



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio**

**Opening statement:** "OK guys, Eagle Week. Monday Night, Christmas night edition. What an opportunity and a challenge. This is probably the best team in football. Really well coached. Good across the board. Really good on offense, defense, special teams. They're playing well. I know they lost [Carson] Wentz, but in [Nick] Foles, they have a very, very capable guy who's won a lot of games in the league. They're a good football team. Got our work cut out for us. Looking forward to the challenge. Questions?"

**Q: Do you think you'll have Rodney Hudson this week?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I hope so. Yeah, I hope so. He's a pretty tough guy. I would say that chances are pretty good, yeah."

**Q: But you called up another center in James Stone.**

**Coach Del Rio:** "We do have another center on the roster. We might have another one before the week is up. We do, [Jon] Feliciano is really the main reason. Feliciano is the one that's not going to practice today. He's the one that's the biggest question mark."

**Q: Do you know if Amari Cooper will be back this week?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yeah, we hope to get him back to practice and have a good week of practice and be ready to go Monday night."

**Q: Have you noticed a change in the way Sean Smith has played?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I think he's been much, much more productive, obviously. Much more on point. I felt like he was assigned last week to shadow Dez [Bryant] most of the night and did a pretty solid job of that and competing there. So yeah, I think it's obvious. I think his play has improved over the last month. It's coincided with all the coverage getting a little tighter. The rush getting a little better. Kind of hand in hand the overall production of our defense has improved over the last month."

**Q: You talked about left tackle being a competitive situation this week. When do you think you'll decide who will start?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Probably up to kickoff before it's made public for the Eagles, but we're going to work on it internally. We know who the guys are that are going to play. The combination of guys. I imagine that they'll all play in some capacity or another. We'll get our preparation throughout the week and then [offensive line coach] Mike [Tice] will help us make that call."

**Q: Have you noticed that the receivers are being covered differently?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Well, you're covered differently when Coop [Amari Cooper] isn't demanding roll to him or attention that he normally gets. Not having Coop, you feel the difference because he's such a dynamic, explosive playmaker for us."

**Q: Is Sean Smith being put in matchups that are better for his skill set?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yes, I think that's just part of the way we've approached it. Pags [assistant head coach – defense coach John Pagano] has done a good job of getting those guys on the same page and how we're going to cover certain groups. They've responded and done a nice job of executing that on game day."

**Q: Do you feel like the small chance to make the playoffs is resonating with the team?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "We're not hanging onto that. We just want to play good football. Sunday night, we wanted to represent ourselves and play good football that the nation would be proud of, that family and friends and people that were watching, tuning in to check on their buddies how they're doing. It's the same thing Monday night. We want to play good football. Just want to play good football. You do the best you can each week and we'll add them up at the end."



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

**Q: Have you been able to get the taste out of your mouth about what happened with the chain?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I'm going back. *(laughing)*. I'm not going back, man. I've already said how I feel about it. I'm not going back there and risk showing anger and going, getting there and all of a sudden getting myself fined because I say the wrong things. I've already said enough."

**Q: Have you talked to anyone at the league about it?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yes."

**Q: What kind of year have you seen from the guys who made the Pro Bowl?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I think in the trenches, that's the strength of our football team. I think it was represented in the voting. Khalil Mack has once again been tremendous. All those guys on offense. K.O. [Kelechi Osemele] is a dominant player. Rodney really, really good. And Donald [Penn] got recognized. I think that's a little bit about the pass blocking. We don't give up a lot of sacks. We maybe haven't run it as much as we've expect to, but I think it's a good group, a good group of guys that represent us. Proud of them."

**Q: Stats suggest that Derek Carr isn't having the season he had last year. Has he grown as a quarterback?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "There's no question he's growing. The experience he's getting, he's definitely growing. Even the very best. Even the very elite quarterbacks of all time weren't perfect every year. Derek is good football player. We're going to win a lot of games together here."

**Q: What jumps out about the Eagles' offense?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "They've been very explosive. [Eagles Head Coach] Doug [Pederson] has done a great job of going in there. They have over 30 points a game. I think they're in the positive turnover ratio, plus-9, plus-10, right in that area, which is what you want to be. It helps you be explosive like that. They have a good football team. They're good in all three phases."

