



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: “We’re busy at work on our preparation, looking forward to the opportunity to go play down in Mexico City against the Texans. Like I said, we’re back from the bye and busy at work getting ready for them. Questions?”

Q: How did the team come out of the bye week health-wise?

Coach Del Rio: “Pretty good. We’re in pretty solid shape.”

Q: How much did the run game and the defense contribute to dominating time of possession in the last three games?

Coach Del Rio: “I think they go hand in hand. It’s the ultimate team game. All three phases contribute to something like time of possession. The defense goes three-and-out, they didn’t get much time. We’re able to possess the ball with good field position created by special teams. I think those three factors all working together are all a part of it.”

Q: How have the Texans been able to remain so strong defensively despite losing J.J. Watt to an injury?

Coach Del Rio: “Yeah, they’re doing a nice job. [Texans defensive coordinator] Romeo [Crennel] is an experienced defensive coordinator, former head coach. One of the really good coaches in the league. He does a great job with his guys, and they have talent. They have talent throughout that defense. They have a lot of talent still, even with J.J. [out]. They have a lot of talent in their front. They have a lot of talent in their back end. I think they have six or seven former first-rounders in that group, and they’re well coached.”

Q: How do you like how the leadership on the team has been and kept the team on the right path in big games?

Coach Del Rio: “We’ve been very purposeful in approaching each game one at a time, really understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each opponent. We have a healthy respect for every team we go against, but we’re not fearing anybody. So, it’s all about us and our preparation leading up to the game. Whether it’s here at home in front of our great fans or whether it’s down somewhere else on the road. Even an international setting like Mexico City, which we know will be awesome, but it still comes down to our preparation leading up to playing a good game.”

Q: The Texans were given instruction to not eat or drink food that isn’t provided by the team. Have you provided your players with similar instructions?

Coach Del Rio: “We try to provide a vision of how we want the business trip to go each week whenever we’re traveling. It’s really business as usual for us in terms of laying that out.”

Q: What led to the Jack Del Rio Foundation giving back down in Mexico?

Coach Del Rio: “My wife. Yeah, my wife. She’s the one that really led the effort and obviously, the Raiders Wives Association helped as well, but my wife, Linda, is really the person really driving that for us. I really appreciate that and that effort. She’s done some things with the Order of Malta and had some opportunities to meet a lot of really neat people at the Vatican where she was doing some work on behalf of the Malta. She met some of these people that were doing tremendous things in countries where there was a great need. With us having an opportunity to go play in Mexico City, it was a real natural fit. She saw that fit and has worked hard. It’s been a collaborative effort with many people contributing. I’m just happy that she’s doing that on our behalf. The credit has to go where it belongs, to her. I’m focusing primarily on coaching a football team and she’s doing a great job of trying to meet the needs of some of the people where we’re going to be playing.”

Q: Are you still waiting to hear about Aldon Smith’s reinstatement?

Coach Del Rio: “Yeah, nothing has changed from what I spoke of last week.”



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Q: When players went down to Mexico City for Draft Day 3, what did they tell you about the atmosphere to expect for the game?

Coach Del Rio: “I didn’t really ask them for a scouting report. *(laughing)* I just asked them to be good ambassadors, represent us with class and come back having conducted themselves properly. That’s all. I think in each case where we’ve had players go down or people go down from our organization, I think they represented us the right way. The common theme really is that it’s going to be loud. There’s a lot of people and it’s going to be very exciting. They’re looking forward to us playing a good game down there.”

Q: Do you expect it to feel like a home game?

Coach Del Rio: “No, we kind of expect it to be like a road game for the offense and special teams and home game for the defense in that our crowd is going to be really loud. It’s going to be loud the whole time regardless of what side of the ball you’re on. That’s really how we’re approaching.”

Q: Will the distance that you’re going to kick a field goal at be determined during pregame warmups?

Coach Del Rio: “That’s one of the things that [special teams coordinator] Brad [Seely] will do, tell me the range of the automatics. Then we always kind of put a cap on what we think we have a reasonable shot at making in a desperation situation. So, we always do that, not only for our guy, but for their guy. We’ll evaluate their guy. Not only with what we know about them going into the game, but then how they warm up and what that looks like.”

