meeting, honestly, because your team is always different, your staff is never the same and you always have to adapt. I'm sure these guys are going through a lot emotionally right now, but I couldn't pinpoint one thing."

Q: Is there any advice you would give to a new head coach?

Coach Gruden: "Just be yourself. Don't get too far away from what got you there. I think some guys are great quarterback guys, they get a head coaching job and maybe they delegate the quarterbacks to somebody. If you're a great defensive coach, keep calling the defense. That's my recommendation. Don't get too far away from the things that got you there."

Q: How would you assess your first year?

Coach Gruden: "4-12. I'm not going to say anything else. Wasn't very good, but it was a necessary year. We had to make some tough decisions, and I do like the work ethic we have in place. I'm excited about some of the moves we have made and the direction of this franchise. I'm not happy with being 4-12, but I'm very, very proud of where we are going."

Q: Talk about the decision between General Manager Mike Mayock and defensive coordinator Paul Guenther to sign Vontaze Burfict?

Coach Gruden: "I was pounding the table with Guenther. We were banging it together. Burfict has something to prove, he didn't play his best football last year. Burfict has been fined. Burfict has had his issues, and that's what people talk about when they talk about Burfict. What you got to remember is that when he's right, he is a great player and he has proven he can make plays with Paul Guenther, so if that combination can reunite that solves a problem the Raiders have had for a long time."

Q: Is the 'something to prove' quality a common thread amongst the players that you are bringing in?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I think that's the case with every guy in the league though. Everybody's got to prove it. You got to prove it every year. This is a 'what have you done lately?' kind of business. I think Antonio Brown is going to bring us energy, charisma and all kind of juice, to not only the meeting rooms, the practice field, but to the field on gameday. [It's] something we desperately needed. Trent Brown is going to bring us credibility at a position we need to be credible at, and he can play right tackle, left tackle. I think Lamarcus Joyner is everything that you are looking for, so we got to continue to add the pieces, but a lot of our guys have a lot to prove, and so do I."

Q: Do anticipate moving Gabe Jackson to the left side of the offensive line?

Coach Gruden: "I think we are going to have to wait a little bit and see how it goes in the draft. Do we add one more piece or not? Jackson can play either position, right or left guard. Trent can play right tackle at a high level, he's proven that. He can play left tackle, he's proven that as well. So, we are going to solve all that here in the next couple weeks."

Q: Any decision to where Trent Brown or Kolton Miller will play?

Coach Gruden: "No, we aren't going to make any final decisions here today."

Q: Knowing what Antonio Brown brings to the football field, what does it mean to have a star like that on your team?

Coach Gruden: "Well, it means a lot. This guy has caught 100 passes or more I think six years in a row. He plays his best football in big games. Last time I was in Oakland, we had Jerry Rice and Tim Brown on the same team, it was a lot of fun. I'm really excited, personally, to have an opportunity to join forces and coach Antonio Brown. It's a great responsibility, one that I don't take lightly."



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Q: What do you think about returning to the Oakland Coliseum?

Coach Gruden: "I'm happy to hear that. To me, I don't know what was so hard about that. We're the Oakland Raiders."

Q: Was there anything about the way Antonio Brown's time ended in Pittsburgh that concerned you with bringing him in?

Coach Gruden: "I had no problem. You got to be kidding me, we got Antonio Brown! I'll walk to Pittsburgh to get him. I don't have any problem with one aspect of Antonio Brown. I don't know who does or why they would."

Q: With all the moves in free agency and to still have the amount of draft capital that you do, what does that say about what your building towards the future of this franchise?

Coach Gruden: "Well, that was our plan, honestly. We lost a couple good players, really good players last year, and we acquired some draft picks. We also acquired a lot of space to sign Trent Brown, Antonio Brown, Lamarcus Joyner. We don't sign any of these players if we don't have the cap space to get that done, so it's a double-edged sword for us. We needed the draft capital to get younger; to get young, emerging players, and we needed the cap space to add Trent Brown, Antonio Brown, Burfict, the men that we did because we felt we had a lot of needs. We are doing the best we can to address as many as possible."

Q: How important is it that, as you're signing free agents, you're not handcuffed long term by how the deals are structured?

