



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Bill Musgrave

Opening Statement: "Getting ready for the Titans coming to town. It should be a good test for us."

Q: Are there times where you forget about how the defense is set up and run a play because it's a play you have to work on?

Coach Musgrave: "Oh most definitely. Yeah, there's balance there. There's give and take. You want to get something out of the preseason, but you also want to work on some technique to be ready for that opener, in our case, down there in New Orleans. There's a balance. There's a fine line that, a chord that we're trying to strike there for all positions, not just quarterback, where guys can work on their technique, work on their craft, but at the same time we want to have success out there and build some confidence."

Q: With the lack of on-field time that you have these days, is it more difficult to get a running game going because you can't be as physical in the offseason?

Coach Musgrave: "You know, I don't know. I don't know if there's merit to that theory. I would say there are different theories. Different people have adapted differently to the new rules based on the new CBA. We have a lot more meetings standing up than we do sitting down. We do more walk-through meetings, inside in big open spaces. We're trying to adapt and adjust to the new rules just like everyone else is. I think we've all gotten used to them, but I don't know if it hampers the pass game, run game or special teams, anything like that."

Q: With Jalen Richard returning to practice is he someone you'll be watching to see what he does in a game?

Coach Musgrave: "Yeah. It was too bad that he had a little knee injury the last couple of weeks. There for a while he was doing something spectacular each and every day in practice. It's good to have him back out there. Yesterday it really reminded us of what we've missed the last two weeks of practice with him not being there."

Q: How fine is that line with using this week of preseason as a dress rehearsal, but not giving away too much since you play Tennessee in the regular season?

Coach Musgrave: "Well, it's unique, especially to play them so early. If we were playing them in November, December, we'd probably just brush it under the rug. The fact that it's going to be so early in the season and then this game we really want to be our dress rehearsal and try to give our players a feel for what the regular season might be like. We just have to be smart in a lot of different areas."

Q: Does that make it a little tougher or do you just have to be smarter?

Coach Musgrave: "Yeah. It's definitely not tougher. It's just another variable to consider and be on top of."

Q: What would you still like to see from your first-team offense?

Coach Musgrave: "Well we've had a couple of good plays here and there in Arizona and Green Bay, but we want to see more consistency and we'll just take that next step toward facing New Orleans. Green Bay, we turned the ball over, we don't want to do that. So we want to get back into some good ball security habits and play some winning type football."

Q: What's the level of importance that Derek Carr focuses more on game like plays?

Coach Musgrave: "Yeah, I think that's just part of the process of getting ready for the regular season. Like Derek said, that's something that all quarterbacks experience. Whether it be practice or preseason games, there's a little trial and error to those examples. We just want to keep getting better each and every week so we can really be peaking for New Orleans."

Q: In what ways does it pay off for the team having it be Derek's second year in this offense?

Coach Musgrave: "Well you said it, the familiarity. Not having to learn a new language, being around the block once before. So he's able to take it to the next level, take it to the graduate level from undergrad where he was



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last year and put his own spin on things. He can solve the problems almost before the problems emerge there at the line of scrimmage – he and Rodney Hudson both. We’ve definitely seen that day in and day out here in his second year.”

Q: So he has more input now?

Coach Musgrave: “Well he definitely does. All the quarterbacks do, but even the position players, they’ve just have more turns at our concepts so they can anticipate the defense and how it’s supposed to work out each and every time.”

Defensive Coordinator Ken Norton, Jr.

Q: Will cuts be harder this year than in the past?

Coach Norton, Jr.: “There’s a lot of talent. Cuts are never easy, but the guys have really made strong commitment. You can see the talent level, the commitment, the effort, the competition is at the best it’s been since I’ve been here. I think that all of the decisions will be tough.”

Q: What happened on the opening drive against the Packers?

Coach Norton, Jr.: “We played a good team. They’re a playoff team, they’ve been really good for a long time. It’s good for us to go up against teams that have been pretty good and at the same time match up to see where we stand. That was a good offensive line, good running back and it’s important that we learn that you have to come out ready to play, even though you’re in the right spot, you have to make plays. But, we can’t let that first drive [happen]. The guys played really good later on, the second drive, the third drive, they really recovered after that first drive. So, it’s certainly still preseason. Guys are still getting better and there’s a lot of room to grow.”

Q: Is it good to see a Tennessee team that can also test your run defense?

Coach Norton, Jr.: “Absolutely. Going into it, you really want to be tested. You want to see where your strengths are. You have a thought about what your strengths are, but then you actually play the games where you find out where your true strengths are. We’ll see how good we are and [where] our run fits and our energy and effort, our ability to play a mobile quarterback, because you have to be good against the run, you have to certainly contain your quarterback and you have to play good solid ball, good fundamental ball throughout the game consistently. Tennessee’s a really good team in that respect, and they’ll certainly let us know where we are from that standpoint.”

Q: Do you expect to see similar plays like Karl Joseph’s goal line stop?

Coach Norton, Jr.: “Oh, that’s why we brought him here. He’s a pack of dynamite. He’s got those shoulder pads, he has that attitude, he knows how to hit. He knows a good lean, he knows how to put a good pop on you and that was a good running back. For him to hit him like that and knock him back on the goal line lets us know that he’s on his way. He’s coming. He’s coming, he’s still growing but he still packs a punch and we like what we see.”

Q: How has Nate Allen taken his reduced role this year after being a starter in this league for years?

Coach Norton, Jr.: “Well, you know, we’re still in preseason. There’s still high competition. There’s still a lot of football left to play in this preseason. So, it’s all about competition and I don’t think there’s 1’s, 2’s and 3’s set up at this point. More guys certainly are playing more than others, but at the same time, I don’t think any final decisions have been made. Nate’s still a fine football player, making plays, playing hard. He shows up every day and we really like what we see out of Nate.”

Q: What issues have you seen from your run defense and what adjustments would you like to see them make?

Coach Norton, Jr.: “Well, just a matter of going out, stopping the run, going out fitting up everything really good, getting off of blocks – all the main stuff. I don’t think there’s any schematically things wrong, just a matter of



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making the plays. It's a matter of setting the edges, it's a matter of making the tackles. That just comes with the repetition that comes with full speed work. We don't get a whole lot of full speed work until the games start. So, that's what preseason has done for us. It certainly gives us the full speed work that we're looking for.

Q: What are some of the things you like about James Cowser?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "He shows up every day. [He's] very hard working. You can't get him down. He loves what he does and he's a playmaker. We like good football players. This is a good football team and he's a good football player. So, we like the fact that he plays hard and plays well."

Q: What has Cory James done well?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Well, he's a good football player. Like I said, we need good football players. Cory James is a really good football player. Those kind of players make us a better team. As long as he keeps playing good, we like him."