Q: What did you think of the Bleacher Report video with Derek Carr, Amari Cooper, Michael Crabtree and Marquette King?

Coach Del Rio: “I have not seen that yet, but I’ll look for it this afternoon. After practice I’ll look for it. It was good? OK. I’ll look forward to it.”

Q: What’s been working for Khalil Mack these last few games? What adjustments has he made against teams that try to take him out of the game?

Coach Del Rio: “I’ve said it, the group that’s been here on a daily basis hears me say it, he’s been terrific from Day 1. His work ethic is really strong. He’s very purposeful. There’s been no problem from our standpoint with what he’s doing. His numbers are going to come. Teams are going to do different things to try to slow him down just like we’ll do offensively against people that we know we have to account for. He’s one of those kind of guys that you have to account for. He’s giving great effort. We have good design, and he’s going to get his numbers.”

QB Derek Carr

Q: What did Jon Gruden’s compliments about you mean to you?

Carr: “Wow, that’s really cool. Coach [Jon] Gruden has been great to me ever since I went to the Gruden camp coming out and spending that day with him which was awesome and we’ve kept in contact ever since. I saw him last year after the season and he’s just such a cool guy to talk to. Coming from him, someone who’s won a Super Bowl, has led teams and is such a great coach, that means a lot to me.”

Q: Does he give you advice still or do you reach out to him for advice?

Carr: “Sometimes in the offseason I’ll pick his brain about certain things and it just happens with two football guys that love the game, football comes up and you talk about stuff. So, it’s not that I text him seeking out advice or anything like that, but it just comes up and I just soak up as much knowledge as I can.”

Q: Do you remember Gruden’s story about you breaking the cameras at his camp?

Carr: “*(laughter)* Yeah, he didn’t ask me for any money for it, so I appreciate that. But, I do remember breaking his cameras and him saying, ‘Who is this guy?’ *(laughter)* It was fun. We had a great time and looking back on it, man, that’s probably the most fun I’ve had on any of that pre-draft stuff, my time with him.”



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Q: Are you approaching this game as a road game in reference to how loud the crowd will be?

Carr: “Yeah, you approach it that way because you never know. Never played a game there. I know that when we played at Wembley [Stadium], at Wembley my rookie year, it was that same kind of way. You approach it that way, so whenever it’s a neutral site you just never know which way it could go. Hopefully it will just be filled with Raider fans and we’ll be good to go.”

Q: Did you ever feel that Houston did not draft you because of their history with your brother?

Carr: “Well, they never talked to me. I never talked one word to a Houston scout, G.M., coach anything. I’m just happy to be here, I can tell you that. But, I do think the world of [Texans Owner] Mr. [Bob] McNair. I think that he’s first-class.”

Q: Did you see the video that bleacher report posted?

Carr: “(laughter) How is that OK? That’s crazy. But, yeah I saw it.”

Q: Did you not like it?

Carr: “It was alright. That’s not me. (laughter)”

Q: What are the challenges of playing at altitude?

Carr: “To be completely honest, any time you deal with elevation, it’s just hydrate and everyone knows that. I’ve been told that since I was in high school and we were traveling up 300 feet. ‘You got to hydrate,’ and those kind of things. That’s just one of the number one things, hydration is key and you just try and hydrate really well. It’s definitely a game, if any, you don’t want to go into not hydrated.”

Q: Did you feel it in Wyoming more than other places during your college career?

Carr: “You definitely feel it more in Wyoming? Yeah, you definitely can feel it. But, it’s just something, it’s like weather, whether it’s altitude or weather or whatever. If you let it affect you it will. Just keep the mindset that it won’t. It’s not going to affect you and you go into it with that kind of mindset.”

Q: What feels different when you’re at that type of elevation, level?

Carr: “Less air. (laughter) I’m not good with all of the science of it, but I’d just say there’s less air.”

Q: Does the ball travel further?

Carr: “Oh yeah, it definitely can go farther. That’s always fun. I had fun with that in pregame.”

Q: How has your leadership style evolved over the years and is it hard to command a room full of alpha males?

