



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

### Head Coach Jon Gruden

**Opening statement:** "I'll be happy to answer any questions that I can. Obviously, a very disappointing outcome of the game last night. We have a lot of areas to improve."

**Q: Is David Sharpe back from T.J. Clemmings?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yes. David Sharpe was with the Texans. We're happy to have him back. We'll get him up to speed as soon as possible."

**Q: Do you have updates on Kolton Miller and Kelechi Osemele?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Both are being evaluated. I can't give you an official update yet. They're going to continue to be evaluated here this afternoon."

**Q: Having someone like Sharpe back who knows the system, will that help him catch up to speed?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, I think that's key. [Ian] Silberman was brought back. He was with the Tennessee Titans. He understood the system. That's common around the league. Hopefully, if needed, Sharpe can come in and play some quality football for us."

**Q: What did you see in terms of the effort on the long touchdown run?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah I didn't have any problem at all with the effort. I think what I had a big problem with is we had two guys in the same gap and we got out flanked immediately and their back was faster than I think we anticipated. That was my big problem with the long run. Once again defensively, I think we gave up six plays for 240 yards. Six plays yielded 240 yards. That cannot happen and it continues to be a big part of our problem. We have to fix it. I know people are saying when are you going to fix it. Well, we're trying. Hopefully we do that against the Chargers."

**Q: When you talk about fixing it, what can you do?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Sometimes we miss a tackle. Sometimes we miss two tackles. Sometimes we have a man out of his gap. Sometimes we have to coach, perhaps, better. It all comes back to me. We just have to do a better job collectively. Sometimes guys do a little too much, they see too much. In this league if you make a mistake, good teams and good players will hurt you real bad and that's been the case."

**Q: Daryl Worley and Frostee Rucker said sometimes after big plays they can get down on themselves and sometimes it causes more problems. Are you seeing things like that?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Perhaps. I can't speak for everybody, but I think everybody is guilty of that at some point and time. Trying to overcompensate. Trying too hard to make a big play instead of doing your job. That's what we have to continue to emphasize and we have to do a better job of it consistently, collectively for a whole game."

**Q: Why is Bruce Irvin not playing as much?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well last night we weren't in our nickel defense very much. Remember we're a 4-3 team, we're not a 3-4. So in the base defense, sometimes he doesn't fit the role that we need done. No disrespect to Bruce. He's an edge rusher. We haven't had a lead. We haven't had the opposition behind in the chains a lot. So his role has been reduced. I know he's frustrated. I'm frustrated. We'll try to solve that as soon as possible. He's a good player. He's a good player."

**Q: Tahir Whitehead has been targeted almost 30 times and allowed a perfect passer rating. Is that just a matter of you guys don't have anyone else?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Is that true? Is that your study?"



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

**Q: According to Pro Football Focus, that's who said it.**

**Coach Gruden:** "30-for-30. Sounds like a television show or something."

**Q: Is that just a matter of you don't have anyone else?**

**Coach Gruden:** "You know what, he's been a good linebacker. He's been a good nickel linebacker in the league for a long time. I think when you look at the kind of throws that have been complete, you have to sometimes take a look at them. Are they quick screens? Are they screen passes? I like Whitehead. I like Whitehead a lot. If you're listening, Tahir, I think you're one heck of a linebacker. But we have to do a better job. We have to do a better job stopping the run, stopping the pass. We have to do a better job collectively, coaches and players, figuring out our defense."

**Q: Are you concerned about Derek Carr staying healthy with the injuries on the offensive line?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Last night I was concerned. Last night we didn't just have a couple of injuries, we were decimated and had guys playing positions that they had never really practiced. That was uncommon for any game I've ever called and I've called a lot of games. I've broadcast some games and I haven't seen that. We're concerned about the health of our tackles. To answer your question, last night I was a little bit concern. We did put [AJ] McCarron in the game and basically ran the ball. We'll try to get better. News from the doctor and we'll try to put the best five out there possible because we do have some talented people."

**Q: Has Osemele practiced at all this year at left tackle?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No. No, he hasn't practiced much in the last month. He hasn't put shoulder pads on since the Cleveland game. You're talking about a guy who sacrificed a lot for this football team last night. He comes back to play left guard and you have to put him in at left tackle. That's tough. [Jon] Feliciano is playing through a rib. We have issues at a lot of positions health wise right now and I commend those guys. On a short week having to go up there and play two games within five days. Hopefully we can get some guys well."

**Q: Brandon Parker was taken out, was that due to health or performance?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We let him take a seat. We took him out of the game. he struggled a little bit early. Had a penalty. Had a breakdown in pass protection. We wanted to let him take a seat for a couple of series and then we went back to him. He's another kid that's just getting started. I really like his upside. Last night he had some ups, he had some downs. He's got to be more consistent. He knows that."

**Q: This record is new for you. How do you determine as a coach when to stick with someone and when to move on?**

**Coach Gruden:** "There's a lot of tough decisions that we have had to make in the first couple of months on the job here. One of the decisions that we have made is we're going to continue to coach hard. We're going to be enthusiastic and upbeat. We're going to develop these young guys. We're going to call on our veteran leaders to lead. If there's a better player out there, someone that we think can come in and help us this year and for the future, we'll look hard at doing that. Making roster changes during the season are very difficult to do. We're going to keep coaching hard and raise the standards on the practice field and hopefully get results on gameday."

