



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening statement: "Alright, ready to have a good week of preparation. Getting ready to head down to Mexico City and take on the Patriots. They're a good football team once again. They've got an offense that is very explosive. It's at the top of the league in most categories. Special teams was really dominate last week against Denver. Really solid unit that they put a lot of work and effort into being good there. Defensively, they've been playing better lately. They got off to a slow start, much like we have. We don't rank real well defensively, nor do they, but they've been effective in helping them win and that's what it's all about. We're going to have a good week of practice and travel down there to take care of business."

Q: They've given up 17 points or less in five straight games now. What is it that they're doing better?

Coach Del Rio: "I think they've been doing a better job in all areas. What it comes down to with playing good defense, it's about tackling, limited explosive plays and generating some turnovers."

Q: Is there a major difference in the altitude between Mexico City and Denver?

Coach Del Rio: "Very similar. Mexico City has a little more elevation and a little more air pollution. Still, it's like anything, there are different challenges that you face every week. Certainly understanding the climate there and the challenges there with the altitude and the pollution, that's just part of it. All in all, I thought we handled our business well last year and we've got a similar approach this year. We expect to go down there and play in a great atmosphere. The fans are very engaged. It's a great atmosphere to be a part of. Just go down there and play good football."

Q: Is there a benefit at all having gone to Mexico last year?

Coach Del Rio: "The number of guys that were with us, are they a little bit more comfortable? I think they know what's coming. I don't know that it really helps. I think each week's new, each game is new. The challenges, the opponent is new and all those things. I think having dealt with the altitude, we do it every year when we go to Denver, so that's just part of what we do."

Q: What are your thoughts on Gareon Conley being placed on IR?

Coach Del Rio: "I think he's going to be a really good player for us. We tried to give him time to see if we'd have a shot to get him back in the later half of this year. That's just not going to happen. We'll look for him to heal and mend and then be ready to help us next year."

Q: Will he need surgery?

Coach Del Rio: "That's for the doctors to determine. I'm just coaching the guys that I have, but I know we really hoped we could get him. He's going to be a good player in this league, I believe. We were looking forward to having him available here this year. That's just not going to work out."

Q: Do you think you guys recovered well over the bye week?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah. We have a number of guys that are further along, some guys that are back, some guys that are still a little bit struggling. It's definitely a valuable time to have to be able to mend a little."

Q: What makes the Patriots offense so dangerous?

Coach Del Rio: "It's execution. They have a system they believe in. I think [offensive coordinator] Josh [McDaniels] does a great job of play calling Tom executes it and makes it all happen. They've had a lot of different pieces that they'll plug in, but obviously, they've got some really good key players like 'Gronk' [Rob Gronkowski] and [Brandin] Cooks who they added. But the guy that makes it all go is Tom."



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Q: How do you get your defense confident enough that you can actually play with these guys after struggling against other opposing quarterbacks?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, we can play with anybody in the league, but we got to play better or you're going to have a rough day against a guy like Tom Brady. So, that's the challenge. We've got to do enough as a football team to win this game. We've got to play complementary football and all three phases have to help. We're going to need some stops. We're going to need some stops. We have to play well, we have to be sound, we have to be solid. We have to tackle well."

Q: What opportunity do you believe is there for Cordarrelle Patterson against a good Patriots special teams?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, we'll find out. It'll be interesting to see how they want to approach it. Obviously, their kicker [Stephen] Gostkowski is a guy that can kick it out if he wants to, especially at that altitude. He could kick it out every time if he wants to. So, it'll be interesting to see if they want to approach it and give us opportunities with C.P. They've got the best unit in the league right now covering kicks and they have the fewest number of touchbacks. So they are being aggressive, trying to pin you down, make you come out and try and tackle you inside the 20. So, that'll be a little game within the game. We'll see how that plays out. Obviously, we like C.P., we like what we think we're capable of doing their and it'll be interesting to see how they approach it."

Q: That special teams unit especially looked good in Denver...

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, they looked pretty good in Denver." *(laughter)*

Q: Do you have any more overall assessments of them?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, they're talented throughout. I saw [Matt] Slater is banged up. Not sure if he'll go. He went back to New England. That was in the news this morning. They've got guys – Nate Ebner – they've kept, specifically for special teams and Slater is one of them. They've got great returners in [Dion] Lewis and [Danny] Amendola. So, they put emphasis on their special teams. We do too. But they've been really good at it. They had a dominant game last week and certainly that's one of the challenges this week."

Q: Brad Seely did a good job with New England when he was the special teams coordinator. Was that part of the appeal in bringing him here?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, Brad is a terrific coach. We're really happy about having him here. He's done a great job with our guys. He's a coach that understands the need to develop the players we have. He's done a great job of that. I think if you look at what Marquette [King] has been able to do here under his tutelage, to bring a guy like Giorgio [Tavecchio] along the way he did, some of our cover guys. He's done a good job with that whole process of being a great coach in this league. We were able to get him. Obviously, the experience that he had with Bill [Belichick] and a lot of the big games that he's been in and some of the game management, some of the game decisions, I'll lean on him for some of that. Brad is a very trusted assistant and definitely a guy I'm glad we have on staff."

