



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement from Coach Gruden: “Big family day that we are excited about. I’d like to just acknowledge that we are going to miss Cliff Branch. It was a terrible loss to the Raiders and to football and to everybody that knew him. A bunch of our players paid tribute to him today and our prayers are with him and his family, so that’s a big loss for us.”

Q: Josh Jacobs said you showed some film of him last night?

Coach Gruden: “Yeah, that was great. He’s a good friend, good friend of mine and has been over the years. Good friend of everybody’s. I never saw Cliff Branch when he was down. He was always upbeat, great player, but I think our players have a good respect for who he was.”

Q: When showing Cliff Branch, what is your message to your guys?

Coach Gruden: “Well, I think the message is, number one, just give him his respect. Let’s have a moment of silence and enjoy life while you’re here. Life is way too short and we never expected to lose Cliff when we did and that was the message honestly, and let’s try to go out there and represent what he would want us to do.”

Q: How did they come about with Derek Carr and Tyrell Williams wearing the Cliff Branch jerseys today? Was that their idea?

Coach Gruden: “I think so. [Vontaze] Burfict wore one. I think [wide receivers coach] Edgar Bennett wore one. I was thinking about wearing it, but I’ll wear it here later today.”

Q: Do you have any thoughts on the Hall of Fame process, being that it has taken so long and he wasn’t able to see it?

Coach Gruden: “I don’t know. He never misses a game, he’s a World Champion every year he played. I mean, three-year Super Bowl player I should say. Possibly one of the top three or four deep receivers that I’ve seen play, so I think he should be in but that’s for another day.”

Q: What does it mean for some of the young receivers to watch his film?

Coach Gruden: “I just think it’s good. When you are on an NFL team you can draw from the past and help you in the future, and sometimes you can use these guys. We’ve had [former Raiders cornerbacks] Lester Hayes and Mike Haynes and numerous players in our meeting rooms helping us, but I think respect is the number one thing. Just respect the players that came before you.”

Q: You were pretty clear that nothing would be given to Josh Jacobs as far as the feature back role, what have you seen from him so far?

Coach Gruden: “Well, he’s working good. I’ve always said he’s got all the things you’re looking for. He can catch, he can block, he’s tough, he’s got breakaway speed. He’s got all the things I’m looking for, but



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he's got to put it all together and when he does I think he's got a chance to be a feature back and good one in the NFL. And he's on the right track."

Q: What caused Antonio Brown's feet condition?

Coach Gruden: "I'm not going to get into it any other than he's getting evaluated and we hope to have him back soon. And in the time being, we are going to continue to move on the best we can. We didn't have Darren Waller today. We didn't have Tyrell today. Derek didn't take many snaps, so it's that time of year where everybody else has to step up."

Q: I don't think Jalen Richard has been in the team sessions the last few days, is this an issue?

Coach Gruden: "He's had a groin, a tweaked groin, but he's been out there. You got to modify your scripts a little bit when players go down and it's been a challenge. That's one of the reasons why we were in shorts today. Paul Butler, tight end, didn't practice. Waller didn't practice and Derek Carrier is on fumes, so we have to be careful with the Rams coming in here next week."

Q: Is there any update or change to Brown's prognosis?

Coach Gruden: "I don't have any update and when I do, I will be sure to pass that on."

Q: Is it challenging going into camp with just one fullback?

Coach Gruden: "We really just found out about Keith's [Smith] injury right before camp and in fairness to everybody we do think Keith will be back soon, so hopefully [Alec] Ingold can hold down the fort for another week but he has really been impressive. Ingold has been very impressive, so we are excited about him."

Q: What sort of camp has Curtis Riley had?

Coach Gruden: "Pretty good. He'll be evaluated big time in the preseason games. He's been a very good post safety. He's a good coverage safety. We'd like to see him impact us on special teams and I want to see all our secondary people prove that they will tackle in one-on-one situations and that's what the preseason games are for."

Q: Can you comment on what the Romanski's, Dick and Bob, have meant to this franchise over the years?

Coach Gruden: "Well, they've been here since the beginning and if you want to tell some stories someday that's where you want to go. Bobby's been with Al Davis and he knows all the legendary players, he even paints their shoes, and if we lose Bobby we have to hope the walls can talk to try to put the pieces together in our past, but he's a big part of our organization and that's why we pay him more than any other equipment manager in the history of football."

Q: There is a pretty competitive group there at tight end. Derek Carrier's ability on special teams, does that really help in terms of his deserving of a spot on the 53-man roster?



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Coach Gruden: “Yeah. He’s a really versatile guy. He’s a good receiver, he’s good in line, he’s good on special teams and he’s a good tight end. And he’s going to be hard to beat out because of that versatility.”

Q: Has either one of the backup quarterbacks taken a bigger step?

Coach Gruden: “I was hoping to see a little bit more command today, not just with the system. They did some good things, just taking control of the team and I want to see a little bit more of that here in the coming weeks. We missed a couple of blitzes, we missed a couple of throws certainly, but I’d like to see them rally the team if Derek doesn’t take the ball. I want to see somebody choke the opportunity and I’d like to see a little bit more of that.”

Q: Have you and Head Coach Sean McVay already mapped out the joint practices?

Coach Gruden: “Yeah, we have a little bit. We are going to have a staff meeting with the Rams when they get here to make sure we are all on the same page. Hopefully we get enough healthy guys in here that can give us a pretty good idea of where we are at.”

Q: I haven’t seen a single shoving match or a punch thrown since you’ve been out here, is that something you are proud of?

Coach Gruden: “Yeah, we talk a lot about that in the team meetings. Perhaps you’ll see that on Hard Knocks. We really believe the etiquette is important. You got to practice in shorts and you got to practice with speed in shorts and if you don’t know how to do it and you practice how to do it and you enforce how you do it you got a chance to really be good at it. It’s the one thing I took from the 49ers when I was there years ago. We had all these Hall of Fame, great players and they practiced fast and they practiced in baseball hats. And Jerry Rice, Ronnie Lott and there were never collisions, but there was a lot of respect and cooperation and there was a lot of intelligence in how they wanted to get things done and we’ve shown video of old 49er film and we showed good and bad examples of our stuff and around the league and guys are getting better at it.”

Q: What have you seen from Renfrow these last eight days?

Coach Gruden: “I like [Hunter] Renfrow. He can be a good punt returner. He can play in the slot. We moved him around where he can go outside. He’s quick, he’s fast, he’s got sure hands and I’m glad we drafted him. That was a good pick.”

Q: How open is that competition, both kick returner and punt returner?

Coach Gruden: “Oh, it’s a challenge to beat out Dwayne Harris. I think he’s more than just a returner. He’s an impact cover guy. I mean, I don’t know what NextGen Stats says but he drew nine or 10 penalties on special teams. Forget about the tackles he made, he was held nine or 10 times. Probably could have been held 15 times, so he’s going to be a hard guy to beat out but we do have some candidates.”



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Q: What was your reaction when you found out that Carr bought a house next to you in Las Vegas?

Coach Gruden: "Really? No, it was a great reaction. I love Derek. We can have meetings at night now. We can have barbecues together. It was great, man. Great, great family and I'm proud to be with him."