



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Assistant Head Coach-Defense John Pagano

Q: Was there a lot more game planning for the secondary than there typically would be for a first preseason game?

Pagano: "You always try to keep it real simple so that they can play fast. There's always that evaluation process that we go through as coaches. So, you're trying to really limit those calls so they can get the call, play fast and communicate. Can our communication be better? Yes. It's got to still improve and we're working on those things every day and as long as we get all 11 out there on the same page, that's the most important thing."

Q: Would you say you got what you expected from the secondary?

Pagano: "Yeah, you're going to have ups and downs with it and those sort of things, but other than that I mean, it's always a work in progress. It's never going to be perfect, but it's one of those things that we have to keep improving. Have we seen progress? Yes. I wasn't here last year, so all I can go off of what I hear. But how we're improving each day, that's the most important thing."

Q: How do you manage instinctiveness, for instance Shalom Luani's, and where a guy is supposed to be on the field for particular plays?

Pagano: "Communication starts first, but you never, ever want to over-coach a guy that has great instincts. You want to let him see ball, go get ball and have the ability. He [Shalom Luani] has a great knack right now for getting around the football and it's been since OTAs [organized team activities], since he's been here in rookie camp. So, it's been exciting. (safeties) Coach [Brent] Vies [Vieselmeyer] has done a heck of a job with those safeties. And watching him grow each and every day, I think it's been huge for his success and this defense. He's still a rookie and has to improve."

Q: Can you talk about Reggie Nelson's role in communication?

Pagano: "Well, you know it always starts with our veteran leadership. He's somebody that's played a lot of football, understands the game, always eager to learn. He's always asking questions, he's somebody that's just a student of the game and a true professional. Being around a guy like that who's always got questions, always wants to understand why, how are we doing these things, his leadership, his veteran leadership and his understanding of the defense helps the younger players around him. It helps everybody in that back end."

Q: How does your opinion of Derek Carr or appreciation playing against him for years grown?

Pagano: "They're explosive. You see the competitiveness, you see a guy that loves to win each and every play he's in there and each and every down. It's weird seeing those plays that you've had to defense for the last couple years, but then you see it out here and you kind of go back to some of the things we did and you try to just be able to, you know, if they ask a question if it's something you saw or something you see that we did against...But you see a great competitor and how explosive that offense is."

Q: Are there times when you can say, 'Hey, we did this and it worked against you'?

Pagano: "Oh, yeah, we've always had those conversations. There's been certain plays that have come up that I'll go up to him even after a series or a break and say, 'God, I remember when you ran that backed up,' or 'We did that.' Or vice versa. And he's always looking for any insight, especially the opportunities I had to coach against him. It's been fun."

Q: You talk about communication a lot. Are there specific ways that you can get better?

Pagano: "I think the best thing to talk about is, we call it Raider Talk. Don't go out of the realm and start talking some other language that nobody quite understands what you're saying. I think that's the most important thing,



Oakland Raiders Transcript

that we're saying the exact same things. It starts, like I said in the spring, with us as coaches. That we're all saying the same thing, so when it happens, the guys can react and play fast. From that standpoint, it's big because you get a lot of guys from different teams, or different areas and they hear something and it may have meant something else, but you just keep stressing that."

Q: Is it catchphrases, in a way?

Pagano: "The communication, even when they come off the field after that situation happened, how does that player communicate to a coach on the sidelines about what happened, being specific how we talk about routes, how we call certain things. It's not just getting the call and getting lined up, it's a multiple of things that you have to be able to do. They're growing every day with it."

Q: What do you think Khalil got out of the pass rush summit this summer?

Pagano: "I think that's outstanding, especially when guys of his ability and the guys that rush the passer at the high level share their experiences and what they know. I think that's huge. In this league, other guys kind of keep things quiet and to themselves, but for them to go out there and communicate and talk about pass rush, I think that's outstanding."

Q: Do you think he came back here with new knowledge?

Pagano: "That's the Defensive Player of the Year. He's been doing just fine."

Q: How would you describe the relationship you've built with Ken Norton Jr. over the last few months?

Pagano: "I think it's been great. It's outstanding. I think the big thing is I'm another set of eyes in there, to be able to help in certain aspects, see it certain ways. It's something that I've been focusing on more, the back end. Making sure the things that we're doing back there are shored up and making sure our communication between the linebackers and the secondary is good. Me and Kenny have been working great together. It's a job to do and the most important thing is to go out there and win football games."

Q: Has Gareon Conley's injury become a concern with him only able to take mental reps at this point?

Pagano: "We'd love to have him out there right now. When he's out there, he'll be out there. Until then, I think he got the reps he needed in OTAs. His mental game has picked up tremendously. He's always asking questions, even more. It's hard for a lot of injured players in this league to stand there on the sidelines and be able to just watch and look out there, but he's always asking. He's getting those mental reps. When he's able to come back, he'll be at a fast level. Injuries are part of the game, you deal with it and you just have to make sure, as a rookie, you're taking those mental reps."

Q: What have you seen from Eddie Vanderdoes?

Pagano: "Explosion. Power. Guy that can get vertical against the run that creates a lot of havoc inside. Coach [Jethro] Franklin has done a heck of a job with him of really getting him up to speed. There's a guy that because of the rule wasn't able to be there for OTAs. I think he was only there for rookie minicamp. As fast as he's learned it, what a great job that Jethro has done with him to be able to get him to do those things right now. He's still a rookie, he's got a lot to learn. They all make those rookie mistakes."

Q: Is there any additional challenge with communication between the safeties and linebackers with a rookie middle linebacker? It's so much from a mental standpoint.

