



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing

Q: A lot of little details have added up to be problems. Has that been frustrating that it's not one specific thing and it's a lot of different things?

Coach Downing: "You know I think we can circle them, but it's just a matter of being able to eliminate those things and not have something pop up in another area. They're both exactly right, there have been little things that have turned into big things as time has gone on. We just need to keep striving for consistency and each man looking in the mirror, looking for a way to get better."

Q: How close do you feel the offense was to being what you wanted it to be?

Coach Downing: "Honestly, say close. I remember speaking to you guys a few weeks back saying we're right there. I believe that. I believe we have the right kind of guys around here. I believe we have the right group of coaches. I believe we have the right personnel. We just need to quarter turn a couple things and get this thing back on track."

Q: Do you think Derek Carr's back injury had any lingering effects?

Coach Downing: "Honestly, I've never discussed injuries with you up here, so I'm not going to start now. That was so long ago that it's in the past for me."

Q: Is it fair to say your play calling ability may have been hindered by his overall health?

Coach Downing: "No, I won't say there's any limitations on me. I'll take full responsibility for my role in this offense and leave it at that."

Q: Has there been any issues with Michael Crabtree?

Coach Downing: "In missing time as the game went, last game, and when available there, we tried try to give him the ball, he was targeted a couple of times. We just weren't able to connect. But no, certainly not by design. Crab is an important part of this offense. We intend to get him rolling."

Q: What do you think of David Sharpe's performance on Sunday?

Coach Downing: "I was impressed with David. That's a hard assignment. Monday Night Football against that front as your first start. I thought he did some really good things. I was pleased with his effort. I was pleased with the fact that it wasn't too big for him. Even just seeing his demeanor on the sideline and the expression on his face. I thought he did a lot of nice things. Impressed with what he did."

Q: Have you given any thought to your future here?

Coach Downing: "Honestly, no. I live in the moment. I try to be the best version of myself I can be each individual day. My task right now is to get this offense ready to play the Chargers. Until Sunday is over, I really won't even think about it."

Q: You've had success with bigger packages and rushing the ball. Is that something you can carry forward?

Coach Downing: "Yeah, absolutely. I think anytime you do something well you gain some confidence in it and it becomes something you will fall back on in the future. Like Coach Del Rio said, he set our intentions early in the week to be physical in that game. We wanted to get in some 'big boy' groupings and go after them a little bit. I think we accomplished that. I think we moved the ball well. Moved the line of scrimmage well. Certainly, got to tighten up some ball security issues, but other than that, we accomplished what we wanted to in the run game. We're definitely pleased with that and look forward to it in the future."

Q: How frustrating was it as an offense to not capitalize on the good field positions you were given on Monday night?

Coach Downing: "Yeah, honestly that's probably the thing I was most disappointed with on Monday night. We got some short fields and didn't do a lot with it. Actually, didn't do anything from a point production standpoint with it."



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That's a point of emphasis for our team. We play complementary football and Jack preaches that all the time. We didn't accomplish that Monday night and it's one of the contributing factors of us not coming out of Philadelphia with the 'W.' Our defense, hats off to them, they played fantastic. We just need to capitalize on our opportunities offensively."

Q: What struck you about all the turnovers on Monday?

Coach Downing: "It was a little bit surprising to see to them come in a bunch like that for us, especially all in the second half. The last one was kind of a desperation fumble. Philadelphia plays that pretty well. They actually had done the exact same thing earlier in the season, I believe against the Rams. Got a fumble off a lateral play and took it back for a touchdown on the last play of the game. The four that we had, the two interceptions and the two fumbles prior to that, they're all avoidable for different reasons and they all need to be cleaned up. We continue to stress and preach ball security and work drills. You guys are out here during individuals on Fridays, we do the ball security circuit. We just have to turning over every stone we can. Make sure we iron out any wrinkles that are in our ball security plan."

Q: Is there a way to explain how tough it is to go from a plus 16 turnover margin to a -12?

Coach Downing: "I think that's a team thing. It's tough to overcome as a team and we have our part in that. Offensively, our turnovers are up this year from last and that's something that we need to get straighten away and something we take very seriously. Our part in this team game is to protect the football and we haven't done as good a job of that this year as we need to. It will be an area of emphasis going forward."

Q: Is there anything you could have done differently this year?

Coach Downing: "Oh geez, how much time do we have? Listen, I'm a person that preaches accountability. I definitely look in the mirror first. So, I have plenty of notes on things I want to do differently going forward. I would hope that that would be a leadership quality that would translate to other people doing the same. If we all take that approach I think we'll like the result moving forward."

Q: Is there anything specifically you would have liked to have done differently with this offense?

Coach Downing: "There are some specifics throughout the course of the season. Maybe a little bit different play here, a little different play there. It's way too early and like I said, my focus is on the Chargers. When we talk in the offseason, I can give you more analysis of things we want to change."

Q: What strikes you about Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram?

Coach Downing: "They're both very, very talented. They're both in double-digits sacks. You have to account for them. When you're using chip help or back help with the tight end, now you're talking about doing it on both sides. They also do a great job of moving their alignments around. Sometimes in third down, you know passing situations, you'll get them both on the same side of the field, which can create a little bit more difficult chipping scenario. You better make sure you know where they're at. You better make sure your progressions are getting the ball out in an efficient manner or you're going to have a long afternoon. They are as talented a duo as there is in the league in my opinion."

