



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: "OK, we recap this one. We're not springing ahead just yet. We have a bye week that we'll use this time right here to rest up and heal up. We have a few guys that are banged up. We'll be able to take a look at a couple of other guys that hopefully will become available. Then when we get back together, we'll practice Wednesday and Thursday, and then take the weekend and get back next week ready to roll, getting ready for the next opponent. Really good energy last night, outstanding. I talked about that. The fans were terrific and the team played well. It was a good, hard-fought division victory and a good game. We'll recap it now, and then we'll move on, so questions?"

Q: Was that the kind of complete game you were looking for in terms of all three phases working together?

Coach Del Rio: "I think it was closest. I think all three phases certainly contributed in the game. I think they had really good moments, all three. We see a lot of things that can be better. That's what we're going to keep working at. I don't know if you ever reach that perfect performance you're striving for anyway, but there are things that we need to clean up that we need to be better at. There were some things that we did really well. I think there were phases, in all three phases. were contributors in the effort last night for sure."

Q: How did you feel like you guys executed with the run when they expected a run play and knew you were going to run it?

Coach Del Rio: "Pretty solid. Pretty solid. Overall, really a good effort. I don't like giving the ball back at all. We got a key first down to kind of melt away, it went for 4:30, just under five minutes, and then we give it back and it goes 2:20, but I don't want to give it back. There's room for improvement there. As good as it was, when you rush for over 200 yards and you limit them to one sack, so you think, 'Yeah, that's a heck of a night.' But I'm going to tell you that I don't expect to go back out there on defense. We should be able to take that ball and not give it back. That's what we're striving for. You want to strive for being able to do that. In each phase I can point out a couple of things that we're going to work at, we're going to point out, we're going to correct and illustrate exactly why it needs to be better."

Q: Is your standard getting higher as the season goes on?

Coach Del Rio: "Not really. Not really. No, I'm pretty straightforward about it with the staff and with the players about what we're looking for and what championship football looks like. We're just going to push for it. It takes time to develop and to grow. The good news is we recognize where these areas are, yet we're winning. Being able to win, you put that big smile on. You go home and feel good about things. Lay your head down at night, but wake up in the morning knowing you have work to do and there are things we must improve."

Q: Is it hard to convince players to fix things when you're winning?

Coach Del Rio: "No. You show the tape. The tape doesn't lie. Part of 'Tell the Truth' Tuesday is what we do when we get back together as a team. We're telling the truth about the good, too. So we're showing really physical play and we're showing the things we want to see; the crisp effort and acknowledging what was really good. Then we're going to be honest about things we have to do better, and that's everywhere. That starts with me. I'll point out a thing or two that I could have done better. That's really how we approach it. Nobody is shielded from that. Nobody is above criticism or above being able to be held accountable. I think we all share in that, good or bad. Then we kind of own up to it and kind of put it behind us and grow from there and that's what we're doing."

Q: Where specifically have you seen the most improvement on your defense over the past few weeks?

Coach Del Rio: "I think probably, defensively, the overall communication has been better and better. I think they're beginning to play with a little more confidence because of that. We have a good group of guys. I've said it all along. They really care. We have some talent and as we gain that confidence and that belief in each other, I think we'll play faster and faster and more effectively."



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Q: What kind of strides have you seen the defensive line make recently?

Coach Del Rio: "I think probably just shedding blocks, getting off blocks. There was some good play last night. This is a zone-run, a stretch-run team that can get you running sideways and cut you down on the backside and open up big holes. I thought we did a pretty good job staying on our feet, setting the vertical edge and not giving them what they really wanted to have in the run game."

