



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "Still not sure about Kelechi Osemele at left guard. We'll see where he goes in the next day or so, but I'll answer any questions that I can."

Q: What was the message to the team about the Amari Cooper trade today?

Gruden: "I don't want to get into the messages to the team. That's not for press conferences. We're doing everything we can to win games and certainly build this football team. Not everybody, I'm sure, understands what is going on. I just want to say those two things: we're doing everything we can for the Raiders, for the team today and the team of the future. Sometimes it's a tough job."

Q: Do you think the players understand that?

Gruden: "You'll have to ask the players. The players I talk to get it, certainly. They get it. They also know that every day is a new day. Sometimes the plans that you have aren't the plans that you think are going to be executed. Things come up. Opportunities arise. I think they understand, but you'd have to ask them."

Q: When you took this job, did you imagine trading the players you traded? Was that in your mind?

Gruden: "No, it was not. Like I said, the plans, on first-and-ten is to run the ball for six yards. When you get a holding call or you get some adversity, you have to respond. It's a hard thing to do sometimes. We're doing what we think is best for the Oakland Raiders and the future of the Raiders."

Q: Can you say when you mentally adjusted to thinking that this may have to turnover again? Was it training camp or the preseason?

Gruden: "I'm not going to get into the roster that we inherited, who was a free agent and what we thought we needed, who was available, why we drafted who we drafted. There are a lot of decisions that I'm not going to rehash today. We're getting ready for the Colts. We're doing everything we can to build this team the right way and we'll continue to do that."

Q: How difficult a balance is it to build a team but also win every week?

Gruden: "It's hard to win, period. It's hard to win in this league no matter who you have on your team. It's a tough league. Certainly the two trades that we made are going to be highly scrutinized and I appreciate everyone's job that they have to do. We had to make a decision, I say we, as an organization, we're going to do everything we can to win on Sunday and win on Thursday and continue to improve."

Q: How will the offense adjust without Marshawn Lynch and Amari Cooper?

Gruden: "We've had to adjust a lot. We're missing our left guard. We're missing our right tackle. We're missing our backup left guard. We're missing our feature back and now our Z. It'll be an adjustment. Missing some players on defense. It's going to be an adjustment. We're going to do the best we can. We rely on the players to get an opportunity. What a great opportunity for Doug Martin. What a great opportunity for Kolton Miller and Brandon Parker to continue to develop and improve. What a great opportunity for us to keep coaching."

Q: You told Chris Mortensen that you aren't trading anymore. Does that mean you are absolutely not trading anyone else?

Gruden: "I wouldn't say... what I told Chris Mortensen, I was quoted on what I said to Chris Mortensen. I don't see us making any more trades. I didn't see us making a trade the other day. I really didn't. Sometimes, like I said, your plans change, whether you like it or not. You don't know who is calling or what they're going to say. You really don't. That does in all phases of life. I don't see us making any more trades, but I'll never say never again to anybody. If I said never to you, I'm sorry. I don't think I did."



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Q: So if somebody calls about Derek Carr?

Coach Gruden: "I'm not going to speculate about that today. I don't see us making anymore trades. Certainly, I don't see us trading our quarterback."

Q: With Amari Cooper gone, what do you expect to see from Jordy Nelson and Martavis Bryant?

Coach Gruden: "Well we need everybody to step up. We need everybody. DeAndré Washington, Jalen Richard, everybody's role will change. You lose a really good player, everybody has to step up. Jordy obviously is going to be playing multiple positions. I think you'll see more of Seth Robert. I think [Brandon] LaFell is a good player. He's played at a high level. He's been in a Super Bowl. He knows how to play this offense. We'll lean on all our receivers and certainly our tight ends as well."

Q: Do you expect Doug Martin to be the main guy?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, we think Doug is the feature back. He's had 1,500 yards in this league twice. He's practiced hard. He's ready to go. I think you've all see Jalen Richard has carved out a unique role. He's a really good player. We'll try to get more out of him as we have been doing in recent weeks. To have DeAndré back, a guy that Raider fans know can run it and catch it, gives us some versatility that we'll try to use as well."

Q: When you say you're trying to make the best decisions for the future, define how far out the future is for you.

Coach Gruden: "I'm not sure I understand your question."

Q: Earlier you said you're going to make decisions that are the best for the Raiders in the future. When you say future, what is your timeline?

Coach Gruden: "Well it depends on what decision we're making here. Sometimes you make a decision based on tomorrow. Sometimes you make a decision based on today. A couple of decisions that we have made, a lot went into. A lot more than I'm going to talk about here today. You can probably figure it out yourself. It had a lot more to do with just picking up a draft choice. There were a lot of things that were involved. It's a lot to overcome and it's a lot to swallow. It'll take a real man and a group of men to play through it. We get an opportunity to prove it."

