



Oakland Raiders Transcript

General Manager Mike Mayock and Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement from General Manager Mike Mayock: “Welcome to Napa, everybody. I don’t know if we need a mic or not, not a big room. But, welcome to Napa, we think it’s an awesome place to train. We’ve got an awful lot done with the young guys this week. I think the thing [Head Coach] Jon [Gruden] are most excited about with the young guys is, you know, we don’t know what they’re going to be yet. We haven’t put pads on and the vets aren’t here, but as advertised as far as work ethic, mental agility and passion for the game of football. I think Jon and I have both really, really been pleased so far with that aspect of it. So, having said that, I’ll tell you one other thing. I’ve been to a lot of training camps in my life. I’ve never seen a greater volume of plays run and the mental agility to handle that on both sides of the line of scrimmage over a three day period was really fun to watch with this young group of guys. That’s kind of where we are. Let’s open up for some questions.”

Q: What excites you the most about this team with the small sample size that you have seen thus far?

Mayock: “I think it’s the energy right now with the young guys. Jon and I have had an awful lot of conversations about these kids and the passion for the game and setting the foundation and all of that. When you see the fact that they not only show up in shape, but they only show up and they have their heads in the books, man. When Jon starts going quads empty on the first day and the defensive backs know what the proper adjustment is, it’s pretty cool. That’s what we’re juiced about.”

Q: After many changes this offseason, does it kind of feel like the first real camp that you are able to build this team the way you want to get it headed in the right direction?

Coach Gruden: “Yes, we have a lot of new players at every position. We are very confident that we have taken some really good steps in building our football team. We need some veterans to come through, we need some young guys to come through, but we do feel like we’ve gotten faster, we feel like we’ve gotten bigger. We’ve got a lot to prove, that’s for sure.”

Q: This is a much younger roster today than it was at this time last year. What have you seen from some of these younger players in terms of how they are integrating into the roster?

Coach Gruden: “Well, it’s been exciting like Mike just said. You have to really be impressed with [Clelin] Ferrell, and Maxx Crosby, and Quentin Bell, the three young defensive ends we’ve brought in here. Their roles are different, they have versatility, they can go do a number of different things. So, I’m really, really excited about that. Trayvon Mullen has come in here and proven that he is going to be a competitor and win a job here. Vontaze Burfict is going to be the straw that stirs the drink. He’s going to be big part of this defense, calling it, making adjustments. We’re hoping Brandon Marshall can be an associate of his and when you put Tahir Whitehead into that group, we feel like we have improved a position that we have really struggled at over the years.”

Q: This is one of the few times Derek Carr has come back the next season to the same offense. Given that experience that he has, how much does that put you guys ahead as an offense and how much does that open it up to you as a play caller and what you are able to do that you may not have been able to last year?

Coach Gruden: “There’s never been any restrictions with Derek. I thought Derek was unbelievable last year in some really tough situations. We have a brand new receiving corps, we have a new tight end, new feature back, a new right tackle and a new left guard. We have a lot of change around him – hopefully for the better – but he has done a great job, not only with the system, he’s done a great job leading the group. He’s had those players at his place in Fresno. He’s clearly established himself as not only an excellent quarterback, but a premier leader on this team.”

Do you know which players are going to open the camp on the Physically Unable to Perform List?

Mayock: “Yeah, at this we have two names. On the PUP, Denzelle Good had lower back surgery five weeks ago, prognosis is plus or minus two months from around right now. And then on NFI, Non-Football Injury, Keith Smith. You guys all saw that recently. He had a left knee and again, don’t have a prognosis but that’s nowhere near a season-ending injury. That’s it for now.”



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Q: With Good out right now, how does left guard look with Richie Incognito serving a two-game suspension to start the season?

Coach Gruden: "Well, we've signed Jonathan Cooper, a former first-round pick of Arizona who has been in the league for a while. Played in a system last year that is very similar to the one that we run. I'm really impressed with Cooper. He came in healthy, he's really smart and athletic. To have a couple veteran guards play next to Kolton Miller is something we're excited about but we're certainly going to have some competition this summer at left guard."

Q: What do you like out of Keelan Doss and what do you like out of undrafted free agents in general?

