



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: "Gotta love it, we're through the first days of camp, getting the preseason games started Saturday night. Looking forward to traveling down to Arizona, playing a good football team at their place. Well-coached, a lot of good players so it will be good for us to see where we are after a couple weeks at camp. Looking forward to it."

Q: Will guys like Derek Carr play?

Coach Del Rio: "We haven't really settled on what we're going to do with reps across the way. We don't typically play the front line a great deal in the first game. We'll see when we get there."

Q: Do you approach things any differently now that you're a team coming off of a 12-win season?

Coach Del Rio: "I don't know that the win total has a whole lot to do with anything. I think having an understanding of your guys and what you know they're about, where they are with conditioning levels, where they are with any injuries they may be battling, what your depth is, what battles you need to see, what competitions you need to clean up. I think that's all part of it. Honestly, we don't sit there and say, 'We won enough games, we can just not rep our guys this year.' That's really not part of the thinking at all."

Q: Is it fair to say that the guys that have been out this week, like Khalil Mack and Amari Cooper, won't play at all this week?

Coach Del Rio: "It's fair to say that I'm not really going to address it. (*laughing*) But I would think that you could probably give out certain things based on my history and some of my tendencies maybe, over the first three years you've known me."

Q: In terms of how much guys play in preseason and how much contact you do in camp, has that conversation changed a lot since you got into coaching?

Coach Del Rio: "A great deal. To me, I could be the guy that sits back and talks about the good ol' days when things used to be so much harder, whether that be good ol' days or not, but to me we look at the opportunities we have to educate our guys, to condition our guys, to prepare our guys for the season. We want to make sure we structure our camp to take full advantage of all those opportunities and all the looks we can get with other teams in preseason. That's all part of it. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about 20 years ago. Every now and then I'll look at a schedule and I'll think, 'Man, that looks a whole lot different,' because I remember being in pads twice a day and a walk-through after that. That's just what it was then. It's a different time. I think we do a better job of being responsible with the guys and the way we prepare them. I always felt as a player that my best conditioning level was when I first reported to camp. Then it would just go down from there, and we'd open the season and I'd be trying to come back to life. I think we do a better job now of managing that whole process. I think our guys are arriving at the season ready to roll more so than they were then, from a physical standpoint."

Q: Do you think Jimmie Johnson would agree with that?

Coach Del Rio: "The science of it, you can't argue with. I think Jimmie felt, in part of what we did, that we were learning to commit to each other and the grind of it and the unbelievable competition every day."

Q: Are there certain things you look for with undrafted players with your recent success in finding production from the undrafted guys?

Coach Del Rio: "We really make it an effort to take our guys and however they arrive, we let them compete. So, over the last two years, the previous two years, you saw examples of guys taking that opportunity and running with it: Darius Latham makes our team, Jalen Richard makes our team. These guys are playing, having an impact for us. So,



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how you get here doesn't matter. To me, that's where it starts. That's how we feel. You have to give [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] and the scouting a lot of credit for bringing those guys in and knowing that they would have a legitimate shot to make our team and to compete. It's a kind of unified effort, we're going to attack it that way. That's what we do and once they get here, show us what you got. That first game is the biggest opportunity now that they've had so far. Practice up to this point tells you a certain amount. Now how they respond in game conditions is huge and definitely a big part of it. We'll see. Typically, a guy or two will stand out in a game like this and we'll know more about him."

Q: What have you seen in Jalen Richard's development over the last year?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, more confidence. I think he knows he can play in this league. He knows he's capable of helping our football team. So, I think he's more of a confident, young man this time around. Not that he was lacking last year. I think he's always felt very confident about his ability. But, certainly doing it, earning it, having been through a year that he's picked up a little experience, he's got a little bit of knowledge of what it takes to play in this league. I think any of the younger guys, if I were them, I'd be talking to him about what his mindset was and how he got in that mindset."

Q: Is there anything special about the Raiders-Cowboys rivalry still and are you looking forward to that game?

Coach Del Rio: "You might be a couple weeks early with that." *(laughter)* *(Reporter: I know, I'm doing it for another Texas market. That's the reason why we fired it off. (laughter) I agree though)* Yeah, OK. *(laughter)* We do have Arizona this week. *(laughter)* We look forward to competing with them (the Cowboys) in a couple of weeks. That one caught me off guard." *(laughter)*

Q: Where have you seen the biggest growth in DeAndré Washington from Year 1 to Year 2?

