



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "Happy to answer any questions I can. I got a lot of good situations covered. Some things obviously, we have to clean up."

Q: Going live is something you did today. What did you see in that period and was that what led to the lighter finish in today's practice?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know about the lighter finish to today's practice. We're going to have some live periods. We had a live blitz pickup period today, 10 minutes of live blitz pickup. That's what it's all about. You can teach people who to block. You can have drills to teach them how to block. But in that period, you can find out how much they really want to block. That's a winning edge in pass protection. As a defensive player, you have to beat a block once in a while. You're not going to be free to the quarterback. So that's a huge period, physical, alive. I want to take a look at some of our young players, live. We did that today. Took the pads off after we had an extensive amount of work. We got to pick up the speed. We have to finish faster than we did. That was frustrating."

Q: Is Martavis Bryant dealing with anything right now?

Coach Gruden: "He's ill."

Q: Jordy Nelson flashed in the 11-on-11 period. What can be said about how much he has left in the tank?

Coach Gruden: "I don't think so. I think there's a lot of guys that are like him at different sports that are able to play at a high level no matter how old they are. I think he's proven that since he's been here. I was really pleased with him today. He's a difference maker for us."

Q: You were pretty high on Erik Harris at the end of mini-camp. What kind of role do you see for him?

Coach Gruden: "Well after we met him in Alameda, he introduced himself quite well. He had an outstanding offseason. I mean he made a lot of plays in the box, deep, covering, special teams. Right now he has a chance to be a full-time starter for the Oakland Raiders. That's what I think of him. Now he hurt his finger. He left practice early today, but he's doing an excellent job. He has some really good communication skills. He's playing really good football for us right now."

Q: Where you're putting Tank Carradine now, do you see that as the best fit for him?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, you know he's healthy for the first time too. Not only has he played multiple positions, but had some injuries coming out of Florida State. Had a tough start to his career. But he's a high draft choice. I got a lot of respect for Trent Baalke. This is a good football player. We like him as a six-technique particularly, head up on the tight end. Very hard nose run defender with some pass rush ability. He's done a nice job for us."

Q: Why did Rodney Hudson get an applauded today during 11-on-11 and what can you say about him?

Coach Gruden: "He's one of our captains. When you're in the pivot and you're playing against [defensive coordinator Paul] Guenther, a lot of things change. Looks like they're bringing a blitz to the left, then they're bring a blitz to the right. They're coming up the middle. He made a couple calls late in the down that were awesome today. It's fun going to work with a battery that we have. Derek Carr and Rodney Hudson are showing some really good communication and understanding of our system and what we want to do."

Q: Is there anything about their relationship on the field that has surprised you?

Coach Gruden: "They're just on the same page. They're very much into football. They love the X's and O's. The strategy and the game planning, the preparation. They put a lot of pride and time into it. When you let Rodney make the calls and the only time Derek really fixes it is when he feels like he has to. They're just great collaboration. Between periods, before practice and it's a pleasure. It's a pleasure being around it."



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Q: Do you think you understand the league's offseason decision about where you place the head during tackling? Is it something you can teach the players yet?

Coach Gruden: "Oh we've been teaching the players at high school level. I've coached high school football, college football, my own sons' football teams. You keep the head out of tackling is the goal. Try to keep your head out of there. Shoulder tackling is being emphasized. They don't want the runner lowering his head either. You try to keep the head really out of football. That's the emphasis. We have a machine over there where our defense is getting a lot of form tackling to try to master that technique, but it's tough sometimes when you're tackling a full-speed man. You don't know which way he's going to go. Is he going to go left? Is he going to go right? Is he going to go through me? It's something I think every coach at every level of football is stressing."

Q: Some players have talked about you showing older film. What's the model in terms of what you're showing these guys?

Coach Gruden: "I'm just trying to make some points. There were some guys that played the game that were pretty good. I think they love it. They love seeing Berry Sanders. I think they love seeing Joe Montana in the two-minute drill. I had a couple of young guys get up there, they didn't know who Jack Tatum was. They didn't know who Art Shell was. Part of that is having a respect for the league that you're in and the guys that came before you. You try to accomplish a lot. You only have them for so long. You try to keep their attention span. Then all of a sudden, man, there's Dan Marino. Man, I didn't know he had that quick of a release. Geez, he was pretty good. A lot of these guys never heard of Mark Duper or Mark Clayton. I think they like it. You can make some points, show some great routes and also teach them a little bit about the people that can before you."

