



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Q: Is it good to be back at it?

Coach Del Rio: "It's great to be back out in the grass with our players, yeah. Players and coaches going at it."

Q: What are your initial thoughts on some of the rookies?

Coach Del Rio: "I would say that they've done a good job of coming in here and working hard, kind of finding their way. I think there are some great examples of how we do things from the veterans that now that we're integrating them, they can learn some of those lessons from some of the veteran players. Want to make sure they learn what the Raider way looks like so they can come out here and we can have good, healthy competition, but take care of each other and understand that we're preparing for a season. Just do smart things like stay away from the quarterback, keep people up off the ground, things like that. I'm sure you heard me harping on that some today. So that's part of what we do. I think everybody we've added is... We've been able to add some guys whether they're veteran free agents or the draft class or the undrafted, I think we've added good people. It's really a pretty good locker room down there and I think the guys respect and appreciate each other."

Q: How fun is it for you to finally get everyone out here?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I mean it's just one step closer to real football. It's tough, I have to tell you, it's tough. The last couple of weeks, the Phase Two part, where you get to have meetings and you get to come out and coach, but you can't ever line up anybody across from you. It's pretty hard to play defense without being able to do that. The offense can run plays on air, but even they can't adjust to what the defense is causing them to adjust to. It's kind of an awkward time. But I love this part where we actually can practice real football and spend time developing our guys and our players and our plays and all the things we want to be good at."

Q: Is it good to see Menelik Watson back out there?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, of course. Guys that are able to return... In his case, he was a guy that was really having a great [training] camp and it was kind of a freaky injury. Great to get him back. I know he's excited to be back."

Q: With some many other Bay Area teams playing well and in the playoffs, is it time for the Raiders to step up to that level?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, what's wrong with that? *(laughing)* I'm good with that. I think that's a great idea."

Q: Where do you see your team fitting in during this incredible time in Bay Area sports?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, first of all, you have to take your hat off to the Warriors. What a tremendous season they have had to this point. Obviously, regular season record, reigning NBA Champs, two-time MVP with [Stephen] Curry. It's awesome. We feel the excitement and we're part of it because we're proud of them. The Sharks are doing well. Heck, I was at a game last week and they're playing really, really well right now. So to feel that excitement, to be a part of it, I think it's awesome. We're one of the pro teams here. We certainly take pride in representing this area. The fans that are here are awesome. So we want to do our part and play great football. We talked about when I got here last year in the opening press conference, talked about return to greatness, and that was the goal. Obviously, what they're doing right now is great and we want to be a part of that. I'm excited about it. I think it's awesome. I think it's awesome when it's going good in an area like it is here in this area and we want to be a part of that."

Q: Does that inspire you?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I think it's inspiring for sure. Like I said, I take great pride in having been from this area. Even when it wasn't good, Warriors had some lean years, whatever. Different sports teams have lean years, if you're a true fan, you're still there. But there's nothing like it when you get it going and we're all enjoying it. That's what's happening right now with the Warriors and the Sharks, and we'd love to join that."



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Q: Do you feel more confidence on the field now than you did a year ago?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah. There's no question. We're gaining in confidence because of the work we're putting in. I think that's where it starts. There are a lot of things being said. This time of year, talk is cheap. I don't really spend a whole lot of time worrying about what is said, but I do pay a lot of attention to what is being done and the work that's being put in, commitment level. To me, that's where my focus is. That's where I want our focus to be, on how we're driving each other, on how we're committed to being here and doing the things we can do. Focusing on all of that is really where it's at. That allows you to have a chance in the fall to do your thing."

Q: Do you find you have to reign in the 'we are the paper champions' talk?

Coach Del Rio: "I think that's a nice catchphrase for somebody to write about, but that's not real. For us, we're about the work that we're putting in. It's real work. There is real sweat being put in. There is real effort and energy being put forth. A real commitment. That's where our focus is, not on words."

Q: Does it feel different for you in Year 2 to get out here with a year down with your staff?

Coach Del Rio: "Absolutely. Obviously, in Year 2 there is a core of leaders that understand how we do things and what we're looking for. There is a staff that's returning intact that understands how we want to do things. I think with that, that puts us significantly ahead of where we were last year at this time."

Q: Why did you make the switch for Keith McGill from corner to safety?

