



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Defensive Coordinator Ken Norton, Jr.

Q: Are you happy with the pressure you've been getting this year? Is it reflective of the amount of sacks you've gotten?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Well, we do get them off their spot a lot, but like you said, there's a lot of different stats you can look at. That particular stat, obviously, you want it up. You want as many sacks as possible. Again, there's lots of things to improve on. There's things we're doing really good. Things we certainly need to improve on. Sacks, I think last year we were up in the 38 area, where you end up. The season's not quite over yet. At the same time, Khalil [Mack] is doing well. Bruce [Irvin] is doing well. I think the sack and the pressure is developing, but obviously it's not where we want it."

Q: Are you surprised the rest of them doesn't have more sacks because so much attention is going to Mack?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Again, Khalil has all the sacks, but they all work together. I think when one guy gets the sack, all of them celebrate the sack. Everybody just talks about the one guy, but they all have to work together. They run games, they practice. Obviously, they work off of each other. Bruce is a guy that's very versatile and I put in a lot of spies. We have a lot of quarterbacks who like to move around a lot and run, so he becomes a spy guy while Khalil gets to do the sacking. At the same time, you just have to really let guys do what they do. This week, obviously, this quarterback isn't the type that's going to run a lot. So you might see Bruce rush a lot more. At the same time, the guys are all working together. When one gets a sack, they all celebrate. So the group is doing well as Khalil is."

Q: How has Jihad Ward progressed from the beginning of the season?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Development is ongoing. You go from Year 1 to Year 2 to Year 3 and some guys develop right away. Some come and develop impactful, right when they step on the field. Some take one, two, three years. Myself, I didn't get to go and play until my second year and [it wasn't] until my third year until I really started playing at a really high level. As far as him understanding what we do, as far as him understanding how to work well with others and to really accept the coaching, very happy with what he's doing. Obviously, from your standpoint, everybody talks about sacks, but at the same time, his discipline, his gap control, hisamentals are down. He's always hustling, plays really hard, in meetings early, asking for extra help. He's durable. He's playing every play. He's here every day, shows up all the time. Extremely happy with his development."

Q: How has he handled having a longer season?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Well he's big and strong and has some veterans around him who have been there before. Bruce has done a lot. Khalil has done a lot. He's not the only guy in the room. They all kind of work together. They have a good rotation. We brought him here to be here and play and grow and develop every day and he's doing just that."

Q: Does the secondary look forward to facing Philip Rivers, who says he wants to throw deep?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "I don't think there's any question whether he says it or not. We know teams are going to try to throw deep, and it's up to the deep defenders to defend the deep. They're going to try to run the ball. They're going to try to throw the ball in the middle. There's situations. There's first down. There's red zone. There's third down. There's second-and-1. There's third-and-short, like last game we had a couple of fourth downs. There's so many different situations that you have to master. You just have to put them all together, then you get to the wins. He's going to attack us over the top, in the middle. They have good tight ends. There's so many different aspects to the game that one aspect isn't more important than the other."

Q: Rivers is kind of like a point guard the way he distributes the ball.

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Absolutely, as is all good quarterbacks. You expect [that from] all the good quarterbacks. We've been facing a lot of top quarterbacks from the very beginning of the season. They're all point guards. They're all pretty good. It's the pros. I mean, the quarterback is one of the focal points of your team."



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Q: What makes their tight ends so good in the red zone?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Well because they're good tight ends. You have a good quarterback. You have good receivers. You have a good concept and scheme. They throw the ball a lot, so you get a lot of shots. You get a good quarterback, that's a good start."