Q: Some of the concepts from back in those days, how much of it is applicable to the type of plays you guys are running today?

Coach Gruden: "You know [Tom] Landry and [Bill] Walsh and Chuck Noll weren't bad coaches. They did some good things. They did some good things from a fundamental drill standpoint, too. Showing guys the drills that Jerry Rice did. Showing them how Roger Craig practiced. Those can be great teaching moments. Look, we're not running a 1964 operation here. But there are some things that happened in 1964 that were pretty damn good. If you don't think so, go ahead and have a nice day."

Q: How are the quarterback helmet cameras good for you and the players?

Coach Gruden: "It's the technology. I'm in the technology. We have Joe Harrington who came to us from the University of Tennessee. I think when Peyton Manning comes through here and talk to Peyton, he'll tell you Harrington was a very important part of Volunteers and part of Peyton Manning. The use of the Joe Pole, the Joe Harrington Pole we call it, from linebacker cam, we have corner cam, we have strong safety cam, we have helmet cam on the quarterback. We're able to see what the quarterback sees. We're able to hear them in the huddle. We're able to hear them at the line of scrimmage and really use it as a resource to teach Connor Cook, teach EJ Manuel, let Derek Carr see for himself how he sounded and what he saw. So there are some great, really cool things that Harrington has brought us in a very short period of time."

Q: I saw Derek Carrier missed practiced that I think is from the Marquel Lee hit yesterday.

Coach Gruden: "Yeah he's just sore."

Q: Is that a teaching moment where you tell Lee to take it easy a little bit?

Coach Gruden: "We're trying to emphasize that. There's going to be some bang-bang plays where it's easier said than done. We're trying to eliminate some of the hits on each other. When in doubt, pull off. That's been our rule, unless we say the tempo is different. Sometimes there's some bang-bang plays that are tough to deal with."



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Q: Jordy Nelson seems to be moving around really well. Can that be calculated with the chips in their shoulder pads?

Coach Gruden: "I guess so. I think so. I think we have that. You get Tom Shaw in his laboratory, he has his own set of technology. We can measure the workload, how much we're working players. We chart the reps and we have computers that tally all of that stuff. I'm more interested in talking about football, honestly, than talking about technology right now."

Q: There were a couple of games last year where Hudson played through a kidney stone. Where you aware of that and what is your opinion on Hudson?

Coach Gruden: "It's funny you say that. I was with Jim Otto the other day. Jim Otto was here for the Alumni [Weekend] and I was talking to him about Rodney. There's a lot of similar qualities in terms of toughness, passion for football and communication and all-out effort. The thing I love about Hudson is when we throw a pass, he runs down to cover, he runs down to see if the receiver needs any help every play. He's the best center that I've coached."

Q: How is the competition going at the gunner spot?

Gruden: "We have a lot of competition. So, that'll be ongoing here as we head into the Lions preparation and preseason games. We got a lot of competition."

Q: What does it mean to have defensive coordinator Paul Guenther around and guys who have played in his system before?

Gruden: "Well, it's big. I think that's a common trend, usually when a new head coach comes in here brings in coaches that he is familiar with and then the coach brings in as many players as he can that are familiar with his system. It's a diverse system, there's a lot of things going on out there and it helps to have Leon [Hall] and Emmanuel [Lamur] and Reggie Nelson, Frostee Rucker, a lot of guys that can help explain things behind the scenes, on the sidelines and help graduate the other guys."

Q: Was there anything that stood out about P.J. Hall's first day in camp?

Gruden: "No, not yet. He obviously was limited. We want to ease him back into things. He did a lot of individual work. We'll try to get him some one-on-one rushes tomorrow and ease him into the nine-on-seven. Remember, he didn't get the four days of the rookie preparation. We're happy to have him back, we think he's an inside pass rusher, he's hard to block, and hopefully we continue to see progress."

