



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Coach Gruden Opening Statement: "That was a real exciting day today. A lot of Raiders with their first NFL practice. It's always really neat to see these guys come out and start a new career, but good work today. We've got a long way to go, obviously."

Q: Are you guys signing Derrick Johnson?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah."

Q: What do you think he brings?

Coach Gruden: "I've known Derrick awhile. I think he brings us status at a critical position. He's got a great history in this league. He's been productive under a lot of different coaches, different schemes. He understands the AFC West. He certainly understands this rivalry. I'm really excited to add him to our team with Tahir Whitehead and some of our young linebackers. I think his presence will be very valuable."

Q: Is it fair to assume the pursuit to bring back NaVorro Bowman is over?

Coach Gruden: "I wouldn't assume anything. As you've seen, we've made a lot of moves and that means we're probably going to make more moves in the coming days. We just want to get better. There's a strong sense of urgency to get better. We've added some young defensive tackles, some young linebackers. We like the direction we're headed, but getting a guy like Derrick Johnson, I think, could be huge for us."

Q: We haven't talked to you since you drafted Maurice Hurst. What are your thoughts on getting him in the fifth round and are there any concerns from your perspective on his health?

Coach Gruden: "I'm not going to answer anymore health questions on Hurst. I realize there are a lot of ghost stories out there about unnamed sources that have their opinion on why we shouldn't have drafted him. This man played at Michigan. I know the head coach there. They've looked after him carefully. We're happy to have him in any round, and I'm excited for him and I'm really excited for him because he's an Oakland Raider and he's a great kid. I hope you just judge him on the field. He's been cleared medically and I'll just leave it at that. He's a fine football player, a very good young man that's really excited to be with the Raiders."

Q: You've talked about wanting to get more interior pass rush. What does he bring?

Coach Gruden: "Well he brings that. That's what he's known for. It doesn't mean he can do it in the NFL. P.J. Hall has a lot of production getting to the quarterback in college. He's got some measurables – quickness and speed and strength that are important at that position as well. To get those two guys, we felt they were the top two inside rushers in this draft."

Q: You guys also got Arden Key in the draft. How much of a priority was the pass rush?

Coach Gruden: "It was a priority, yeah. It was a major priority. There's another guy, Arden Key, that we had ranked very, very high as a pure pass rusher in this draft. It's a commodity that's hard to find. I've heard a lot of critics have talked about the risk involved. There is risk involved with every pick. There's risk involved with taking a five flat defensive end. But I like this kid a lot. He checked out with us, and he can bend the edge, I know that."

Q: What's it like having a Hall of Famer like Willie Brown to help mentor these draft picks?

Coach Gruden: "I think it's great. I wish we had more of the Hall of Famers here. When I was here the last time, Fred Biletnikoff and Willie Brown were on my staff and we leaned on those guys a lot. I'm hoping we can get Fred around more. Willie's presence is huge. We're going to try to get [Ted] Hendricks and a lot of the ex-Raider greats to come around. We had an outing a couple of weeks ago. We got to see Lester Hayes and Jim Plunkett, [Daryle] Lamonic, some of my favorite Raiders. It is very important, I think, for our young players."



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Q: Is there a risk with working Kolton Miller on both sides or do you want to have him focus on one side as a rookie?

Coach Gruden: "I think right now, we're going to start him off on the left side, get him comfortable over there. That's where he has recently played. We like him at left tackle. We think he's a prototype left tackle. He can bend, he's got the length that you're looking for and he's a sharp kid. He's still young though. And then Brandon Parker at the beginning, we'll start on the right side. That doesn't mean that's where they're going to end up though."

Q: Gareon Conley and Nick Nelson are both injured right now. Do you expect both of them to be ready for camp?

Coach Gruden: "Yep. Conley is doing well. He's very close. He participated in the veteran minicamp in the walk-throughs and he's running with our defensive backs out here on the field. He's extremely close to get the green light. We're just being smart with him. Nelson is probably three weeks, four weeks away. He'll be ready for training camp as well. Good, young corner. He has versatility to play outside and in the slot, and he's been well-coached. I really think a lot of the Wisconsin defense, the program they run and the versatility that they ask their guys to have."