Coach Gruden: "It's big, and I credit Mike Mayock, obviously a lot, and [Director of Football Administration] Tom Delaney, who did the work on the contracts, a lot of the work on the contracts. He's the unsung hero of free agency. Nobody really does it better."

Q: What are your thoughts on Mike Glennon and Landry Jones?

Coach Gruden: "You know what? I've always liked Glennon, having lived in Tampa and studied him and seen him play live several times. There's a guy that got a big deal to go and play for the Bears, just a couple months later they draft [Mitch] Trubisky. Then he goes to Arizona to compete with Sam Bradford and a couple months later they trade up for [Josh] Rosen, so he's had some bad luck, but I do like this guy because he's got arm talent. He's got some experience as a starter and he's really smart. Landry Jones is a guy that started and won games in the league, and he can help us with Antonio's transition as well. What did they call this at Pittsburgh? Why did he convert his route and do that? So, there is some really interesting side things that Landry can bring to the table also, and I don't want to forget Nathan Peterman, he was the opening day starter for Buffalo and I know a lot of people have forgotten him but it's great to start the offseason program on April 15th with four quarterbacks that are all learning together."

Q: Does Antonio Brown bring with him new concepts from Pittsburgh that he can share?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, no doubt. We went through all his catches and all his routes. If something is working in Pittsburgh, we'll put it in for him. We're not too proud to steal some good ideas."

Q: How have the conversations gone with Marshawn Lynch about coming back or not?

Coach Gruden: "I'm not going to get into the conversations that we've had. I've talked to Doug Hendrickson, his agent, as well. Obviously, we have a need at half back, at feature back. We are going to keep the door open certainly. Keep researching his situation and we'll see what happens. We'll update you when we know something."

Q: How long are you keeping the door open on Lynch?

Coach Gruden: "The door is always open for Lynch. The door is always going to be open for Marshawn, trust me. All the doors are always going to be open for Marshawn Lynch."



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Q: What has it been like working with Mayock?

Coach Gruden: "That's my guy. You know, Mike and I, we go back 20-25 years to when I was offensive coordinator of the [Philadelphia] Eagles. You like to be around people that have similar interests and unfortunately, I don't have any other interests than football, and neither does Mayock. So, we have a lot of fun talking about every aspect of football, all the time. His relentless effort, his enthusiasm, his energy has energized the building, and it's just a blast."

Q: How much of it is a collaborative effort between you and Mayock?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, it's collaborative. It really is. And I don't think either one of us has an ego. Who cares who gets the credit? Who cares who makes the decision? Let's just make the best decision possible and let's try to be right, and let's not be afraid of arguing once in a while. He's a great friend and he's a great teammate, and he's really good at what he does."

Q: Is he a Leo too?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know about that. I don't get into that stuff."

Q: Mayock says he's mentally exhausted today after talking with you, what are you doing with him?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know. You got to go over the quarterbacks, you got to go over the salary cap, you got to go over what are we going to do with the defensive line, who's going to play this? So, it's great. That's why we are getting out of here today. We got to get back to our wheelhouse. We don't belong here, we do not belong here."

Q: What did you learn about Mayock in making the Antonio Brown trade?

Coach Gruden: "It's a people business, and I think when the trade was happening with the Steelers...I know [Steelers Vice President of Football and Business Administration] Omar Kahn. He knows [Steelers General Manager] Kevin Colbert. Everybody's got cellphones today and you are communicating, but he's such a great communicator. He has so many connections in the league, it helps to get deals done and he's not afraid. He's got the guts and he's got the knowledge to pull the trigger, and that's what I really like."

Q: What do you like about Trent Brown?

Coach Gruden: "I loved Trent Brown when he was a 49er, personally. I did not know he was on the trade market. Trent didn't even know he was on the trade market, and I think he went to New England for the equivalent of a fourth-round pick. No one knew he was on the market except the Patriots and [Kyle] Shanahan probably, but I like him as a right tackle. I loved him as an offensive lineman. Obviously in New England, playing as a left tackle what a job he did, but there's not many 26-year-old guys that have proven they can play at right tackle and left tackle in this league so it's great to have him."