**Q: The past couple of weeks you and defensive coordinator Paul Guenther have exchanged some words. Is that just natural for game day?**

**Coach Gruden:** "You should see us on the golf course."

**Q: Nothing more to that than just frustration?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Look, you go down the field, you score a touchdown and I don't know the next play they get a 51-yard run and [you say], 'what the hell happened?' You know? You're on the phone talking with



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

somebody and the next thing you know it's a big play. Frustration kicks in on his behalf and my behalf. I'm sure emotions get caught on tape sometimes but, there's not a better coach I know than Paul Guenther. There's not a better friend that I have than Paul Guenther. We're going to argue and jaw, probably tonight, deep into the night over a lot of things. I'll see if we can video footage for you."

### **Q: Are you sticking with Johnny Townsend?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah. Like I said, I think he's overthinking some things a little bit. Directional punting, putting the ball between the numbers to the side line to the right, to the left, getting it off quicker, whatever it may be. I make no excuses for Townsend, but I will say this, I have seen him bomb it. I have seen him be a difference maker and I am confident it's in our near future. I went through this with [Shane] Lechler. Lechler used to tick me off. He used to punt the ball out of the Black Hole instead of trying to get it inside the 10. I've been through it with [Sebastian] Janikowski. Everybody hated Janikowski for the first three or four games. I'm going to be patient and everybody knows that's not a strength of mine."

### **Q: Will your record play a part of when your hurt offensive lineman come back?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No, we're never going to put a player at risk. We never would do that. If they can play through it, we're going to let them play. That's a big part about being a great pro football player. I've been around guys that have iron-man streaks. I watched Andrew Whitworth play for the Rams, he's still playing. You never feel good. These men never feel good from the time training camp starts until about two months into the offseason. If the trainer says we're putting them in any danger, they will not play. If they can play through something, we're going to try to encourage them to do that, just like we encourage everybody at every position to do it."

### **Q: Do you expect to start the practice clock on Justin Ellis next week?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I hope so. We miss him, we're going to try to rev up [Eddie] Vanderdoes as well. Those are two big guys that can obviously help us. We know what Ellis is and what we've been missing there. But, he's still a couple weeks away I think."

### **Q: If Kolton Miller does have to miss time, where do you go at left tackle?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, we're looking at a couple options right now. I don't want to make any projections right now until I know the facts, but we'll have a left tackle next week ready to play."

### **Q: Why did you have Clinton McDonald move to the five-technique over the past couple games?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, we need somebody to line up on the tight end and jolt the tight end. We need somebody that can play on the edge and really be a factor, bend the edge, don't let the ball get to the corner and credit to him, he's been able to do a pretty good job of it. But to answer your question, outside of Frostee Rucker, we're still looking for guys that can bend the edge and be a factor on the running game, particularly on the strong side where the tight end is."

### **Q: Are the rookie defensive lineman hitting the 'rookie wall' or wearing down at all?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, it's possible. I can't speak for them. I thought P.J. Hall had one of his better games last night. He had some good pursuit plays. I think he's starting to catch on to the position. Remember, he's a guy who played in college all over the place. He was a stand-up end, he's an outside linebacker. Heck, they used him everywhere. He is just now healthy, remember, he was out for a while. He's starting to do some good things. [Maurice] Hurst is doing a lot of good things. I don't know that they are hitting a wall, you'd have to ask them. We need to get Arden Key in some pass rush situations. We got to continue to get him stronger and more experience, but I like all three of those guys."



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

**Q: Are you getting enough from your safety play?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We need more. Coverage, in the box presence, tackling, prohibiting and eliminating big plays. We need more from that group. I think we are going to continue to try and get the right combination of men out there and hopefully improve."

**Q: The veterans talked about over these final eight games showing the younger players how to be professionals. Do you feel like that's where the culture of the organization you want can be established?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, I think so. I think that's a big part of it. I don't want to talk about too much of that. I want to win the game. We want to win the game. We want to win and win and win. That's what we are trying to do, but at the same time as a football coach in the first year of this program there is a standard of how we are going to practice. There is a standard in how we are going to prepare. I think it's been really good. Now, how we play on Sunday and how we play on Thursday Night, we got to show that we can do that at a much higher level. We have some really good veteran leadership here and I think we have some young guys that are taking advantage of it."

**Q: Obviously you didn't plan for the season to go this way, but do you think the type of veterans you brought in can thrive in this situation?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, I think we can thrive. Look, 1-7 is no fun. It's a combination of players that came from the draft last year and guys that came from around the league. That's not uncommon on any football team. There's not a lot of continuity. There hasn't been a lot of continuity on this football team and there hasn't been much continuity on the staff either. We just got to work through it. We got to try to be true to ourselves, listen to our heart, keep getting better. Keep improving, worry about what we can control and don't worry about anything else."

**Q: Why did you go for it on fourth-and-one?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It was an inch. It was inches, Vic. There is a difference between a long one and an inch. I really wanted to get the inch and run the ball a few more times. We weren't in a two-minute mode at all. I just wanted to run the ball a few times more and unfortunately it didn't work out."