Q: Is the development Denver Kirkland has shown what you look for from all of your guys on the practice squad?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, we talk about it. We travel them [the practice squad] every week and part of that is they understand that they are just a snap away from being called up and being counted on. So yeah, we really do work at it that way, look at it that way and approach it that way. Denver's [Kirkland] been a big, physical guy, tough guy. We were drawn to him in camp, thought there were some things that were with developing and that development, obviously, has been accelerated a little bit with him being on the field as much as he is now. When you look at the number of guys that we have that are rookies that are playing or undrafted's that are playing and that's encouraging, because they're getting a lot of coaching, they're developing and they're building belief. Guys like Jalen Richard, great stories, some of these undrafted men are coming in here and doing a nice job for us."

Q: Was the plan to get Menelik Watson in for just a little bit last game?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, good to get him back. He had a good week of practice, so he was going to be active and be part of the backup, kind of play-as-needed plan, be available to play the extra tight end as well. Denver just ended up doing such a nice job for us that we left him to get the majority of those reps. But, Menelik [Watson] played, I think, a series at right tackle and came in for a snap when Donald [Penn] got shaken up. It was pretty solid, so, good to have him back. This is a good time, this is why I say, it's really a good time for us to catch this bye week. Because really, we've got a few guys like Menelik that we're bringing along, like Sean [Smith] should have a shot coming out of the break. Hopefully Mario [Edwards Jr.] will be a little bit closer and so, it's really a good time for us to catch a break here and kind of regather ourselves and reset our intentions coming out of the break."

Q: Why do you like the jumbo package that you use?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, we like Lee [Smith]. We're trying to fill in for Lee, you know? Big guy that gives us the ability to run the ball, that can pass block and can occasionally sneak out and be a part of a route. You know, he's not going to be a big part of the route tree, but we do have plays designed, those guys get out and catch the ball and run over a little guy. So, they love that part. They love that and what they're really good at is the blocking part and being physical. So, I think it just makes us physical. But, we're not the only team doing it out there. The Saints do it quite a bit. There are a number of teams that are utilizing the extra big guy as a tight end."

Q: Do you talk to the players to keep track of what they are doing over the bye week or do you council them as grown men?

Coach Del Rio: "We're going to council them as grown men, but we are going to educate our guys. And, that's part of what we do throughout the year. It's part of what we did throughout the offseason, it's part of what we did during training camp, prior to training camp. It's part of how we're traveling and traveling better is them understating, I don't know if it's so much of 'dos and don'ts' as much as things that are going to benefit you and would be wise to take advantage of. I think the culture that we've created and the mentality of our guys is that they want to do the right thing, so we point out what those right things are and we're getting that bye in and the guys are taking care of themselves and preparing themselves. So, we get the best product, at the end of the day, we want to put forth the best thing we can come gameday, and we're working hard for that."

Q: What did you see on film from DJ Hayden and TJ Carrie?

Coach Del Rio: "They battled tough. I thought they did a really nice job for the most part. Couple things we can clean up, technique-wise but the effort was great and the intensity was great. I thought DJ was really solid. TJ did a heck of a job filling in in a tough situation, you know? People talked a lot about Aqib [Talib] being out but heck, we



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had Sean Smith out. He's one of our good players. I think for our backups to step in and play well like they did, that was big for us."

Q: You've talked about how you thought DJ would make strides this season since the offseason program. In what areas have you seen him improve in the last 12 months?

Coach Del Rio: "I think he's decided it's what he wants to do. He's put in the work. There's no shortcut to it. I think his confidence is growing as he goes, and continues to do the things that are being asked. He's gaining confidence in what he's seeing. He's got the ability, the quick feet. He's a bright guy. He's got all the movement you're looking for at that position. I think he's applying himself in a way that's going to typically lead to success. The way you practice, you practice really hard, your focus, your attention to detail, you're taking care of yourself on and off the field, the little things that add up to playing good football. You're giving yourself a chance. I think he's playing his best football since I've been around over the last two years for sure."

Q: Aldon Smith says he expects to be back next week. Have you heard anything in that front?