Q: Do you envision him as left tackle?

Coach Gruden: "Like I said, a lot of teams flip their tackles. We might just have them break the huddle and look for Von Miller and go block him. It could be done."

Q: What are your thoughts on Rob Gronkowski retiring from the NFL?

Coach Gruden: "I hope he comes back and plays, obviously. I hope he revisits it and comes back. I said it yesterday, I think he's the most complete tight end that I've ever seen. He can play as a wide receiver. He can play in the slot. He can play on line. He can do anything. I wish him the best and it's great for him, if he does go out, to go out on top."

Q: What do you think about the discussions of expanding the use of replay?

Coach Gruden: "It's tough. Do you want to make every play challengeable? Do you really want to do that? Do we want to add an eighth official? Do we want to expand the role of the replay official? There is a lot that has been discussed, and I think a lot of it got tabled unfortunately. It's a very sensitive topic, but you hate to see a game



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decided by a miscall. But football is going to be played and it's going to be officiated by the guys that are there. Now we got guys officiating the game in New York. How much do you want to expand their role? So, it's a very sensitive topic, and I'm just glad I'm leaving today."

Q: Have you embraced analytics?

Coach Gruden: "I love analytics. You people act like I don't like analytics. We just won an analytical award for crying out loud. I mean they gave us the analytical award of the year [Sloan Sports Conference- 'Best Transaction of 2018']. Why don't you put that in your little article there, huh? Of course, I embrace analytics."

Q: Are there some lessons to be learned from the Cleveland Browns rebuild?

Coach Gruden: "Obviously you got to get the quarterback playing at a blue level. If you get a blue-chip quarterback, you got a chance to win every game. Forget about winning a couple games, you get a chance to win every night. And [Baker] Mayfield has solved a lot of their problems. All you got to do is turn the film on, what he did as a rookie, it's incredible. I don't think people really know well he played. They've gone through quarterbacks, they've gone through I don't know what, but when you solve that position you got a real chance, and when you get that guy playing at a blue-chip level it certainly helps you and that's what we are trying to do with Derek. Getting guys like Antonio Brown, Tyrell Williams; hopefully that can help Derek return to blue chip status and if that does happen we'll be on our way."

Q: Do you see good depth at the edge rusher position in the NFL Draft?

Coach Gruden: "It's a mysterious group of guys, it really is. Obviously [Nick] Bosa is a good player. He's an underclassman that didn't even play much. A lot of these guys' play time is not what you want it to be. They don't play a lot of snaps. They are underclassmen also, and a lot of these guys haven't even done an individual workout, haven't even run yet. So, there's a lot of mystery for sure, but when we went into free agency, obviously, the names that were potentially going to be there were franchised or traded. We are going to look hard at that position, obviously."

Q: Are you worried about who you have at defensive end or are you confident that you can find those guys in the draft?

Coach Gruden: "I want to see Arden Key play better. I want to see our second-year players play better. They got to play a lot last year. Big deal. I want to see them play great this year. I want to start the conversation right there. Arden's got to play better. He's got to get stronger, and he's got to play better. They don't grow on trees. These defensive ends, they don't grow on trees. And I know I've been criticized for trading one of the best, but we are going to look hard to replenish and add players at that position that's for sure."

Q: Where would you rank the defensive end group in this draft class?

Coach Gruden: "I think on paper it looks great and you start studying the tape you have to decide for yourself. Some of these guys, like I just said, are a bit mysterious because they are young, they're underclassmen, they didn't play a high percentage of snaps and a lot of them haven't even completed their pro workout day yet. They weren't in college all-star games, so that's why I'm getting out of here today. Got to go do some more work."

Q: How much importance to you place on seeing these potential first-round picks in person and just getting to know them personally?

Coach Gruden: "I do like to do that. Fortunately for us we got to coach the Senior Bowl. I got to meet [Jaylon] Ferguson, I got to meet [Montez] Sweat. Got to meet a few of the guys at the Combine and going to get on the airplane and go meet some more."



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Q: Are you going to bring the slapping of helmet stickers on players from the Senior Bowl to training camp?

