



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

### Head Coach Jon Gruden

**Q: What do you know about Nick Mullens?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, I'll get a hold of Brett Favre and learn a little bit more. Jalen Richard has helped us a little bit. He was a good player in the preseason – athletic guy. You never underestimate anybody in this league. He did some really good things as a quarterback in the preseason. We have a lot of respect for whoever is under center."

**Q: Do you prepare more for the system and then just see whoever is behind center?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, I think so. You have to prepare for this running game and everything that comes off of it. If you can't stop the running game against [Kyle] Shanahan, you got no chance, because they have as good of move-the-pocket system and play-action system as there is in the league. We're going to prepare for the structure of the system. We expect them to run the ball and play-action pass."

**Q: What was the message to the team when they see a well-respected guy on the team decide to retire?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's eye-opening. I don't think it's anything that has never happened before. I don't think it was real dramatic, but we did mention it and we wish him the very best."

**Q: Does not having Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie on a short week with two cornerbacks injured put you guys in a bind?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No, I mean we're going to miss him, obviously. He's a guy that had learned our system. Nick Nelson is back now, his role will probably increase and we'll see what happens."

**Q: Do you see Nick Nelson as mostly a guy who, will cover the slot or outside as well?**

**Coach Gruden:** "He can play outside. I think his long-term upside is as a nickel corner. He dressed up today – Halloween costume – he was Leon Hall today/ *(laughter)* So, he's had a great role model to learn from. I think down the road he's going to be a great nickel corner but I think he's got the range to play left and right corner."

**Q: What is the value of a player like Jon Feliciano, who can step in and give you that caliber of performance?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's important because he can do it at three positions. He can play center. He can play right guard or left guard. Unfortunately, we had an injury to our left guard and still not quite 100 percent sure about Kelechi's [Osemele] status for this game, but it's a valuable guy obviously. A guy that can not only come in and execute the assignments, but somebody that can come in and play good. He played good for us against the Colts."

**Q: Having depth at the interior line, does that allow you to be more patient with Kelechi's return?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We are trying to get the big man back as soon as possible. I think he's a difference maker in the NFL. We will see what happens. We will get him out there early in pregame and see if he is ready to go."

**Q: Is Eddie Vanderdoes going to play on Thursday Night?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I don't think so. I think that's a long shot right now. We just activated him. It's been a long layoff for him. He had no offseason program, no padded practices. He's had really one padded practice since he's come back, so we have had some time to evaluate him and get his conditioning right. Perhaps next week, after this game, would be a good time to start thinking more seriously."

**Q: How do you get more pressure on the quarterback?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Obviously we got to stop the run. It all starts with getting at-bats. If you get two at-bats a game and you get intentionally walked, you don't get to swing the bat. We haven't been able to get



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

enough looks. You got to win on first down. You got to win and get them in second-and-ten, third-and-eight. When they are second-and-four, third-and-two and they aren't in enough third downs it's tough. It's really tough. I think it starts with stopping the run and getting them in a predictable situation. Guys are going to have to win, obviously, in one-on-one's. Sometimes a scheme can help too, but you'd like to be able to unload your scheme a little bit if you have more of an opportunity. I think there is a lot that goes into it."

### **Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther**

**Opening statement:** "Alright guys, short week. My time is all yours."

**Q: Were you surprised with Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie's decision to retire? What did he tell you?**

**Coach Guenther:** "I just think he's played a long time in the league. He didn't feel like he had it in him to finish. You have to ask him exactly why. I didn't get into that. If a guy doesn't want to continue to play, I can't beg him to do that. He had a great career. He's a good guy. He was a good teammate, and I'm sorry he's gone."

**Q: Do you think the fluctuation on defensive snaps is affecting the players mentally?**

**Coach Guenther:** "No, it's the NFL. You have to be ready to play whether you're playing or not. Whether you're a backup player or starting player, you have to be ready to go. Like I said, I don't think it had anything to do with the one game. If I did, I'd tell you. I just think with Gareon [Conley] and [Daryl] Worley out there, you can only put two. Leon [Hall] has been manning the nickel most of the time. That's the direction we went in."

**Q: When you review the pass presser aspect of Sunday's game, what did you see?**

**Coach Guenther:** "Quite honestly, we didn't do a good enough job of stopping the run. That kind of affects the down and distance of things where you can make calls where the guys tee off. We have to do a better job of stopping the run, getting them to third-and-longer situations where we can rush the passer."

**Q: Is it encouraging that you'll be getting Eddie Vanderdoes and Justin Ellis back soon?**

**Coach Guenther:** "Yeah, we could use those guys. They're two good players. We'll see how they go here in the next couple of days. They'll be good to get back on the team."

