



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening statement: “Jacquies Smith, one of our defensive ends, is going to have season ending IR status. He hurt his Achilles tendon. Very disappointing, he was doing some great things for us. I think that’s the only real injury of note, but I’ll be happy to answer any questions I can.”

Q: What do you make of Smith’s injury?

Coach Gruden: “What do I make of that? It’s unfortunate, man. I mean veteran players... it’s a tough injury, I know that. It’s disappointing.”

Q: The offense opens with a really good drive with really good rhythm but then it doesn’t seem to carry over to other drives. Is there anything you would attribute that to? How do you sustain that?

Coach Gruden: “Well it’s a credit to our guys for starting fast each half. We take a lot of pride in that. We had a couple offensive pass interference penalties that really slowed us down and put us behind in the stakes yesterday. We didn’t have the ball very often in the second half, quite honestly. After the touchdown drive to make 20-17, I think we had a three-and-out. Then when we got the ball back, we were down by 10. We didn’t have many possessions in the second half. I think that would help, quite honestly. I have to do a better job, I’ll just leave it at that.”

Q: How do you feel like Doug Martin played?

Coach Gruden: “He’s a good back. I think I’ll say it again and again, he’s a very good player. He’s been a great player in this league. He’s running it. He’s catching it. He picked up some blitz that were flushed. We did a lot of good things on the film that I look at. We’re proud of what we did against a very good defense. We thought Doug Martin played extremely well. Hopefully we can keep him around here. He’s a heck of a football player.”

Q: What did you see from Kolton Miller?

Coach Gruden: “It went pretty good. Last week it was Chandler Jones, this week it was Terrell Suggs and [Matthew] Judon. It’s never perfect, but the last two weeks he’s played very good football for us. I was proud of both tackles, honestly. Brandon [Parker] had some bad snaps at the end of the football game, but both our young guys hung in there and did quite well.”

Q: With Parker, how much of that is a matter of strength or endurance?

Coach Gruden: “You know what, it might be part of that. I think sometimes you hear different words about pass sets. You over set sometimes for speed. Maybe you’re susceptible to power. Maybe you don’t get out of your stance quick enough in the noise. Maybe you don’t take advantage of a chip or know where your help is. A lot of thing happen when you have a sequence like that. It’s unfortunate. He was up against a very good rusher. I think I said it after the game yesterday, when it’s an obvious passing situation, when you’re obviously throwing the ball to get back in it, we have to do a better job collectively of pass protecting. He knows that.”

Q: What’s the importance for a young player to stay true to his technique and learn to weather the highs and lows of the game in the season?

Coach Gruden: “It’s easy for us to say in an air-conditioned theatre like we’re in right now. But when you’re out there and bullets are flying, and you have all kind of blitzes and stunts and the crowd noise and the audibles and things are happening fast and you’re blocking great players and you’re a rookie out of North Carolina A&T, it’s a different ball game. I don’t want to lose sight of all the very good things this young man has done. Some of the difficult situations that we put him in early in his career. You just have to be mentally tough. He has to be like a defensive back. You’re going to get beat once in a while. You have to have thick skin. You’re going to be a wide receiver? You’re going to get gloved. You’re going to



Oakland Raiders Transcript

drop a pass here or there. You have to come back. He's been able to do that on a weekly basis. He's going to have to do it this week because Justin Houston and Dee Ford are coming into town."

Q: Is it challenging to get young players to realize that they are making progress when they aren't seeing it on the scoreboard in terms of the final score?

Coach Gruden: "It might be, but it's also, I think, a little easier than you might think. These guys are excited to show up and get a chance to start in the NFL, no question. I think when you look at the film and they realize, hey, I can play in this league. That's all part of being a rookie is proving to yourself and proving deep down in your own heart that you can make plays in the NFL. It's a big step for every rookie. The win-loss record is not very good, and it can take the wind out of your sails. But I think when you sit down and watch the tape with these guys individually and collectively, there's a lot to take away from it."

Q: What was the issue with the run defense yesterday?