Coach Gruden: "No, we were just having fun. We try to have fun. One thing I'm going to try and do and try to keep emphasizing in my mind is to try and have fun. No matter how miserable you guys make it, I'm going to have fun. No matter how mean you guys can be, I'm going to keep having fun. I'm just so excited to be coaching again."

Q: What factor do you look for in players that make you say, 'Hey, they really love the game?'

Coach Gruden: "I try to find out what's in their wallet. I like that commercial, what makes you tick? What is it you love? Off the field, on the field. What do you love about football? What do you love about life? Do you have any passion in your body at all? What's the meter say towards football. You got to study that, you got to find out...I like to ask their teammates, their coaches, their trainers, their strength coach, their professors, how much does this guy really like that? And what I like to do is, I like to look at that team play when they are behind. Like I love watching Rashaan Gary against Ohio State in the second half when they are way behind, that's when you can find out how much they love it, and I like to see them play against the toughest opponent. See if it brings out the best in them."

Q: What are your thoughts about Drew Lock?

Coach Gruden: "I like Drew Lock. I like him a lot actually. Coached him in the Senior Bowl. Very productive. Played in different offenses at Mizzou. I like him because he finished the job."

Q: What are your thoughts about the possibility of playing a preseason game in Canada?

Coach Gruden: "Oh, that would be a great experience. I've never really been there. News to me."

Q: Do you think it's possible to run the old Cowboy's 'flex defense' in today's game?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know. You ought to ask [New England Head Coach Bill] Belichick, he would know. If you have good players, you can probably play any defense you want."

Q: Does the addition of Nevin Lawson round out the cornerback group or are you still looking?

Coach Gruden: "No, we're still looking. Obviously getting [Gareon] Conley healthy and playing to his potential is priority No. 1. We got to see it 16 weeks now from Gareon. He flickered some really good things last year. Didn't finish healthy, which is a concern. [Daryl] Worley started good, but got hurt. We need 16 outings from him. Lawson can play nickel, he can play outside, he's been healthy. That's what I love about Lawson, he doesn't miss any action, and I think you need five corners. I think you got to have five because they do get banged up, it's a very difficult position to play and sometimes you play three or four at a time."

Q: Do you anticipate Lamarcus Joyner being the primary slot corner?

Coach Gruden: "You know when I was at Tampa, I coached a guy named Ronde Barber and he might have been perhaps my favorite player I've ever coached. He wasn't the biggest guy, he wasn't the fastest guy, but when he put the helmet on something happened to that guy. And Joyner to me is the closest thing I've ever seen to Ronde as a slot corner. I think he's the best. I think he's got a chance to really be dynamic in there. His leadership, when you meet Lamarcus Joyner trust me, he'll be your favorite guy you've met in a while. There's something about this guy that's special, and I think the Rams would tell you that. That's why he is a franchise player, but his ability in the slot is rare. That's a guy that comes in and replaces a linebacker. So, you take a linebacker out and you bring in this nickel corner and he will hit you like a linebacker now. I have so much respect for him, and I'm so excited to coach him, I can't tell you."

Q: How important is it to have veteran leadership in your secondary with a player like Joyner or in your linebacker core with guys like Tahir Whitehead and Vontaze Burfict?

Coach Gruden: "It's big. Remember when I got here we lost T.J. Carrie in free agency, and that was a void for us. It's a hard position to play. I really think it's as hard a position to play as there is on a football field. The nickel



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corner, all we ask that guy to do. But his leadership, his communication, his swagger, it's a little bit like Antonio Brown and what he's going to bring for the offense."

Q: Is Conley healthy?

Coach Gruden: "I think he's healthy and ready to go. All indications are he's working out good, and we expect him to be full throttle."

Q: Would you call tight end a need or would you be happy with the four guys you have on the roster?

Coach Gruden: "We lost a really good player. That guy was a really good player, man. It's sickening to think that we lost that guy. That's one of the things I don't like about free agency, you can't keep all the guys you want. That's a lot of production to replace. This Darren Waller is very interesting. We are going to give him a chance of a lifetime, so if you are listening out there Darren, let's go brother. I really think he is intriguing, man. It'll be an interesting training camp for him, but we're looking. We'll keep looking. Those are some big shoes to fill."