Assistant Head Coach – Defense John Pagano

Q: How much can you build on the way this defense has played the last few weeks?

Coach Pagano: "I think when we started this deal out, five weeks ago, we talked about identity, belief and ownership. That's what you want a defense to be, you want to create an identity. Keep building off of it each game, each opportunity you have. Every chance you get, you go rush the passer, you tackle the guy with the football and you try to create turnovers. That's what you want to be defensively."



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Q: Is this the identity you want your defense to have?

Coach Pagano: "I think we're building it. Identity is created by what people talk about you. How they're going to talk about your defense. How they want it to look. That's what I really explained as a coaching staff to the players that that's what we want to create and that's what we're about. Whatever it may be. Create an identity. Have belief. Take ownership, those things."

Q: Have you seen a difference in Sean Smith over the last month?

Coach Pagano: "I see guys playing better. I see all 11 being on the field, accountable. I see a lot of guys working together, communicating at a high level. You could see it during the week of the process of how we're practicing to how they even attack their walk-through. We had a great walk-through last week that can prepare us to do the things that we have to do defensively. That being said, I think all guys are playing much better. We're playing at a higher level of how we want to play,"

Q: Is this game different in terms of preparing for a road game with crowd noise?

Coach Pagano: "You just always have to prepare for whatever type of crowd it is. I've been in San Diego where it was a ton of Raider fans, and I've been in San Diego where a lot of San Diego Chargers fans. You're always prepared. You never know going on the road. We have to prepare for the team that's coming in, hot, explosive offense. A team that plays really good at home. It's a division game. We want to finish this year out right. We want to start the new year off with a win, and that's the most important thing."

Q: What's been the difference in Sean Smith from the first half of the season to this past month?

Coach Pagano: "Like I said, I think it's more of guys being accountable. Really stepping up. The attention to details. It holds a lot for the coaching staff. I think [linebackers coach] Sal [Sunseri] and [safeties coach] Vies [Brent Vieselmeyer], [cornerbacks] coach Rod [Woodson] and [outside linebackers coach] Travis [Smith] and [defensive assistant coach] Sam [Anno] and [defensive line coach] Jethro [Franklin], they've done a heck of a job of getting those guys to understand what we want to do and what we need to do. I think sometimes things just happen and it clicks on for players sometimes. You can really see that. You see their effort. You see that intensity. That's the two things that we were going for. Number one was to win the game, but number two was to have unbelievable effort. They showed that on Christmas."

Q: Do you think shadowing guys helped him?

Coach Pagano: "I think anytime you do that... We're not the first team to do it, we're not going to be the last team to do those sort of things. It gives guys the opportunity and focus. Sometimes you're going to be on guys, sometimes you're not. I think from that standpoint it gets them honed in on the players, on the receivers and to do a little bit extra work during the week to where you really, truly what he's going to do and who they focus on. They still have to prepare for three or four receivers, but at the end of the day, it gives them a guy to look at and really focus in on his skills."

Q: What would it mean to have David Amerson back on Sunday?

Coach Pagano: "It's huge. He's a cover corner that can run, that can make plays. You can see those certain things. It'll be big for us to be able to get him out there, add to the mix. If he's not available, it's what we've been doing. Next guy up and keep working that process."

Q: What do you think of the potential matchup between Keenan Allen and Sean Smith?

Coach Pagano: "Just all the different matchups that all three... The receivers play at a high level. Keenan, seeing him every day and seeing his work ethic and seeing how he runs routes, he's a tough match for all our guys. We're going to have to go out there and be sound on our technique and our fundamentals. They do a great job of... Keenan is a great route runner, but also they will attack you downfield, so you have to be prepared for that."



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Q: What's this week like preparing for Philip Rivers?

Coach Pagano: "You have to keep preparing our team to line up and go play with certain formations, the certain routes that they do. The run game, they run it at a high level. Wiz [Chargers offensive coordinator Ken Whisenhunt] does a hell of a job of their run to pass ratio. Their playactions look like their runs. It's going to be a big challenge. Like I said, Philip plays at a high level. He sees everything and knows everything. We have to make sure we're on top of our game. Especially this week."

Q: What made this job with the Raiders appealing when the Chargers opted not to bring you back?

Coach Pagano: "Just the opportunity, number one, to come up to Oakland. [Head Coach] Jack [Del Rio] reached out to me. Stay in the division. Stay on the... I consider myself a West Coast guy. It was an opportunity to come up here and do a job that I wanted to do. Help on the defense. Come win games. It was something that I look back on and I'm excited to be here. I'm excited for the opportunity that's in front of me now. That's football. It was time to move on."

Q: Do you get surreal being in that building coaching against the Chargers?

Coach Pagano: "I don't know. Maybe if the game was in San Diego. It's the LA Chargers. Seeing all the guys, going through that whole process because I was there a long time to be able to have the relationships that I had. The opportunity, like I said before, that the Spanos family gave me to be in that organization for 15 years was outstanding. I'm excited. We're going to be ready to go on Sunday."

Q: What's been the biggest change in playing faster?

Coach Pagano: "I think I'm a firm believer in this; there's always guys who think too much. You react, in football you react. If you're thinking too long, you may think wrong. It gives us the ability to play faster. How do you slow the game down for your guys? You give them a plan that they understand, that they can go fast and go attack. We've been building on those things each and every week. I think we can play faster. I think we can even play better. There were a lot of mistakes the other night that we have to clean up that always show up, but at the end of the day we'll keep playing faster and that's what we want to build on."