Carr: “To be honest, I’m just myself. I just really am. I thank God that I’m able to come into a room and guys will respond to anything I have to say and I think that has a lot to do with how they see me work, how they see me go about my business and those kinds of things. You can’t say one thing or try and get something out of another guy if you’re not doing it yourself. I’m just thankful that we have a good group of guys that trust in me, but we also have a big room of guys of a lot of leaders. There’s a lot of guys in that room that have come from other teams that were leaders on those teams. I’m just thankful to be on a team with a lot of them, but my style hasn’t changed because I’m just me. If I have to say something, I will, if I don’t think I should, I won’t. There’s no real, ‘I’m a rah rah guy’ or anything like that. I’m just me.”

Q: Do you have an edge when you need it?

Carr: “Yeah, I definitely get mad. Yeah.”



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Q: Because of the experiences with your teammates you mentioned, is that why you guys are able to ignore the hype of the primetime games?

Carr: "Yeah, because we know if you don't win, it doesn't mean anything. It's a cool thing to look back on someday. It's obviously cool, don't get me wrong. I'm very excited to play on Monday night and Sunday night and those things, but it doesn't change the game for me. It doesn't change my heart rate, you know, it stays the same. You just go out there and we have such a good process here. I think that that is such a key thing, we have such a good process to where Coach Del Rio has taught us, if you prepare a certain way and you do things a certain way, it doesn't matter what game we're playing in, it's just the next game. And, I've bought into that and I know that our team has."

Q: Have you kept in touch with Aldon Smith at all?

Carr: "I've talked back and forth to him as a friend, texted him. To be completely honest, nothing about football. I tweeted him yesterday because he posted that video and I was excited. I was like, 'Man, is he telling us something?' I don't know. Whenever we get him back, we'll be happy to get our brother back."

Q: Tommie Smith is going to be lighting the torch in Mexico City. Can you talk about how significant that is?

Carr: "Absolutely. We're all excited. He'll be excited to do it. I think him and Mr. Davis are really close, so I know it's a special moment for them two. I've never met him but I am looking forward to meeting him."

Q: The social consciousness that is in the world right now, it seems like an appropriate choice.

Carr: "I love it. I absolutely love it. I am all about everyone coming together. I am all about people loving one another and serving one another. I think the more people that we have that are in positions like this, whether you're a quarterback or a coach, to stop creating this divisive division between people, I think the better we're going to be. I think if we can stand up and show support, show love to each other, stand together and lock arms, I think that's better than creating more division."

Q: Did you see any of the comments about you running for president in 2020?

Carr: "Yeah, I might. I'll think about it. *(laughter)* It's definitely something... I'll never say no to that. We'll see."

Q: Who is your running mate?

Carr: "I haven't decided yet. I'll let you guys know."

Q: How much do you think about points per game?

Carr: "To be completely honest with you, the first time I've thought about it is when you said that. I really don't think about points. I don't think about stats or those things. I think about their defense, what they do in certain situations, and what they could do. The scoreboard will take care of itself if you take care of what you got to take care of, starting in your preparation."

Q: Talk about the offensive line. They've been so good at protecting you and in the run game, and it seems like they've had a ripple effect to the defense.

Carr: "I tell those guys all the time, if you win, we win. I tell them before the game: you win, we win. They love that. They want to put it on them. My goodness, look at Austin Howard walking this way. I wouldn't want to be in the way of that, just being honest. I'd give him everything I got, though. I think that when your offensive line can do certain things, protect the quarterback, create running lanes, create blocks downfield for receivers, that inspires everybody. If anyone has the choice to not run 20 yards down the field, I think it would be them but they continue to do it and play with great effort and I think it fuels our team."



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Q: Will it be awkward to go out there and see the Texans helmet out there that you grew up watching? Playing against them?

Carr: "My rookie year, it was weird. Seeing that helmet and thinking, 'Oh, my brother should be playing.' It will be cool though. I have nothing but love and respect for Mr. McNair. That is one of the nicest, genuine men I've ever met in my life, football aside. He is one of the coolest people in the world. My brother would tell you the same. That city was so good to us, good to my family. For that, we're always thankful. I'm happy I'm not there, but I still have love for them."