



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: "Alright, always a great time to kick off the offseason. Get the rookies in. We have our draft picks in here. We have some undrafted college free agents that we signed. Then we have some tryout guys that are here that are obviously, as we all know from last year having Jalen [Richard] make it from the tryout into camp then from camp into a big role on opening day down in New Orleans, anything is possible with these young men. That's what we talk about. Once they get here, it doesn't really matter how they got here, we're going to let these guys compete. We're looking for men that are locked in to doing the right things and guys that can help us win. Regardless of how you got here, you have a shot. So we had a good start, 24 hours with these guys and getting them in the building and going to the physicals and the meetings and getting out for the first practice. A lot of life out there, I know you saw it. We're just happy to be getting started. Questions?"

Q: What did you see in Obi Melifonwu today?

Coach Del Rio: "He's very gifted. He has a good head on his shoulders. He comes in, and he's just trying to soak up our system right now. Athletically, he's very blessed. He has highway speed that you look for. Athleticism, changing direction and then he'll come up and hit you. We like the tape. We think he's a good football player and we're happy to start working with him."

Q: What do you have them do on the first day?

Coach Del Rio: "The first day is, 'Alright, these are some basic calls that we have,' and just give them a chance to come out and compete and run around. Begin to learn our defense. Yeah, it's going to take some time, but it does for everybody."

Q: Is Gareon Conley going to play outside and inside?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, we're going to learn all that we can about him. Gareon is, we think, a talent. I think he can play inside and outside. We'll see what the best combination for us is. Just let him come in and compete. Again, much like Obi, I think for these guys first let's really understand how we do things. How do we lineup and stretch. Let's start there. You go from there. They're good, young men. They're excited about the opportunity to be here and get started."

Q: How much is the team being kept in the loop about Conley's legal situation? Who are you getting that information from?

Coach Del Rio: "I'm not at the forefront of that. I know [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] is monitoring that for sure. Things are going to take place. I'm going to focus on football. We have them this weekend and then they all have to go back. We'll get them back after Mother's Day and begin working with most of them. I think there might be two guys that won't be able to return after Mother's Day because of the agreement with the NFL and NCAA. I'd love to see that changed some day, but we'll work within the rules."

Q: David Sharpe said your son Luke gave him a thumbs up.

Coach Del Rio: "He did? Like an I'm OK or what kind of thumbs up did he get?" *(laughing)*

Q: Luke told you that you should draft him.

Coach Del Rio: "No, it wasn't quite like that." *(laughing)*

Q: Is his eye going to affect him?

Coach Del Rio: "No, it's not anything that I need to talk to him about. He's a good young man. He's from Jacksonville. I've been around him and known his father and him, watching them for a number of years. So, I'm very familiar with him as a young man. We look forward to working with him. He's a big, talented guy. We think he can play either side. Again, much like we're doing with all of these guys, they're going to get a chance to come in



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and compete and earn their way. We're looking forward to getting started with him. He's a big man. He has really good feet. We think his best football is in front of him."

Q: Did you ask Luke's opinion of him?

Coach Del Rio: "Sure. I talk to my son when it comes to different guys around the country. He's been on the field with some really good players at Alabama. He roomed with Derrick Henry and O.J. Howard his first year there. I know they're both studs. Sean Mannion at Oregon State. It's just continued at Florida. Being around those guys, being able to talk about those guys. He has a little insight being a guy that's been around ball as long as he has. He kind of knows what it looks like when guys are dialed in, doing the right thing."

Q: Do you accelerate Marquel Lee more because of the need at his position?

Coach Del Rio: "We're not going to treat any of these young men differently. They're all going to come in here with an opportunity to learn our system. How we do things, how we function. Come in and express themselves to their fullest. Be who they are. Learn our system. Learn what it looks like to be a great teammate. I think once the veterans are with them, I think there's more of that where they get taught what our culture is like and how we do things, how we treat each other. I think that will come in time. The biggest thing is come in and compete. You're going to get what you earn. You're going to earn your way, and nothing is going to be given to any of these young men. That's the message."

Q: Does someone like Jalen Richard jump out right away this weekend?

Coach Del Rio: "It takes time. Yeah, it takes time. Certainly when you have a higher opinion to start with, if you're starting out and you're a first round pick and you see something flash the first day, that's what you expected to see. When you have a tryout guy, you didn't expect to see that. But if you do see it, you're like, 'Hmm, that's pretty good. Maybe we should bring him back.' We bring them back and then it's like, 'That's pretty good. Maybe we should see more of him in camp.' As you go, it kind of grew from there. Nobody saw that coming or we would've drafted him, the kind of year he had for us. We're looking for these young men. They all get that opportunity to come in and just be themselves and compete. The thing I talk to them all about is don't let fear keep you from going for it. Just go for it. If it works out, great. If it doesn't, you gave it your best. There's no regret there. I think it's been proven that we'll keep these young men if they earn their way."