**Q: What did you see from Nick Nelson?**

**Coach Guenther:** "I thought he did a good job. Again, he's another guy that's progressing in this thing. He was dinged a little bit. He was inactive. Then we got him some snaps. It's hard to get all these guys snaps and get them in games, moving in and out. We're just trying to do the best we can as a staff to make sure we don't come in here on Monday morning and say, 'Hey, you only got six snaps. Is that really a good enough eval of the guy to see what he can do?' We're doing the best job we can with what we got. We're going to continue to progress and move guys in and out."

**Q: How do you think Leon Hall has done mentoring Nick Nelson? Does it ever get awkward because Nelson might take Hall's position one day?**

**Coach Guenther:** "Leon is A+ guy. I've been around this guy a long time. He's a lot like [Marcus] Gilchrist. I said when he gets done playing, I'd like to hire him as a coach. He's done a good job. Nick has listened to him. He's kind of trailed him. First thing I told Nick when he got here is, 'You need to follow that guy. See how he prepares. See how he takes care of his body. See how he plays in there.' Leon understands that. He understands where he is in his career. He's a tremendous guy, a tremendous asset for the team."



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

**Q: How did you see Reggie Nelson respond to not playing on Sunday?**

**Coach Guenther:** "Reggie is another A+ guy. I had to sit him and Emmanuel [Lamur] last week because we had some things on the O-Line. We had to get some extra guys up and they took it great. They're team guys. That's the kind of guys you want around here. Guys that will do it and understand why we're doing it. You don't mope around on the sideline. They're in there encouraging guys, helping them in-between series. That's the kind of guys we want around here."

**Q: What was it like not having those guys on the field?**

**Coach Guenther:** "It's hard. It's hard to tell them really because they're two guys that I wanted in here in the initial stages of this thing. It's hard to say, but they understood it. They know I'm a straight shooter with them and I'll always be upfront with why, this is the direction we're going. They took it great."

**Q: Do you view that as a one time thing or could this be weekly?**

**Coach Guenther:** "No, I just think we had to take some guys, a little bit of more numbers away from the defense because of the injuries upfront on the offensive line. Every week the inactive thing is a fluctuating thing. This week, if we have certain guys down, we may have to dress another guy on defense. I think it's a week-by-week thing."

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**Q: What have you learned about QB Nick Mullens?**

**Guenther:** "I took a look at his preseason. He's obviously been there for two years so he understands the system. He's out of Southern Miss. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter who is playing quarterback. We've got to play better. What we showed on Sunday was unacceptable. I told you a few weeks back, I'm not used to giving up 42 points. This is new to me. The players have to understand that we have to play better team defense, we have to stop the run better. It's not a missed assignment issue. It's more of a physical issue. We lost leverage in coverage several times. We're supposed to be outside leverage of a guy. The guy beats you on an outside route and that stuff can't happen. I showed them those plays and I said until we fix this stuff, we're going to continue to get it. To me, who we're playing against is the least of my concern."

**Q: What happened on that play?**

**Guenther:** "He got it miscommunicated with the call. The ball got snapped and he's supposed to be in that gap. We had a little pressure into it. It should be a dead play. That's what's been going on with some of the things and the moving pieces of some of these guys. It's a young player. We're going to have to deal with some of these young guys and I have to be more patient with the young guys, as far as understanding this is their seventh NFL game. We've got three rookies playing on the D-Line. It's a challenge, but hopefully as the games progress and the time goes on, they'll learn. I've been through this before as a young team in Cincinnati. I started three rookies there. By the end of the year, they were like veteran players. Hopefully it's the same here."

**Q: What do you see from the 49ers TE George Kittle?**

**Guenther:** "Very good player, good receiver. He can run. He can block. They are two good tight ends. They use them effectively along with the fullback, who I'm familiar with from my days in Baltimore. He's a good player. They move him around to several spots on the field: tight end, out wide, in the backfield. They create challenges that way with matchups."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: How do you improve as a pass rush?**

**Guenther:** "Just keep working with them. It's not like Bruce Smith and Reggie White are going to walk off the bus and dress up as Raiders. You just keep working with them. The guys we have, I said nobody is showing up here and the trade deadline is gone so you don't have to worry about that. We've got what we got on this team right now. We have to improve and improve quickly."

**Q: Do you have to adjust your play-calling?**

**Guenther:** "We've done some different things here than I've done in Cincinnati, based on the guys we have. At the end of the day, when they're in a 3-receiver set, there's only so many different alignments you can line up in and coverages you can play. It's pretty stagnant across the board in the league. Certainly, we're trying to find guys that fit and if we can't find them, we adjust the plan accordingly with the guys that fit it."