



Oakland Raiders Transcript

TE Derek Carrier

Q: What did the Raiders say that they wanted from you in free agency?

Carrier: “Just kind of the skill set that I’ve been able to develop so far. Just being an all-around tight end. Being able to do it in the run and pass game. That’s just something that I pride myself in and continuing to be able to improve.”

Q: Have the Raiders and Jon Gruden said how they plan on using?

Carrier: “We haven’t talked about that much. I’m sure that will be hashed out here in the days to come once we start workouts and start formal meetings with coaches. Like I said, right now I’m happy to be here and looking forward to that process.”

Q: What do you remember from your first time in Oakland? Is it nice being back?

Carrier: “Yeah definitely. Like you said, this is right where it began for me. Great experience coming into the NFL and kind of being able to get my feet wet. It’s very nice to be able to come back here and be able to contribute to this organization once again.”

Q: Having played for Jay Gruden and Sean McVay, is there any continuity you can take being with Jon Gruden now?

Carrier: “Yeah, they all fall under the same familiar coaching tree. So, I’m sure there’s similar concept, similar organization that they use in their offense. Should help. Should help me learn the offense rather quickly. But like I said, just looking forward to the opportunities here.”

Q: How would you say you’ve grown since you were first in Oakland?

Carrier: “I would think physically just understanding what kind of condition, how strong I need to be to compete down in and out in the NFL. I think mentally, too. More so than anything, just kind of understanding what it takes to be successful and just having a stick-to-itiveness and a mental toughness. Just keep getting after your dream, keep grinding every day.”

Q: Any particular areas you have strengthens that you’ve developed?

Carrier: “I think if you look at, obviously, when I came into the league as a wide receiver and now being a tight end, I think just my blocking has grown incredibly. That’s not to say I’m done growing. I still have areas in my game that I can improve all around. That’s just something that I take pride in. Just trying to get better and be the best, complete player and teammate that I can be here.”

S Marcus Gilchrist

Q: Can you walk us through the process of signing with the Raiders?

Gilchrist: “It started at the normal tampering period where we were able to start talking to teams. There were a couple of other teams that were interested, but ultimately I chose this to be my first visit. I have ties here on the coaching staff with [Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator] Rich Bisaccia. He was the guy that helped bring me in when I was in San Diego as a rookie. He was there for two years and I kept in constant contact with him when he was in Dallas. It kind of made it a little bit easier from me to come here first.”

Q: What did you think about the whole vibe of the Raiders?

Gilchrist: “You could just feel the energy in the building in what everyone feels like is ahead. Obviously, you know offensive the weapons that are here. You always start with the quarterback and there’s a great quarterback here. With that in mind. You have the pass rush here and a bunch of young players that have a bunch of upside. It’s exciting to be around and see and be here firsthand.”



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Q: Did they say if you were going to play strong safety or free safety?

Gilchrist: "I'm just going to play where ever is needed. I think it's one of my attributes that I played a lot of positions both in college and in the pros. Where ever I'm needed, where ever I can help the team best is I guess that's where I'll be."

Q: What was your thought of playing against the Raiders when you were with the Chargers?

Gilchrist: "It was always tough. Always a tough place to come. The Black Hole, the fans are crazy about the Raiders. It was always a hard place to play at. Even when I played my home games as a Charger, it always seemed like there were more Raiders fans in the stands than Chargers fans. It's a very exciting fan base. I just can't wait to be able to go out there and try to contribute and help this team win."

Q: Do you think you can help the Raiders record more interceptions? What are your strengths as a defensive back?

Gilchrist: "I think collectively it's a team thing. It falls on everybody at the end of the day. Some of it is a little bit of a luck of the draw. Sometimes people have seasons like that, that fall under that. But all and all I'm just looking forward to getting to know my teammates. Getting to know this coaching staff. Getting ready to try to put a plan together to go out there and try to win a bunch of games."

Q: What do you think you're going to see in terms of the kind of defense the Raiders are going to play?

Gilchrist: "If you look at the track record of [defensive coordinator] Coach [Paul] Guenther, you look in Cincinnati and on the [Mike] Zimmer tree and lot of things that they like to do, I think they do multiple things that's able to keep the offense off balance. That'll be very exciting to be a part of."

Q: Jon Gruden likes guys who love to play and prepare, does that describe you?

Gilchrist: "Most definitely. I think I'm a guy that likes to be prepared. I like to watch a lot of film. I like to know the defense in and out. I'm a vocal guy. I'm a communication guy. I think that those things are a big part my character and my skill set."