Q: Does the loss of tight end change your draft strategy at all?

Coach Gruden: "We're going to see if we can address the tight end certainly, running back, left guard, linebacker. We are looking for another corner, three defensive ends and a who knows. Maybe quarterback, you never know."

Q: What do you think you learned most last year in your return to coaching that might have been a little different than your first time around? Were there a lot of different things or did you find it was basically the same game?

Coach Gruden: "Well, Al Davis wasn't here to help me. That was different. We were 4-12 when I got here the first time. I think we were 6-10 when I got here the second time. The emphasis both times was building a team, getting a roster where we want it. Painful at times last year, but necessary at times and that's very similar really to the last time. Hiring a staff was viable, critical and assembling a roster and getting to know your quarterback. Not really a lot has changed other than the amount of time that I can spend with the players."

Q: Has the amount of time you can spend with players in the offseason been a big issue for you?

Coach Gruden: "I think every coach would say that though. Especially the coaches that have been a part of the old wave of spending time with the quarterback. I think in the next CBA perhaps they'll make some amendments to allow the coach to spend a little time with his quarterbacks. Makes sense to me, but I don't know about you and everybody else."

Q: When you look specifically at the quarterback position in this draft, how much does the experience factor effect the way you evaluate these guys?

Coach Gruden: "It's a big deal. [Former New York Giants Head Coach] Bill Parcells, I used to listen to him, he wanted guys that were three-year starters, guys that won 24 games and a bowl game. You know, you'd like to see a complete body of work. Those days are over now. [Dwayne] Haskins is incredible production, 50 touchdown passes at Ohio State, you got to think about that. I'm from Ohio, Ohio State didn't throw 50 touchdowns in 20 years. What Haskins did is impressive and you wish he would play another season, but he's coming out. [Kyler] Murray, what he did is astonishing to me. He took over for a Heisman Trophy winner and won the Heisman himself, and got more done statistically. Phenomenal performance. I wish he played two more years there certainly, but those days are over. So, anyway we deal with who's coming out and you got to do your research. You got to have a vision of what you think these men can be, maybe not the first year, but a year or two down the road."

Q: What are your thoughts about Tyree Jackson, who you coached against in the Senior Bowl?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, he came in and really was a late add to the roster. When he came off the bench in the fourth quarter, he almost won the game for them. He was impressive."



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Q: Do you look at the quarterback position any differently than you did 15-20 years ago? Does Kyle Murray's height measurements matter to you?

Coach Gruden: "He's a little over 5'10. I think somebody asked me that at the Senior Bowl. I don't put a prototype on him anymore. When I went to Tampa Bay and Drew Brees showed up in Tampa Bay and ran me out of the NFC South, a 6'0 quarterback who had a bad shoulder. If the guy can play, the guy can play. Then I met Russell Wilson when I did him on my little show we had on ESPN a few years ago. I was blown away with this guy. What he did at NC State, how he showed up at Wisconsin and becomes a team captain and takes them to a Rose Bowl. I wanted Wilson if I was coaching and if you're 6'6 or 5'6, if you can play, you can play. I think these guys have proven that. [Baker] Mayfield is another guy. What he did for the Cleveland Browns is remarkable, and he's not the biggest guy either."

Q: Do you anticipate a jump in play from Derek Carr this season?

Coach Gruden: "I do anticipate, not only the system being easier for him and certainly we will be able to rely on him in the system more because of his experience, but the team is going to be better. There were games this year where we had three possessions in the second half. He doesn't get an opportunity. The defense gets some turnovers, get him the ball more and then Antonio Brown and Tyrell Williams and Trent Brown and some of the additions hopefully that we are going to continue to add will even enhance his performance more. That's the plan."

Q: What can Carr do to help his protection and avoid getting sacked?

Coach Gruden: "I think he would be critical of himself. We have to look at that sack total and we all have to put our hands in and eliminate sacks. The quarterback, the play caller, the left tackle, the right tackle, the receivers, everybody. The running backs, the tight ends. We all got to put our hand in and eliminate sacks, and we got to eliminate negative plays, that's the philosophy of our offense. I will say we started two rookie tackles. I don't think anybody in the NFL can say that. I don't think anybody can say that for a long time. We had a new left guard, we had a new right guard. We had a lot of moving parts and it's an area we all got to get better at."