Coach Del Rio: "I think the biggest thing is to give him the opportunity to do what he may be best at. He played both in college. We just really felt like it was going to be hard for him at corner. We feel he has his best opportunity to contribute on special teams and as a safety. We like his length. We like a lot of things about him. It's just a matter of how far we can bring him, in terms of developing him, but that's largely up to him. We're going to give him every opportunity, knowing he can do some things at corner but we feel like his long-term future would be best served with him at safety."

Q: What is he best at?

Coach Del Rio: "I would say he's got great range. His ability to track the ball. There are some things that are not going to be quite as natural but we'll work hard at that going forward. I think he's comfortable back there. In his mind, he likes this opportunity. He can speak for himself, but in talking with him he was kind of excited about getting this opportunity."

Q: Sean Smith looks massive out there with the other corners, maybe a head taller than everybody else. Physically, do you want him to lose weight?

Coach Del Rio: "Sean is doing a great job, working hard. He's a big man. We knew that when we signed him. We like his size, we like his competitiveness. He's going to be a terrific addition to our football team."

Q: Leadership-wise, what have you seen from Sean so far?

Coach Del Rio: "Good things, because the first thing you have to do is be here doing the right things yourself. He's been here doing all of the right things like spending time with the younger players at his position, coming in here and being a great teammate. It's really been very positive. The guys that we've added like Sean, like Reggie [Nelson], like K.O. [Kelechi Osemele], these guys have come in and they've been really embraced right away by their teammates. That's a great sign for us."

Q: I know you don't want to talk about injuries, but is it safe to say that Mario Edwards Jr. is being brought along slowly?

Coach Del Rio: "I wouldn't say that. I don't say much about injuries, you know how that goes. I would just say that the guys that aren't working right now are doing everything they can to get back, to be back, to be a part of this. They're all chomping at the bit. They all want to go. There's a process that has to take place for each of them to return. They're all different. Because I don't spend time going through any one, I'm not going to make Mario an



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exception. I would just say that they're all here, they're all working hard and eager to return. I think we feel good about being able to have all those guys join us at some point in, hopefully, not too far away."

Q: Do you guys err on the side of caution at this point?

Coach Del Rio: "I wouldn't say we err on anything. We're doing what we need to do and being smart and just taking care of business. With each player, what they can do, we're doing. What they can't, they're not. It's really pretty simple, cut and dry. Everybody is here. Everybody is eager. Everybody wants to go. The guys that can, will go. That guys that can't will keep working with [head strength and conditioning coach] Joe [Gomes] and the trainers until they're ready to be let loose with us."

Q: Is there as much internal competition this year as there was last year? It seems like the roster might be a little bit more solidified.

Coach Del Rio: "I don't know that I would look at it that way. I think, first of all, when you have 90 men that are on the team at this point, if we don't think they have a chance to be here to be part of the 53, they're not going to be here long. We try to make it as competitive as possible. Certainly, you can pencil in Khalil Mack, but a couple more guys are going to be here. There are a number of positions that are in play, whether it be starting roles or backup roles, special teams role. How can you help us on Sunday win games? How can we get you activated? The 53, who is going to be inactive? Those thoughts are part of what we're doing now. We're going to try to build the flexibility and the role on special teams. It's all a part of it. I would say there is still a lot to be settled. We expect it to be a real competitive camp. We'll sort through a lot of work and sacrifice. We'll sort out who the best 53 are."

Q: Is Reggie Nelson one of the guys that wants to go but can't quite go yet?

Coach Del Rio: "I would say they all want to go. Anybody that you didn't see out there in a full uniform participating would be in that category of wants to go but we're doing what we need to do with them."

LB Bruce Irvin

Q: What was it like to get out there and have something close to practice?

Irvin: "It felt like football. The past four weeks, we've been doing drills and stuff, more in the conditioning phase, but today it actually felt like football."

Q: Is the energy what you're used to or is it still ramping up into that?

Irvin: "It's what I'm used to. Being in Seattle, we caught a couple of violations. It's everything I expected. It was a great first day and I'm continuing to get better each and every day."

Q: What has it been like coming in and building chemistry with this group?

Irvin: "You could definitely tell it's a tight group. We're on the way up. When I got in here, I tried to get with Khalil [Mack]. He is one of the top guys on defense, so I try to get with him as much as I can and pick his brain. He does the same for me. The good thing about it is it's a young group. You have a lot of guys who are willing to listen to the older guys, so that's the greatest thing about coming to a situation like this."