Coach Del Rio: "I have not. That's good news. We'll see. That's one of those deals that... Honestly, it's a little bit of a questionable policy, but it's the policy in place, so we'll follow it. It means I can have no contact with him, so I've had no contact with him. That's one of those wait and see, and hope for the best situations. For me, the way I've thought about it – and I haven't thought about it a whole lot since – is, let's get this young man's life in order first and if he can do that, then we can talk about football. But let's make sure he's got his life in order. I think that's what the Commissioner [Roger Goodell] will do before he decides if he's going to reinstate him or not."

Q: For as well as the defense has been going, the prospect of maybe getting Mario Edwards Jr. and possibly Aldon Smith down the road, does that excite you?

Coach Del Rio: "The unknown part, I just leave that over there in that category. We're not going to wait for that. What we've got to do is continue to grow and do the things that have helped us play much better defensively the last several weeks and build on that, and continue to be better. Each of the three phases really showed great things and showed things that have to be better. We'll look to grow there defensively. We're definitely making strides. I know, in my mind, what we're capable of and we're getting there but we're not there yet."

Q: Andre Holmes had some pretty decent numbers a couple of years ago, then Amari Cooper and Michael Crabtree got here. He had to remake himself as a special teams guy that is only going to get a few offensive snaps. He had two balls that he downed inside the one yesterday. Did he catch on that way?

Coach Del Rio: "I think when you looked at the group when we got 'Coop' and 'Crab' last year, I think the guys that had been here understood like, 'Hey, these guys are pretty good and coach is letting it be competitive and I'm looking to create my role.' Seth [Roberts] came out of nowhere. Seth was just given the opportunity to compete and he ended up being the third best guy in that group. He's continued to play that way and earn that. Andre, same thing. Andre has competed and earned what he has. I thought there were a couple of players that are good players that aren't here anymore from that group of wide receivers. We made the decision of what the best four were and that's who were playing the most. The other guys like [Rod] Streater and 'International Duffle' [Brice Butler], those guys aren't here anymore and they're good players. We feel like you get what you earn in a lot of different areas. What Andre has done has been exactly what we would hope he would do. He's busted his butt everywhere he can. He remains ready. He would like to get more offensively, but he's doing whatever he can to help the football team. Those are two big plays to pin their offense back there like we did inside the five."

Q: After Marquette King punts the ball, are you watching to see what he does next as far as dancing goes? Are you looking forward to seeing his next move?

Coach Del Rio: "He's entertaining. He's good. *(laughter)* He's got a knack for it. I don't know about that pony ride he went on last night *(laughter)*. That's not in my repertoire right now, I can tell you, but he's having fun. And the thing about it is, to me, where you're having fun, you're enjoying yourself, but there's not anything where you're



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showing anybody up, you're not disrespecting the game. I'm all for guys having fun, just don't cross the line where you're being disrespectful and I don't think he is at all."

Q: For the players, over the next couple of days, are you guys reveling in a win like last night?

Coach Del Rio: "No, they get another couple of hours and then they have to turn the page. You guys can revel. We're going to get about our business. We're nine games in. It's been a good start. We've got some really good football teams coming in and us going to their place as well. In our division, we have three division games to finish the year [in] in the last month. We've got to continue to put wins together. We'll enjoy the victories – we always do – but we don't enjoy them for very long. Take a day or so and then we move on. That's really where we are."

Q: This AFC West is pretty competitive...

Coach Del Rio: "Right? You're believing that now, right? I've been saying that."

Q: Does that force you to keep the foot on the gas?

Coach Del Rio: "That's what we do anyway. We're going to do what we do. We're going to prepare hard. We're going to recover from the last game. The process is in place and there's a good, healthy process here. Recovering from the last game, and in this case, we get a bye week to help in that recovery and then dialing in our preparation and really putting pedal down each and every day trying to get everything we can out of that day and learning as much as we can about the team we're playing and the things they like to do and our game plan. That's a healthy process. All the things we do with the training, the strength and conditioning, the sleep, all the things that we're doing, the soft tissue work. We do a lot of different things leading up to these ball games. We're going to continue that process and then go compete and give it everything we have."