Coach Del Rio: "His biggest growth, his biggest improvement, to me I think there's a certain amount of angst that a young player has, nervousness, not really understanding where you need to be, what you need to do, what's most important. I think he really has a great feel for what we're asking him to do, how it all ties together, what his responsibilities are. Physically, I think he's matured. His body's matured. His conditioning level is really strong. I think DeAndré is having a really good camp and to me it's just a matter of Year 1 to Year 2 things start slowing down for everybody. Probably no important than the quarterback with it slowing down but all of the positions I think, you know where the meal room is, you know here meetings are, you know what's expected of you. You know how the preparation is going to go, you know what the lead up to the game is going to be like. So, I think it gives you a level of confidence that you've been there and done it and you're better prepared for."

Q: Is the evaluation of quarterbacks more heightened in preseason games because they can be hit?

Coach Del Rio: "Absolutely, yeah, fair to say. That's a big part of it, how you function when you know that guys can really tee off on you, I think that's certainly a part of it. Being able to absorb a load and get up is a part of it. We don't want them doing that very often, but that is a part of it; getting back up and getting back in there. Yeah, I think that's a part of it where it's live contact, where we're playing another team, those are things you learn about everybody on the squad; how they respond when the lights are on, how they respond when it's live action. That's why this is such a valuable time for us in our evaluation and this is the first opportunity to do it in that setting."

Q: Have you seen the development you've wanted to see from Connor Cook in this camp?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, I'm seeing the development of our whole football team and with Connor as well. He had a couple really, really good reads and throws today and the hard part for all of the quarterbacks, whoever ends up going with the guys that are the youngest and the greenest, it's going to look a little more ragged because they're not going to be on time with it as often and consistently. But I think all of our quarterbacks have been pretty sharp in this camp and I think [quarterbacks coach] Jake Peetz is doing a good job and [offensive coordinator] Todd



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Downing is doing a good job in that room. They have a healthy room and it's a room where there can be good development."

Q: How much work does somebody like Marshawn Lynch need to get ready for the season? Is he a unique case?

Coach Del Rio: "I suppose. You could go down the line, there would be some uniqueness amongst a lot of different people. I know he's a high profile guy that people have questions about. I'll try to do the best I can. We like the way he's working. I'm not that concerned about seeing a lot of Marshawn in Week 1 of the preseason. I'll just be honest with you on that."

Q: Are you opposed to scrimmaging against another team at practice or is it something you would do?

Coach Del Rio: "No, I think it just depends on where you are in your development. For us, I thought it was most important, I thought the last three years that we've made a choice to go ahead and keep it this way. I would do it with the right situation. I did it in Jacksonville. I worked with Mike Smith who actually was on our staff before. We did a home and away. I thought it worked out just fine. Every camp is a little bit different. This year I really wasn't going out seeking it. I think we're having a really productive camp right now. Looking forward to finishing it up."

Q: How is Marquel Lee doing with the mental aspects of the position?

Coach Del Rio: "He's doing well. Lee is doing a nice job. He's growing, working hard. He has some natural kind of leadership traits. He has a presence in front of the huddle. I think he's doing a pretty solid job right now. We'll just keep letting work, keep letting him earn his way."

Q: What has Cory James done to solidify his place with the first team?

Coach Del Rio: "He's just working. Every day he's working, developing. For Cory, the biggest thing is to get his base under him. Get his footwork to where it's really efficient. He's extremely athletic, very gifted. Can run, can really run and change direction. Just to play with a really good base is so important when you're an inside linebacker and the block arrives that you have a base to be able to strike and get off and go make plays. He's making progress."

Q: How much do you think Seth Roberts' injury affected him last year?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, you know, I don't know because it was news to me. I said, 'Hey, really?' We just had this conversation. I said, 'Really?' He said, 'Yeah, I didn't tell you.' I said, 'Well who did you tell?' He said, 'I didn't tell anybody.' I said, 'OK, well, that's your right. You didn't miss any practices.' He said, 'Nope.' OK. That's what it was."

Q: Are you impressed with what he went through the season with?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I mean I don't have any idea about what it was or all of that. I certainly appreciate guys that find a way to be out there for their team and their teammates. We had a couple tremendous illustrations of what it looked like when Charles Woodson was here and the way he gutted it out and played through things. I think that legacy lives on a little bit now with some guys toughing it out. That's good stuff. Now we want them to be smart. I'd like them to report anything they had, but I respect his decision to keep it to himself and just play."

Q: Did you go back and reevaluate his season at all?

Coach Del Rio: "No, I'm going back and doing a do over. I'm not going to change the grades or anything. *(laughing)* It is what it is. What I knew he was having a hard time with is he had a newborn last year. A newborn can disrupt your sleep patterns at home. To me that was something I was concerned about last year. Little baby is growing and he has that other issue resolved, so we'll look forward to him having a great year."