Coach Gruden: "(laughter) Doss is one of my favorite guys. I get all fired up talking about this guy. He can play all three positions. He might be as smart as any young receiver I have been around. Now, can he make the plays? Can he get away from [Gareon] Conley? Can he get away from our corners, our top-flight guys? We'll see. He's going to get a lot of playing time in the preseason. He can play split-end, flanker or in the slot. He's going to contribute on special teams. What do I like about undrafted free agents? I don't know, I like Rich Gannon. I like a lot of these guys that come up the hard way with a chip on their shoulder. We have a number of those guys in this camp that are going to be fun to watch. And really going back to what Mike said, the last four practices with the rookies has allowed them to catch up mentally where they can get in the huddle on offense or defense and handle the multiple adjustments that you have to handle in this league. So, we're excited about these guys."

Q: What have you seen out of Johnathan Abram thus far in camp? Have you been impressed with his mental retention of the system?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, he's very sharp. He loves football, it starts there. You can't get rid of the guy. He's texting me, calling me. I'm going to change rooms so that he can't find me. I love this guy, you'll love Abram. He's an old school throwback ball player. He's got to continue to refine his game, he's got to learn the NFL game and we're confident in him."

Mayock: "He was so frustrated at the walkthrough yesterday that he couldn't hit people. Jon's calling him out. He's looking at Jon like 'Just let me go.' (laughter) It's fun to watch, it really is."

Q: How important is Kolton Miller to your offense this year, and what have you seen from his development this offseason?

Gruden: "Well, the offensive tackle position is vital to any pro offense. I remember when we came here we really didn't have one tackle in their prime that was healthy on the whole team, that had proven he could play in this league, so we had to go out and address that position when you have a quarterback like Derek Carr. Kolton Miller is a guy that we think has a huge upside. He's tough also, he played through a lot of things last year. He's a sharp kid, he's got a lot of pride. I would be shocked if he is not one of the strong points of this offensive team this year. We think a lot of him."

Q: What do you think you have at tight end going into camp, and what have you seen from Paul Butler?

Gruden: "Well, we respect the shoes that need to be filled. Losing Jared Cook is going to be a hard pill to swallow, he was an outstanding player for us. We think Darren Waller is going to be a really fun guy for everybody to follow. He's athletic, he's hungry, he's got an opportunity that he's been waiting for. Foster Moreau, our fourth-round pick from Louisiana State, he's been impressive. I hope it continues. Paul Butler has gotten better and as I challenge the second-year players, those are the guys that show the most improvement and just like Keelan Doss you'll see a lot of Paul Butler in August."

Q: Jon, you mentioned Mullen competing for a job, is there other competition at that position?

Gruden: "We think it's going to be competitive. We didn't bring Mullen in here for any other reason. We want to see Conley stay healthy, first of all, and establish himself. We think he's got a huge amount of talent, he has just



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had some unfortunate things happen. Like to see [Daryl] Worley have an injury free couple of months. Really excited to see Mullen and Isaiah Johnson, and Nick Nelson. I want to continue and hammer the second-year players. Nick Nelson was one of the bright spots in Alameda during the offseason program, so we are anxious to see all those guys.”

Q: Which player or players have you seen make the biggest strides since you first walked in the building?

Mayock: “It’s been watching different progressions of different players. For instance, you take Foster Moreau, he came in and we are teaching him different techniques at everything, whether it’s pass protection, whether it’s run-blocking or how to run a route. Jon’s offense, which is a lot different than any college kid got to even begin to assimilate, he’s picked it up. I sat in the tight end meeting room yesterday with Coach Frank Smith. I think Frank has done a great job with both him and Paul Butler, but I think Moreau has come a long way from the guy I saw at the Senior Bowl. I think Hunter Renfrow is a guy that’s going to come in and not make any mistakes, be very user friendly for the quarterback. I think Derek is going to have a lot of fun watching him compete. There is going to be a lot of competition at that slot and like Jon I can’t wait to see some of these second-year players. If we are going to have a chance to compete this year some of those guys are going to have to step up. We need Mo Hurst to step up, we need P.J. Hall to step up. We didn’t see it from them last year, we need to see it this year.”

Q: Jon, you have a rookie back who’s going to be your feature back. Where do you get that balance of you have to see him play, but you have to be careful with his workload also?