RB Doug Martin

Q: What did you take from your meeting with Jon Gruden?

Martin: "It was a good meeting. We met over in Tampa. Gruden was telling me, basically, what he expects from me for this upcoming year. From him talking, he has that type of effect on people that he got me very excited. He got me very excited to come here."

Q: How do you envision working with Marshawn Lynch?

Martin: "Marshawn is a great back. He's definitely made his mark here in the league. Whatever role that they want me to play, I'm willing to play. I'm not sure how many carries I'll be getting or how many carries we'll be splitting, but whatever I need to do to help this team, I'm going to do it."

Q: What enticed you to sign with the Raiders?

Martin: "Yeah, I have been the lead back for most of my career, but what enticed me in coming here is the potential for this team. We have Gruden coming. The front line and just being home. I was born here. This is my homecoming. Those are the things that enticed me on signing here."

Q: How good does it feel as a running back to see Gruden's emphasis on prioritizing blockers in the running game?

Martin: "That makes a runner feel real nice. You know, when he brings up bringing blocking tight ends, bringing in fullback, wanting to go old school. That's something that a running back wants to here. I'm excited to see what we're going to do."



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Q: Where are you at physically?

Martin: "Physically I feel great. I feel really good. Currently working out and training. Being healthy throughout the season helps anybody. Personally, I feel like being healthy is going to help me greatly to achieve that success that I would like to have for myself."

Q: Did you grow up a Raiders fan?

Martin: "I did. I did. I was born in Oakland and then I moved to Stockton, California. Growing up I watched the Raiders. Actually, me and Gruden were both joking about how we're both coming back to Oakland. Because he went to Tampa and now we're back in Oakland. It's like a full circle for us. It's something that we joke about."

Q: What do you remember about your big game in Oakland?

Martin: "I remember a lot of family being there. I had about like 15-plus family members in the stands, yelling. I believe it wasn't until the second half that I made those touchdowns and ran for all those yards, but it definitely was a special moment."

Q: Do you know Lynch personally at all? Did you talk to anyone during this decision process?

Martin: "Me and Marshawn, we don't really know each other that well. The first time I actually met Marshawn Lynch was my rookie year going to the Pro Bowl in Hawaii. It was me, Marshawn and Adrian Peterson. We've chit-chatted and we've talked but we haven't really sat down and had a full conversation. I can't wait to pick his brain and watch him and see how he plays the game and how he practices and all of that. I can't wait for that."

WR Jordy Nelson

Q: Can you walk us through getting the news from Green Bay to signing with the Raiders today?

Nelson: "Obviously, we got the news from Green Bay on Tuesday. Obviously, that was a little shock to the system and not what you want to hear after you've been somewhere for 10 years, but we know it's part of the business. Once that happened and the news broke, people started reaching out. Obviously, I know Edgar Bennett who coaches here now from my years in Green Bay. He reached out right away. Him and Coach [Jon] Gruden were all over trying to get me out here as soon as possible. We were out here on a 6:30 a.m. flight the next day. Got out here. Got to the facility. Met with the coaches. Got to the physical part and checked it out. Got to drive around and check out the area because I haven't spent much time in the Bay Area. Just to get a feel for it and see if this was a place for me and my family to move to or not. Then obviously after that some things set up and we were able to get it done before I got to go anywhere else."

Q: Did Derek Carr meet you at the airport?

Nelson: "He was in the car when I got off the plane at the airport. Which was great. He told me they gave him my number earlier, but he was like, 'I wasn't going to text you and add to the flood of text messages coming in.' He was like, 'If you come into town, I'll meet up with you.' So he did. We spent pretty much the whole day together. In the building here. He was the one who drove me around some of the area. I was actually about to meet his wife and two boys. Get a feel for the area and obviously a feel for him. I knew a lot about him from James Jones who played here and Davante Adams who he played with at Fresno State. I knew a lot about him before I even came out here. It was great to get to know him a little bit more. I think it's a great fit to be with him for the next couple of years."

Q: What do you expect from Jon Gruden as a coach? Are you excited to be a part of his offense?

Nelson: "Yeah, absolutely excited to be a part of the offense. I think he's a guy who has a creative mind. I think he's going to stay true to who he is, but also is willing to learn and adjust to what he has and play to the skill level that each of his players have. I think everyone knows the intensity that he's going to bring, he'll bring in day in and day out. That energy, I think, will feed down to the other coaches and into the players and will also allow us to match



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that on practice and obviously on game days. I look forward to him. I obviously saw him on TV and all of the other things he's done. To be a part of it and be a part of this organization moving forward is going to be exciting."