Q: Was Eddy Pineiro out here today?

Coach Gruden: "No, he's not out here today. He'll be out here next week, but he's got a good leg. He's interesting. We thought about drafting him, honestly, and we're happy to have him as a free agent."

Q: What do you see from Nick Sharga?

Coach Gruden: "We're going to try to add another fullback. Sharga is a guy right now that gets the early call. He was a fullback. Matt Rhule is a friend of mine who was the coach at Temple who called me and recommended him. I usually listen to Matt Rhule. I have a lot of respect for him. We also have a young fullback here out of Michigan, and it'll be competitive, but we'd like to take another fullback to training camp so Keith Smith can get some Gatorade, get some rest."

Q: What do you like about Ryan Switzer and are you excited about the competition at receiver?

Coach Gruden: "I like Switzer. I liked Switzer a lot at North Carolina. He's a fourth-round draft choice. He was Mitch Trubisky's go-to guy. My brother doesn't like Switzer. He took an 83-yard punt home against him last year. That's what he can do. We want a lot of competition for the punt returner job. Dwayne Harris is very good at it. Jalen Richard has done it before. Switzer is outstanding and can also return kickoffs. I think he's got some nasty quickness in the slot. We've got a competitive situation here at wide receiver too, so I like that."

Q: Do you plan on doing any joint practices this training camp?

Coach Gruden: "We are trying to work that out. I don't have anything official yet to announce, but I have been in contact with a coach in the NFL and we're going to try to work something out. We'll have some announcement, hopefully, in the coming weeks."

Q: What have been your impressions over the last week working with Martavis Bryant?

Coach Gruden: "He's different. Let me tell you, he brings a different dynamic. He's 6-foot-4 and he plays it. He's 4.4, fast and he plays it. We just have to get him wired into the offense and Jordy Nelson's experience and versatility has really been impressive that it's allowed us to do some things in just a few days that is pretty cool. We like our receivers and we think Martavis will make you think twice about doing some things."

Q: What about the punter situation?

Coach Gruden: "We drafted Johnny Townsend from Florida. We are happy he was there. He was our guy, I think, from the beginning. He's an excellent directional punter. He has a strong leg. When you talk about punters, no one really looks into what kind of holders they are. The holder is as important to the operation of a field goal than almost the kick itself. This man can put the ball down, he can field a bad snap. He's an excellent punter. He can handle a bad snap and he's a great kid. He's an outstanding athlete, so we're happy to have him."



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Q: He also knows the undrafted kicker that you're bringing in.

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, and our incumbent kicker has had a heck of a start too. We want competition, just like every coach wants in training camp. I think we have at least accomplished that."

Q: What are you able to tell at this early stage at rookie minicamp?

Coach Gruden: "With the top five picks, this was a minicamp very unlike 1998. They weren't involved today in the team part of practice. They were on a different program. This was more of an orientation for them with strength coach, with the position coach, learning the nuances of our offense. They got to meet the great [Senior Director of Media Relations] Will Kiss today. They had an opportunity to meet with the trainers individually. There is a lot they have to learn and I don't really want to just spend time teaching them a couple of plays. I think they have to learn how to be Oakland Raiders and how to be part of our future. That was a big part of today and it'll continue in tonight and into tomorrow."

Q: Why no practice for the top picks?

Coach Gruden: "I just said we had a different agenda for them. They're going to spend a lot of time with their position coaches and they're going to have some individual opportunities to work with [strength and conditioning coordinator] Tom Shaw and his staff to see where they are physically, what they need to work on, and also talk with our training staff. When you meet with Will Kiss, you have to understand this media. It's tough. You have to learn which one of you guys is dangerous, you know what I mean? *(laughter)* It's tough. We had a lot of fun with them. We want to get to know them. I want these guys to leave excited about having some relationships with people in the organization and we'll get to the football as soon as they get back."

DT P.J. Hall

Q: Jon Gruden said you and Maurice Hurst were the two best interior pass rushers in the draft. What do you think about that?