Q: Have you and Head Coach Matt Patricia already mapped out what you want to accomplish during your practices?

Gruden: "We've talked a couple times. It's going to be a pretty standard practice. I think the big thing is we're going to work together, making sure that we an etiquette in how we practice. We're going to try to hit some different situations. There will be some really fun, live o-line elements. But, we want to work on our punt protection. We want to see a different opponent that plays different defenses and so do they. We'll collaborate further when they get here, but we've already had pretty good dialogue in terms of the format."

Q: Are you happy with the depth at cornerback?

Gruden: "We're going to have to wait and see. We felt that was a position that we needed to address. Unfortunately, [Gareon] Conley has been unable to stay healthy. We like him when he's out there, but he's missed a lot of time. We like [Rashaan] Melvin, we like [Daryl] Worley, we like a lot of the things we see from Nick Nelson. We got a lot of contenders. But as Guenther said yesterday or two days ago, it's wide open. It's wide open."



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Q: What kind of impact will Johnny Townsend's directional punting have in a division with returners like Tyreek Hill?

Gruden: "I think it's a big factor. I mean, we're not going to promise anything. But, we really don't want to punt the ball down the middle of the field to that guy, or any guy, nor does anybody else in this league. You want to try to pin the guy between the numbers and the sideline, give your punt coverage team an idea of where the heck the ball is. And also, it's a hidden area with Townsend, he's a great holder. He puts the ball down and handles it well, spins the laces and titles it properly. He's a mature guy and we like what he's done."

Q: There's a theory going around about Gareon Conley and a vitamin-D deficiency. Is there anything to that?

Gruden: "Really?"

Q: Rod Woodson mentioned it last year. Is that something you've heard or discussed?

Gruden: "I haven't heard that. I have not heard that. Makes it hard to heal? We'll try to get supplements for him. *(laughter)*"

S Reggie Nelson

Q: Has anything stood out to you about Jordy Nelson thus far?

Nelson: "Jordy Nelson is Jordy Nelson. *(laughter)* Working hard, great runner and hard to guard. He's doing what he's supposed to do."

Q: How do you feel like the safety group is coming together?

Nelson: "Our group is coming along great. [Marcus Gilchrist] Gilly's a great add-on. He can play anywhere on the field. That's always a plus when you have a guy like that on your defense. He can play nickel, corner and safety. I've learned a lot from Gilly. Smart, intelligent dude. He's doing what he's supposed to do out there."

Q: How is defensive coordinator Paul Guenther as a teacher and are you seeing other guys picking up the system?

Nelson: "I mean, I think our whole coaching staff is doing a great job of putting our system out and making sure the guys in that room get it and learn it the way they've been teaching. I just think all together, the system has been great for me. We haven't had any problems at all. We have a great coaching staff out here. I love it."

Q: Are you answering a lot of questions regarding the defensive system because of your familiarity with it?

Nelson: "I get a lot of questions but like I said, [defensive backs] Coach [Derrick Ansley] 'D.A.' and [senior defensive assistant] Coach O'Neil do a great job of getting it out to us and breaking it down and teaching it how Paul wanted. It really takes a lot off me when they do that. I think it's great. Like I said, the coaching is great, it's outstanding."

Q: This is your 12th training camp...

Nelson: "Really? Is it? Dang. That's a good number. *(laughter)*"

Q: Making sure that you get the most out of yourself every year, how, over the course of time have you learned to take care of your body year after year?

Nelson: "I mean, I think I do a great job taking care of my body, not doing too much. I think the coaches do a great job of getting my reps in, make sure I get my work in. So far, it's been great. I feel good and I don't feel like 12 [years in the NFL], but I'll take it."

Q: Has it flown by?

Nelson: "Yeah. *(laughter)*"



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C Rodney Hudson

Q: Do you see Derek Carr being challenged more mentally than he was last year?

Hudson: "Derek's doing a good job. It is a lot of information. We've been installing every day. He's doing a good job. He's a sharp guy. He's going to work hard, that's one thing we do know. He's doing a great job."

Q: Derek seems like he's embracing how much Gruden is throwing at him.

Hudson: "He loves the game. He loves coming to work. He embraces it. He wants to know more. Like I said, one thing about him is that he's going to study hard and leave no stone unturned."