Q: Who's going to wear No. 87, you or Jared Cook?

Nelson: "I don't know. I have Cook's number in my phone, so I have to give him a call. But we'll see. If he charges \$1 for it, I don't think I'll pay. I'm a pretty cheap guy. I'll have to work on my negotiating skills and see what we can do and what not. We'll see. I haven't looked at any of that. Never even thought about that coming in to this team or any other team that I was possibly going to go to. So, I'm not a big guy to worry about that stuff. I'll figure out some number and we'll go play football."

Q: How would assess your level of play right now?

Nelson: "I think if you just combine the last two years. I think if you look two years ago, the year I won NFL Comeback Player of the Year coming off my ACL. I was still productive, 1,200 yards, I think it was 14 touchdowns or whatever. I think we had a lot of different things going on last year that obviously affected that. But I think I still can. I can still run. I can still catch. I think football at this level a lot of people focus on speed, but I mean I ran a 4.5 coming out of college. I wasn't blazing then either. It's different when you get helmet and shoulder pads on. I think I can do that. I can make plays. Any play is a big play or just catch in the slant. I look forward to just getting out, getting in rhythm with Derek and start forming that chemistry with him that I've had with Aaron [Rodgers] for the last 10 years. Continue to build off that. Just see what happens. Go out there and play my role in this offense. Make the plays that are available."

Q: How is it going to be suiting up for a different team after a decade with the Packers?

Nelson: "It's exciting. I think it will be different. Obviously, the first time I even just put on an Oakland Raider hat or shirt and shorts and shoes and walk around this building when we come back in April will be different. Then when we go to practice and it's helmets and then shoulder pads. Then obviously the first game. All of that will be a first time for everything, but at the end of the day it's going to be football. It's also going to be exciting. My wife and I were excited when we got drafted to Green Bay because we were starting our life together. We both grew up together in a small town, so we hadn't really been anywhere else besides Kansas. To be able to get away and form our family now this is another opportunity for us to be in a different part of the country. Experience something that's completely different than rural Kansas or even rural Wisconsin. We look forward to that. Also, I mean, the Oakland Raiders is a great organization, historic organization. To come and be a part of that, an opportunity to do some great things and leave your mark on this organization like I was in the first one."

Q: How do you think your Midwest background enhanced your work ethic?

Nelson: "I think it just sets the foundation of who I am. The hard work. The day-in and day-out grind. Understanding that you have to go do it every day. When you're farming if you don't get it done, no one else is going to. So, you have to go do it. You can't rely on someone else to do it for you. Everyone has a role in this job and you have to fulfill yours. Not only fulfill it but fulfill it the right way. Everyone is relying on you to do it the right way. I think that always carries over to the football field. We all have a job to do. It's all of our jobs to do it to the best of our ability. If all 11 of us at the same time do it, then we'll be successful."

Q: When you got to Oakland did you think you'd take your other trips?

Nelson: "The plan was to make some other trips, but you never know what's going to happen. You get to place and you enjoy it and they enjoy it. Obviously, there's a financial part of that. One thing I didn't want to do is fly around the country just because. I didn't want to waste my time or anyone else's time because I mean when I got here I saw all the time and work that they put in. I know all the other organizations were going to do the same thing. There's a lot of jobs on the line. There's a lot of guys hitting the free agent market and they're trying to organization things, so it's not fair for me to just fly around just for fun just to see different areas. Once we got in here, enjoyed the fit. Obviously, the financial part was whatever they were going to do on that end. As a player, I don't think you get involved in that too much. You have to figure out if the fit is right for you. Like I said knowing some of the coaches,



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knowing a little bit about Derek, understanding the offense is something very similar. Different terminology, but similar to what I had in Green Bay. I think will just allow this transition to be that much smoother and that's what we need right now. We're going to be on a tight window to be ready to go for offseason and into the season. Right now on a two-year deal, I need to go in, get going and make the most of it."

Q: How would you describe your leadership style?

Nelson: "It's very similar to what I had in Green Bay. Randall [Cobb] and I were kind of the older guys. Davante had just finished up year four there and everyone else was younger than him. Randall is going into year eight. I'm kind of used to it. My leadership style is always about action. I always think actions speak louder than words. I'm there to help the guys. I'm there to teach them as much as possible. What I've experienced over my 10 years, and what we've been very successful doing. Also at the same time I'm there to learn, too. It's all about communicating. Step up and say some things. I think if a young guy watches a veteran guy go about his day. The way he goes about it. If it's in the meeting room. If it's in the weight room. If it's the way he recovers and prepares for a game or the way he practices. That will have more impact than me just sitting there and saying a bunch of stuff and then not going out there and doing it."

