



OAKLAND RAIDERS vs. DALLAS COWBOYS

Sunday, December 17, 2017
Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum
Postgame Quotes



RAIDERS HEAD COACH JACK DEL RIO

Opening statement: “Well, heck of a game. I thought it was a gritty effort back and forth. Really, really believed that we were going to pull it out and I’d be sitting up here with a big smile. But I’m proud of the guys, the way they fought. A group of men that are going to leave it on the field, that’s what it looks like. The difference is so little between winning and losing. That’s just the nature of this game. There’s nothing like being on that stage and being in the game with an opportunity like we had. It doesn’t always go your way. As competitors, I think you understand that. Certainly, proud of the way we left it out there. That’s what I asked them to do. Anyway, questions?”

Q: In that situation on the last offensive play, do you expect Derek Carr to have it in his mind to not lose the ball in that way?

Coach Del Rio: “I mean look, I thought he did a great job with his feet tonight. We asked him for that. He gave it up at the end. Yeah, you can go back and say, ‘Hey don’t reach that thing across there.’ We would’ve all been really happy if he reached it across there and held onto the thing while he did. He moved with his feet there. Made a great play or potentially a great play, that’s just an inch away from a great play and ends up unfortunately going the other way for them. I think going forward, the way we did and the way he did, I thought he played...It reminded me of what we saw a lot of last year. Derek played with a lot of zest. Just took off and made some plays with his feet. Played courageous. I thought he played well. It’s a shame. It’s a shame that play goes an inch or two the other way and it’s a different feel right now. But I’m proud that group of men, including Derek. I’m proud of those guys.”

Q: What was your perspective of the chain review with the index card?

Coach Del Rio: “I don’t want to get fined, OK? I’m not happy with the way things were done. A lot of different situations throughout the night. They did the best they could. I had a different view point. I saw air. It was pretty obvious. But again, they do the best they can with a tough job.”

Q: Have you ever seen them use an index card in that situation?

Coach Del Rio: “Never. Never seen air like that and it somehow turn into a first down. There was air between the ball and the stick. That’s short, OK. Goes the other way. Period.”

Q: Have you ever heard of using an index card in that situation?

Coach Del Rio: “I have not. I have not. That’s a new one. There were several... I mean, there were several things that to me I had a hard time explaining. I’ll have a hard time looking at the tape. Jared Cook runs down there and turns around in the endzone. Really? He has a right to that space. He didn’t do anything egregious.”

Q: How do you feel about how the defense played tonight?

Coach Del Rio: “Yeah, it was the first drive, maybe the first two drives, they hit a couple. We just settled down. We had a good feel for what we had to do to defend them. I thought we were ready. I thought we did a good job of it. We got off on third down. I think they were 2-for-10 or something like that. So, we did a good job there. We got some turnovers. We had a chance for a couple more. I thought it was pretty solid.”

Q: Held them to a field goal at the end?

Coach Del Rio: “That was a great stop right there. Big time stop right there. Guys gutting it out again. That’s a big, strong, physical group there. We got some strong, physical men as well. That was a great turn of events right there. To get the ball, force them to kick that field goal. Then to go down the field. Obviously, we go down the field and put ourselves in position knocking on the door to not just tie the game, but to win. That was outstanding.”



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Q: Was the fake punt play a total surprise?

Coach Del Rio: “Yeah, they got us on that. They have a good special teams unit. They won the battle tonight. We had too many penalties on special teams. They had that big conversion there. That was a big play in the game for sure. That allowed them to go down and get a touchdown there. I mean ultimately that probably is the difference in the game. We were asserting ourselves pretty well to start the second half.”

Q: In the second 2-yard touchdown pass to Michael Crabtree, was that the same play used against the Chiefs?

Coach Del Rio: “No. It wasn’t the same. That went to the right instead of the left.”

OAKLAND RAIDERS QB DEREK CARR

Q: Can you walk us through the final play and did you have any hope it was going to get overturned after watching the replay?

Carr: “You know, I didn’t know. Obviously, you always hope. I left it all out there. I’m just trying to win for my teammates. No excuse, I have to hold onto the ball. You know, the fight our team played with today – that was familiar, that looked like us. Did we execute 100% of the time? No. Did we play a really good defense? Absolutely. We played a really good team, but at the end of the day – we lost. It is what it is. I can say that we left it out there.”

Q: Have you ever seen anything that 1st Down index card measurement?

Carr: “No, I haven’t. I haven’t seen that before.”

Q: When you ran for that first down attempt, is that the moment the offense clicked for you today?