Q: What was it like to sit down with Antonio Brown after signing him and what did you see in him and his desire to be great again?

Coach Gruden: "When I got permission to talk to Antonio from the Steelers, I was in the back seat of the car and my wife was driving. The guys enthusiasm to play is unlike most guys I've ever met. When I sat down with him I didn't want him to leave. I like Mike Mayock. I like being around guys like Antonio Brown. I like guys like that. I like guys who will play a double header. Brown would like two-a-days the way they used to be. He would like to run that hill with Jerry Rice, I promise you. He'd finish that hill with him, might beat him up the hill. That's what I'm going to try to get done. I'm going to try to get Rice and Antonio Brown to run that hill. I just love guys that bring it every day, not only on a game day, but on Wednesdays and in the meeting rooms. He's going to challenge everybody, me included."

(On the upcoming season)

Coach Gruden: "I don't really do well at the Owner's Meetings. I'm anxious to go home...Yeah, I am, and I love football. I know it wasn't a good season, but I'm excited about the Raiders. It's why I came back and really excited about some of the moves that we have made. Really excited about the draft potential that we have. I just love life, man. Love Silver and Black. Got a silver shirt and black pants on, and I can't wait to get on my flight to go home and get to work."

Q: Are you satisfied with the way your team is progressing in terms of personnel assembly and are you there yet?

Coach Gruden: "I am. No, we aren't there yet. It's pretty well documented we have a lot of needs and we are doing all we can to address them all."



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Q: Did you see that your trade of Khalil Mack won the ‘Best Transaction of 2018’? Have you paid any attention to their (Sloan Sports Conference) reasoning for that and what do you think?

Coach Gruden: “I do know that we got the award. I think it was the only award we got last year but forget about all that. I don’t really have time to worry about who thinks it’s right or wrong. We didn’t have much of a choice. If we did come up with the money to make the contract happen last year, we wouldn’t have any of these men that we are talking about now. We would not have Trent Brown. We would not have Antonio Brown. We would not have Lamarcus Joyner. We wouldn’t have Vontaze Burfict and we wouldn’t have Tyrell Williams. We would not have any of them and we wouldn’t have the three first-rounders that we’re talking about, so you have to consider all of it like the Nobel Prize winner did and digest it for yourself. We were able to add a lot of pieces, and I’m not going to sit here and say I didn’t cry for three days. I wanted to coach [Khalil] Mack, and Mack knows it, and wish him the best but we have a lot of work to do with this football team, but that trade allowed these acquisitions that we are talking about today to even happen.”

Q: Why did you trade Kelechi Osemele?

Coach Gruden: “A lot of it has to do with the salary cap, and I’m not going to get any further into it. We are going to miss him. That leaves a big void for us at left guard, but a lot of it had to do with salary cap and making other acquisitions.”

Q: What did you make of the way Osemele played last year?

Coach Gruden: “Well, he was hurt a lot. I don’t know that he was healthy the whole season. Hopefully, he has a healthy offseason and gets in great shape and delivers for the Jets because if he does he’s a formidable beast.”

Q: Does your amount of draft capital make it likely for you to try to turn it in to more picks?

Coach Gruden: “I don’t know. You make all these statements. It depends on when you are on the clock and you’re sitting there at number four and someone offers you to move back to whatever, what are they giving you? We’re wide open to moving up. We are wide open to moving back. We’re wide open to just sitting there and taking a guy that falls to us.”

Q: How does the relationship best work between coach, general manager and owner?

Coach Gruden: “I don’t know. I think it all starts with the owner. These guys got a tough job. They are managing billion-dollar teams, some of these teams are more expensive than that. It’s hard to imagine being an owner and turning over that investment to a coach and general manager. It would be hard for me if I was an owner. I would have very high expectations and big demands. I think it’s got to be a collaboration of men working together. Communication has got to be great. Trust, loyalty, some of those words are vital in the ones that really work.”

Q: What is your communication style?