Q: Do you think you'll be able to adjust to the Bay Area after being in Green Bay?

Nelson: "Yeah, I'm getting to see a little bit of it. I'm also understanding that there's different areas of the Bay Area. If it's here actually in Oakland or outside of Oakland where Derek was showing me some of the guys live. I mean we were driving around and seeing the hillside, grass and cattle and deer running around. I think there's still that aspect there. But also it's going to be great to be close to the city and be able to go downtown and experience some different things that you might not be able to enjoy in Green Bay. I think you kind of get the best of both worlds here. Being able to maybe live a bit outside of town but also it's easy to get into town and experience some great things. We'll have to slowly figure that out. When to drive on the highways and when not to drive on the highways so we can make the most of our time. We'll pick a lot of people's brains to figure out what that is and we'll learn from experience. I think we're very laid-back people, my wife and I can handle a lot of different things. It'll be great."

Q: Have you looked at the housing prices out here?

Nelson: "I have. That's what I told my wife. I said, 'When we sell our house in Green Bay, I don't think it's going to make it very far out here in Wisconsin.' That honestly will be an adjustment. You know that coming into it and you know what you're getting out of it. The weather is going to be great. All that other stuff. It's one of those things that will be an adjustment as well, but it'll be a great experience. I guess I won't buy as many movies or something to make up for the lost money in between."

Q: Does Derek Carr remind you of Aaron Rodgers or is that unfair this early?

Nelson: "Definitely unfair right now. I haven't even caught a ball from Derek yet. I think that's something that I'll obviously get to experience here in the next coming months. I have heard that and most likely I'm going to stay away from the comparison because I don't think that's fair to either one of them. For what Aaron has accomplished in this league is second to none pretty much. The way he performs day in and day out. I'm sure Derek is more welcoming that challenge to be that good for that long. There's no reason to put that on him as well. Guys are going to be their own self. I look forward to seeing how he plays. I think that a lot of it could just be the demeanor on the field, the throws they can make and stuff like that. That'll be something that'll be a wait and see game for me and we'll go from there."



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FB Keith Smith

Q: Why do you think it's a good fit for you in Oakland and what went into the conversion a couple years ago from linebacker to fullback?

Smith: "I just feel like this is almost a homecoming for me. I went to school in the Bay and am really familiar with the area. I've got a lot of friends out here. That part of it was really intriguing to me. Also, just the challenge that Coach Gruden was presenting. I feel like that is one thing that I've been going through my whole career: overcoming challenges. I'm just here trying to help the guys win. You asked about the transition, too. It wasn't that bad of a transition for me because, really, at linebacker you kind of have to think like a running back because that's the position and guy that you're mirroring the whole game. You have to know what he's thinking like. You have to move like him. As far as the transition, it was more of the terminology, getting used to the offensive terminology. Also, incorporating my knowledge from being on the defensive side and knowing what linebackers are thinking and what I'm doing. I feel like all of that played into the little success that I've had at the new position. I feel like I still have more strides to go to get a lot better."

Q: Did Gruden get you fired up?

Smith: "You have a conversation with Coach Gruden and you are going to feel like you're ready to be out there on the field right then and there. He was just telling me that he's got big plans for me and he's going to put a lot on my back. I feel like that's what I'm here for. That's one thing that I didn't get that much of in Dallas, a lot of offensive workload. It's always a blessing when you hear something like that and I'm definitely looking forward to it."

Q: How much work did you get offensively with Dallas?

Smith: "Blocking, I averaged around 10-15 snaps a game, which is not that much. I was playing all special teams, so it wasn't like I was just sitting there. As far as offensive-wise, I think Scott Linehan is big on the passing game and he likes the whole single-back formation and whatnot. He didn't use me as much. I'm looking forward to incorporating my talents any way I can to help these guys win."

Q: You talked about special teams a little bit, how much does having Rich Bisaccia in Oakland attract you?

Smith: "That was almost the main reason. Rich is my guy. He's always been a real close piece to my career. His belief and confidence in my abilities and what I can bring to the table was definitely one of the biggest factors of my decision. Having him, incorporating the whole Bay Area and everything that comes with it and my history here, it was a pretty easy choice."

Q: Did Gruden articulate his belief in blocking, running and 'big boy football' to you?