Carr: “Even though we weren’t clicking, I saw the coverages the way I wanted to and the certain match-ups with the ball that I wanted to. We just didn’t connect yet. That kind of stuff is going to happen. If I was out there lost, then we have a problem. I knew we were seeing it good. I knew guys were competing, so it was only a matter of time. They [Dallas Cowboys] made plays, we’re going to make plays too. I wasn’t worried, but definitely coming into this game and knowing what’s at stake – I try every game to leave it all out there. Whether it’s by throwing the ball, making the right checks, sometimes running like today. Everyone felt it when I was able to pick up the first 1st down, I think it was 3rd and 8 or 3rd and 7, something like that. That just gives our team life, if I can do that, I’ll do it. Again- today showed me that team was familiar. I recognize that team. It shows you that we’ve got some real men on this team that want to fight.”

Q: Is there honor in defeat?

Carr: “Always. I think there’s honor in everything. To be honest, you can always find something. Absolutely. There’s no consolation prize in the NFL. Only one team at the end gets to hold the trophy and one team feels good every year, out of 32 [teams], of the best football players in the world. It’s a tough thing to do – week in and week out to win, it’s tough. Like I said, the men in that room, my teammates. The way we fought, the way we competed – you saw guys get a little nicked up and kept fighting. That’s what the Raiders look like now. We didn’t win so there’s not feeling good or victory, but what we put out there today – no one can every question your manhood or anything like that.”

Q: What was your perspective of the touchdown pass to TE Jared Cook?

Carr: “To be honest, I couldn’t see Jared [Cook] when I threw it. I saw the initial – him and 50 coming together. If I told you how many times I threw the ball without seeing someone, you guys would worry for us. But that’s the NFL. I didn’t see him, but I know where he’s supposed to be. He made a great catch and all that. I watched the replay again. I was just hoping it would stay a touchdown.”



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Q: Discuss your thought process on that last play.

Carr: "It's one of those things – I'm super competitive. You guys, my teammates, my brothers - ask my kids, my wife. I try not to lose at anything. I had an opportunity to try and win the football game. When I was pumping, I was just trying to get the corner to by Jared. I was just trying to beat 38 to the corner. I was able to beat him, but as soon as I stuck the ball out and he pushed – it just slipped out of my glove. I tried to hold onto it. It wasn't like I didn't try. Obviously, there's a lot of different things – throw it away, kick the field goal, run out of bounds. In that moment, I was just trying to win for my teammates."

Q: Even in hindsight?

Carr: "Yes, absolutely. I just have to hold onto the ball. Absolutely. I would always – that's me. And if they told me otherwise, then I'd say yes sir and move on. That's me – I'm super competitive. I'm always going to try to win the game."

Q: What happened with WR Michael Crabtree on the last play?

Carr: "We actually had a play called, a certain play called on the other side, and then the refs made us take him [Michael Crabtree]out. And then we had to change our call."

Q: You mentioned you recognize this team – do you recognize yourself in comparison to last year and when did you start to feel that?

Carr: "Yes absolutely. In the beginning of the season, I felt like me. There was a little question about my ankle going into the first pre-season game and the first live hit. Besides my wife tackling me all off season. I definitely – I know who I am."

RAIDERS CB SEAN SMITH

Q: Have you ever seen that before with the officials and the piece of paper?

Smith: "To answer your question, yeah I have seen it once, awhile ago. I've seen it before."

Q: So it wasn't a Pop-Warner game or anything like that?

Smith: "No, it was in the NFL."

Q: But if they can stick a paper down there, and there is space between the paper the ball, and the chains wouldn't that be short?

Smith: "You are asking the wrong guy. The guy with the stripes, they would know better. I just play in between the lines."

Q: From what you saw, do you think he made it?

Smith: "To be honest, I couldn't really see. I was in the back."

Q: Is this a bit bitter-sweet for you then with two picks and still coming up short?

Smith: "No, it is all bitter. A loss is a loss, so not much to celebrate there."

RAIDERS LB BRUCE IRVIN

Q: What are your thoughts on the final play of the game?

Irvin: "It's tough man. Derek was trying to make a play as a competitor. Kind of a bang-bang call. You can't really be mad at him for trying to compete and get a touchdown. It's just an unfortunate situation."



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Q: On that fourth-down call have you ever seen something like that before?

Irvin: "I've never seen that in my life. He pulled an index card out of his pocket. I have never seen it but it is what it is. We can't do anything about it now."

Q: Do you guys feel like you made that stop?

Irvin: "He was definitely short but I'm not going to get into that. I like my money too much so I don't want to talk about the refs."

Q: How unfortunate is it that maybe some of these bizarre calls may have determined what happened?

Irvin: "It's football. It's unfortunate man. The ball bounced their way today and they got out of here with a win."

RAIDERS LB NAVORRO BOWMAN

Q: What was your reaction to the touchback call at the end?