Coach Gruden: “Well, I’m honest. I’m loyal. I’m going to work hard. That’s all I can offer. I’m passionate about helping the Raiders win. I’m going to do the best I can all the time. So, that’s what I have to offer and I think that’s what Mayock has to offer, and Mark Davis will decide if we are good enough.”

Q: Where do you stand on the use of replay?

Coach Gruden: “I’m confused by what we want to do with the replay. Do we want to expand the official in the booth? His role. Do we want to expand (NFL’s Senior Vice President of Officiating) Al Riveron’s role in New York? His role. Do we want to make every play challengeable? Really? Is that what we want to do? That’s why I’m leaving today, honestly. I just don’t have time to waste talking about it. Let me just go back and worry about the things I can control. You’re never going to satisfy everybody, and to think that the two of us could ever agree on is it or isn’t it a pass interference, that’ll never happen. I do know this, for us to think we can look at a replay at super, super, super slow-mo of pass interference and determine whether it is or isn’t, is unrealistic. I think we tried to do it in the booth for nine years, me and Gerry Austin, who wore the white hat in three Super Bowls, and we couldn’t



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tell if it was or wasn't. We disagreed, and I just think it's very, very difficult for any of us to see if it is pass interference at that speed."

Q: Do you believe that human error has to be a part of officiating?

Coach Gruden: "Human error or you know what. It's just a call you have to determine. I don't even know if it's error. Certain guys look at things differently. We are not going to look at this cup of coffee the same way, it's too hot or too cold. But we are still going to drink it, and we are going to move on to the next play. I think the leadership in place is outstanding. We are trying too hard to get every call right, but I think the harder we try the more we might make this more difficult."

Q: Looking at the bigger picture, do you think replay is an issue that needs to be addressed?

Coach Gruden: "I just think, personally, I believe the coaches we were on the right track yesterday. I think the replay official, his role could expand. I think he could be able, personally, to beat down to the white hat on the field when there is an obvious, indisputable error. Maybe there were 13 guys on the field. You can't give them a fifth down. Perhaps even the play that cost the Saints in the playoff game, you missed the call and you want to look at this again. Or a player safety matter, you missed the guy that clearly went in there with a malicious intent, eject the player. I do think that guy up there, without interrupting the game, can right an indisputable wrong. I believe that should happen. I think his role, he's got replay accessibility up there. If he sees anything dramatic, I'm not talking about an interference call unless it's a blatant missed call. Blatant. It's got to be indisputable. That's what I'd like to see happen."

Q: Does the non-pass interference call against the Saints fall into that blatant and indisputable category?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I think it does. Yes."

Q: Can you put yourself in New Orleans Saints Head Coach Sean Payton's shoes and say we have to have the egregious errors fixed?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah. That word came up a lot yesterday. Egregious. That was the benefit of being here for the owner's meetings, I learned egregious. Look, I lost a game on the Tuck Rule on instant replay. I had a call reversed on me. I remember when [Tony] Siragusa planted Rich Gannon, there was no 15-yard penalty and the guy got fined \$25,000 the next day, but I'm not going to sit here, and you know this is football. I can't remember calling a perfect game. I can't remember an official...maybe they missed the call. It's a hard business. It's hard to do things live. I'm sure umpires have missed balls and strikes, right? I'm sure guys in the NBA have missed charge calls, they probably aren't a 100 percent either, but I give them credit for trying."

Q: Would you like to coach against Larry Fitzgerald?

Coach Gruden: "It's a difficult job. What I love about Fitz is he's transformed himself. He's reinvented himself. He's able to do things that a slot receiver, the little guys can do. Route running, blocking. I give him a lot of credit and he's one of the great guys in the NFL. He's been able to play at a high level and maintain just being a great guy which is sometimes hard to do."

Q: Is Jim O'Neil going to be coaching the defensive backs?

Coach Gruden: "We are going to give Jim the room. Jim is in charge of the secondary. That's what I'm most comfortable with. Don't get me wrong, we are going to miss DA [Derrick Ansley], he was a good coach. We hired [Assistant Defensive Backs] Taver Johnson who is going to help Jim O'Neil with the secondary. There might be periods in practice where you'll see we split them up...Jim's room, yeah. I want that one voice in there, and I think it helps from an accountability standpoint."