Hall: "It's pretty exciting. I'm ready to get to work. We knew we were going to be challenged with our pass rush out here, so just trying to give them what they need and help the team, doing whatever we can do. Pass rush, stopping the run, just ready to get to work."

Q: Did you get a sense with Maurice during individual drills that you guys could be the interior?

Hall: "I definitely do get a feel of how he moves, how he rushes. He's really explosive just like I would say I was too, so I feel like we'll be a good combo in the years to come."

Q: We saw the video of you squatting 700 pounds. What are you up to now?

Hall: "I haven't tried it out in a while. My coaches said I don't need to do too much after that so I'm not really sure."

Q: The fact that interior pass rush is something that needs to be addressed here, is that something you were aware of?

Hall: "Coming on my visit, I knew that they needed help on the interior pass rush, trying to help out the edge rushers that they had. Having interior pass rush that can help collapse the pocket will actually help them out too, on the edge. We're just ready to get to work here and do what's best for the team."

Q: What did Bruce Irvin say to you guys today?

Hall: "He said it will help him out a lot, he and all the edge rushers. Being able for them to have that pressure down the middle will help them play better and actually help us also. There's two great guys rushing on the outside."



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Q: What have you been able to learn about the Raiders history over the last few days?

Hall: "We learned a lot of history. A lot of great guys that have come through this program, especially D-linemen. We're just trying to make sure we represent it well, represent the name that we're putting on our helmet, on our shirts because there's just so much history here."

Q: Seems like it's important to Gruden.

Hall: "Yes. You can tell he's very passionate when he talks about it. He loves the Raiders. He's been here before and that's probably why he came back here. He loves the history and wants to make more in the years to come."

Q: How daunting is that jump from small school to the NFL?

Hall: "It's just something I have to handle. I'm ready for it. I don't fear anything. I'm ready for what comes here and ready to attack everything."

Q: Is there another part of your game that doesn't get quite enough attention?

Hall: "I've contributed on special teams also. I feel like I do a very good job of stopping the run."

Q: You have a lot of blocked kicks.

Hall: "Really just giving effort on every single play, doesn't matter if it's special teams, offense or defense. I just want to give it all on every play."

Q: Did you get doubled-teamed?

Hall: "I did get double-teamed, but like I said, it's just about effort and wanting it more than the guy in front of you."

DT Maurice Hurst

Q: How did it feel to get out there and put on the Silver and Black?

Hurst: "I mean it's exciting. Spending five years at Michigan, I've never really put on another helmet, but getting to be a part of a team with so much tradition sort of like the Wolverines, it's great. Just to think about the players that played before you and get to represent them, represent the greats that have made this place what it is."

Q: Was today what you expected it to be?

Hurst: "I mean, Coach Gruden was definitely fired up and so were all of the coaches. It was just a great atmosphere to be a part of just to be out there and compete."

Q: Coach Gruden said that he thought you and P.J. Hall were the two best interior pass rushers in the draft class. Are you excited to work with a guy in your same position group to try and contribute to this defense?

Hurst: "Yeah, it's definitely exciting to get to come in with P.J. and Arden [Key] and have such a great leadership group. I got to meet with Bruce Irvin today for the first time and he was just up there trying to help us out, give us some advice. Just telling us that you have to show up and work – that's exactly what we want to do and we want to be a crucial part of this team and help them win as many games as possible."

Q: Coach was talking about having an interior pass rush as something that he was looking to improve on this team. Is it exciting for you to be a part of that as the guys that he wants?

Hurst: "Yeah, it's exciting. That's exactly why he brought me and P.J. – to try and improve the interior rush and get some more production from that point. I'm just excited to be a part of that."



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Q: You've went from Jim Harbaugh now to Coach Gruden. What are the similarities and what are the differences?

Hurst: "I would definitely say the similarities is just a passion for football. These guys eat, breathe and sleep ball. That's what they do and that's definitely their similarity. They're both energetic about it and Coach Harbaugh uses an enthusiasm unknown to mankind and that's the same thing that applies to Coach Gruden."

Q: Are you excited about working with guys like Khalil Mack and Bruce Irvin?