CB Gareon Conley

Q: How did you feel out there for your first day on the field today?

Conley: "It felt good to be out there playing football again and being out there as a Raider, it felt real good."

Q: They had you line up on the outside and inside today. Where did you feel most comfortable?

Conley: "I felt comfortable at both, actually. Most of it is man, so either inside or outside, that's what I played this past season, so it was comfortable at both spots."

Q: Some guys that play outside have difficulty playing inside. What makes you suited to play both positions?

Conley: "It's just a mentality and I feel like on the inside, it's a game of leverage. Outside is more just man-to-man techniques. Inside, you have to be outside leverage or inside leverage depending on your help, so I feel like people who learn that will be able to play both."

Q: On Monday, you went back to Cleveland to meet with police. What can you say about how that went?

Conley: "I feel like it went good. There's not more to say about that. We'll just find out what happens after this."



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Q: Is it difficult to have to wait rather than get a quick resolution? Is that a tough part for you?

Conley: "It's tough to think about it, but I try not to think about it and just worry about what I'm doing out here right now."

Q: Does coming out here and being on the field make it easier?

Conley: "Yeah, it makes it way easier. Football is like a stress reliever for me."

Q: Do you feel like you took another step towards this thing being resolved? Was it positive in that way to have that meeting?

Conley: "Yeah, it's just another way to prove my innocence."

Q: Have you been given a timeline as far as when you might know a resolution or when your name might be cleared?

Conley: "No."

Q: At Ohio State, did you follow one wide receiver around the field all game long or did it depend on the play call?

Conley: "I was dependent on the play call and set. Nickel, I kind of followed speed receivers, but on the outside, I just played left or right."

LB Marquel Lee

Q: What was it like getting out there and working with the defense?

Lee: "It's exciting. I haven't played football in a while, since December. So, putting a helmet on, running around, getting in on defense, it was pretty exciting and pretty fun."

Q: Are you even more focused being that your position is a position of need?

Lee: "I've always been critical of myself playing the game. As a linebacker, you have to know everything. You have to know the ins and outs of the defense. That's what I plan to learn, coming in here this rookie mini-camp and going forward."

Q: Have you studied up more on the Raiders defense since being drafted or is most of that to follow?

Lee: "Most of that to follow. I watched some of their film just going into it, but most of that to follow."

Q: Even with the little bit of film you watched, do you feel like there's opportunities for you?

Lee: "I mean, definitely. I still have a lot to learn coming into the league as a rookie, you know? I just want to come in and learn as much as I can from these guys and then take it from there."

Q: Are you aware that 55 is Head Coach Jack Del Rio's number?

Lee: "I did not know that." *(laughter)*

Q: No pressure, right?

Lee: "Lot of pressure, I guess." *(laughter)*

Q: Are you used to having vocal coaches like Ken Norton, Jr.?

Lee: "Yeah, I'm definitely [used to it]. It was nothing of surprise. I like that. My dad's been vocal throughout my life. He was my linebackers coach in high school, so I'm used to the yelling-type dude. He's a real cool guy and I'm looking to learn a lot from him."



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Q: Is it cool to have guys who have played in the NFL before as a mentor for you as a linebacker?

Lee: "It's definitely a nice resource. [You can] learn a lot from those guys; the ins and outs of the game and learning how to play the game at linebacker correctly."

Q: Have you heard from people via social media after being drafted?

Lee: "Yeah, I've got over like 100 or so DMs (direct messages), comments and stuff. *(laughter)* So, it's been pretty exciting. I'm glad I'm in Raider Nation. I'm trying to help out as best as I can."

Q: Are the direct messages saying you need to do your job because they need a linebacker?

Lee: "Yeah, Yeah. *(laughter)* 'We need a linebacker, congrats. We need a linebacker. Looking for you to plug in this year.' Things like that."

S Obi Melifonwu

Q: Any surprises today? How was it out there?

Melifonwu: "It was great. I'm just excited to be out here running around finally, put a helmet on and practicing with my teammates."

Q: Have they already talked to you about guarding a tight end?

Melifonwu: "Not really. I want over the same installment everybody else went over. I was just out here focused on my job and what I had to do. I was just really trying to have fun."

Q: Have you heard about some of the issues this team has had with tight ends?

Melifonwu: "Not that I know of, I really haven't heard of the issues. All I've heard is that this is a great team, with a great defense and a really great offense and quarterback."

Q: Getting together with Gareon Conley, what has that been like?