Q: Have the two big trades that you made led to difficult conversations with Mark Davis?

Coach Gruden: "I'm not going to speak for the owner. He's available, I'm sure you can talk to him. We're working together, Reggie McKenzie, Mark Davis, myself, our coaching staff. Trying to, as I said, get some stability here, get this football team to a point where we can compete for championships. It's hard to do without guys like we traded, but it's also exciting to think that somewhere down the road we'll have a chance to pick some pretty good players."

Q: Why was there a wait from you to tell the players that Cooper was traded?

Coach Gruden: "Well nothing's official. I thought maybe I should find out for sure what was going on. I don't even know if the trade is official yet, honestly. Look, there's people working in the building when we're out here on the practice field. We just don't turn the lights off. I'm not going to get into anymore. It was an uncomfortable thing. It's not the first time I've seen it. It's not the last time I've seen it. And it's not the first time it's happened in the league and it's not the last time. It is the trade deadline looming and sometimes trades happen that are unexpected and untimely."

Q: You talked about making Cooper the centerpiece of the offense, why didn't that work out the way you planned?

Coach Gruden: "Well, he had some good games. He had some good games. We had six games together. I know I said some things. Really you can go back and remember what I said in Indianapolis. I saw him as a young, emerging star. What obviously happened is we felt we got an opportunity to improve this team."



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There are a lot more things that went into it than just who we're throwing the ball to. I don't really want to get into it anymore, Vic [Tafur]. We made a tough decisions, we're going to live with it."

Q: What did having the Bye Week to heal up do for Carr?

Coach Gruden: "I think it was great. I think Derek is doing a lot of good things. I know there's reports out there that the team has...I heard that there's a report out there that a phantom, unnamed source was curious as to some things about Derek. I think Carr is going to be fine. We have a lot of moving pieces now on offense. It's tough on a quarterback. In the first year of a system it's doubly tough. I'm going to keep supporting him. I know I believe in him. I know he's going to be a great player. You watch and see, he'll play just fine on Sunday."

QB Derek Carr

Q: What was your initial reaction when you saw Amari Cooper was being traded?

Carr: "Man, it was hard, same with Khalil [Mack]. More-so because those guys are my friends. They come over to my house, we play, as you know, pool basketball, they hang out with my kids and all of those kinds of things. That's the hard thing, not seeing my friend every day. As soon as I got off the field I wanted to come grab them before he headed out, but he was already out and I got to my phone and he had already sent me this long text, just all the stuff that we would talk about. Honestly, just as a friend, just being in this business it was hard when I read it because not only is he a good player and all of those things, but you just want to spend more time with him. It was hard, but I'm happy for 'Coop' man, go ball out. I want the best for him."

Q: How did you find out about the trade?

Carr: "When I came in the locker room. Just grabbed my phone. It was more of a feeling of, 'Where's Coop?' Then you kind of just assume after that."

Q: How is the locker room digesting the trades and what is the mood inside in general?

Carr: "It's hard, it's hard when you lose guys like that, especially when they're coming up on contract stuff and then it gets to business type stuff. That's hard. Just being one of the guys in that locker room, you sit there and you know it's hard, but at the same time, it doesn't matter who's here or who's not here, this organization is going to keep moving on. It's going to keep going forward no matter what. We have games to get ready for, games to win and the guys that care about working hard and giving their best even when the success hasn't been right there in front of you, those are the guys that knuckle down, and they understand that we have a job to do still."

Q: How difficult is it for you as a player to hear your coach say that you are building for the future?

Carr: "Obviously, the future looks good, right? With all the money and picks and all of those kinds of things, that's a positive. For me, being in my fifth year, it's hard if I'm being honest. Just going out there, I feel like we've had to do this a couple of times in my early five years. That part is hard. At the same time, it doesn't change my mindset, you guys know that. Good things, bad things, it doesn't change who I am and how I work. I still have a job to do. It's going to be harder without Coop, it's going to be harder without Khalil, we knew that. It's not going to make it easier, especially for us, for a quarterback and things like that. But, that's no excuse. We need to go perform and we need to go win games and that's my mindset. That's how, a lot of guys offensively – we're in the meetings together – offensively speaking, that's how we feel."



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Q: Your name has been a part of the trade speculation, you seem like you are aware of that. What are your thoughts on that speculation and possibility?