Hurst: "Those are two of the best guys in the NFL. To get to play with them and help them be more productive – that's our goal – to try and help those guys out and just be a team player and try to make the most of this D-line."

Q: With the questions leading up to the draft about health stuff, is it nice to just be back on the field thinking about football and away from those questions?

Hurst: "Yeah, you know, just trying to get all of that stuff behind me, try to get people to stop talking about it. *(laughter)* You know, some sort of issue or all of those kinds of things – just try to move past that and focus on playing football and just having fun out there."

Q: Coach Gruden said that he's not going to answer any more questions about your health at all. Is that something you're fine with? Do you hope that everybody adheres to that?

Hurst: "Yeah, I hope everyone does."

Q: It seems like we're getting close to everybody talking about just football again in relation to you. Before we move towards that chapter, is there anything you would want to say to close this chapter related to the heart? There are a lot of people in the NFL who are concerned about you. Obviously, you're a heck of a player – that you were available in the fifth round speaks to that concern. Is there anything you want to say to just shut it down for good about your decision to play?

Hurst: "I just have no concern whatsoever. So, I'd say that's probably what I'd say."

DE Arden Key

Q: How does it feel to be out here?

Key: "Oh, it feels great. It feels great to be back on the field, back around my teammates and things of that sort. Just being around football, it feels good to be back."

Q: You said when you first met with the coaches here you put a plan in place. What were the first steps of that plan and have you started it already?

Key: "As far as what?"

Q: You just said you guys put a plan in place.

Key: "Just coming in and getting around vets. Me and Bruce [Irvin] talked already. We exchanged numbers and things. We started with that."

Q: Any reason behind No. 99?

Key: "No. But you know you have some of the greats in Warren Sapp, Jason Taylor, Aldon Smith. You have a lot of greats that wore that number, so I said, 'Why not wear it?'"

Q: What are your impression on P.J. Hall and Maurice Hurst?

Key: "Great guys. Great guys. Good on the film, they have great film. One went to Michigan. You have P.J., he went to a small school, but you can see the talent that he has and the potential that he has."



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Q: Jon Gruden said he wants to get into pass rushing more this year, is that something you guys are going to take on your shoulders?

Key: "Oh yeah, oh yeah. Definitely. That's the mind and goal we have. That's the combination of the goal we have, to be out there together and stay together."

Q: Are there any pass rushers that you like watching or grew up watching?

Key: "Oh yeah, Khalil Mack. Bruce Irvin. Jason Taylor."

Q: They're old?

Key: "Nah, they're not old. Bruce has been in the league for eight years now. Jason Taylor. Derrick Thomas. You have Robert Quinn. Aaron Donald. I can keep going. We can be here all day. I can keep going."

Q: Do you watch other guys films to pick up new moves?

Key: "Oh yeah, I always watch to add more moves to my arsenal to see what I can use. A lot of those moves, like Aaron Donald uses, I won't use because he's in the three technique and he uses more power and things of that sort. Some of the moves that he uses, I try to use in practice."

Q: As an edge rusher, what does it do for you when you have inside guys bringing pressure?

Key: "We all work together. We have edge rushers that can get to the quarterback and the quarterback steps up. Inside guys get the sack. We have inside guys that get to the quarterback and make the quarterback roll out, the edge rushers get the sack. So we all work together."

Q: How much have you been able to familiarize yourself with the Raiders organization and its history?

Key: "Oh it's been good. They gave us booklets on the history of the organization and things of that sort. So it's on you to study. Jon Gruden, he wants us to study it and get to know the history behind the Raiders."

Q: Is it hard to switch gears and think of Jon Gruden as a coach instead of the guy on Monday Night Football?

Key: "Oh no."

Q: What do you know about Jon Gruden as a coach then?

Key: "He won a Super Bowl with Tampa. ... He coached Warren Sapp, Simeon Rice, the guys that I looked up as pass rushers. I know a little bit about Jon Gruden."

Q: What are your early impressions of the strength and conditioning staff and what are your goals?