Bowman: "I can't. In a player's mind, I know [Derek Carr] wanted to have that play back, but if he would have scored that touchdown everyone would have been screaming and happy. It was just one of those plays where I'm sure he'll learn from it. He'll probably make the better play, run out of bounds. We love [Derek]. We know that he's given everything he has. We just need to move forward and stick together as a team."

Q: Have you ever seen a 1st down decided by a piece of paper?

Bowman: "I've never seen that. You could just be in that circle and see where that ball was, I just don't see how they got that. For them to pull that paper out, did that solidify the first down? There was space in between the ball and the stick. I don't know, man. We just have to come to a mutual thing with the officials and get every play right."

Q: What were your impressions of Dak Prescott?

Bowman: "He played well. I thought he made the plays down the stretch that they needed. He got the ball to Dez [Bryant] when he needed a big play. It's all about winning. It's hard to win in this NFL. They're not all going to be pretty but when you get one it's a relief. You forget about the game you had, you move on and you take it."

Q: This game had a playoff implication to it. How do you react to everything that happened with this maybe being the game that knocks you out of the playoffs?

Bowman: "It's the NFL. As players we make this our career. Me, I get over losses and wins very fast and just try to build that legacy, the team morality. A loss always makes you stronger depending on how you respond to it. I'm ready to go back to work and see if we can win next Sunday."

Q: Do you have any thoughts on the rule, the touchback?

Bowman: "That's the rule. [Derek Carr] knew it when it happened. He wished it wouldn't have happened but we're always going to stick with our quarterback. We know he's trying his best."

RAIDERS WR MICHAEL CRABTREE

Q: Have you seen anything like that before with the index card?

Crabtree: "It is what it is. I just don't understand why they took me out of the last play of the game. They put me in concussion protocol like two plays after the pass-interference call. I don't know. I'm lost. I don't understand."



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Q: Did the officials put you in the concussion protocol?

Crabtree: "I guess it was the officials. They just took me out of the game and the last play. They took me out and made me go into the tent."

Q: Is that what you were asking Coach Jack Del Rio when you were coming off the field?

Crabtree: "I was confused. That has never happened. They took me out."

Q: Did you feel ok?

Crabtree: "Yeah, I'm good. Of course I was pissed off because it is the last play of the game and I am trying to help the team win. But, it is cool. I can't do anything about it now."

Q: Was it a bit special for you coming from Dallas and playing against the Cowboys?

Crabtree: "Yeah I was motivated. Dallas, that is my hometown. I love my city, and I love the Bay Area. I've been out here going on 10 years so it was cool."

Q: What did you think of the Dallas Cowboys young DB's?

Crabtree: "No comment. No comment. I just wish we would have won the game. I'm just really trying to figure out why they took me out."

Q: You guys looked like you got more in sync in the second half. What adjustments did the team make?

Crabtree: "Just playing football. We were just competing. I mean, we came up a bit short."

Q: Do you think if you were on the field for that play, maybe Derek Carr finds you instead of running it?

Crabtree: "I can't even answer that question because they took me out. I'm pissed off but can't do anything about it."

RAIDERS DL DENICO AUTRY

Q: Have you ever seen a notecard used to call a first down?

Denico Autry: "Never."

Q: What did you think about the whole sequence, did you think you stopped them?

Autry: "I guess they gave them a cheap one. It is what it is."

Q: The goal-line stop, you forced them to kick a field goal. They have that big offensive line, they think they're going to get that yard. How tough was it down there to stop them?

Autry: "We had our backs against the wall. We knew what we had to do, we knew what it would take. We just had to execute and do the best we could."

Q: They were going inside a lot, especially on that first drive but then you slowed them down after that. What do you think was the difference as the game wore on?

Autry: "I don't know man. It's a tough game."

Q: Is it tough to lose one like this with a couple weird rulings? You don't see these rules come out often.

Autry: "Yeah, they took us out of the game."



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RAIDERS G/T VADAL ALEXANDER

Q: What were your thoughts on the touchback?

Vadal Alexander: "That's our quarterback. That's our guy. That's our leader. He was going to the end zone, trying to make a play. It's a game of inches. I wouldn't have any other guy back there. He's our leader."

Q: Have you ever been a part of a game where a first down was decided by a piece of paper?

Alexander: "Absolutely not. I've never seen that before. That's all I'll say."

Q: Any other reaction to that?

Alexander: "I'm confused. I've never seen it before. That's it, that's all I'll say."

Q: You watched Donald [Penn] leave the game with an injury. Was it tough to see him leave the game like that?

Alexander: "Absolutely, our leader. Him, Rodney [Hudson], our veterans of the group. Our leaders. Our OGs as we call them. We all are experienced. All seven O-linemen who suit up are experienced. I thought it went really smooth."

Q: You guys really seemed to pick it up after the 1st quarter.

Alexander: "The o-line is all about comradery. It's about getting reps and getting rhythm. As the game gets going you get more comfortable with the guy next to you. You get more comfortable with the defense you're playing against. It helps a lot."