Q: Just special teams decisions?

Coach Del Rio: "No, game management. Yeah, game management."

Q: Tom Brady is pretty good when he is blitzed. How vital is it for you guys to get to the quarterback with four guys?

Coach Del Rio: "Game plan stuff, blitz, don't blitz, how much you blitz, how much you pressure, how many guys you're bringing, all those things are part of game planning. I think for us, the need to not let Tom be comfortable is important. I think that's the biggest thing. It's easier said than done. They do a good job with design, with people, with scheme, him understanding where he wants to go with different people. That's the chess match and we're putting together a good plan. Need to slow them down, need to get some stops. Need to play well on special teams. Cannot let them dominate the game the way they did last week in Denver. Offensively, we've got to move the ball and score points."



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Q: Who needs to step to help Khalil Mack with the pass rush?

Coach Del Rio: “Everybody. The game of football is a team game. Khalil is a special player. He needs to continue to bring great energy, which he does. If the quarterback is going to throw the ball in less than two seconds, it’s going to be tough to get there. So when the quarterback is throwing the ball quick like that, we’ve got to tackle and have their punt team come out. They’ll get tired of punting or turning the ball over and they’ll sit and hold the ball a little bit and Khalil can get there. If they’re throwing the ball in two seconds or less, it’s going to be hard to get sacks.”

Raiders QB Derek Carr

Q: Does it get you more amped knowing you’re going up against one of the greatest this week?

Carr: “No. If I had to get more amped, we’d all have a problem. No, and like I told you before, it’s a good thing I don’t play defense, so I’m not playing him or we’d be in even more trouble. It is exciting. He’s done a lot of great things in his career. He’s a Hall of Famer, a walking Hall of Famer. I have nothing but respect for him. I love his game.”

Q: How tough is it when you travel to a foreign country?

Carr: “You know I think for us, we’ve done such a good job of being able to travel and being able to make it just like home. Especially taking a week off into Sarasota and those kinds of things. We’ve done that a couple of times. I feel like we’re used to it now. We love our fans down in Mexico. We love playing in front of them because Raider Nation is everywhere for us. It’ll definitely be a home game, that’s for sure.”

Q: What do you remember about that environment from last year?

Carr: “It felt like a big-time home game. The atmosphere is, as I’ve been told, a playoff atmosphere. It’s loud. There’s a hum, there’s a buzz throughout the game for offense or defense. Especially when we’re on defense, it gets really loud. They want us to win. You can tell by looking in the stands how many Raider fans there were there that it’s definitely a home game for us.”

Q: What did this bye week clarify for you if anything at all?

Carr: “My body. My mind. I got a break, which it’s nice having that bye week somewhere in the middle of the season. You get it too early and it’s like, ‘Man, we just want to play.’ You get it a little bit too late and you’re like, ‘Dang, we want to go on our run.’ Ours being right where it’s at, we’re sitting at 4-5 with a lot of work to do. It was good to sit back and reflect on what has happened but really hone in and focus on this week and how important this game is going forward.”

Q: Have you marveled at how you’re still right in it?

Carr: “No, it’s the NFL. You hear it every week. Guys talking about teams that have one win or no wins and how much talent they have and these kinds of things. It doesn’t surprise me at all. That’s why we don’t freak out. That’s why we don’t ever get too high or get too low because as soon as you get too high your bubble is popped real quick and as soon as you get too low, it’s over. If you can stay right there in the middle, which is kind of where we are right now as a team too, if we can stay right there in the middle your mindset doesn’t go, oh we need to do this or we need to do that. You just stay in the middle and keep competing your tail off.”

Q: What’s the biggest thing you need to do in the second half to cut down on interceptions?

Carr: “Some of those, it’s very situational. There’s a couple that we’d like to have back, but there’s some that you just can’t avoid sometimes. You’re going to the right read, right spot with the ball and maybe one or two things was wrong with whatever happened. Again, I don’t get caught up in stats because stats lie a lot of the time. I just try to play efficiently each play. The more that I can do that, the more hopefully I don’t throw any interceptions or anything like that. The more that we have chance to have the ball in our hands, the more opportunities that we have to win.”



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Q: When you look at the Patriots' defensive stats, they're not where you'd expect them to be, but they've held opponents to 17 points or less in the last few games so they must be doing something right. What do you see when you look at that?

Carr: "Exactly. That's another thing. If you just look at stats, they're averaging whatever, it doesn't matter. They're good. They're well coached. They have first round picks all over the field. They have talent. They have veterans to get them lined up. They have veterans that know that system, been in that system a long time. Like I said, stats are misleading a lot of the time. They play very efficient. They tackle really well. They're very fundamentally sound. They don't miss a lot of open field tackles and that's why. Maybe early on they did, but you know they're a good tackling team. That helps limit the amount of points."

Q: They say that Bill Belichick is one of the masters of taking the one thing you do best and taking it away from you so you can't use that. Can you guys go to enough different areas that it won't be a problem for you?

