



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: “Alright, Panthers week, getting ready. Glad to be home. Looking forward to it. It should be a heck of a ball game. Really good football team. They have a lot of talent throughout. They’re well coached. We’re gearing up for a tough game.”

Q: What kind of unique challenges does playing a guy like Cam Newton propose?

Coach Del Rio: “He’s as fast as most everybody out there. He has tremendous size. He has really developed as a passer. He was the MVP last year for a reason. The guy is a really good football player and he’s a threat not only to throw it but to run it as well. They do a great job with design with him. He’s a good football player.”

Q: Do you take it easy at practice this week coming off a Monday night game in high altitude?

Coach Del Rio: “No, not really, mostly just really about recovering right now from it being a shorter week. Today is going to be a lighter Wednesday than typical. After this, we’ll try to make it as normal as possible leading up to the ball game.”

Q: Is there any adjusting on the fly with your original plan for coming out of the altitude? Are you asking guys where they’re at in recovering?

Coach Del Rio: “We’re constantly taking stock, seeing where they are, monitoring where they are. That’s just part of our process, but no, there’s nothing additional that needs to take place. We’re constantly doing that, monitoring how we’re recovering, how the guys are doing and the workloads that we’re having them go through and all of that. We’re on track. We just need to handle our business, prepare well and go in and fight like heck on Sunday.”

Q: Can you talk about what head strength and conditioning coach Joe Gomes has done to get your guys in position for the different elements you’ve faced this year?

Coach Del Rio: “I can’t give out any secrets. (*laughing*) Joe locks it down in there. He doesn’t like to give out a lot of the information. We work hard at putting our plan together. It’s really just about maximizing the ability of our players to compete and be at their best. That’s what he’s here to do, to help us strength and condition and have our football team recover and prepare at the highest level. Everything that we’re doing is geared that way.”

Q: What does it do for an offense to have a fullback that can make big plays?

Coach Del Rio: “He’s another weapon. I feel like we have good players, a lot of versatility in the group. ‘Maze’ [Jamize Olawale] has done a great job for us.”

Q: What does it do to the confidence of the team to win close games?

Coach Del Rio: “I think you gain confidence when you’re in those situations and you do well. For us, we recognize the things we’ve done well. We always go back and look at the things we have to do better. Today is kind of a combination of ‘Tell the Truth’ Tuesday and ‘Moving Forward With It’ Wednesday. So that’s what we did this morning, kind of rehashed last week and then looked forward to this week and the challenges coming up. I think for us right now, it’s about recognizing that there are areas that we need to be stronger in and keep the pedal down and keep working.”

Q: How encouraging is it that after a win the players say they can be better?

Coach Del Rio: “I think that’s been pretty consistent for us throughout the year. I think the guys have a healthy respect for the need to continue to develop and grow. We’re playing a lot of younger guys. They’re getting better as they go. Some of the older guys that we need to be smart with, we’re trying to do that. So there’s a delicate balance that we’re going through each week. The team’s continuing to work hard. That’s what we need to do to give ourselves a chance to continue to grow.”



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Q: Is it a weekly battle with Austin Howard and Menelik Watson for the starter?

Coach Del Rio: "Don't forget about Vadal [Alexander]. We have a good group there. They've all played. We came out of camp thinking it'd go a certain way and then injuries kind of came. We've gone with the healthiest and the guy who is playing the best at that time. [Offensive line coach] Mike [Tice] has done a great job of working the whole group. It's been fairly fluid."

Raiders QB Derek Carr

Q: How does it feel with all of this extra oxygen?

Carr: "(laughter) It feels good. It feels good to be able to breathe. No, I'm just kidding. It's good to be home though, I can tell you that. It was a fun trip, the place was rowdy; definitely a home-field advantage for us. But, it's always good to sleep in your own bed."

Q: What are the challenges with the short week?

Carr: "Just that you don't really have a day off, you know? We kind of had one yesterday but there's so much film to watch. It's not like you can just get a head start. You have to hit the ground running and so that's fine with me. That's fine with our team, because we have a plan, we have a good plan that Coach Del Rio put out there for us. So, it's good for us, but I would say that's really the only disadvantage in a short week, is that extra day where you can get a little extra in or whatever. But, you just make it up on the back end."

