



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing

Q: How do you carry last week's run performance into this week's game?

Coach Downing: "Last week was a step in the right direction for us in the run game and the production there. We're excited about the way that's trending. Just continue to look for ways to grow and highlight our guys skill sets, whether it be run or pass game and take another step forward."

Q: What kind of challenges does the Chargers defensive line present with Joey Bosa and Melvin Ingram lined up next to each other?

Coach Downing: "Yeah, they're both very talented. So whether they're next to each other or both on the edge, they're a force to be reckoned with. We have to account for them anywhere they are."

Q: Are you surprised with how much the air quality has affected the weekly routine?

Coach Downing: "You know, we've done our best to stay as in routine as we can. I think [Head] Coach [Jack Del Rio] has done an awesome job of adjusting where he's needed to, but we feel like we're putting together a good week of prep."

Q: Do you have any concerns about that with your offense?

Coach Downing: "I do not. No. I'm just focused on the offense and getting these guys ready to go execute a game plan."

Q: Are the breakdowns you're seeing the same repeated break downs? Is it changing every week?

Coach Downing: "I think big picture-wise there's been a lot of different factors into our lack of production. We're just excited that we have a group of guys that are hard-working and have the resolve to bounce back. We haven't seen any disbelief in what we're doing. We just need to do things a little bit better. Execute a little bit better. Call plays a little bit better. Everybody is looking to do their part just a little bit better. We're excited to see what it looks like."

Q: For it to go on for three weeks, whatever they be, how concerned are you that you are here where you are right now?

Coach Downing: "I wouldn't call it concerned. I'd call it a continued attention to detail. We're not concerned, obviously we'd like to have better results over the last three weeks, but it doesn't change our belief or our resolve in what we're doing."

Q: What's the value of having someone like Jon Feliciano be able to come off the bench and step in at right guard?

Coach Downing: "Yeah, Jon did a great job. We're very fortunate to have him. That's the type of roster that [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] and Jack have put together. It enables to us to have guys that if something happens and someone stubs a toe, we're able to keep moving and not feel like we have a big drop off."

Q: What did you see from him specifically?

Coach Downing: "Jon brings a tenacity and effort that I think a lot of teams would like to have. Seeing him out there and playing as hard as he did and being able to grasp the game plan and prepare as a backup center and a guard and be so well round, it kind of showed his versatility. Certainly, his tenacity."

Q: Have you ever seen Amari Cooper's normal calm personality waver throughout the past few weeks?

Coach Downing: "Not at all, no. That's one of the best things that we got going on this team, is that we're all in this together. It's all a family environment. We truly have each other's back. So as Amari had ebbs and flows throughout his career and certainly not satisfied with his production at this point, it's not showing in his attitude or approach where we're all fighting to get this thing back on track. He's going to be a big part of that."



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Q: What is encouraging when you watch the film on Cooper?

Coach Downing: "That he is playing with confidence and the he's playing with speed. He's threatening defensive backs with his speed and with his skill set. That lends itself to getting open like he was at times last week. We just have to work to continue to get through our progressions and get him the ball when he's open."

Q: Does there have to be more of an effort to get him the ball because of who he is on this team?

Coach Downing: "I think you can walk a fine line there. If you spend too much time trying to force the ball to someone as the number one read, you can really hurt yourself offensively. 'Coop' is a big part of what we want to do. He's going to be a big part of our production going forward. We're excited to see what that looks like come Sunday."

Q: How much does John Pagano help as you're game planning against this personnel?

Coach Downing: "He's a heck of a coach and a heck of a football mind; certainly knows those guys. He was in San Diego a long, long time. He's a point of reference, but right now the offense is focus on doing our job well and executing our assignments. Not really spending a ton of time trying to uncover little gems. We're focused on doing our job."

Q: Has Derek Carr shown you all you need to see in terms of being ready to go?

Coach Downing: "Yeah, what he's done at practice, I've liked. Those are decisions that are above my pay grade, but I've been pleased."

Defensive Coordinator Ken Norton, Jr.

Q: How does the air quality seem out there today?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Not good. We've seen a lot fog out there. It doesn't look very good at all. I think we've adjusted our practices accordingly."

Q: Do you think it's taking a toll on the players?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Not yet. We haven't been out there in it very often. The leadership here has done a great job of getting us on, getting us off the field in a timely manner. So it hasn't affected us, hopefully, in any negative way at this point."

Q: What did you see on the film from last week on Khalil Mack?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "We didn't get to the quarterback. I think every time you go into the game, you have a plan to get to him. They also have a plan to spot Khalil from getting to there. It's like their plan versus our plan. At the same time, it's a team effort. Everybody on the line, everybody in the secondary, in the linebacker position, everybody has to work together in order for a play to be successful. So, it's not just one guy not getting there. It's everybody working together to make the plan successful in order for us to win the play."

Q: What sort of resource has John Pagano been this week?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "'Pags' has always been a fantastic resource. Again, we've played them for a few years now and know them very well. The fact that he's been there for so long. He has a little more insight to what they think or what they might see when they see us play. Different ways they might want to attack us and things like that. So that certainly helps us out in a lot of ways to see how we want to go forward."

Q: Is there any concern about how thin you guys are at middle linebacker?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "No question. It's always a concern when someone goes down. You don't want to see anybody get injured. At the same time, that's where your practice, your meeting time, the next man up mentality. We expect these guys to be pros, to step in and play at a high level."



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Q: Is it harder because some of those guys who have to step up are not the same build or size?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "We'll see. Practice is practice. Games are games. I think that study is one thing, but I don't think anybody knows exactly what is going to happen. You know a lot of different players with different sizes. The bigger guys aren't the better guys. The smaller guys aren't the better guys. It's the guys who are prepared, who practice, who know what they're doing and go out and make plays. It just comes down to how do you play on Sunday, and that has a lot to do with how you practice and prepare during the week."

Q: What is your evaluation of Sean Smith through the first five weeks?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Well, I'll tell you, we win as a team, we lose as a team. I think that it's a matter of making plays. I think that all of us aren't happy with the way things have been going. We have to continue to improve. There are some things when you look at our group that we've improved on and there's somethings we still have to improve. I don't think it's fair to point one person out. This is the ultimate team game. Everybody is connected. The pass rush, the guys in the middle, everybody is working together. Everybody is connected. We're up and we're celebrating as winners. When we're unhappy and we lose, we lose as a team as well. It's not singular. It's team."

Q: Are you happy with what he's done?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "My answer is the same."

Q: What sets a guy like Philip Rivers apart?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "He's very bright. I think he understands the game. I think he's been around a long time and he's seen a lot. He understands how to bring his information, his experience to the field. He's aware of what's going on, situations, down and distance, what's going on with your defense, what you're talking about. He listens. It's important to be a good listener. When you listen well and you watch and you're able to put your wisdom of experience on the field and have it carry over, there's no question about why he's been able to play at a high level for a very long time."

Q: What do you see from Tyrell Williams and Travis Benjamin in terms of being able stretch the field?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Just really good football players. Know how to make plays. Good catches. Good runs after catches. The entire group, really high-skilled group. They've gotten better, faster, smarter. Running routes really good. Really impressed with what we see on film."

Q: What have you seen from Hunter Henry?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Hunter has been very impressive. Catches the ball well. Blocks well. He's a total package."