### Raiders QB Derek Carr

**Q: Looking back at that last play, is there something you would have done differently?**

**Carr:** "Hold on to the ball. It's not like I didn't try."

**Q: In terms of reaching out at that stop, how do you weigh that?**

**Carr:** "So my mindset of doing it, I don't think I would have, to be honest. We talk about ball security, jumping with two hands, stuff like that and those are things like, 'Yes sir, I'll try to do my best.' I honestly didn't think I was going to drop the ball. When I took off to jump, in my head I thought it was a touchdown because I knew I had the corner. From a mindset standpoint, looking back, yeah I want to do something different because we lost. But from making that decision, I always think of it in basketball terms: I'd rather take the last shot and miss it than pass it off and try and do it another way. From a competitive standpoint, I'd try it but with better technique, two hands, I don't know, but something to where we don't lose the game. But from making that decision, I think I'd go for it again."

**Q: Some people said the penalty for that is something that needs to be looked at because it's too harsh.**

**Carr:** "With it being that that's what it is, nothing we can do about it. We lost. It does deter your mind of giving an amazing effort because an amazing effort ends up in a loss so it's no good. I always try and give my best effort. When I was there and in the moment, I saw the pylon and I saw a win for our team and I tried to go for it. The fact that it went out and they get the ball, it's like, 'Dang,' one of those things. It would be one of those things that I'd definitely look at, but I don't know if defensive coaches would like it too much. It's definitely something that could be looked at. There are a lot of things that they want to look at and we're always trying to make the game better. It would definitely take away from guys making an effort for those types of situations."



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**Q: During recent games where you haven't had Amari Cooper available, how are you guys being defended differently?**

**Carr:** "When people cover Coop, they bracket him, they try and match him, they try and in-and-out him, they try a whole bunch of different things. When that doesn't happen, the attention goes to [Michael] Crabtree, the attention goes to Jared [Cook] depending on the defensive personnel that they have. They're able to roll coverages and make it hard for us. It's one of those things that is next man up. We have to play ball. That's why sometimes if we're not as efficient or things like that, we're trying to do the same kinds of things and make plays, it just hasn't worked out that way. One of those years where we haven't been as efficient. It's not an effort thing. It's not guys not giving it their all and things like that, it's just that we haven't been effective."

**Q: You scrambled and took off a lot more last week. Is that something they were doing?**

**Carr:** "They're a team that run a lot of games up front. They'll bring an end to the other side and it leaves windows and lanes for the quarterback. Some teams you play are straight rush and they're just waiting for you to run. Games like that, even though it is man coverage, you can't really take off because they're just waiting to grab you. But, this was a game where they had a lot of, if they run into each other, there's a whole side of the field like on the long one. They were at a big game and I was able to step up and go out. You saw how big the hole was. It's not always like that, but I knew going into it that there would be opportunities like that. If my read wasn't there then I knew the coverage behind it, depending on what kind of routes we were running, that those would definitely be opportunities."

**Q: When you're outside of the pocket and running, do you feel like more of your ability is being used?**

**Carr:** "Yeah, oh yeah. Absolutely. We've all talked about this. I think we've talked about it last year. There's a fine line of, do you stay in there for the third option, the fourth option or do you take off? It's a fine line. I definitely feel comfortable doing it. I think we had like three, if I'm not mistaken, three or four first downs running. So, it's something I feel comfortable with. I definitely, it's something I'm not going to do all the time. But, to be able to have that and to make it another mental checkpoint for me verses certain coverages and looks to know that hey, I can go do that, it's something that I can definitely grow in. But, it's something that I'll never be a guy that – I'm going into this game, I'm running five, seven, eight times – it won't ever be like that. It just has to be the situation and the play."

**Q: Do you feel that you are a better quarterback this year than you were last year?**

**Carr:** "You know what, you'd have to ask my coaches on my grades. [Offensive coordinator] Coach [Todd] Downing and [quarterbacks coach] Jake [Peetz]. They grade me pretty tough and my grades have been where we want them to be, but we want them to be better, obviously. That's every year. But I definitely have worked, if anything, harder this year, because I learned so much from last year. Every year, I find things where I can go harder into and things like that. We just haven't executed at a high level as a team, to be honest. So, do I feel like I'm a better player today than I was a year ago, last year? Absolutely. I definitely do. But, there's definitely decisions and things that can be made that would be better for our team."

