



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: “Long trip back, but one with a smile. Good to get the win yesterday. Always good to go out on the road and get the win. Pleased with the complementary football in spurts and looking for more of it as we go through the second half. As I laid out a little bit yesterday, we’ll do a little bit of self-scouting over this bye week, not that we wait very long to get into that, we’re going through it all the time, but we’ll get into that self-scouting aspects and get a little extra on the Patriots going forward. Questions?”

Q: Did you have anybody that didn’t finish the game or did you come out fairly healthy?

Coach Del Rio: “Came out fairly healthy.”

Q: Talked a lot about mojo leading up to the game. Do you feel like you got it back and how do you identify that?

Coach Del Rio: “There are a couple different kinds of mojo. There’s Maurice Jones-Drew mojo. I’ve seen ‘MoJo’ and he’s not ready (*laughing*) and that’s my guy. You still owe me breakfast by the way for that UCLA-USC game. I feel we are. I think we had a couple really good practices during the week. There are still things we need to clean up and be better at, really in all three phases. I think what I saw was I saw glimpses of what I know we can be as a football team when we put all three phases together and that’s really what we’re looking for.”

Q: The average of the running game wasn’t great yesterday, but it seemed like maybe you were able to get going a little more.

Coach Del Rio: “I think we had a few negative runs that took away what was largely an effective running night. I thought we had a pretty solid night running the ball. We had the attempts I was looking for. I wanted to get upwards of 30 attempts in that game. Talked about it with the team the night before, that we wanted to get a good number of attempts. I thought, overall, it was solid. There are some things we’ve got to clean up and will, but overall I thought it was solid.”

Q: In terms of getting the attempts, is it a mindset?

Coach Del Rio: “It can be. I think you saw examples of it last night, where there wasn’t a lot of efficiency early. We had some short gains, but we stuck with it. I think, especially when you’re in the game like that and it could go either way, to continue to bang at them is important. I think it’s important to establish it. When you look at our football team, the strength of our football team is in the trenches. That’s where, when [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] and I got here Day 1, we talked about wanting to build our trenches strong, offensive and defensive lines. That’s the strength of our football team.”

Q: You had the third-and-3 before the Johnny Holton play and you ran it with Marshawn Lynch, even though he hadn’t been that effective thus far. How big was that?

Coach Del Rio: “Obviously that was a big part of it. Having that threat and being able to break one off in that situation, you gain confidence with that. It also allows you to then have some of those play-pass opportunities over the top. That was a really well executed play, where Johnny took off, he can really run, and we had some protection look down the field and got it down there.”

Q: You’ve got to get him the ball more often.

Coach Del Rio: “He’s 2-for-2, huh?”

Q: What does the defense need to do to improve?

Coach Del Rio: “Tackling is the biggest thing. We’re doing some things well. I think we’ve established, as a front, that we can limit some good running attacks from really running it at us. I think it started in the opener in Tennessee. I think they have a really good running offense and we showed there that we can stop the run. That’s one area. When we start doing that, and then getting off on third down more regularly, I think you take a big jump. To me, what it comes down to is the tackling on the back end that has really been poor. You can’t play great defense without being



Oakland Raiders Transcript

great tacklers. That's probably the biggest area for us. Maybe a tie between the tackling and the turnovers, being able to catch the ball and being able to leverage and tackle better. Those are kind of the two keys in helping us take a big step forward defensively."

Q: Do you tell yourself that you need to get to 10 wins or a dozen? Do you think nine gets you in? Do you think like that?

Coach Del Rio: "When I talked to the team, I was very frank coming out of the first half. I said it's been my experience in this league that you typically have to get to 10 and that doesn't always get it done. I think this year is one of those years where it's very competitive throughout the league. I don't know that there's one team that's so dominant that everybody shudders at the thought of playing them. I think there are a lot of good teams, and a lot of very capable teams. It's a matter of going out and executing well and playing good football and finding a way to win on Sunday. Even Philly, they're tops in the league with record. They've won some close games, so it's not like all of them have been decidedly settled. I know they had a blowout yesterday, but the bottom line is you keep playing. Keep improving. You want to get hot at the right time. For us, there's no time like the present to get hot."

Q: What was the thinking there with you telling them that at halftime?

Coach Del Rio: "Oh no, I didn't tell them at halftime of this game, I meant the halfway break before our last game. It was like, 'Hey, this is reality. This is reality in the National Football League. It doesn't mean that it necessarily gets it done. Sometimes less gets it done, but this is just to understand where you are at the halfway point. We've got very little margin for error. We need to get it rolling now. The urgency needs to pick up.'"

Q: How much do you pay attention to scores around the league after picking up a game on Denver and Kansas City?

Coach Del Rio: "You know, different people focus on different things. I think for us, the focus wants to be about just playing well and the process of playing well and preparing and all of that. But, you can't help but look. I mean if you're a fan... Heck, I'm looking all the time. That's just the fan aspect, but the professional aspect, we have to just focus on the process of what goes into playing really well, understanding your assignment, being accountable, doing your job, basic stuff. And that's what we want to keep the focus of our attention. But certainly, being aware of the fact that it was a good weekend for us. We had some guys that came back to us a little, we got another win and at the end of the day, what does it mean? We'll find out at the end. We'll find out at the end. For us, just keep stacking wins and find a way to win the next one and we have a tough challenge going against the Patriots."

Q: Are you surprised that the pass rush has not cranked up lately?

Coach Del Rio: "I am a little surprised we haven't been a little more effective with it. We've got good pass rushers, we need to have a little tighter coverage so that the quarterback has to hold the ball. If he's able to get it out on time and comfortably, throw it in front of us and then make guys miss and get big plays, then why would they hold onto it to look down the field? That's where I say leverage and tackling is huge for our defense."