Coach Pagano: "Well yeah, because it's new to him. It's new to him. Coach Sal [Sunseri] has done a heck of a job getting him going full speed. You throw him into those things. The more it happens out here of some type of communication error or mistake that we can correct, it's better for us. We call them scars at times. Sometimes



Oakland Raiders Transcript

you want something bad to happen out here so we can prepare for those things and they can adjust to them. If it's happened, that they're able to make that adjustment and fix it, that's something that we fixed already. Does that make sense?"

Q: With pass rushing and coverage being so linked, how do you view that between the first game and the second game. Would it be a situation where you'd like to see the test the secondary had without the premier pass rushers out there or are you looking forward to seeing it all as one big package?

Coach Pagano: "That's a good question. I mean, no. We'd like to sack the quarterback every time they drop back to pass. If the rush isn't there, we have to do our job in the backend and cover them. It goes hand in hand. You'd like the ball to come out, but if it doesn't, if they do have seven in a protection, if they six back there in a protection, it's our job in the back end to make sure that we cover him. It goes hand in hand. You're always going to have those wins offensively where they do get good pass protection and the rush doesn't get there. Then it's the job of the backend to cover him."

Q: Is moving a defensive back up a difficult transition?

Coach Pagano: "I don't see it as being difficult. I think there's always a challenge of a guy being able to go inside. It's a game of angles. You're taking a corner. You're taking a nickel that's used to playing on the outside looking in, now you're bringing him in and he's on the inside looking out. The game is totally different from that view point. At the end of the day, it's all about seeing the triangle, seeing what he has to read and getting there fast. It's easier more on third down because of the certain types of blitzes or man-to-man in that situation. It's always a challenge when you take a guy from outside bringing him inside and vice versa. It's all about what you're seeing and not keeping your eyes on the quarterback and looking more at your coverage. Where outside in, you're looking at guy."

Q: Sean Smith has looked strong at practice the last couple of days.

Coach Pagano: "I think he's growing every day. There's always highs and lows in this game. You don't want to make it, as we term, inconsistent. We're always looking for the consistency. It's how you build. It's how you learn. It's how you come off those things. There's always room for improvement in the backend, in the front, all across our defense. There's guys we're asking them to go out there and make plays. Has he been improving at practice? Yeah. Then our job is to take that practice stuff and take it to the game field and have that consistency and that carry over to those types of games."

Q: Is there anyone you've worked with in the past that Head Coach Jack Del Rio reminds you of?

Coach Pagano: "Well, I worked with him in the past, so he reminds me of Coach Del Rio (*laughing*). No one else."

Offensive Line Coach Mike Tice

Q: What are the challenges of developing the offensive line without Donald Penn?

Coach Tice: "Injuries happen during the season and you have to have a plan to have a player ready to play at each position and sometimes multiple players ready at the same position. With Donald not here yet, we're able to have Marshall [Newhouse] over there. He's done a nice job. He's gotten better. The challenge you have with a veteran guy that comes in, he's been coached by other coaches to do things a different way and it takes time for a veteran to learn the ways to do things the way that we want to do them as Raiders. That's probably the biggest challenge."



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: Even if you get Penn back, can it be a good thing that Vadal Alexander got experience at right tackle and Marshall Newhouse at left tackle in the long run?

Coach Tice: "Well it's always good when you develop in depth. We had a number of days when we were down to 11 and 10 players. David [Sharpe] got banged up and he didn't practice for five or six days. Jylan Ware, the young tackle, got a concussion. He missed a couple of days. Kelechi [Osemele] was only practicing every other day. We've had some days where we've had to make it happen with 10 or 11. When you have that, you get the ability, you have the ability, you have the opportunity to develop your depth. In the long run, it's actually a good thing."

Q: With not seeing Marshall Newhouse on the right, does it factor into who's going to start?

Coach Tice: "Where I'm at right now is I have to get us ready to go out and beat Tennessee. So right now, I have Marshall on the left and I have Vadal on the right and I have David doing a little bit more each day, playing both sides. That's what we have. I can't sit here and wonder when DP is going to come back. Right now I've moved forward with Marshall is on the left and Vadal is on the right and David is swinging. That's reality right now. I can't think that there's going to be something else there until it's there."

Q: What do you think about Ian Silberman's transition and what he's done?

Coach Tice: "He's probably been the biggest story on the line the whole training camp because when Jon [Feliciano] went down in OTAs and hurt his knee, Feliciano our backup center, we had to have another player play center. So we slid Ian in. He had not snapped a ball in practice. He had not snapped a ball in a game. He played every snap in the game at center and did very well. Had one mental and the mental he had, he stepped with the wrong foot. I'm very proud of him. He's been a great story for us. He's a tough kid. He's a determined kid. He's been cut before and he's determined not to be released again. Right now he's our No. 3 center and we'll move him over to guard next week and let him play a little left guard and create some versatility for him and give him an opportunity to make our football team."

Q: What about Silberman made you choose him to come in at center?

Coach Tice: "Smart. First you have to be smart to go in there and play center for us because we make all the calls, center makes all the calls. He has good movement. He moves well laterally. He can run. Again, he's determined. He wants to have an opportunity to make our team, and at center, it's probably his best chance because we keep three centers at least. We're real happy with Ian right now."

Q: What are you hoping to see this week that you didn't see in Arizona?

Coach Tice: "Well, we didn't play three guys inside. We didn't play the quarterback. We're looking for good communication. We're making sure we don't have any free runs. We don't want anybody on the quarterback, that's No. 1. We want to be able to run the ball efficiently and open some holes up. And we want to have some rhythm offensively. No penalties. No pre-snap penalties, really. No offsides. No balls on the ground. That's what we're looking for, a nice, clean game. Hopefully the guys can get a good first half in, up to the first half, somewhere in that range and come out of it healthy. That's the main thing."