Key: "Oh, I've been knowing Tom Shaw. We had a lot of LSU guys go out to his facility and train with him. They brought back knowledge on what Tom Shaw had taught them. So I kind of knew him but didn't have a chance to meet him. It's just been like I've been knowing him. The goal is just to get stronger. Make sure my shoulders and things are right and just get stronger."

Q: How is your shoulder?

Key: "It's good now, it's just strengthening."

Q: What do you hope to pick up from Bruce Irvin?

Key: "How to be a pro."

Q: Is there anything specific to that?

Key: "Just the all-around game. how to be a pro. Just a lot of pass rush skills. There's still some things that I don't know as far as pass rushing that he knows. He's an eight-year vet, so he knows a lot that I don't know. I'm just a rookie."



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Q: Do you know about the path he took to get where he is now?

Key: "I know a couple of stories. I mean we're from the same area, so I know a little bit about him."

Q: Do you feel like you have something to prove?

Key: "No, just stay the straight path. Talent was not the reason why any of this happened. Off-the-field issues and we set a plan. I trust them and they trust me. We're just going to keep on moving with the plan."

Q: Where are you now in your game and what has this offseason done for you game?

Key: "Oh, I'm back. I'm back. I'm back to my 2016 season. I got down, lost the weight. Been getting in shape and things of that sort. Now I kind of put the pads on to show it."

Q: What was your weight in 2016 and where was it last year?

Key: "245 last year. Between 245-250. Right now, I'm 246."

T Kolton Miller

Q: How has today been for you?

Miller: "It's been really exciting. From how practice is structured to how [offensive line] Coach [Tom] Cable has us working. There's not a whole lot of sitting around, which means we're really productive. A lot faster pace than what I'm used to, but it's really good."

Q: What was your participation level today?

Miller: "It was mostly individual. We got all our work there, which I think is great. We hit that, and we weren't involved in team. We definitely got a lot of work in."

Q: Are you happy about starting on the left side?

Miller: "Yeah, I'm happy to compete wherever they put me. Of course, having the last games at left [tackle], I feel a little bit more comfortable, but wherever they plug me in at, I'm ready to compete."

Q: What are your impressions of Jon Gruden and Tom Cable?

Miller: "It's good. I think they're a really good matchup together. They're both really fiery and intense, and I like that. Practices are really productive."

Q: How do you think you fit in with this offensive line?

Miller: "I just look to learn as much as I can from these guys. Like I said, be a sponge. I met K.O. [Kelechi Osemele] briefly, and he seems like an awesome guy. I'm ready to learn a lot from them."

T Brandon Parker

Q: What's it like getting out here?

Parker: "It's really nice. Getting to be out here, I've heard of how good the weather was, and I can actually attest to the weather being great. Just getting out here with my teammates, my coaches, just really getting in the NFL system is a dream."

Q: Now that you're getting coached by Tom Cable, what are your first impressions of the offensive line?

Parker: "He knows his stuff. He knows his stuff. I trust him whole heartedly. I can't wait for him to really get more of his hands on me. It's the first day out here, but hopefully I have a lot longer of a time to get better with him."



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Q: Jon Gruden said you're starting on the right side, but that could change. Do you prefer to stick to one side over the other?

Parker: "I'm willing to play wherever they put me, it's as simple as that. As you know, I played left my whole career, but it's not an issue to go to right [tackle] at all."

Q: What was the focus for you today and what did you get out of the first day?

Parker: "Just getting used to his pace was definitely number one. He said it was going to be a fast pace and it was. Just getting our feet wet and going to see the film and get better from it."

Q: Have you been able to meet any of the current offensive linemen?

Parker: "Yeah, K.O. and Breno [Giacomini]. That's about it actually, just those two."

Q: What are your first impression of Kolton Miller?

Parker: "He's a lot like myself, athletic, humble. Very easy going. Loves to work. Loves football."

Q: How's the transition from left tackle to right tackle going for you? Has it been seamless?

Parker: "It's a little seamless and then obviously, I need to work there just because I've had a lot more reps at left. It's still just as fine as the left."

Q: What first impressions do you want to make?

Parker: "Just that I'm here to work. I'm here to make the team better and get us some wins. Any way I can help the team, I'm willing to do it."