Carr: "My brother told me when I came into the NFL, if they cut Peyton Manning, they're going to cut you some day, too. So, that's always a realization for anybody in our locker room. We all have to show up and give our best on the practice field, the meeting room and all of those kinds of things to make sure we're around for the long haul. But, to be honest with you, I'm the quarterback here today, I have confidence I'll be here tomorrow and when we turn this around I'm very confident I'm going to be here when we do that as well."

Q: Do you ask Coach Gruden or Reggie McKenzie if you are on the trading block or any of the coaches?

Carr: "Just the way that they communicate, I never had to ask the question, honestly. The way they communicate to me, that's not even something that we think about. Just the things that we talk about, obviously privately, just the way it's communicated, I'm trying to answer it. But, that's just how it is."

Q: Could you have ever imagined you were a 12-win team just two years ago and you'd be going through this now?

Carr: "I didn't. I don't think any of us did, really. But then, when you get a new coach, obviously we had the year and then we lost Coach Del Rio, you get a new coach, they're going to build it the way they see fit. That's just how it goes, that's this league and all you do is control what you can control. I come in here and I bust my tail, no one can deny that. I give it everything I can for the city of Oakland, for our fans, for our teammates, for my family and for my faith. I'm never going to give it anything less than my best no matter what. It's not ideal, it's not what I imagined it to be but I still come to work joyful and thankful that I'm here."

Q: Last time you played the Colts you were a 12-win team. Do you think you are a better quarterback tonight than the guy that was hurt that night?

Carr: "Oh yeah. I think honestly, we executed as a team better, but I definitely feel like a better player. I'm smarter. I know more. Talent wise, I think after last year just recovering from injury, I'm back to my strength and my speed how I want it to be. Absolutely I believe that I have nothing but the best out in front of me. I really do believe that."

Q: There was a report that suggested that you have a fractured relationship with some teammates. Do you have any responses to that?

Carr: "No man, I don't pay that any mind. Just go talk to those guys. If they don't want to put their name on it, I am going to leave it as what it is. It's nothing to me. If they want to come say it to my locker, I've had plenty of tough discussions standing right here with teammates. Those are some of the guys that texted me yesterday saying, 'Don't worry about this bull crap.' That kind of stuff. I can't tell you how many texts I got from former teammates, teammates I have now and all of these things that when your losing crap happens."

Q: You develop a thick skin as a professional athlete, obviously. Did you ever think that at some point you would have to defend yourself against an accusation of crying on the football field?

Carr: "No, never. I broke my back, I broke my ankle. I didn't cry then but I guess the shoulder was really tough for me. It was funny, my trainer actually sent me some pictures of me working out making the same face, so I guess I cry when I train, too. It just is what it is when you are losing man. Just like any technique or anything you do as a player. When you are losing, when things are tough, when things are happening we know how that goes. I know how that goes. I've been doing it too long, but I never thought I'd have to do that."



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Q: The Raiders are considered to have some of the best fan support in the NFL. With everything that's happening (losing Khalil Mack and Amari Cooper, the 1-5 start, relocation to Vegas) would you understand if the atmosphere at the Coliseum feels less like the Coliseum you've come to know?

Carr: "I understand absolutely where they are coming from. We talked about that last year when we all found out. I understand, obviously those are decisions above my paygrade. I don't have any control over that. I'm just trying to throw completions, right? I don't think our fans will change. I don't really feel the Coliseum will change. It's still going to be rowdy, it's still going to be tough, they are still going to expect wins and those kinds of things just like when I first got here. Our fans are loyal. It's usually the people that make the negative comments that are heard the loudest. You find so much of that and that's what we hear so much, all the time, that you forget about the loyal ones that have been here forever. They have seen playoff droughts and losing seasons. They've seen it all and they continue to support their team in hopes, just like we have hopes, to make it better and get it right. I'd be surprised if it changed because I know our fans and I know how loyal they are, but I understand their pain. I really do."

Q: Why do you think Amari's [Cooper] production had fallen off this season?

Carr: "I don't know. That's a better question for a coach, for his coach. He would probably know better, but it's tough man because the guy works hard. He's a good route runner and has all the talent in the world. Sometimes your just covered, sometimes he was open and he made big, explosive plays. I don't know the fine-tuning things. I'm not a receiver's coach but I do know this. He has the talent moving forward to be dynamic and to be unstoppable."

Q: How do you assess the focus of the team right now and how do you get it to where it needs to be?

Carr: "Oh, it's hard. There is no doubt about it. It's not easy, we are human. We work our tails off to win and to do those things. When you aren't winning it sucks. There's nothing like losing in the NFL and there is also nothing like winning in the NFL. The focus of our leadership group, the focus of the guys whose voices need to be heard is: 'we believe we are doing the right things schematically, honestly. We believe in our coaches. We've seen it work, except when we screw it up as players. We know that if we keep working that good things are going to come. It doesn't stay like this forever, trust me I know that.' I think the mindset right now for some of the guys is they just want to be here when it goes right."