Q: How do you guys try to put this one behind you?

Alexander: "It's not a problem for me, it's not a problem for our guys. I started playing football because I love it. I love going out there under the lights. We have a big game, Monday Night Football, prime time next week. If you don't have any other motivation, that's plenty of motivation right there. I know I'll be motivated and so will our team. Absolutely."

RAIDERS TE LEE SMITH

Q: What did you think just about the way you guys fought and the heart you showed tonight?

Smith: "You know what man to be that late in the season and be two teams that, let's just call it what it is, have had disappointing seasons. The fight out there tonight was there. It was almost like a playoff game. It was two teams that refused to quit. I have so much respect for all my brothers in this locker room and I have so much respect for everyone on the Dallas Cowboys. It was a fight until the bitter end and regardless of the piece of paper on the measuring, whatever, they won and they still have a fighting chance to move on and we don't. I can promise you I love every man in this locker room and I assume that everyone watching understands and knows that the Raiders and the Cowboys both refused to give up regardless of what has happened this season."

Q: It was a bad start with three-and-outs on the first two possessions but things did start to click after that. What changed for you guys do you think?

Smith: "You know last week, not to speak about last week, we stubbed our toe in Kansas City early and didn't really recover. That was one thing we talked about all week and as an offense is, listen man, there is three-and-outs every game. Just because it happens the first series doesn't make it any different if it happens the tenth series. Once again, I'm proud of these guys. We lulled a little bit at the beginning but we just kept fighting and fighting and fighting. We had a chance to win at the end and I assume when we were down there the Cowboys were pretty nervous. So it's a shame it ended the way it did but that's life. There is a winner and loser every Sunday."



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Q: How unfortunate was it that the game ended in a touchback?

Smith: "I told Derek [Carr], I said the reason that happened is also the reason in my opinion he's the future of this league at the quarterback position. He is a great young player and he is a competitor and he was competing just like all of us do. Just like when I get a holding penalty or regardless of what happens we are out there fighting to try and do the best we can for this team and that's exactly what number four was doing. He's the leader of this team. He is the heart and soul of this team and he was trying to win the game. Just watch the TV copy, I am pretty sure every player on this football team hugged him right after that happened. We all love him. It is what it is. Of course, it's a shame but nobody feels worse than he does about it. It's just one of those things the ball just bounced the wrong way for us tonight."



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COWBOYS HEAD COACH JASON GARRETT

Q: Have you ever experienced anything like that?

Coach Garrett: “Well certainly the end of the game, I’ve never experienced that play. To have a walk-off touchback to end the ballgame, that hasn’t happened before. Real credit to Jeff Heath, he makes a hell of a play on that. Continue to scratch, continue to claw. It wasn’t our most perfect performance in any phase of our football team, but the fight was there and I thought that play typified what we’re trying to instill in our football team. Him laying out, somehow, somehow, not letting that guy get to the pylon and ultimately knocking the ball out. It was a hell of a play. It was an unbelievable game.”

Q: The fourth down play when the referee brought out the paper, clearly, I don’t think you’ve ever seen anything like that.

Coach Garrett: “Yeah, I don’t know that I’ve ever seen that one. It seems like that’s the method they used to decide. One of my concerns was it looked like the stick was kind of on an angle and I thought that was working against us, but eventually they straightened it out and they brought the card out and we made it by the thickness of the card. It certainly was a big play and then subsequent to that, the big play down the sidelines to Dez [Bryant] to get us in scoring position to let us go ahead. Those guys came up big at critical moments.”

Q: Were you going to challenge the spot if it was short?

Coach Garrett: “To be honest with you, we thought that it was spotted short from our vantage point. We felt like he made more than they gave us. As we all know, it’s hard to overturn those in a big scrum like that. I do think at that moment, because it was such a critical play in the game, if it did go against us we probably would’ve challenged it, but again it’s hard to overturn those kinds of plays.”

Q: Why’d you go for it?

Coach Garrett: “We decided to win the game right there. We just thought it was really important for us to, when you have the opportunity with the ball in your hand and the score is tied, you have our offensive line, you have our quarterback, you have to give yourself a chance to win right there and the guys embraced it. Not only did they make that play, they made the plays afterwards to allow us to go ahead.”

Q: All that being said, was there any thought to go for it at the end there on the fourth and goal at the 1?

Coach Garrett: “Not really. I just think in that part of the game, you’re under two minutes, you have to go ahead. Obviously, we wanted to score a touchdown in that situation and we came up short, but you have to go ahead. You can’t come away from that situation tied and we went ahead and put it back on the defense. They had one timeout under two minutes and I thought we did a really good job up until that last play where they threw the ball way down the field and then we had to bear down and Jeff makes the big play at the end.”