Carr: "I sure hope so. I absolutely do. It's not a scary thing to play them. They're the next team on the schedule. Let's not make it something it's not, but let's respect that they're very smart. They're very wise in how they game plan things. They have great players that can do it. If they're going to try to take things away, that's this league. Every team tries to take things away that you do good and you try to hit them with other things. It works both ways, offensively and defensively in that sense."

Q: Is it all about how well you guys execute?

Carr: "Yeah, absolutely. That's something that came out of the first half of the season is we just have to worry about us. We have to worry about me doing the right footwork, putting the ball in the right place. Receivers running the right depth. O-line getting the right block with their footwork. Running backs doing their job. If we all can just do our job from here on out, we'll be celebrating at the end. We have a lot of good players on here that work really hard, but so does everybody else. The things that separate you are the little things. That's the footwork, the eyes, the reads, those kinds of things. The unseen things that we need to do better going forward."

Q: How does Jared Cook diversify the offense?

Carr: "It helps us because I think the teams that play us see that we have guys that can all go off. Like I said, every team tries to take something away. They try to take a player away or a certain phase of your game or emphasis. Everybody does that. So whoever they try to take away, that means that other guys have to step up. That's why [General Manager Reggie] Mr. McKenzie and [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio put great players on this team so that when their number is called, they win. That's how the league works. It's a matchup league. Personnel wise, schematically, it's all about matchups."

Q: Having a tight end that can stretch the field more than others help in that regard?

Carr: "There's a lot of tight ends that can run the intermediate and short routes, but not a lot of them on third down can run a go route and catch a 35-yard gain. Those are few and far between. Having a guy like Jared to have that speed that he doesn't just run the short stuff or intermediate stuff, he can take the top off and I'm liable to throw it. Even if corners are guarding him. I've thrown the ball to him when corners are guarding him. I've thrown it when safeties, linebackers are guarding him. Just having that at our disposal is really nice."

Q: The Patriots have given up a lot of passing yards this year. Do you see opportunities when you look at film?

Carr: "Yeah, every time you turn the film on you see opportunities against any team. Some of their things have come from some busted coverages that usually guys don't mess up and things like that. Again, like I said, there's a lot of things that go into a certain play or stat. I don't look too much into it. I prepare every game like their the number one defense in the league and we have to go after them because if you don't get ready for them then they will be."

Q: How has Jared Cook helped in the run game with blocking?

Carr: "It can change the personnel that people play. If they want to play a sub defense, with him on the field and he's shown that he can block, then that makes it tough on them. If they want to play a base defense, he's shown



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that he can catch routes. That's the risk that they're taking each time. Like I said, we've talked about it with the running backs as well. They have to be able to do everything. We have to have guys that can do everything. We have to have Lee [Smith] run routes and catch the ball and he has. Being able to have guys that can do all different spots, it definitely helps."

Q: Are you guys looking at this as a whole new season and do you feel like you have a chance to still be the team you thought you were going to be at the beginning of the season?

Carr: "Yeah, absolutely. There's no doubt about it because we still are that team. We have the same people, so we didn't think too highly or low of ourselves. We're the same guys waking up at five in the morning and coming into work while other people are still sleeping. We're going to continue to be that team, the ones that do the little things right. We're going to continue to be that because that's the culture that we've built here. Guys had time now to look on the bye week and say, 'Man, I can do that better or I can do this better.' Now let's just go do it. You've pointed it out, now fix it. I have a number of things that I've been trying to do better and hopefully at the end of the day those little things add up. Like you said, we're going to start this last half of the year and go on a roll."

Q: Did you watch the Las Vegas groundbreaking at all?

Carr: "No I did not. I did not. To be honest, I didn't know it was happening until I saw it pop up on the phone and I was like, 'Oh sick, they did it.' I was not paying attention."

Q: Do you have any thoughts about potentially laser pointers coming in your direction this time in Mexico?

Carr: "No, no, no, no, no. I think that going down there is a home field advantage. I'm not worry about the laser pointers. I think that's for the other guys." *(laughing)*



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Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick Conference Call

Q: What have you seen from Marshawn Lynch this season?

Coach Belichick: "He's as good as any back in the league in terms of yards after contact. He's got great balance, great lower body leg strength. He looks good on every run – inside, outside, cutback, downhill. It doesn't matter. He can run everything."

Q: What stood about how Brad Seely worked with your team when he was in New England?

Coach Belichick: "Brad did a great job for us. We won three Super Bowl championships. Brad has a lot of experience in the league. He knows personnel and the league very well. He's an excellent special teams coach. He did a great job for us and he's had a great career."

Q: What have you seen from Derek Carr?

Coach Belichick: "He's very impressive. He can make all the throws. Smart, reads coverages well. *(inaudible)* I'd say he does a tremendous job. The Raiders have great skill players – running backs, tight ends, receivers – and a great offensive line. So there's a lot of weapons on offense and Carr makes it all go. They're tough. They're really good on offense. Excellent talent and they can score in a hurry really from any place on the field at any position, so they're hard to defend."

Q: How much did having a game in Denver and preparing this week in Colorado help your team in preparation for the altitude?

Coach Belichick: "I don't think it's that big of a deal. The way the schedule worked out, this worked out for us. We're here and we're just doing the best we can to get ready for the game."