**Q: The adversities and things you have gone through this year, will that make you a better player down the road?**

**Carr:** "Absolutely. I'm glad you said that, because I've been thinking about that a long time. I don't know if you've been reading my texts or tapped into my phone, but you know, I really think so. Absolutely. I think it was my rookie year, we were sitting there in Seattle and I think we were 0-9 or 0-10 at that point and somebody asked me – think they were from Seattle – is this season ruining you? I said, 'Not if I know who I am.' It's one of those things that I use everything that I go through and things to be better. I use it all to just fuel the fire, to grow and learn from. There's been things that I've gone through this year that I've never been through and I'm learning how to deal with those things and not just deal with them, but execute them at a high level. So, I absolutely, 100 percent believe that going forward, again, this time next year we're standing here I'll feel like, man because I trust my work ethic, that I'm a better player this year because of what I went through. Not only on the field, but off the field as well, what I've dealt with. I think that going forward I'll definitely be a better player."



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**Q: Does it say a lot that your teammates voted you as the Ed Block Courage Award recipient in a difficult year like this?**

**Carr:** "Yes. Without even just speaking on how much that award meant to me. Just the fact that your teammates vote for it, that really touched my heart. Just being candid. It really showed me that obviously I know there's things I can do better, but it showed me that my teammates still see me for who I am. They still see me grinding through adverse times and those kinds of things. I gave you guys free permission to go ahead and kick me right in the funny business if I changed as a person after that. Because we signed a contract and all those things, it didn't change me. If anything, it made me learn things throughout the course of time and want to be better. It definitely didn't change how I work. It definitely didn't change the effort I give. For my teammates to vote for something, that's like when you... Whenever you're able to be a captain, everyone is like, 'Well, of course the quarterback.' That's something the teammates vote on. I don't know how every team does it, but that's something our team votes on. Every time you can just be a captain of the teammates vote for something, that means the world. Even opposing players, opposing coaches. When they're voting on something, that means a lot because those are the ones that you're going head-to-head against, mentally, physically all those things."

**Q: How do you quantify the loss of Donald Penn and how might that affect you going forward?**

**Carr:** "You know, you guys know I love Donald, obviously. He doesn't get me hit very often. For that, we're really close. I think I'm closer to Donald than David [Carr] is with his offensive line. I think having a guy like Donald who really cares about you. If you get even a finger touched on you, he feels sick. I'm just describing his personality. When you lose a guy like that, it hurts. Again, we've talked about this with other positions. You lose a starter or you lose a coach to the business or something like that, it always hurts. It's next man up and you have to keep going, but losing Donald, nobody felt good about it. I can tell you that."

**Q: Did the kidney stones affect Rodney Hudson?**

**Carr:** "It definitely didn't affect him on the field. It affected him the night before and the morning of and the pregame and all of that, but thank the Lord that whatever reason he was able to play. I don't know of very many people that could have done that. I don't know if anyone knows anyone who's had them. I sure know people and I've seen how they've reacted and how it makes you feel. For him to be able to do that, he's one of the toughest people I've ever been around."

**Q: Does having a chance to make the playoffs resonate with the team at all?**

**Carr:** "You know, it's definitely one of those things that you're not out until you're out. We've all seen crazier things, that's for sure, especially playing this game. You're not out until you're out. If we were out or if we're still in, it's not going to change how I prepare. It's not going to change who I am. I owe it to my teammates, this organization, my coached, everybody, the fans, to give my all, all the time. That's a preseason game. I've gotten in trouble plenty of times for holding onto the ball too long or trying to take off and run in a preseason game and things like that. I try and give my all. We do know, but it doesn't change the way we go about it. If it did, there'd definitely be something wrong before that."

**Q: Is it good for you to go through and answer fans questions on YouTube on Mondays after a game?**

**Carr:** "Absolutely. I really enjoyed it. I was actually talking to Carla, I tried to do it this time, but my phone wouldn't work. I tried to put it up because they have a lot of the same questions that you guys have. To be able to sit there and talk to them it feels good for me because they're just trying to learn. Like I've told you guys, I love to teach. Not saying that I know more than anybody, but I just like to teach what I know. There's a lot of things that I don't know about that I ask a lot of questions. I ask Carla a lot of questions about certain things. To say is it therapeutic for me? I would say it definitely feels good to be able to help. Help share information. Help people understand certain things. Really just to interact. I love people. I think you all know that by now in four years. I just love talking to people. Being able to interact with people that care about what I do, it's definitely good for me."