Q: When Anthony Hitchens dropped that pick, did you feel like something else was going to happen in the game?

Coach Garrett: “No, you just have to keep playing. He had done a nice job guarding his guys and obviously, you want him to make that play. He wants to make that play. No one wants to make the play more than he does, but again you have to put it behind you and I thought our team did a good job of that tonight. The best example was the long pass interference. They get down in there. You got to stick your feet in the ground and you got to battle and Jeff, his play at the end, was just big time and again typifies what we are trying to instill in our team.”

Q: Can you talk about the momentum changing play Chris Jones made? Was that a sideline call? Was it something he could see?

Coach Garrett: “Yeah, just real credit to Rich Bisaccia. He does a great job every week talking about some of the looks that we can take advantage of in the kicking game and at a critical moment in the game, Chris is such a good



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athlete, and he saw it. He felt it and then makes a big play and gives us an opportunity to keep that drive alive and go on and score.”

Q: Does what’s at stake carry you through the last two games?

Coach Garrett: “Yeah, I just think the biggest thing is you go back to work on Tuesday and you process this game. You look at it, there’s some good things in this game you want to build on. There’s certainly plenty to clean up in all phases of our team. Again, what you’re trying to instill in your football team is fight and the mental toughness to keep going, keep battling through the success and the adversity. We’re able to do that, but you’ve got to clean the slate and you’ve got to go back to work. It’s a new day when you come back in. The guys will have sick call tomorrow and we’re back to work on Tuesday and we’ll be on to the next opponent.”

Q: How excited are you to have Ezekiel Elliott back?

Coach Garrett: “Yeah, he’s a great football player. Obviously, he’s made a big impact on our football team in the time he’s been with us, but real credit to Alfred Morris and Rod Smith for playing as well as they have in his absence. But any time you add a player of Zeke’s caliber back in the lineup, he’s going to help you. He’s going to take some pressure off everybody else. He’s just that kind of player and he’s been that kind of player for us. There’ll still be a role for Alfred, there’ll still be a role for Rod, but we’ll certainly embrace Zeke back on Tuesday.”

Q: What time will he be there?

Coach Garrett: “Yeah, he’ll be there tomorrow morning at 10 o’clock. He’s allowed to come in at the time for sick call.”

Q: Do you feel like you missed an early opportunity to secure the game?

Coach Garrett: “Well we certainly started the game slow. We had a good drive and unfortunately, we had the interception and so we didn’t catch it on that drive. We had two other good drives, one resulted in our field goal and eventually we got the touchdown. So we felt like we were moving it, running it, throwing it, having some success. Our defense wasn’t on the field very much at all early on in the game, but you always want to cash in on those opportunities. We felt like we kind of did one and a half out of three on those first drives. Touchdown, field goal and then we had the interception, but you’ve got to keep going. Great respect for their team, the fight in their team. We knew it was going to be a 60-minute game and our guys just kept battling through it.”

Q: Do you have an update on Tyron Smith’s injury?

Coach Garrett: “Not really. He hurt his knee and he hurt it enough where he would come out of the game. He’s as tough a guy as we’ve got, so it’s significant enough that he wasn’t able to finish the ball game. We’ll see how he is tomorrow when he comes in.”

Q: Rod Smith has scored a touchdown in four straight games. Did you think about going to him down the goal line?

Coach Garrett: “Yeah we did. We had some discussions about that, but Alfred [Morris] has such a good feel as well, so we felt like we wanted to give Alfred the opportunity.”

Q: Can you talk about Dez Bryant’s resiliency?

Coach Garrett: “Yeah, again, it’s the same thing we’ve been talking about. You know, you have to play through the success, play through the adversity of the ball game. Dez’s play at the end was as big a play as there was in the game, to get us down there in scoring position. He’s a veteran player. He’s had a lot of success through his career and a big part of that is the mental toughness to play through those things. He did a really nice job tonight and again, made a real difference making the play.”

Q: Can you talk about the play where Chris Jones’ faked the punt?



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Coach Garrett: "I don't want to get into the details of it, but the credit of it goes to Rich Bisaccia and Chris Jones. They did a really good job communicating on that and taking advantage of the look."

Q: What do you tell the team after something like this?

Coach Garrett: "Well there's a process to winning a game in the NFL. You have to prepare hard each and every day. You have to be focused and edgy in your preparation and you have to play for 60 minutes. There's plenty to clean up in this game and we'll go back and we'll look at it very objectively and unemotionally on Tuesday with our team. But you want to instill that fight in your team, that battle and our guys demonstrated that tonight. It was embodied by the play Jeff Heath made at the end of the game. That's certainly something that we can build on. Again, a lot to clean up, clean the slate and get back to work and get ready for the Seahawks."

Q: Was Ezekiel Elliott able to have contact with your coaching staff during his suspension?

