



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: “Alright, ready to go. Got a good Ravens team coming in here. I think they’re a team that’s well coached. We’ve played them the last two years. They’re good in all three phases. We’ve had close games, each of the previous two years. Expecting a heck of a battle this week.”

Q: How much does EJ Manuel’s familiarity with Rodney Hudson and Todd Downing help this process?

Coach Del Rio: “Well I think the fact that we’ve had him here, he’s been in camp, he’s been getting reps, he played a little bit in the game the other day. Todd worked with him previously when he got his starts in Buffalo. So, I think those are all factors that help. It’s a tough Ravens defense that we’re going against, so we have to be ready to go.”

Q: What have you seen from Derek Carr and what do you expect to see from him over the next few days?

Coach Del Rio: “Yeah, I think he’s a professional. We expect him to be professional. Prepare himself, but also be a positive influence in the room and sharing ideas and knowledge and all of that. He’ll do that.”

Q: Giving Manuel’s veteran status, how much better equipped is this team with this status than it was last year?

Coach Del Rio: “Well, I mean last year in the playoff game we had a rookie making his first start. So obviously, a lot better situation. We have a guy who’s taken snaps in the league, started games and will have time to prepare. So I think it’s a lot different scenario. Bottom line is as a football team, we have to find a way. They have a bunch of guys on IR, too. We all deal with different things in this league, week to week. It’s a week to week league. For us, it’s about putting together a great week, a great week of preparation and going out and competing on Sunday.”

Q: How much will the offensive struggles get better with getting at least four yards on first down consistently?

Coach Del Rio: “Yeah, a lot of those things. It’s what we need. Just play good and we will.”

Q: Are you optimistic that Michael Crabtree will be back this week?

Coach Del Rio: “Yes.”

Raiders QB EJ Manuel

Q: Other than the added reps in practice, how does this week change for you?

Manuel: “It doesn’t really change. I think the only difference is the reps. I still show up at the same time. I still go home at the same time. Preparation-wise it’s still the same. Obviously, T.D. [offensive coordinator Todd Downing] is talking to me direct now instead of Derek [Carr] in meetings, but not too much has changed.”

Q: What have you seen from Carr and what do you expect to see from him over the next few days?

Manuel: “Yeah, Derek is awesome, man. Since Monday or Tuesday, once we found out that I would be playing this week, he’s been there the whole time. Like I said, we pretty much get here at the same time. We eat breakfast together. We work out together, all that kind of stuff. Everything has been the same, he’s just not playing this week.”

Q: How much does the familiarity with Rodney Hudson and Todd Downing help this process?

Manuel: “It helps a lot. Knowing ‘Hud’ [Hudson] since I was 18 years old at Florida State and obviously knowing TD since the draft process and everything. It’s been awesome for me. Not just in this instance, but since I’ve been here as a Raider. Having familiar faces around and obviously, my teammates excepting me and bringing me on board as well. There’s not too much unfamiliarity. I think we’re ready to go.”

Q: When you look back at the film from Sunday, what did you see?

Manuel: “I saw fast decision making, I saw accuracy. When I went into the game, I just wanted to help us win. That was my biggest thing going through my head. Just have solid footwork, things that I practice day in and day out. I’m



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really proud of the preparation weeks beforehand because I never know when I'll have the opportunity to play. Obviously, we wanted Derek to play because he's our starter, but when the opportunity calls, you have to be ready to go out there and handle your business. The O-line, the receivers, everybody was very receptive and like, 'Hey man, you got it. Let's go.' It gave me that added confidence. Watching the tape, the only issue was just the pick at the end. I wish I would've took it down and ran, or maybe checked it down. Threw the ball outside a little more for 'Coop' [Amari Cooper] to help him out a little bit. Besides that, I thought it was solid."

Q: Are you looking at this as a second chance?

Manuel: "Not really. I'm looking at it as an opportunity that's before me right now. I'm not necessarily looking for a second chance because I'm on the team right now. I want to go out here and help our team win. That's the main thing I'm looking forward to."

Q: What's your initial thought of Baltimore's defense?

Manuel: "Solid defense. They're 2-2 just like we are. They have savvy vets all over the field and in the secondary and also on their D-line. It's going to be a great matchup for us. I think if we can get the running game going and everything like that, as well as the passing game, we'll be in good shape."

Q: What is it your dad does?

Manuel: "Yeah, my dad works as a civilian on Norfolk Naval Base, hazmat. He's been doing it for like 26 years."

Q: What is that?

Manuel: "That's a good question. I'm going to have to ask him when I get out of here. *(laughing)* But I think it's basically making sure all the hazards materials are weighing the correct things. Works with a fork lift and all that kind of stuff in the warehouse. When it's hot outside, it's hot in there. When it's cold, it's cold in there. I'm definitely proud of my family and where I come from. I think that's really where I get my hard work ethic from. Aside any other things that may be coming against me, I'm just always looking forward to working hard and trying to defy the odds."

Q: Is it a dangerous job that he has?

Manuel: "I think so. Anytime you're dealing with hazards things, I'm sure it is dangerous. Everything's good with him."

Q: As a guy who's started in this league, do you find that it helps you focus in better on being the backup?