Gruden: “Well, you have to see how much the man can eat. How long can he stay at the table? He hasn’t been given anything. He won’t be the feature back until he earns it. He’s got to prove he can get up time and time again. These are car crashes, some of the hits these guys take. You got to be one tough guy. You got to be able to do it down after down. When you are tired and sore and beat up you got to pick up a blitz, you got to beat a linebacker on a route, then you got to make and third-and-one to win the game; so there’s a lot of maturity that is going to have to take place because he’s such a young and inexperienced player, but he’s a great kid and got a lot of talent. Kirby Wilson, our running back coach, has done an excellent job putting the boat in the water and getting him started.”

Q: What did you think of Antonio Brown’s hot air balloon entrance at camp, and what have you seen of him so far?

Gruden: “Is he okay? That’s all I want to know. I expect a lot more drama from number 84, I really do. I told Antonio try not and yell at Derek, yell at me when you have a problem. Then he started yelling at me and I said, ‘Don’t yell at me, yell at [Greg] Olson, he’s the offensive coordinator.’ He’s a fun guy to be around, I expected a little bit more than a hot air balloon. I thought he might jump out of an airplane and parachute here himself, but he’s going to add a lot of life to this organization at a position where obviously we need some explosive plays.”

Q: What do you think the second-year defensive lineman have shown this offseason and where are they in their ability to make that jump?

Mayock: “Arden (Key) has gained some weight, first and foremost. The Raiders didn’t want to play him the percentage of the snaps he played a year ago which I think took a little bit away from his pass rush, and I’m not trying to give him an excuse at all, but he’s been able to sustain some additional weight. We hope that translates to more production and we also hope he doesn’t have to carry the percentage of load of snaps that he carried last year with Maxx and Clelin involved, so on the outside we hope we get additional production from Arden. On the inside, again,



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we are wide open to P.J. and Mo making a big move in training camp, but it has to come from them. We are not handing them anything. Coach, I'm sorry if I answered that, I got a little excited there."

Q: How much of an asset has Doug Martin been in terms of tutoring Josh Jacobs?

Coach Gruden: "I think he's been really important. He's been through a lot on and off the field in his career. He's had some really high moments, he's had some dark moments. To be able to live to tell about it and be a great resource of reality is good for any young back, any young player. We have some other leaders in our locker room that we're proud to have here. Hopefully, at the end of the Napa experience, we've come together and formed and identity as a team."

Q: What needs to happen now that you go into training camp to take all the offseason moves and translate it into production on the field?

Coach Gruden: "Well obviously we have to execute and come together. We have to form an identity. We want to be a physical, versatile football team that can adapt to any situation. We want to be a tough team. We want to be a smart team. We want to take a lot of pride in the details. We have Phil Villapiano and some of our alumni coming in here this weekend. You'll see George Atkinson running around here. We'd like to get back to the Oakland Raiders of years past. Hopefully our players can learn what it is to be a Raider and the commitment that it takes to be an excellent football team. I think it'll be there. We have to get a lot of new relationships formed and that's the goal. That's why we're here."

Q: Do you have any concerns about the Hard Knocks cameras?

Mayock: "So here's the deal on Hard Knocks. We're on the record of saying the Oakland Raiders did not invite the Hard Knocks cameras in. You guys all know that. That's where we are. What I'd like to tell you is I grew up in the NFL Films building, basically. I spent weeks, months, years in that building. Steve Sabol was not only a mentor but a friend to me. I have the upmost respect...I know half the camera people just from southern New Jersey. Bottom line for me, Jon and I are kind of old school. The reason you go away to training camp is to get away from all the distractions. Get together, bond, learn your assignments. No distractions, no intrusions. Hard Knocks is an intrusion. But it was handed to us, so it's up to us to deal with it. I think we're really dealing with it in a professional way. Tim Rumpf from NFL Films, their director, has done a great job. We've been in constant communication every single day. I think we've come up with a plan where they feel like they can get what they need and we feel like we can get done what we need. So far it's been great."

Q: When you looked at the Raiders before you became the general manager, what did you think their identity was?

Mayock: "To over simplify, the Oakland Raiders had been to one playoff game in 16 years. That's not a good identity. I don't want to get more specific than that, but I think Jon came here and his intent was to change that. Jon is one of the most talented men that I've met in any industry in my life. We're going to change it. I think he has a vision. I think he and I have talked an awful lot of fricken football over the years. Jointly we have a vision, and I think we're starting to implement it. I'm excited about that."