Coach Garrett: "They're allowed to have indirect communication with him."

Q: What did they relay to you through that indirect communication?

Coach Garrett: "That he's been working hard."

COWBOYS OWNER JERRY JONES

Q: You get playoff eligibility and you get Ezekiel Elliott back, what is your mindset?

Jones: "Well, of course, all of that is near a point now. I must tell you, when we settled for that field goal, I just thought boy we're going to have a tough time keeping these guys out here. I know we all thought the same thing. And then, sure enough, that play. You know we had to go through some up and downs to get there. I thought our guys hung in there and really played hard all game. We had a real chance to get down after kind of really having our way early in the ball game."

Q: Will your next project be to find out what is a catch, what is a touchdown, how thick a piece of cardboard we're supposed to use to measure a first down?

Jones: "Well, I love any game that will allow you to just stick it in the pile, and then come back and measure it with a piece of cigarette paper."

Q: You talk about football being a game of inches. This really was on numerous plays.

Jones: "Well, I know this. I love our game. There's many nuances of the game. But like you said, when you're measuring with cigarette papers out there, and then the last game you're having the debate of in bounds, out of bounds, and touchbacks. It just makes this game exciting. I don't know that you can invent a lot of nuances. Now I was too busy complaining about our coaches not going for it on fourth down down on the goal line then I was to worry about those last couple plays. But I'm proud for these guys. We fought. We fought when we had the luxury of feeling good about ourselves for leading, then turning around and didn't play as well. Oakland played well, and we came on back and got the win."

Q: What's it like to get three straight with Ezekiel Elliott coming back now?

Jones: "Well, we're excited about Zeke. Zeke and I are going to meet tomorrow, and I'm of course excited to have him back at the Star there in Dallas. I don't know if he's made a statement about coming back, but I expect that either tonight or in the morning. We're just glad to have him back. This has been a rough year for Zeke, and he'll be the first to say that he knows his fans have had it up and down with him here. And now their back together again, and maybe we'll get a chance to really do something special. Maybe we can get in the playoffs."

Q: Jerry Richardson [Panthers Owner] has announced that he's going to sell his club at the end of the year. Your thoughts on that?



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Jones: "I'm sad. I'm very sad. Jerry was one of the really, really, really outstanding men of football that I've ever met. And I really admire him. I know that he made it the old fashion way; he worked for it. And he took what he made in a short time in pro football, and turned it into a great business. And then used that to get the Carolina franchise. So it's a great story. I'm saddened by any of the stories or the things that might have instigated this at this time. He's a battler; he's a big man with a big heart. By the way that's somebody else's heart; he's had a heart transplant. He'd be the first to tell you he's had a blessed life. But I'm really sad. I want all of those kind of men we could have in the National Football League."

Q: How do you think Dak [Prescott] battled today?

Jones: "Yes, I think the thing that we always want to see from our quarterback is someone that can outlive adversity. I thought he was steady all the way. And there was no doubt that he was ready to make the plays, he was prepared. Give them [Raiders] some credit, they came out and really got the defense going after us thinking we were going to run the ball on them pretty good. So, to answer your question, Dak engineered that."

COWBOYS QB Dak Prescott

Q: Have you ever seen a game end like that?

Prescott: "Yeah, actually I have. You weren't ready for that answer. In college though, our rival. I think 2013, the quarterback the same exact way went into the end zone. Ours was actually in overtime then fumbled it, but the emotions never get old. Just the play Jeff [Heath] made, I don't know if I've ever seen him run that fast and it was just incredible just him going and his effort. That was a great team win."

Q: Can you go back to that sneak and the card, the way they measured for the first down, have you ever seen a referee pull out a card to measure?

Prescott: "No, I've never seen the referee pull out a card. That was interesting, but I felt like I got it. I felt like it wasn't that close. We got it anyways so it doesn't matter, but that was interesting."

Q: Were you going to tell Coach Garrett to challenge that?

Prescott: "Yeah, I had already ran over to the sideline before he pulled out his card and told Coach Garrett regardless, 'I know I got it. I put the ball well over that mark so review it if anything.'"

Q: Did you want that again on fourth down, fourth and goal from the one or did you know the field goal was the best option?

Prescott: "No, of course I wanted it. I wanted the chance to get us seven and make it a seven-point game and not just the three, but obviously we trust in the coach and believe in our defense and they went out there a made a play."

Q: Have you seen Ezekiel Elliot and some of the pictures of him running on the beach?

Prescott: "No, I haven't seen the pictures. I haven't talked to him. I'm sure I'll have a text or something from him there when I go back in. It was a tough one, it was a grind like you said, it wasn't pretty but we did enough and got the job done on offense and defense and it was fun. It was up and down the whole game was but it was fun to come away and get that victory at the end."