Gruden: "It's a unique way of doing business right now in Baltimore. It's a 250-pound back, it's an electrifying 4-3 quarterback. One's going one way and the other is going the other way. The young man can throw the football so you have to defend a lot of different things. There were times we made some mistakes up front. We got out of our gaps. There were times that you really have to credit the Raven front for being physical. There are three ways that ball can go. It can go in the fullback's gut, it can go on the edge, it can go on the parameter to a receiver. It strings you out, it spreads you out and makes things very difficult. It's a combination of all those things."

Q: Do you think the amount of RPO in this league is sustainable?

Gruden: "We threw a couple RPO's yesterday, run-pass-options. I was proud of that. I don't know. I think as long as you don't compromise the health of your quarterback, I think it's here to stay. Some of these run-pass-options put your quarterback at risk. We all know that. We have to be careful, I think. You don't want to lose your quarterback because of an unblocked defender on a running play. That's my opinion. Some of these are very unique and hard to defend."

Q: Were you surprised in the first half how much the Ravens made an effort to keep Lamar Jackson in the pocket?

Gruden: "No, I wasn't surprised. I know that's what they have to do to continue to develop this kid. They can't be just one-dimensional. I thought Guenther did a good job. Our idea was: make somebody else carry the ball. That's what we did yesterday and unfortunately, they did a pretty good job of that. Like I said, you have to pick your poison at times defending that type of offense. We have to get better at it."

Q: What strides have you seen Gareon Conley make this year?

Gruden: "Pretty good. He's getting better. I think his practices have been better. I think that's a big part of it, his preparation on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday has been better and more consistent. He's been healthy. I really credit Derrick Ansley, our secondary coach. He works good with him. His technique is better. He's more consistent. Playing with confidence. He's improving. I like it."

Q: Do you expect to bring anyone back from IR other than Justin Ellis this season?

Gruden: "I don't know. We brought Johnny Holton up this week to give us some speed. We'll probably make a couple more moves. Ellis will be up this week, hope to have him available against the Chiefs. That will help us on the inside running game I do believe."

Q: Are you signing a tight end off Baltimore's practice squad?

Coach Gruden: "I believe we are. I believe we are in the process of doing that. Darren Waller is his name. A big guy that can really run. He was a wideout at Georgia Tech, he's transitioning into a hybrid role and we will take a look at him."



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: Is Donald Penn's return a possibility before the season is over?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah it is. He's been downstairs rehabbing and we are hoping he can come back and help us. I don't know how close he is officially, but he is making progress. Hope to have him on the field before the season is over."

Q: Jared Cook said he was impressed with how Derek [Carr] has handled the pressure this season, how have you seen him fair against the amount of hits he is taking?

Coach Gruden: "I think he's done well. I think he's done well in all areas. He's adapting to a new offense, he's adapting to new skill receivers around him. We've had numerous injuries up front. We've had a new feature back. He's had a lot of change, but he's doing well. He's taking care of the football. I don't know when the last interception is that he has thrown. He made a couple great throws that were called back yesterday. I thought he had a couple other throws that were right on the money and could have been caught. I'm proud of what he is doing. I agree with [Jared] Cook. I always agree with Cook though. Whatever he says, I agree with."

Q: What have you seen from Derek and has he made strides since pressing early on the season?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I think so. I think he's a heck of a quarterback, honestly. I'll just leave it at that. I look forward to someday, where we have a lot of pieces in place and we have some continuity, and everybody is used to playing with one another. I just think this guy has a real high ceiling and he has a lot of pride in his performance. Taking care of the football and being available every day, on the practice field and game day, is a priority."

Q: What did you make of Jordy's [Nelson] return to lineup?

Coach Gruden: "It was tough. Jordy was, obviously, not a 100 percent yesterday. I give him a lot of credit, man. For going out there and playing and giving us everything he has. Hopefully, he'll be closer to 100 percent this week. Hopefully Martavis Bryant shows up. He was knocking on my door this morning which was a good sign. I credit Jordy Nelson a lot for going out there and playing over 50 snaps when he wasn't at his best."