Manuel: "I've been in this situation before even when I was in college. When I was a starter at Florida State, Christian [Ponder], if something happened to him, I would have to go in to help us win the game. Obviously, I had a great supporting staff and teammates, but I've been in this situation before. Whether it was the Denver game or now, getting to start this week. Having those reps, even back in college. Then also when I was in Buffalo, when Tyrod [Taylor] became the starter, still just being ready as the backup. It kind of puts me in familiar territory."

Q: Can you get Amari Cooper going?

Manuel: "Definitely. I think we can do a great job with allowing 'Coop' to be who he is. There's no pressure on him because we know he's a great player. That's why I threw that pass on Sunday because I know 'Coop' is one of those guys that if you give him a 50/50 chance, often times he'll come down with it. So we definitely want to get him rolling. Get his confidence rolling and everything like that and get him some touches early so we can make some plays."

Q: How much does it help with the anxiety of making your first start this season having so many weapons on offense?

Manuel: "Having play makers always helps. I try to pride myself on making plays as well. I think that's the name of the game. In order to win football games in this league, you have to be able to make plays. Whether that's with your feet or with your arm or your decision making. I'm just excited."



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Q: You're a pro, you're a veteran. How do you engage the game plan to be sure you are ready even when you go into the game as the backup?

Manuel: "I treat it the same way because like you said, we could be walking out of the tunnel before the game and something could happen to the starter and you have to go play. You never want to be blindsided. That's the last thing, as a backup, you never want to be blindsided going into a game. My preparation for this game hasn't changed at all. Like I said, I still show up at the same time, still go home at the same time. Crossing all my T's, dotting all my I's like I have since my career started."

Q: Do you get to be more vocal in the player only meetings?

Manuel: "Definitely, I think that's tomorrow. So I'll do the player-led meetings. Obviously, being around Derek for the past four weeks of the season, seeing how he does it and seeing the rapport that he has with our other teammates, I don't look at it as a challenge at all. I think it's going to be something I can fall right into. Hopefully we won't miss a beat."

Q: What's the importance of having that sort of setting as a quarterback?

Manuel: "Yeah, you just want to exude leadership. You want to exude confidence. Obviously, when you exude confidence, your teammates have confidence in you as well. It's a confidence position. If you have it, your teammates will have it as well."



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Ravens Head Coach John Harbaugh Conference Call

Q: What have you seen from EJ Manuel and what does he do different than Derek Carr?

Coach Harbaugh: "Well you know I think the first thing you do is prepare for the offense. Obviously, they've had a very successful offense the past few years and have built the offense the way they want it. Even this year, they've kind of made a few changes, but they still are doing the things that I think they do well with the personnel they have. When we've seen EJ run the offense, he's run the same offense that Derek Carr ran and has done a very good job both in the preseason and in Denver. We'll try to understand his talents, his unique talents as much as we can, but prepare for the offense."

Q: What's it like going against a former player in Kelechi Osemele?

Coach Harbaugh: "It's always a challenge because Kelechi is such a good player. He's a guy we have very high amount of respect for. He's a guy that played very well here, worked really hard. He was a great member of our organization and our team. I appreciated his efforts and work. It's really good to see him accomplish the things he has in his career. Real proud of him in that way, and it's just tough to go against him because he's such a good player."

Q: What's it like having to face guys like Khalil Mack and Mario Edwards Jr.?

Coach Harbaugh: "Yeah, I think these pass rushers are just tremendous. Those two guys are great and they have two more guys, and you know who they are, who are also rushing the passer very well. Plus, I feel like they have two pocket pushers inside. The kid from UCLA [Eddie Vanderdoes] is doing a great job. Nose guard is pushing the pocket really well. I just feel like this is a very well-balanced front seven, especially the front five in terms of pass rushing. They have some guys and they can bring it."

Q: What challenges does Amari Cooper bring?

Coach Harbaugh: "He's just a guy you have to put a red star next you and you have to know about him all the time. He's a game wrecker. He got us in the game out there two years ago right out of the gates on the first drive. You don't forget those things. I loved him coming out. He's definitely a guy we'll keep our eye on. He's not the kind of player you want to break out on you. But you can't put all your attention to one player and ignore the other guys because they have a number of playmakers over there. But he's definitely a red star player."

Q: What are you seeing in Joe Flacco's start?

Coach Harbaugh: "I see a lot of things. We look at the ins and outs of how all of our players are performing and we try to go to work at it. The quarterback is always the guy who takes the heat when things aren't going great and gets the credit when things are going well. When you win, the quarterback is good. When you don't win, the quarterback takes a lot of heat. Joe has always been great about taking responsibility and putting that on his shoulders. We have to get our offense going. We have to get going and get clicking. We've had some injuries and things like that that have made it challenging, not to mention that Joe was missing all of training camp. I think that's not something that you can just ignore. We have to move on and improve. The good news is because he wasn't in training camp, we should be able to make progress very quickly."

Q: What are your early impressions of Austin Howard?

Coach Harbaugh: "Like him a lot. He's playing good football. He's learning the system. I think he's gotten better every single week. You guys know him. He's a smart guy. He's a very hard worker. He likes football. He's a good guy to be around. Nothing but a joy and I'm sure glad he's with us. He's helped us."