Q: Do you come in to be one of the leaders? What's the process like to see who is running the show as far as leadership goes?

Irvin: "They didn't bring me here to be a follower. I'm a very outspoken guy. You guys will learn that about me. I'm coming to be a leader. I'm not stepping on any toes, but if I have something to say, I am going to say it."

Q: Khalil Mack can be somewhat of a quieter guy sometimes. Is that a nice balance with you two?

Irvin: "I definitely think so. In that regard and on the field, really. On the field, he is more power and I'm more of a speed guy. I think we're a great complement to each other. I really expect us to do a lot of great things this year."



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Q: Can you give some insight into Karl Joseph, with both of you guys being from West Virginia?

Irvin: "That's my guy. I know what type of player he is. I know the dedication he puts in. He's small, but he plays big. He plays bigger than what he is. He's a dog. He came from my school, so that's another reason why. I wouldn't ask them to bring somebody in who wasn't going to be able to help us. I fully expect him to be ready whenever he is ready, and I fully expect him to come in and compete and hopefully get a starting job."

Q: Karl Joseph mentioned that you have been helping him get accustomed to the NFL. How has that been going? Did you know him before he was drafted?

Irvin: "I always go back to my school. He came in, actually, a year after I left. I would go back and I would talk to him. I saw him as a freshman. I saw what type of player he wanted to be and I saw that he wanted to fulfill his dream of being an NFL player. When I would go back, I would talk to him. You could just see the hunger in his eyes. The guy is a dog. Like I said, he's small, but he plays bigger than what he is. I can't wait to see him get out there."

Q: How much hunger do you see in the guys in the locker room right now?

Irvin: "A lot. Coming in, you wouldn't think we were a 7-9 team last year. Talent is cool, but when you have a group of guys that can work and want to get better, it's scary. Being in Seattle, I know the formula. I know what it is to be on a number one defense. I know the grind of a 16-game season. I know when you get in the playoffs, it's way harder. So, I'll tell you this, when you get a bunch of guys believing in one thing, putting each other before they put themselves, it's scary. You can see it in Seattle. The past three, four years, a bunch of guys playing for each other, a bunch of 'us,' not a bunch of 'me' guys."

Q: How much a part of that is Ken Norton, Jr.? Do you see any differences now in him?

Irvin: "He's still the same Kenny. He's going to talk smack. He's going to yell at you. He's the realest, man. That's the biggest thing about him. He's not going to tell you what you want to hear, he's going to tell you what it is. That's all you can ask for in a coach. Like I said, that guy saved my career. Bringing me here and putting me in a position to be a leader and to help my career take off, I couldn't thank him anymore. Ken Norton is a great guy. I look at him as a father figure, not only as a coach. He's done a great job and he's going to have us ready each and every week. Believe that."

Q: Has anything jumped out at you about the personality of this group?

Irvin: "About the same. If I was coming into a situation where it was 4-12 or something last year, it would be different. I have to say, it's a bunch of guys who are hungry. They are ready to take the next step. We know what we have to do. We've seen the blueprint to win a Super Bowl. It's running the ball and playing great defense. I think we are ready to take that next step and really capture this AFC West."

Q: What do you think you add to the defense?

Irvin: "We look good on paper. It's nothing until we go out here and prove and win these games. I feel like I am a versatile player and I can do a lot of different stuff. But, I would prefer to go forward more than going backwards [like], obviously, in Seattle these last three years. So, that's the plan and hopefully Khalil can draw double and triple teams and let me just run free and get those sacks. Like I said, we are going to keep working each and every day and keep getting better. We are going to be ready when the season gets here."

RB Latavius Murray

Q: Does it feel different this year? More confidence amongst the guys now more than a year ago?

Murray: "I think yeah. It would be hard to say no. Going into my fourth season, coming off of last year where I was a full-time starter, I'm definitely more confident. I still have a lot to prove and a lot that I want to improve on, as far as my game. Looking forward to it."



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Q: What's the biggest difference between now and this time last year?

Murray: "I think now it's a matter of really learning the playbook inside and out, knowing it like the back of my hand so I can play a lot faster. Any time you're out there thinking, you play slow or you're not confident. So, me knowing it now, going into my second year, I think I can do a lot more. I feel a lot more confident."

Q: What did the Pro Bowl experience do for you?

