



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

### Head Coach Jon Gruden

**Opening Statement:** "Good afternoon. I'd like to begin by saying that I'm really proud of our team yesterday. Really, really proud of our team. Thankful for the support of the fans. We are nicked up and we will have some injuries we can talk about shortly. I'd like to wish Reggie McKenzie the best. He's a good friend of mine. He will always be a Raider and we are going to have to rebuild this football team without him, but I will assure the Raider fans that we will do everything we can to find the right replacement. He left some big shoes to fill and I just want to wish him the best. I will answer any questions that I can."

**Q: Where did you see the disconnect and why it wasn't able to work out?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I'm not going to sit up here today and talk about any disconnect. We were connected. We are very good friends and very connected. I'll leave it at that."

**Q: Why now? Why the timing of that move?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, we won a game last night and I went home. Obviously, there was a meeting last night and changes have been made. I respect everything that this organization is about. I can't exactly answer why the change was made last night, but changes were made, and we got to continue to fight and continue to build this team back and that's what we are going to do."

**Q: Was this a Mark Davis decision?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We all work for the same man."

**Q: What would you like to see in a replacement for Reggie [McKenzie]? What kind of qualities?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Similar qualities. A guy that works hard, loves football, that loves this organization, that will scratch and claw and fight with the rest of us. I think it all starts there. Obviously, an expertise in personnel and great leadership skills. A number of things go into this job. It's a tough, tough position in this league."

**Q: The press release did not mention specifically that it could be a GM. In your mind is it unnecessary to call the new person a general manager?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Like I said a minute ago, I just got done coaching a game yesterday. I know Mark [Davis] is going to cumulate a list of names and candidates and I'm sure we will discuss those people later this week, but right now I don't have any idea."

**Q: Will you be involved in the interview process?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Don't know."

**Q: Would you like [Director of Football Research] Dave Razzano to be a candidate for this job?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I'm not going to get into the general manager thing anymore. I know what I just said. I don't want to take away from what happened on the grass yesterday. I can answer those types of questions better. Right now, all we can do is speculate."

**Q: You did bring in Dave Razzano, what's his role for you?**

**Coach Gruden:** "He's a personnel assistant. We got a lot of assistants up there that watch tape, mark tape, both college and pro. I'm not revealing any candidates because I don't know of any."

**Q: Moving forward you have a whole bunch of draft picks. How much input do you want to have, as opposed to a general manager, in the final say?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think any coach wants input. Let's be honest. I've had input here. I had input on the draft picks that we made when I was here with Al Davis. I had some input on the draft this year and I think it's a



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collaboration around the league. I think the general manager, the scouts, the coaching staff, and sometimes the owner all work together in every selection. I would like to be involved for obvious reasons.”

**Q: What was your interaction with Reggie like today?**

**Coach Gruden:** “I have not seen Reggie yet. Haven’t seen him yet.”

**Q: You guys have talked about not getting enough out of the draft classes from a couple years before you got here. What do you think was missing in those draft classes?**

**Coach Gruden:** “I don’t think you can write the book yet. A lot of those guys are still developing and still a part of the NFL. Some aren’t with us and some are. I’m not going to sit up here and reiterate anything that went wrong. I do know this, we have to get better in a lot of areas and that’s what we are going to strive to do.”

**Q: Did you agree with this decision on McKenzie?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Look, I’m not surprised. When you’re 3-10, I’m not surprised with anything that happens in this league. I’ve been fired. I’ve been traded. It’s a horrible part of this business and I’m very sensitive to it.”

**Q: Did you get a sense from Mark Davis if there’s going to be an overhaul of the personnel department outside of McKenzie?**

**Coach Gruden:** “No, this just happened last night. I’m sure we’ll talk later in the week or next week or whenever the time is right.”

**Q: At what point during your time back did you get a sense that this was a possibility?**

**Coach Gruden:** “I really didn’t have a sense of it. I’ve just been in a dark shaft room working hard trying to get ready for the next game. This is all somewhat surprising. There’s been a lot of speculation and a lot of rumors coming out of here early in the season. You don’t know what’s real, what’s smoke, what’s fire. You really don’t. But we have made a change and we have to respond and that we will.”

**Q: In terms of personnel changes, who quarterbacks these next few weeks?**

**Coach Gruden:** “I think [Director of College Scouting] Shaun Herock will be a big part of this. He’s a very talented personnel man. He has a lot of Raider history. We’re going to lean on him. He’s our college scouting director. We have good scouts. We have a lot of picks in this draft. So his leadership will be important. I expect him to be a big part of the organization moving forward, honestly.”

**Q: Is Joey Clinkscales still employed here?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Yes he is. Yes, he is.”

**Q: Do you have any concerns that there’s an environment of uncertainty among the scouting department?**

**Coach Gruden:** “Well I hope not. I’m going to get a chance to go upstairs and see them after this press conference. Just continue to show my confidence in them and try to rally the troops. It’s a tough, like I said, business. Changes do happen. There’s been a lot of change in this organization in the last 15 years. Coaches have come and gone. General managers have come and gone. We have to respond. We have to fix the Oakland Raiders. That’s something that we’re dead set on doing. I thought yesterday was a big step in the right direction.”

**Q: Is there any truth to the rumors that there are two different personnel staffs working here throughout the course of the season?**

**Coach Gruden:** “No. I don’t know where these reports come from. I have a pretty good idea, honestly. I have a couple of guys that work for the coaches. We have different needs than the scouts. We’re not



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scouting players, we're getting ready for an opponent. So yes, we do have people working for the coaches, but it doesn't intersect with scouting at all. It's a completely different agenda."