Smith: "When you've got the backfield that we've got, I feel like that's what you are going to do. Now, Derek [Carr] has weapons and a solid, solid backfield. Not to say it wasn't solid before, but just the addition of Doug Martin and hopefully I can help, too. I feel like we are going to run the rock. Jon Gruden is old school so he's going to try and play that smash-mouth football."

Q: When you were coming out of San Jose State, could you imagine yourself signing as a fullback somewhere?

Smith: "Never. Never. I look back on it and that's one thing that I thank God every day for, the transition. I feel like it happened for a reason and football hasn't really been as easy as it is now for me, with this position change. I feel like my skillset fits the position a lot more. I feel like I have so much more to learn in the position, too. Not to say I don't miss linebacker, but I still feel like I'm a linebacker deep down in my heart. That's just my mentality. I'm a fullback with a linebacker mentality."

Q: You caught a pass in college, an interception off of Derek Carr?

Smith: "I did. I picked him off my senior year when we played Fresno State. They were ranked. We kind of shattered their dreams to say the least. I've always been cool with Derek. We actually met at media day at the Mountain West. I kind of knew him ever since then and nothing but love and respect for that guy."



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LB Tahir Whitehead

Q: Walk us through how this transpired. Was this the first place you went?

Whitehead: "For me, what really attracted me was Jon Gruden. Great guy in the league. Grew up watching some of the teams he's coached. That right there in itself was enough for me to be motivated to come out here and when I got here, first visit and only visit. I felt good about the coaching staff. I felt good about the energy in the building. Everyone that I bumped into, it was a good feeling."

Q: Do you know what they have in store for you?

Whitehead: "I played everything in my career. I'm just a linebacker. I don't know exactly what's going on just yet. Wherever it is, I'm just going to go out there and play ball."

Q: How much did you look at Coach Guenther's defense in Cincinnati?

Whitehead: "Looking into that, I just knew he allowed his linebackers to go out there, flow, make plays and ball. That right there interested me because being a linebacker, you want to go out there and make plays. That was enough motivation for me to want to play for PG. Like I said, I feel good about all of the energy that I got from Coach Guenther, Coach Gruden. Everything has been great."

Q: Would you say that of the linebacker positions, there's one you played more than the other ones?

Whitehead: "No. I've played all positions equally. I don't try to label myself as one particular linebacker, Mike, Will or Sam. I feel as though I play linebacker. I'm an NFL linebacker. I don't try to pigeonhole myself and limit me to one particular position."

Q: Ideally, what do you think you bring to a defense?

Whitehead: "That ballhawk mentality. That energy. That Leadership. Going into year seven, I have played a bunch of football. I've missed one game over the course of six years. I believe that's what I bring. I bring leadership. A guy that's active. A guy who is going to go out there and give it his all. You know exactly what you're going to get from me on a day-in, day-out, week-in, week-out."

Q: Aside from Gruden being here, did you have preconceived ideas of the Raiders from afar?

Whitehead: "For sure. Last time during the free agency process, I was set to come out here before I resigned with the Lions. The history of the organization, the area in the Bay Area, the west coast. There were a lot of things that intrigued me to come out west. I'm excited about it this time that we were able to get it done. I'm just ready to work."

Q: Today was a pretty crazy day at the facility. Did you get a sense of how busy it was?

Whitehead: "Actually I didn't get a chance to see how active they were today until I got a chance to get back to my phone and realized how many guys they signed. I'm like 'dang, they're making a lot of moves.' Once I got a chance to see some of the guys that were signed, I thought adding those guys with some of the pieces that they already have on the team, this team can be something that's going to go out there and do damage."

Q: Is there anybody on the team you have an existing relationship with?

Whitehead: "No one in particular. I haven't gotten a chance to play with anyone on the team currently. The only guy I am semi-familiar with is Khalil Mack. He went to Buffalo and I went to Temple and we were rival schools. I actually had a chance to meet Bruce Irvin at one point in Panama. We did a football camp out there so I had an opportunity to meet Bruce. I saw how good of a guy he was. Knowing that Bruce and Khalil would be coming off the edge, and I could team up with those guys, I was excited about that."



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Q: After playing six years with one organization, are you energized to walk into a new place?

Whitehead: "I look forward to it. There's always a challenge to insert yourself and get guys to become familiar with me and me familiar with other guys. It forces you to learn people, learn everything all over again. I'm looking forward to the challenge. I'm an extremely likeable guy, easy going, I'm a team guy. I think everything is going to work out perfectly."

Q: Are you glad you don't have to face Jordy Nelson twice a year anymore?

Whitehead: "That's a good feeling that we're on the same side now. Instead of being on the opposing teams and trying to hit him, I can sit back and watch him go to work."