Q: Knowing Ezekiel Elliot the way you do, do you think he will come back in great shape and be ready to play?

Prescott: "Yeah, I can guarantee he is probably in better shape now than he was before he left. Just being away from the game, that hunger. Like you said, just knowing him, knowing the type of person he is and the competitor. Watching football, I'm sure, lit something up in something inside of him and he is ready to get back."

Q: Will Elliot coming back open things up?



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Prescott: “Yeah, I mean he is a talented player. He’s got some abilities that not many people have, so yeah I mean we’re going to believe in him when he comes back giving him the ball and him making people miss and getting those dirty 8-yard runs and eventually it turns into 15 yard, and you know the rest of it, so I mean yeah, we’re excited to have him back. Defenses can’t play us the same.”

Q: Can you talk about the 40-yard pass to Dez Bryant at the end?

Prescott: “Yeah, I mean we’re waiting on that single high in man-to-man coverage all game long and then we got it right then. I knew he knew the play we had and I was waiting for that safety to go back to a two-high look and he didn’t, and I took my opportunity with Dez, and Dez made a great catch.”

Q: Can you talk about how the playoff mentality that started a couple of weeks ago for you guys has fueled the team?

Prescott: “Yeah, nothing has changed. Like I said, we know where we are. Our backs are against the wall. We’ve got to win, and that is what this team is about. We’re excited and we’re loving this matchup, or matchups. We’re loving the position we’re in, but it is what it is. We got ourselves here and we’re excited about next week. Just one at a time.”

COWBOYS WR DEZ BRYANT

Q: Brown said he felt like he let the team down and had a lot of sense of relief when Jeff Heath caused Carr to fumble. What was your viewpoint on that play?

Bryant: “Yeah, I was watching it but our defense really had been playing good all year and they just move on to the next play real quick good or bad. That’s a great attitude to have and it showed tonight.”

Q: What did the fans throw at you that you caught and then spiked on the ground?

Bryant: “They threw a hat. I didn’t spike it I back dunked it.”

Q: What does it mean now that Zeke is eligible to be back tomorrow? What does he do for you with two games to go?

Bryant: “I can’t wait till he gets back just because tonight, it’s probably out of my whole entire career, correct me if I’m wrong, this is probably the most I’ve ever been doubled. It’s a lot of respect. That’s the way I’m going to look at it. It showed. We executed very well and we got that win too.”

Q: What are your thoughts on grinding out a win here?

Bryant: “It just goes to show you who we are as a whole. We probably practice more football situations than any team in the National Football League and it showed tonight. Positive play or negative play, we didn’t blink. We looked at every play the same and we kept it moving.”

Q: Was your frustration building during the game?

Bryant: “Nope, I was never frustrated, not once. I was excited. Even at half time I asked coach Jack Del Rio. I said ‘hey man, what’s up with all this doubling? Let’s play some football.’ Just joking. Nothing too serious. They gave us one-on-one one time and they paid for it.”

Q: Does that make that one catch all the sweeter?

Bryant: “Yeah it’s sweet. Even a double is sweet. It just goes to show you there’s respect. I take that. I accept that with full pride. I appreciate coach Jack Del Rio viewing me that way.”

Q: What are your thoughts on your playoff hopes still being alive?



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Bryant: "Truthfully as much as I want to pay attention to it, I throw an eye in there, here and there but then I come back to myself and really understand the situation like tonight. It came down to the wire. We have to focus on what we have to do and that's just to play the best football we can possibly play but it does give you a little extra fire when you know that we're all still alive and have the opportunity to play for something. I think we all understand that but at the same time we have to focus on the now and we're doing a great job of that."

Q: What were your thoughts on the piece of paper being used to measure the first down?

Bryant: "The game is a game of inches and it is what it is. We got that first and kept that drive alive."

Q: What kind of boost do you get from Zeke coming back tomorrow?

Bryant: "We get an extreme boost because that's our guy. That's our horse. He gives us that extra boost of joy because of his personality and who he is. He gets guys going with his attitude and his passion and love for the game. Just seeing him back will make us play that much harder."

COWBOYS P CHRIS JONES

Q: Your playoff hopes are alive and you get Ezekiel Elliott back. What's the mood of this team with two games to go?

Jones: "I think everybody is feeling good. I mean it's a one game mentality. We played good tonight. There's obviously some stuff we have to clean up. I mean, on to the next one. Come back to work, and let's do it again."

Q: Was that an automatic call on the fake punt? When you see a look, do you just take it?

Jones: "No, not necessarily. We work on all sorts of stuff. Every week we do different things. If it comes up, it comes up. And tonight it did."

Q: So you could have punted it there? It wasn't drawn up? Do you think time, score, and where you are? Do you think of the consequences?