**Q: There seemed to be belief that Jon Feliciano might be done for the season with a calf injury?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, it's a real concern. That's a big concern for us right now. We have three games left to play. Gabe Jackson hurt his elbow. We don't know the severity of that. There's a good chance Feliciano might be gone for the season. Kelechi Osemele did not play yesterday, so we have big issues to solve. Who's our backup center? Who's playing left guard? Who's playing right guard? That's a big concern and one of the reasons I've been up late at night."

**Q: Did Jalen Richard get injured yesterday?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Hurt his ribs. I think he's going to be OK, but he's sore. Got a lot of guys hurt yesterday."

**Q: You mentioned the injuries in the interior line. What did u see from Jon Feliciano and Gabe Jackson?**

**Gruden:** "It was unbelievable. It was one of the great things that I've seen. You hate to see a guy go out there and put himself at risk, but Feliciano and Gabe Jackson insisted on going out there and finishing that drive. It was like out of a movie for me. I was really proud of those guys for finishing. It's something we talk about a lot. They put an exclamation mark on finishing yesterday and that was awesome."

**Q: What were your thoughts on Damontre' Moore?**

**Gruden:** "That was an impressive debut for him. He's stayed in shape, credit to him. He came in and took advantage of his reps. Kony Ealy is another guy that hasn't played much football. We had some injuries, Shilique Calhoun was out, [Maurice] Hurst was out yesterday so those two guys were needed. In a lot of ways, they delivered a lot of good snaps for us."

**Q: What's the biggest difference in Gareon Conley this year?**

**Gruden:** "He's a lot more confident now. He missed a lot of training camp, he was hurt. Missed most of last season. I think his preparation has been better. I think he's been able to practice. Our secondary coach has helped him play a role in this. The guy is talented and he's gaining confidence each week. Each week he sees himself covering the best guys in football and he's having some success. He's doing the little things right and he's getting better every week."

**Q: Do you think he and Karl Joseph not playing at times was part of the process?**

**Gruden:** "I think it was part of the process. Conley, coming out of training camp, had missed some time. We were worried about him even being available early in the season. Karl was still solving the defense, finding his way a little bit playing free safety and strong safety. Both of those guys have gotten better and better. They're even showcasing some leadership now, taking some ownership of the football team. It's great to see. I'm excited about that."

**Q: Are you having increasing confidence that maybe you have some long-term solutions in the secondary?**

**Gruden:** "Yeah, I really am. Conley, his play has really improved steadily. [Daryl] Worley is still battling through that shoulder injury, but we still think he's got a big upside, so to answer your question, yes."

**Q: What have you seen from Seth Roberts?**

**Gruden:** "[Brandon] LaFell came and LaFell was a good player. I didn't realize that LaFell had over 400 catches. This guy was a heck of a football player. So you're right, Seth was in the background a little bit. Credit to him for not hanging his head and sulking. He is a pro. We had him a couple times yesterday, we chose to throw the ball elsewhere but he ran some great routes, made some big plays when needed and really did a good job of blocking on the perimeter. He's been a go-to guy for us here with the injuries that we've had at wide receiver. I'm really happy with him."



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**Q: When will Jared Cook re-signing be on the priority list for the offseason?**

**Gruden:** "Hopefully it's on a high priority, whoever the general manager is, we'll show him some tape of Jared Cook. This guy has been dazzling as a receiver. We've been able to put him in so many different positions, in the slot, at wide receiver, his conditioning, his stamina, his competitiveness, his running after the catch. I'm really excited about the season he's had. Hopefully we get him back."

**Q: What did you make of some of the tight-window throws that Carr made?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think it goes back to why we drafted the two tackles. We really feel if we can protect Carr, he can make all the throws. I mean, he can make passes that very few guys on the planet can make, and he can make them confidentially. He doesn't even think about it. When he's off six inches, he's mad. He can really throw the ball, he's feeling it right now. That's why there's a lot of concern at guard; who's going to play guard for us? If we protect him, the man is really, really talented."

**Q: Derek Carrier wasn't the main guy on the last touchdown, right?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, we were going to Jordy Nelson on a double move, but they doubled Nelson and they singled Carrier. When you get the single on that play, you have to win. And Carrier ran a great route. He made two big catches for us yesterday, almost blocked a punt. Our tight ends coach Frank Smith has done a great job with all of our tight ends. We used four of them yesterday."

**Q: How important is it for the team to finish the year strong?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's big, it's huge. It's really huge. A lot of the rookie players are getting confidence. The young guys are getting confidence and the will to win, the commitment to excellence, finishing games, thriving in adversity, mental toughness, all the things I believe a championship organization and a team is made of were on display yesterday if you really study the tape. I'm really excited about that. Hopefully we can finish strong and continue to lay bricks, lay the foundation for something that might be really special here in the next few years."

**Q: Is the conversation you and Carr had earlier in the year regarding just wanting him to execute and not caring about stats something you remember?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Little bit. You know, he tries to do everything you ask him to do and he wants to do it by the book - read this play like that, go through this footwork - he really wants to do it by the book. I probably, I felt maybe I inhibited him. Free yourself, free yourself from me, free your mind, trust your instincts and go play. Don't overthink these plays, don't overthink these situations. I just didn't want to paralyze him with too many thoughts. I just wanted him to relax, go play and trust his instincts and his abilities and trust his preparation and that's what he's done."

**Q: Is that something you have learned over time - not to inhibit?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, I bother people as you know. *(laughter)* I try not to, I just want to win. I want to compete, I want to prepare, I want to overprepare. I want a contingency plan for if the plan doesn't work. So, I have tendencies sometimes to maybe drive a guy crazy, yeah."