Q: Does Hunter Renfrow remind you of anybody?

Coach Gruden: "He's a funny kid. He reminds me of our Nick Holz our receivers coach. I see Nick walking down the hallway and I say, 'Hey, Hunter.' Then Nick turns around. We've had a lot of fun jabbing Renfrow. He does not look the part. He does not look the part, but don't let looks fool you or deceive you. He's a great competitor. He's



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talented, he's quick, fast twitch, natural receiver. He is going to have his hands full when LaMarcus Joyner shows up. It'll be excellent for him and his development to see if he can stand in front of that guy and block him and separate from him. Joyner is giving me his word, none of that is going to happen. Renfrow is going to have an opportunity, much like Darren Waller and some other young players, to have an impact, but he's got to earn it."

Mayock: "One story along with Renfrow is the night we drafted him, we traded up to get him. Jon gets him on the phone first and he hands me the phone. You guys have all seen what he looks like facial. I get on the phone and I was all jacked up and we traded up and I'm like, 'Hunter, you remind me of Doogie Howser. It's unbelievable. We traded up for Doogie Howser!' He was like, 'Yeah, hi Coach how are you?' I get off the phone with him and he was in the building two days later. I said, 'Did you even know who Doogie Howser was?' He said, 'Well actually Mr. Mayock, I had to ask my Dad.' He's taken a lot of heat from how he looks. But trust me, he's earning some respect."

Q: What was your reaction to the two game suspension to Richie Incognito? Additionally, how has he been in the building since he joined the team?

Mayock: "You know the day we addressed it in Alameda, I told you guys point blank that we expected some type of suspension. So we knew about it, we planned for it. We think we executed accordingly. As far as Rich himself, from my perspective, Jon can talk about it more, but from my perspective, I go back several line coaches with him. I know all the guys that have coached him over the years. Over the years. I knew the Richie Incognito story for years. There's some dark moments, but there's an awful lot of bright moments also. He's been nothing but phenomenal, both to the young guys in the building in the offensive line room. He's been responsive to me. I've sat him down in my office four to five different times. It's been all about off the field. I know he can handle on the field. Just sitting down, having mature conversations. Jon I don't know about you, but I've been excited about the kid on and off the field."

Q: What has impressed you the most about Carr and Antonio Brown?

Coach Gruden: "Just their premier workers. They're the hardest working guys. You really can't ask for much more hard work. That's where it all starts. The great receivers that I've ever been around, hard-working Jerry Rice, Tim Brown. Durable, complete. All they think about is winning and beating the guy in front of them. Derek Carr is very similar. He's got great command. He sees the field well. I think Derek is a lot more athletic than people think. Hopefully, we can get some more scramble second reaction offense because Antonio is one of the great recovery, uncovering receivers in those situations that's in our game. I think just the fact that they work extremely hard. It's really important to them. They're both very talented. Usually that's the key ingredients for success."

Q: Is everyone present and accounted for or are they still filtering in?

Mayock: "They're still filtering in, but to the best of our knowledge, everybody's going to be here."

Q: The way you guys have seen Antonio Brown work how does that change your building?

Mayock: "I can just tell you that at practice when he catches a quick slant and gets vertical and goes, it's rare to see grown men in the NFL look at each other and just start giggling and laughing and it happens almost every day in practice. He just does something and grown men that have been around the league for years look at each other. I think what it also does is the young guys get to see how an All-Pro, potential Hall of Famer actually practices on a daily basis. If you're a young guy and you look at that, you better understand what it takes."

Coach Gruden: "I just don't want to overshadow Tyrell Williams either. He's cut from the same cloth, just quiet. Doesn't jump out of hot air balloons midair (*laughing*). Hopefully he doesn't learn that from Antonio. We have some



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life at that position. I think it's really helped our secondary. Listening to Karl Joseph and some of the veterans back there. It's elevated their practice habits. They don't want to look bad. They want to beat these guys. They want to go out there. They understand if we can cover these guys, we can cover anybody. I think that competition is something that the Raiders are used to around here. Something we're getting back to. You better come ready to practice or you're going to look bad. Some of these guys can really make you look bad. I think it's going to be great for both sides."