Q: Does Gruden throw a lot at centers?

Hudson: "Yeah, but I don't really focus on me so much. It's everybody. It's a true team game. Everybody is learning what the man next to him is doing so we can help each other out."

Q: Gruden seemed pretty happy with you at the end of the drill there. What happened to elicit that reaction?

Hudson: "I don't know. We are just playing ball."

Q: Gruden says you have similar qualities to Jim Otto. Has he ever said that to you? Have you ever spoken to Jim Otto?

Hudson: "No he hasn't. I'm just trying to work hard and get better. I've spoken with Jim a good bit. Jim was always playing hard and did things the right way. We spoke briefly. It's an honor to be able to meet him and talk to him."

Q: Did you speak to him during alumni weekend last week?

Hudson: "I actually didn't see him but I've seen Jim over my three years here a bunch. We've talked together."

Q: Are these practices more mentally taxing because Paul Guenther's defense is throwing a lot at you?

Hudson: "He does a lot. I think for me, I have to really lock in and anticipate and even after I anticipate, I need to trust what I see, too. Like you said, this defensive scheme is known to be multiple, with a lot of things. Mentally I have to make sure I'm locked in."

Q: Do you look forward to the Lions coming next week?

Hudson: "I look forward to every day coming out here. Practice is a blessing. I try to take one or two things I'm trying to work on to get better. I am having fun out here with my teammates and I look forward to being out here every day."

Q: Do you genuinely love and look forward to practice every day?

Hudson: "Right now, it's early. It becomes a grind but for me the love of the game rises to the top. When times get hard, I love being out here and being with my teammates. I think that always rises to the top, no matter how tired I am, no matter anything."

Q: How do you feel about going full pads for half of practice and then taking them off?

Hudson: "It's different. On o-line and d-line, we're always going a little faster than normal anyways. It's a little different. We just try to focus on the now and do the best we can."

Q: You've watched a lot of film over your career. Have you seen as many dated films as you've seen this year?

Hudson: "I've seen a good bit of that this year."

Q: What's that like?

Hudson: "Football plays are football plays. They've been around for years. You put a little extra on it to make it your own, but that's how I look at it: plays are plays. Everyone is running similar plays with their own spice on it."



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Q: Have you gained an appreciation for history?

Hudson: "Yeah, for sure. He put up some games that I was watching when I was a kid. I have an appreciation for it."

Q: Did you do anything physically this offseason to affect your weight?

Hudson: "I just try to do my normal... I always try to number one, stay healthy with stretching so I can try to get stronger. I think that's everybody's goal, to get stronger. I want to be the best I can as the year goes on. We always want to get better as the season goes on. I have my little routine and I try to work at it and get better every day."

Q: What has the message been to you from the strength staff about your weight?

Hudson: "I've been here for awhile, so I know where I need to be. Obviously the coaches coach you up, but as I've learned to play, I know where my body fits. I really don't have a problem there."

Q: Is there a difference between the way you'll block this year and last year?

Hudson: "It's downhill. It's physical and we are just learning and trying to get better at it. We're not where we need to be but we're just working at it."

Q: What have you seen from Maurice Hurst?

Hudson: "He's got a lot of ability. Smart rusher. He's asking questions. We talk back and forth, o-line to d-line. He's always attentive and asks questions like 'why did you do this' or 'why did you do that' and like I said, he's got a lot of God-given ability. He's quick. He uses his hands well to be so young."

Q: How comfortable do you feel with this new scheme?

Hudson: "I'm learning every day. I think I'm getting a grasp of it, but along with knowing the offense, you have to learn the defense, too. I think that's the part that's going to take time, knowing what they like to do and being able to anticipate them."

Q: When you run down field on a pass play, what goes through your mind?

Hudson: "Anything can happen. Trying to get that extra block downfield for a touchdown. Anytime anyone is around our back, we want to be there. The ball could pop out, anything can happen. I just try to get down field to make something happen."

Q: Have you always done that?

Hudson: "Probably college. High school not so much, I didn't know so much about it I was just out there playing. As I got to college and started to learn the game and all the scenarios, that's kind of where it started."