Q: How was it to be able to have your running backs be such a threat in the receiving game?

Carr: "Absolutely, and it's a big advantage that we have. Like I said after the game, I think [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] and Coach Del Rio have done a great job in our front office of bringing players in that can do a lot of different things. And, that's why we always talk about it, we can throw it 60 times or we can run it 50 times. Whatever the game dictates and however our coaches want to attack it, that's how we're going to attack it. We knew that we had some matchups that we liked in certain situations and we got the coverages we wanted for those plays and they did a great job, obviously, of making very explosive gains in the passing game."

Q: What does Jamize Olawale bring to the table?

Carr: "Oh, man. You can see, obviously, they extended him. He's here for a good amount of time and hopefully he'll be here as long as I am. I love 'Maze' [Jamize Olawale]. The cool thing about him is that not only is he a real, really good football player, he's one of the best people I've ever been around. He's quiet, he's funny and he works extremely hard. So, whenever you have a guy like that having success, everyone in the locker room feels good for him."

Q: Do you think teams are surprised when they see him come out of the backfield?

Carr: "I don't think they will be anymore. (laughter) I don't think they will be anymore. Even before the year before I got here with 'Oly' [former offensive coordinator Greg Olson], you know, 'Oly' had him running slant-and-go's, seam routes and things like that. So, they knew what they had in him. This organization has known for a long time. I think teams know what he can do but when the fullback is coming out of the backfield and catching the ball, it creates a lot of mismatches for us."

Q: How much did having Amari Cooper in the backfield confuse the defense?

Carr: "'Coop' has had some experience in carrying the ball, so it's good to put him back there because we can run all of our run game and at the same time, we can run our pass game with him. If they don't want to put a corner in the box and do certain things, there's such a mismatch if they don't do that. That's why I talk about how Reggie and Coach Del Rio have brought in people that can do a lot of things. If we wanted to run the ball there we could go to the run game and let Coop run it. So, it's just cool to have different options."



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Q: Are you conscious of how much you're being noticed by people around the country?

Carr: "You hear all of the outside stuff like just now, that kind of stuff. It doesn't change how I prepare, it's never going to change who I am. Those are things that you set goals and you want to reach certain things. As Coach Del Rio says, 'You have to expect great things.' You have to expect it. And then, if you expect it, when it happens it's normal. So, that's everybody on this team. Everybody expects great things and so when good things come our way, we know how to be humble and accept those things."

Q: How important is it knowing that you can win the games when one part of the offense isn't as effective as others?

Carr: "It's very important to know that we can win a football game either way. I can only speak offensively, because I don't know what goes into the defensive meeting rooms, but for us I know that if we need to win a football game, like I said we can do it either way. We can run the ball 50 times or we can throw it 60 times. I think 59 times we did in Tampa. So, however we have to do it, I'm all for it as long as we just keep winning."

Q: People are starting to say that if you have the ball at the end of the game, the Raiders have a chance. That has to feel good.

Carr: "It feels very good. You always want the respect and confidence of your teammates. That's something that any football player wants. Not only your teammates, but people you play against. You just want people to respect your game. I'm very thankful for those things."

Q: When you look at the difference between where the Panthers were a year ago and how they are struggling now, does it make you want to appreciate how good of a season you guys are having? I know you focus on the end-game, but do you sit back and appreciate what's happening in the now?

Carr: "We're definitely thankful. Any time through 10 games you have eight wins, anybody in the NFL should be thankful for that. This is the week to do it. It's nice to be thankful for those things and be happy about it, but at the same time, it's not going to mean anything if we don't win another one. Our focus is strictly on beating Carolina. It's going to be a tough task because they are 10 months out from playing in the Super Bowl, or however long it was. This team coming in is such a good football team. Their record doesn't show how good they are. It's hard to do because you know how good they are."

Q: Jack Del Rio was saying that when he's trying to decide whether or not to go for it on fourth down, he already knows that your vote will be. Could you ever see yourself on fourth-and-one saying, "Let's just kick this?"