Jones: "Right, right. I mean it all plays a factor. But, like I said, we work on everything. So, that just happened to be what it was. You just have to live with it, you know. Take it as it comes. The guys up front did their job, they did a great job. We were able to keep another possession alive."

Q: Do you take pride in your running ability?

Jones: "I guess. As long as I don't get caught and get the first down, I'm happy."

Q: So I can say it was totally your call on that play?

Jones: "I mean, it was there. Let's just say that. Like I said, we practice numerous things. So we got what we wanted and took advantage."

COWBOYS WR JEFF HEATH

Q: What are your thoughts on that last play?

Heath: "I just tried my best to keep him out and thankfully he reached his hand out and he fumbled."

Q: Do you think the nudge from you might have helped the ball come loose a bit?

Heath: "Hopefully. I don't know. That's tough when you're laid out like that. He's fully extended and somebody hits him, it's tough to hold onto the ball unless you're Aaron Rogers obviously but thankfully he dropped it."



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Q: How pressurized was that? Not just that play, but when you batted the ball down. How pressurized was the end of that game?

Heath: "That's what this league is all about. They all come down to the fourth quarter normally and these two-minute drives are very important. We practice them every week. These types of games are won and lost on these types of drives. The key in a drive like that is to stay calm and use your technique and see what happen, but you try not to be frantic."

Q: When that happens live it's bang bang and your laying there for a split second. Do you know what's actually happened or do you think that's either a first down or a touchdown for them?

Heath: "As soon as I hit him I rolled over I saw the ball rolling out of the side of the end zone. Right at that moment I knew that it was a fumble. I just didn't know if he had his knee down."

Q: Can you talk about the growth of this young secondary and where they are at this late stage of the season?

Heath: "They're doing a great job. I knew they would. You can tell right when you meet these guys the mentality they have and I really love playing with these guys. It's good to have everybody healthy so we can continue to grow. The best time to grow is in games. That's when you get most of your experience. These guys obviously have the talent and everything you need to play DB but really they have a lot of what you need inside."

COWBOYS RG ZACK MARTIN

Q: Are you glad you're still alive [playoff hopes]?

Martin: "Yeah. We've been talking about it for the last few weeks. We're in the playoffs now. We have to take each week at a time, but we have to win each game. We'll take it any way we can get it."

Q: What's the energy like after winning the last three games and getting Ezekiel Elliott back?

Martin: "I think we have a lot of stuff to clean up. But we're a very talented football team, so like I say, it's the playoffs now. We have to win each week, and we are playing well with our backs against the wall."

Q: Is your belief stronger now than what it was with Ezekiel Elliott coming back?

Martin: "Obviously he's a great player. Alfred [Morris] and Rod [Smith] have been doing a great job for us. You know, if you get 21 [Ezekiel Elliott] back, you have a scary backfield. We're excited to get him back, and hopefully we can keep it going forward."

Q: If that piece of paper wasn't folded in half, is that a first down?

Martin: "I mean I thought that the spot was a little iffy myself. But, you know, we'll take it."

COWBOYS WR JASON WITTEN

Q: Witten, you'll take the win but there's got to be a better scientific way than to take a folded up piece of paper in my pocket to decide a billion dollar industry isn't there?

Witten: "There's a lot to clean up in that game. I think back to last year and the last couple years, sometimes it's good to see one go your way. Still alive. Still in it. That's really all that matters at this point right now."

Q: How did Dak hang in there? He threw a couple picks but it seemed like he battled.

Witten: "That's what he is. The guy's resilient. Any amount of adversity he faces, anything that happens, he doesn't blink. It says a lot about his maturity and his poise and his demeanor and what he's all about at a young age and I think we've seen that all year. There are a lot of areas for all of us to clean up in that game and we can



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play better offensively. You'd like to score there at the end and make it a seven-point game. But to be alive and the emotion that we are feeling right now, the heart this team plays with, it's a good feeling to still be in this."

Q: What are your thoughts on Elliot returning next week?

Witten: "Yeah it will be exciting to get him back. I've kept up with him and I know he's worked hard to get himself back and provide juice for our football team when he comes back. It's good to be in the hunt with him returning. He's been a professional about how he's handled this the entire way and I know he'll come back focused and prepared to face Seattle."

Q: What's the emotion like on the sideline on that last Raiders drive?

Witten: "Oh man, a lot of emotion. I mean there's the emotion of not getting it in. Give coach Garrett credit to make tough decisions at critical times to take the points. We have a lot of confidence in our defense. The interception Anthony almost had. There's a lot of emotion in that game and it happened fast. We know where we're at. Our season is on the line as far as going to the playoffs. It's good to just see us find a way to get the result that we did. Unbelievable play by Jeff Heath. There's something good about this football team. It's good to get lucky and see the football gods help you out a little bit. I've certainly been on the other end of it."