Murray: "I want to make sure I get there next year on my own terms and on no one else's. It was a great experience. I had a lot of fun. I was definitely stoked that I got the chance to go. Again, I want to make it there on my own terms and what I do on the field."

Q: There's been a lot of talk about this offensive line being one of the best in the entire league. What's it going to be like to be working with that group?

Murray: "It's going to be exciting. There is going to be a lot of work that we have to put in. We're just getting started and the work starts now. Hopefully, the hard work that we put in right now will pay off come fall time."

Q: That offensive line could be the biggest thing in the NFL this year. How big does it seem standing behind them?

Murray: "Those are some big boys. Sometimes I kind of take it away because I am a big guy myself. I try to put myself in other guys' shoes and that's a big O-line, a big group of guys in front of me. I'm definitely excited to have them."

Q: What are your impressions of DeAndré Washington so far?

Murray: "He's good. Quick guy, great speed, great vision. I think he looks real good. Excited to get to work with him, learn from him and hopefully he'll learn from me."

Q: Coach made no secret this offseason that they were looking for a back to be complementary to you. What does it mean that they put such focus on to bring in a guy like that for you?

Murray: "I knew that was going to be their decision going into the draft. For me, it doesn't change anything. I have to do what I have to do when I'm in the game. Coming in here and getting better every day. I just have to do my job. I'm sure he's out there competing just like I am."

Q: There is so much buzz around the Raiders this offseason. Coach Del Rio just finished saying that talk is cheap. Amongst each other, do you guys talk about how special this year can be?

Murray: "We're definitely excited. We know the group of guys that we've got in the room and the moves we made in the offseason, we know all that. Just like coach said, we know we have to put the work in. We know it doesn't really matter who we have in the room unless we come out here and get better every day as a team and prove it on the field."

CB Sean Smith

Q: What are your impressions of getting out there and working with your teammates?

Smith: "It was fun, you know. First time putting a helmet on. I know I signed a long time ago, but I didn't really feel it until today when you actually put the equipment on and going out there running with the guys. So, it was fun."

Q: Where do you see your role from a leadership standpoint?

Smith: "Just trying to come in and make guys better. We have a very, very young team back there, especially in the secondary. I guess my job is to come in here and make them better mentally because they have all the talent and all the tools to make plays. Just have to get them up to par with me from a football IQ standpoint."



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Q: What have you learned about this group?

Smith: "The one thing about this group, this is one of the tightest groups that I have ever been around. We're all friends. We all hang out outside of here. I actually knew a couple of guys coming in. There is no kind of relationship issues or anything like that, trying to bond with the guys. They're all outgoing, laid back. They're all, just pretty much, ready to learn from me and get this thing going."

Q: In your experience, does it take a while to get everyone together?

Smith: "The thing about that, you always have to start from ground zero. I've played on a couple of secondaries now that were pretty good and the key thing that it was when we can back from OTAs and the offseason and all of that is last year is last year. We just have to set the foundation now in OTAs, in the film room, trying to get better. With transactions and things coming and going, there's always a few pieces missing. Chemistry always has to start over, get guys back on the same page."

Q: What are your impressions of David Amerson?

Smith: "He's one of the most athletic people I've ever met. D.A. can make all the cuts, all the breaks. I'm definitely looking forward to working with him. Again, another young guy who's been in the league for a few years. Like I said, it's all mental, just trying to get guys to see the game like I see it, that way I can slow it down for them. A lot of them go out there and play instead of reacting."

Q: Is there any advice you'd give to DJ Hayden in terms of keeping his head up?

Smith: "Look, I tell all the guys, regardless of who you are, myself included, the past is the past. The thing about football is you can always reinvent yourself. I had a chance to meet with him just for a brief second. There wasn't too much to talk about. Just come out here with a whole new mind frame, a whole new mindset. Trying to repaint your image. Like I said, the past is the past, but you come out here and work, compete and try to get better. As long as you put it on tape, you'll always have a job in this league. So, he has nothing to worry about."

Q: There's been a lot of buzz around the Raiders this offseason, what's the excitement level amongst the guys in the locker room?

Smith: "We're all really excited, already, regardless of what the media [says] or what the buzz is around the Oakland Raiders organization. We're just excited. We have plenty of potential inside this building, plenty of great players, great leaders. We have all the tools, everything we need to be successful. We're just looking forward to going out there on the field and putting it on tape."