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: In your opinion, do you really want replays to change the call of plays?

Coach Gruden: "Replay is a sensitive matter, really. I don't think it's possible to get them all right. I don't want to challenge plays and have some guy decide the outcome of all these games that's not even in the stadium. I think it's a concern, but it's hard to get everybody to agree on this for sure."

Q: How hard is it going to get all the votes for replay on pass interference calls?

Coach Gruden: "Well, there are some proposals on the table. The question is, do you want to put a flag on the field? Do you want to be able to challenge a no-call? The Saints-Rams game, there was no foul called. Do you want a coach to be able to challenge those plays and do you want him to be able to challenge the flags that are thrown for pass interference? And then, do you want a guy deciding whether it is or isn't at super slow-mo speed? Is that what you want?"

Q: Where do you see room for growth with Maurice Hurst?

Coach Gruden: "We like him. They tell me he's working very hard at Michigan in the weight room. I've always felt, second-year players show the most improvement, and I'm counting on that happening with Mo Hurst. I think he's a legitimate three-technique. I think he's potentially got a chance to be an every down good one, and he's got to prove it."

Q: Does Hurst have to get medically cleared to play again?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I'm sure. Just like all the players. We give them a physical. Not just when we draft him, we give them physicals when they leave and when they show up. So, we're going to keep a close eye on him obviously. We're confident that he is going to be fine. Live a great and productive life."

Q: When Mayock came into the organization, did you change your plan of building for the future?

Coach Gruden: "Well, we had money to spend. We lost a couple really good players and you know it's hard to say goodbye to [Amari] Cooper and [Khalil] Mack. We picked up some draft picks. We picked up some space to allow us to sign players, so that was the plan. Whether it's right or wrong we'll find out, but when you trade two players, really good ones, you got a chance to pick up some draft picks obviously. But you also get some room to maneuver and maybe get some guys that you really want to get in free agency."

Q: Is Gronkowski's retirement hard to believe?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I would be very similar in my views if I was [Adam] Gase or in that division. I hope he does come back personally. I hope he does come back and play. I just enjoy watching him. I enjoy the style that he plays with. He's fun to watch. He's good for the game, but he's had his injuries. I'm sure he has his reasons and if he does go out, it's a great way to go out on top."

Q: Is there certain qualities you look for in a running back?

Coach Gruden: "Well, we are looking for a three down back, a guy that can play in any situation. A guy that can catch it, a guy who can pick up the blitzes and a guy that can run in the first and the fourth quarters. A guy that's got some durability and versatility is the big thing, and they are hard to find. You got to have certain size about you that can take the punishment and deliver punishment. Those are the big things that we look for. Ball security obviously. We could go on and on."

Q: How important is it for a rookie running back to be able to help in protection?

Coach Gruden: "It's hard because a lot of the pass offenses now are running plays, they are RPO's. They aren't even protection, so they don't ask the backs to even get in the huddle and execute a diverse audible system with the complex pass protection responsibility, and it's not their fault. It's the great offenses they come from, but the role is going to change when they have to start protecting \$20 million quarterbacks around the league because they're blitzing. They are coming every week with different looks and you got to know who to block, got to know how to block and you got to want to block. Those three things got to go hand-in-hand."



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: What kind of player are the New York Jets getting in Osemele?

Coach Gruden: "He's a thumper. He's old school guard, nasty, smart. He's just got to get healthy and stay healthy, and if he does it's a great, great pickup for the Jets."

Q: How much can a player like Osemele help in the development of Sam Darnold?

Coach Gruden: "It's huge. It'll help develop Sam. It'll help Le'Veon [Bell] run. It will help the play caller call plays confidently. It brings a lot. He's a nasty, physical guy on gameday, and it's hard to say goodbye to him also."

Q: Was there ever a point last season where you asked yourself, 'Why did I come back?'

Coach Gruden: "No. Maybe the 49er game on Thursday Night I was thinking that a little bit. Maybe I was thinking that quite a bit. There were some tough games. Some tough flights home, tough nights in the office. But I've been here before. It's not my first rodeo. It's not going to be easy but I'm excited about being here and the progress we are making and having a lot of fun."