Carr: "Definitely not. I don't think I have that in me. He knows my vote. I think it just already goes off in his head that that's one vote for that side. I just have so much confidence in our ability. I always want to end the game with the ball in our hands. In a situation like that, put it on our O-line, put it on Latavius [Murray], put it on our fullbacks or our right ends to go run that ball and get that first down. Put it on us and let us do it. There is going to be a time where we're going to have to kick it and things like that, but if there's a decision to be made and he's leaning either way, I'm going to try and nudge for us to get it."

Q: The catch that Jalen Richard made earlier on that drive up the sideline, for him to catch in on the sideline and get down in bounds... For a rookie, how impressive was that?

Carr: "I was very impressed. In my head I was like, 'Stay up, go score,' but it's very smart. I don't know how they found him. I don't know how other teams didn't find him. But I'm glad he's on my team and I'm glad he's going to be on my team for a long time. Very good football player, obviously, we all know that; very dynamic, very explosive. To have the wherewithal to get down in that kind of situation and not go out of bounds... That's a risky call. He catches the ball and those are bang-bang deals. Obviously we'll take the first down over time stopping but for him to stay in bounds and be smart as a young player, it says a lot about him."



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Q: What's Thanksgiving like at the Carr house?

Carr: "I'm thankful for my foundation, how my parents raised me. Very thankful for my own family, my wife and my two beautiful boys. My dog, Bruce, he's awesome. My wife cooks, my mother-in-law helps. I'll probably end up being asleep about an hour after I eat. That's usually how it works out."



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Panthers Head Coach Ron Rivera Conference Call

Q: What do you take away from seeing the Raiders completing 11 passes for 199 yards to their running backs? What does that do for a defensive coordinator?

Coach Rivera: “Well, I think just the bottom line is you have to be aware of it. They have some pretty elusive backs. They made some really good plays. It’s just one of those things, if you go back and look at the games they’ve played, probably the biggest thing, more so than they’ve done is they’ve thrown the ball to the receivers. When you break the tape down and look at it, you know that they were trying to do a little something extra with the receivers and forgot about the backs, and the backs made them pay by making big plays.”

Q: Starting 1-5 and climbing back into it, what’s the mindset of your team right now?

Coach Rivera: “Taking one game at a time. That’s kind of the truth of the matter. That’s the mantra. We’ve been in this type of situation before. We can’t rely on anybody else doing anything else. We just have to go out and take it one game at a time and do the best we can.”

Q: In a way is that the same way you approached it when you were 15-1?

Coach Rivera: “Yeah, we play them one game at a time. Look guys, we can’t get ahead of ourselves. That’s the bottom line. We have to take care of our own business. This is a very good football team, so we can’t assume anything. We can’t take anything for granted. We have to line up and get ready to play against a good team.”

Q: What can you tell us about Luke Kuechly and his availability?

Coach Rivera: “He’s in the protocol. He’s in the steps of it. We’ll just go through it and see how things develop as we get later in the week.”

Panthers S Kurt Coleman Conference Call

Q: What is your team’s mindset right now while still being in the race for the division title?

Coleman: “Well, I think for us, it’s been a one-game mentality at a time. I think when you’re down to 1-5 and you’re kind of saying, ‘Well, we got to win out. We got to win out,’ and you look at the whole schedule, things can kind of become blurred. But, for us, we’ve been able to just refocus and just refine our week-to-week mentality. And for us, it’s been a great approach because I look at the last four games, we’ve been 3-1 and we should have won against Kansas City but obviously, we didn’t get the job done there. But, for us it’s been a one-week mentality going 1-0 every week and then at the end of the season, then we’ll look back and say, ‘Well, we made the playoffs or we didn’t make the playoffs.’ But at least we know that we put everything we had into each week.”

Q: In a way, is it the same mentality you had last year going 15-1?