Q: Yesterday, you blitzed a little more but Jay Cutler was able to find open receivers. Was that sort of the case yesterday?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, I'm saying the coverage, we stayed on top for the most part. We didn't let things go over the top of us. But we didn't tackle very well, we didn't leverage and tackle very well. And that's really important."

Q: How much of the footing affects the pass rush?

Coach Del Rio: "I don't know. I don't think either pass rush was what, one each? One sack each?"

Q: Yeah, but it seemed like guys were slipping a lot...

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah. Look, we talked about it. We wore seven-stud cleats. Everybody does not get a pedicure. Sean Payton rule was not in effect, but we did get our guys to put the seven studs on for the most part and we kept slipping to a minimum. But we talked about it. In fact, I talked about it during the week. I said, 'Typically you go down



Oakland Raiders Transcript

to Miami and for some reason or another a storm will pop up, you're going to get some rain. It just happens. And then it'll disappear and it will be a beautiful night.' And sure enough, we get it right before the kick. So, it was a little bit of a soft feel but I don't know that was a huge factor."

Q: How do you think Derek Carr did working the ball down the field?

Coach Del Rio: "He played well. I think there was one danger ball early we got away with and then the one at the end I'd like to have seen completed, not end up being a pick where they get a chance to put a bunch of garbage yards up and give themselves another opportunity there at the end. But, I thought for the most part he played well last night."

Q: How much do you plan to practice during the bye week?

Coach Del Rio: "Not a lot. It's going to be a lot of recovery. We will get some work in. There's some young guys that we need to continue to develop and that's important. We will do that and we'll get a little bit of a peak ahead. We'll get a little bit of a review of who we are and what we need to do better. But really, it's a lot of rest. A lot of it, the structure is established by the CBA now. There's a four-day weekend that's promised to them through the CBA. So, we'll adhere to that and usually there's a bit of a refreshing period and then get back next week."

Q: Does it help that the bye week is before the Patriots? They can't be an easy team to prepare for.

Coach Del Rio: "It helps no matter who you're playing. Certainly, they're a good football team. Anything you can get to help that cause would be good."

Q: How much say at all did you have that the Patriots game was the one that would be taken out as a home game?

Coach Del Rio: "Oh, zero. Yeah, zero."

Q: Is it not the most thrilling or do you just say whatever?

Coach Del Rio: "It's not thrilling for me to lose a home game, you know? That's what it is. We're losing a home game. But that's what it is. I think I've already spent enough time talking about the number of the true road games that we're going to play. It's a competitive disadvantage in my opinion – one that we've faced the last couple years and will face the next few years. But that's a league rule, that's out of my domain. I don't have any control over that."

Q: The fact that you did it last year going to Mexico and had success, does that play into? That has to be somewhat of an advantage?

Coach Del Rio: "We're going to take the challenges that are in front of us and plan and do the very best we can within those situations. Establish our approach and look to find every advantage we can to do it as well as possible. I think certainly having success doing it last year kind of validates that a little bit. To me, you have to strain for it every year. You have to strain for the details of what makes it special."

Q: It'd be better to do it for a road game though...

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah. *(laughing)* It would be. It would be better if it was their [home] game we were playing there."

Q: Do you anticipate having David Amerson back after the bye week?

Coach Del Rio: "I hope so, yeah."

Q: How would you assess the rookie class?

Coach Del Rio: "Obviously, the first-round pick, the guy is going to be a really good football player. There was the drama about the off-the-field stuff, which ended up being exactly what we thought that it wouldn't amount to anything. And then there was the unknown injury that he's dealt with. We wanted to get to the bye week and take a look, so at some point here, we'll take a look and make a determination of yes, we're good to go or no, he's going to need to go down and that decision is approaching. I think, Obi [Melifonwu], obviously we lost the first half of the year because of injury. Those two guys are really talented. They are going to help our secondary and our secondary



Oakland Raiders Transcript

needs some help. That will be welcome. Eddie [Vanderdoes] has been solid all year. This is kind of a year ending kind of discussion, but I started to go here. I'll try and finish. Marquel [Lee] has been solid for us. I've been really happy with him. Shalom [Luani] has been a solid pick for us. Overall, we've had some injuries that keep it from being what it really can be. It's a good group of guys, a good group of young men."

Q: Where does Sebastian Janikowski stand in his recovery? Giorgio Tavecchio has been pretty effective.

Coach Del Rio: "Giorgio has been great and 'Seabass' is mending."

Q: With Giorgio Tavecchio's field goal at the end of the first half, as you were watching it transpire, were you thinking that you weren't going to be able to get it off?

Coach Del Rio: "No. I thought we executed it beautifully, managed that situation to a T. Derek does a great job being aware. Todd [Downing] called it properly. We managed the clock properly and we executed and squeezed every little bit out of it. You end up winning by three and you squeeze one of those out at the end of the half, that's big. And the way we came out and started the second half was big, so to me, those are the things that lead to wins. That's that complementary football at its finest, really."

Q: In terms of the clock, is there an ideal? Are you OK with just the one second left? Do you guys have a number you want on the clock?

Coach Del Rio: "If we can get a snap up, get an opportunity, that's what we're looking for. There used to be an old school way of doing it where you would leave enough time to fail at it and still have another opportunity. That's more of an end of the game situation where you're clearly in position and you maybe do it on third down in case something goes wrong or something like that. I thought it was well executed. We went down the field, made the plays we needed to make, used the time that we had available and I was really pleased with that."