Q: How does the offense adjust with no Marshawn [Lynch] or Amari?

Carr: "Obviously you had plays specifically designed for them but I'll say this, Coach Gruden does a fantastic job of, even back in April, having a plan for Doug Martin and Jalen Richard. Martavis [Bryant] when he got here, Jordy [Nelson], all those guys, [Derek] Carrier. When we come into the building on a Wednesday or a Monday, when we are installing the plays it's like okay, 'who are we attacking, what plan are we using. That kind of thing. Trust me, he's been prepared if anything goes wrong with anybody, so we will have something ready."

Indianapolis Colts Head Coach Frank Reich

Q: Can you tell us about Andrew Luck's health and the way he's playing right now?

Coach Reich: "It's strong and it continues to even get stronger. That's been the goal. We talked a lot about it as a team, let's continue to get better physically during the year. He's done that. Really going into the year I felt no limitations, no restrictions and just gotten more and more comfortable and more and more confident as the year has gone on. Certainly that's been true with Andrew."

Q: How does losing Marshawn Lynch impact the Raiders offense?

Coach Reich: "He's certainly a force. Everybody knows that. Just a hard, downhill runner, physical. My experience with these things is you're offensive system is what it is. Other players step up and fill that role



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and you count on them. Certainly, missing a player like that is significant, but no doubt they're like us in that we have next guy, man up mentality who will step in and do a good job."

Q: What do you see when you look at the Raiders at this point?

Coach Reich: "It's not unlike the journey we've had through the first part of the season. Losing some tough games and digging ourselves a little bit of a hole. Being a hungry team, a competitive team. Playing in your home stadium always provides a spark. So, we have to come in there focused. We're in a similar situation where I think you're going to have two teams that are hungry for a win and fighting hard."

Q: How would you assess the play of Mike Mitchell?

Coach Reich: "Mike, it's just crazy how quickly he stepped in and made an impact on the field and off the field. He's a leader. Not only does he bring his years of experience as far as leadership to the locker room, but instantaneously he started making plays on the field. He's savvy, instinctive, disciplined, plays hard, aggressive. Been a great spark for our defense."

Q: What have Jihad Ward and Denico Autry brought to the team?

Coach Reich: "They played really well for us. Jihad has had several sacks and made an impact. Unfortunately got hurt with the ankle. Denico, he came in here and has just been a solid veteran leader for us. Our whole offseason program and then the games that he's played. He's explosive off the ball. Got a little bit hampered by this injury, but we're looking forward to getting him back."

Q: How much have you seen from Derek Carr's play this season?

Coach Reich: "Just more in general, obviously I coached in that division for a few years. I've just seen Derek play a lot of football and think very highly of him. I think he has really good arm talent. I think he sees the field really well. He can make all the throws. He can drive the ball all over the field. He can throw the touch pass. I just think he shows good instincts. I think he has good feel in the pocket. This is a guy who I think can put a lot of points on the board leading an offense."

Q: When Andrew Luck came in, he was known as a player who would willing to put his body at risk to get first downs. Has he changed at all in that regard?

Coach Reich: "Yeah, actually he really has taken an approach to live to play another play. It doesn't mean he's not tough or anything like that. This guy is tough as nails. We talked a lot about that. The best thing for the team and the organization is to live to play another play. You have to get yourself out of harms way. Don't make a decision that's going to put yourself or the team in a compromised position. There's a time and a place to put your shoulder down and dive for the winning score. Not when every situation calls for that, so let's just have the maturity to understand the situation and play appropriately."

Q: In the past you've talked about how quarterbacks operate like computers with RAM and their ability to process a lot of information. What have you seen from Andrew Luck?

Coach Reich: "I don't know whatever the highest amount of RAM is that you can have, but he's got it. It came fully loaded. The hard drive and the software package was fully loaded. You can see that every day in the meeting room and on the practice field. He has unique qualities in that regard."

Q: What does the return of T.Y. Hilton mean to Luck? Does it expand what he's able to do on the field?

Coach Reich: "It's big in several ways. Number 1, he's just a consistent play maker. Just a lot of trust. A lot of trust and chemistry between the two of them. It just seems to be that when a play breaks down, he and T.Y. just have a unique way of finding the dead spot in the defense and making a play. They've done that a lot over their career. That certainly showed up last week on one of the scramble touchdown plays. That's shown up all over their career."



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