Coleman: “That was a big part of it, especially last year when we were winning games and people were saying, ‘Are you going to go undefeated for the season?’ For us, we just had to take everything game by game, because like I said, even on that end of the perspective you’re trying to go undefeated, but when you do that, things and little details, everything starts to slip and you lose your focus. And, kind of like for us when we were 1-5, it wasn’t that we were losing the games by a wide margin, we were just losing the details. We weren’t focusing on the details and I think that was a big, major turning point for our season. We just said we need to get back to the basics, let’s focus on us and figure out what we need to do best. And that’s how we’ve been able to approach these last few weeks.”

Q: What challenges does the Raiders’ running back, tight end and wide receiver position groups present?

Coleman: “It’s amazing what the group of guys, from the wide receivers all the way down to the running backs, tight ends. They all are able to play every position it seems like. You see [Amari] Cooper, you see [Michael] Crabtree in the backfield at times, you see the running backs out at the number one spot at wide receiver. I mean,



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they put everybody in every single position and they create a lot of different types of mismatches. They're very athletic, all of them, and especially in space. When you give them space, they're able to do a lot of damage and I'm speaking for all of those guys. So, I think what [Derek] Carr's been able to do, he's been able to just find the guys. He hasn't made a lot of bad decisions, which is why they've been so successful. He's not turning the ball over and it's given their offense, it's given everybody an opportunity to line up, get the first downs and then as they move down the field, their playmakers are making plays."

Q: Have you seen a fullback like Jamize Olawale who is able to break a long touchdown like he did this past week?

Coleman: "Well, when you look at a fullback running that fast, it's typically not in this day and age, especially when you talk about football, fullback's more of a stockier, bigger type. And, not to say that he's not, but he definitely has the speed and it surely showed against Houston. But really like I said, I feel like all of those guys are very athletic and that's why they're able fit them in a lot of different positions and create a lot of mismatches for the defenses."

Q: What's the team's mindset now after Luke Kuechly and when his injury occurred?

Coleman: "I think the first and foremost thing that all of us were thinking about what we want Luke the person to be healthy. The player, as great as he is, he's an even better person. I just want him to have a healthy life and then after that, it's alright, let's not rush him back into this game. Because I think the whole thing that we've been built on, our culture's built on not one man makes this team and we have a 'next man up' mentality. We work hard and we know that everybody is willing and able to step up given the right opportunity. I thought that David Mayo did a great job of stepping in last week given no practice reps with the ones. He came in there and he did a great job at the MIKE. And this week, obviously if A.J. Klein is up and ready, he'll be going. If not, I think David is going to be completely ready to go in there with a full week of prep and practice. And obviously, Luke is going to come back when he's ready and when the doctors deem that he's ready. I just want him to be healthy, because I care about him more as a person than he as a player. Then when he's out there on the field, I know he's going to bring everything he's got."

Q: What is it going to be like being back in the Bay Area for this game and are you staying out here while preparing for Seattle the following week?

Coleman: "Yeah, that's the plan. You know, it's a business week. I think the thing that we're stressing and I've been stressing to a lot of my younger guys is that we have to have the right mentality. I think this is a mature group of guys, even though we are fairly young. We have a lot of mature guys that are out there and obviously the leaders have to be able to lead. We have to be able to take charge and say, 'This is the time we have to be able to study.' If we have our days off, we still have to be smart. We can enjoy the time when we have it off, but we still have to be smart while we're out there. This isn't a vacation for us, it's a completely normal week even after the game and leading up to the week following we play the [Seahawks]."

Q: Was playing Drew Brees last week good preparation for the Raiders and Derek Carr?

Coleman: "I think we've been able to face a lot of challenging quarterbacks. I think Matt Ryan obviously, Drew Brees is a Hall of Famer. No question in my book, and he's able to understand the defenses, read the defenses. And I think what I've seen with Carr is, like I said earlier, he's making a lot of smart decisions. He's not trying to hold the ball too long, that's why he's not getting sacked a lot. And also, I think what helps is he does have a good run game and even when the run game isn't happening, they're able to do a lot of playaction off of it and get the big plays such as the big play, the 75-yard play last week. I think these guys are very talented. They're young, they're eager and they have a lot of confidence and they're playing really well. They're playing some complementary football and that's what it takes to win games in the NFL."