Melifonwu: "He's actually my roommate. He's a cool guy. A guy that loves football. We talked a little bit about it yesterday. We're really excited to play together."

Q: Do you focus mainly on the playbook this weekend?

Melifonwu: "I think this next level, as a young guy coming in, the quicker you can learn the playbook and the scheme, the quicker you can get on the field and the faster you can play. Right now I'm just focused on learning the playbook and focused on what I can do to help the team."

Q: Was there a point this week where it kind of hit you like, 'wow, I was really drafted'?

Melifonwu: "I got that question yesterday like when is it going to feel like I'm on an NFL team? I think it was when I stepped onto the green and put my helmet on, then it felt real. I am really doing this. I was just really excited about it."



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T David Sharpe

Q: How was your first day? Any surprises?

Sharpe: "It went pretty well. Getting comfortable with the team, getting used to how they stretch and how they do things. It went pretty well."

Q: Is it a lot different?

Sharpe: "Not really. We got coached up pretty well in Florida. It's fast tempo just like this. A lot of up-tempo practicing. I'm pretty used to it so it wasn't bad."

Q: How hard is it to go from left to right tackle?

Sharpe: "It's not very hard. I played a little bit of both at Florida in practice and things like that so I'm used to it. Just switch up the feet a little bit, different movements. It's not that bad."

Q: This Raiders' offensive line is pretty good and there are three Pro Bowlers on it. Are you excited to get to know guys like Donald Penn?

Sharpe: "Definitely ready to get under Donald Penn and try to learn a lot of things from him and those guys. It's a great room and a great coach and I'm definitely looking forward to getting started and getting to work."

Q: Any of the guys reached out to you?

Sharpe: "I talked to Penn before I came up here. I'm ready to work with him."

Q: What are your impressions of Mike Tice so far?

Sharpe: "Great coach, man. Getting comfortable with him. We're going to have a great relationship with him."

Q: He likes linemen that are nasty. Do you think that fits how you like to play?

Sharpe: "Definitely."

Q: Have you had a chance to talk to Luke Del Rio much?

Sharpe: "A little bit. He sent me the 'I told you so' text because the day of the draft he kind of hinted that his dad had called him about me. So I've talked to him a little bit."

DT Eddie Vanderdoes

Q: It must have been quite a whirlwind recently for you. What has the last week been like?

Vanderdoes: "Yeah, yeah. It definitely sunk in when I got here yesterday afternoon. But, I'm glad to be here. I'm ready to get to work and ready to prove myself. So, I couldn't be happier for the situation that I'm here at Oakland."

Q: How do you feel physically rafter running around out there today?

Vanderdoes: "I feel good, I feel really good. I weighed in at 301 today, so I'm in good shape and where I want to be. Now, it's just learning the playbook, learning the technique and taking it to the next level."

Q: Do you feel like you're coming here with the opportunity to make an impact as a rookie with the position you play?

Vanderdoes: "Yeah, right now I'm just taking it day by day, trying to get better, trying to work on my technique, trying to get used to the playbook and what the coaches ask me to do."

Q: Are the coaches happy with you weighing 301?



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Vanderdoes: "Yeah."

Q: Did they give you a number they want you to be at?

Vanderdoes: "Not yet. We'll probably get in more detail, exactly where they want. Right now, just kind of feeling everything out, just kind of see how we're playing and all that."

Q: What has the reaction been like in Auburn, Calif.?

Vanderdoes: "Tremendous, tremendous. It's been a whirlwind in Auburn. Most of Auburn is Raiders fans and if they're not Raiders fans they just became one last week. I'm happy to make my community proud and it's great that they support me 100 percent. It's nice that I'm local. Couldn't be in a better situation than I am right now."

Q: You look like you've really slimmed down. What's that been like for you?

Vanderdoes: "Not that hard, honestly. It's just discipline, you know? Getting my weight down since the end of November has been the goal I had set for myself and I knew I had to do it, and I did it. I feel great and I plan on staying here, for sure. There's no more slip ups or whatever you guys want to call it. So, I'm not really worried about that."

Q: Was it mostly conditioning and how much of dieting has been involved in that?

Vanderdoes: "Yeah, diet's been huge. It's just a matter of portion control and exactly what you take into your body. So, I learned a lot of that at EXOS. The staff, the strength and conditioning staff here is also from EXOS, I learned that today. So, I'm able to take what I did at EXOS and do it here as well. So, I'm happy."

Q: Did that make it a little more seamless for you?

Vanderdoes: "Yeah, I mean going into some of the stuff we already did today, I'm already used to doing because I did at EXOS. I know what they are going to expect out of me. They have the same stations for protein supplements that EXOS has. I'm able to thrive in this strength and conditioning program and excited to get to work."