



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "That was great, that was exciting. Great to be back on the field with the Raiders. Some really good effort, good work Really pleased with our first day of practice. I'll answer any questions."

Q: First day, overall thoughts. What was it like to be back on the field?

Gruden: "It was great. Been on a field, obviously, for the last three or four days but it's really fun when the veterans show up and they're in shape, they know what to do, they've paid the price. I think they're together. I like the way the team has gelled and I was pleased with the execution for the most part on both sides."

Q: Your thoughts on Kolton Miller?

Gruden: "He's doing pretty good. He's blocking a beast over there. Bruce Irvin is one of our captains right now and he's going to test Miller every day. We're really pleased with Kolton, not only from an athletic standpoint but from a mental standpoint. [Offensive Line Coach Tom] Cable is on him every day. He's learning how to play with Derek Carr, who's doing a lot at the line of scrimmage. He's showing a lot of poise and he's very talented."

Q: Do you like having a lot of fans here or is it a distraction?

Gruden: "As long as they're fans. I love fans that are rooting for the Raiders. The more the merrier. All the critics have to sit over there in the cheap seats. I love having fans out here at training camp."

Q: How much have you missed this?

Gruden: "My role at the beginning of practice is to let the assistant coaches do the fundamentals, a lot of the techniques that we're coaching. I had a hard time just standing and watching. It's awesome to be here. Great responsibility, I know I have a lot to prove. I'm eager to do the best I can to do it."

Q: When you were here last time, you had two-a-days. How is it different now?

Gruden: "We still have an afternoon session. We're going to cram a lot of information into our walk-throughs. We're still going to get the reps done. You're just not going to see it at speed. You have to really encourage your coaches and players to be wired in mentally. You have to do a great job above the neck, being into it. Even though they're not full-speed reps, you can still learn how to get a line, how to communicate. If you need to make a change in the play, you can learn to do that. It's not that much different really than it was 100 years ago, you're just not allowed to bring 150 guys to camp and have three-a-days."

Q: It seems like Kolton put on a little bit of weight. What does that say about him?

Gruden: "He put in a lot of work physically. He's going to get bigger. He's just a pup getting started. He's obviously worked hard. [Strength and Conditioning Coordinator] Tom Shaw and the strength staff has done an excellent job with our young linemen on both sides. We brought in three guys in the trenches on defense, two offensive tackles that need a lot of work in that area and so far, we're very pleased."

Q: What's P.J. Hall's injury?

Gruden: "He has a pec [pectoral] strain. We're going to keep him where he is for a couple days. We haven't seen him. We're not allowed to have contact with these players for a few weeks, so we'll take him through some rehab and make sure he's ready to go before we cut him loose."

Q: How would you assess your involvement with bringing Khalil Mack back? Is that Reggie McKenzie's department?

Gruden: "I'm coaching a team. I'm on the quarterback meetings, I'm going to go in there and install the plays and get ready for the next practice. Reggie will be able to update you on his situation. He's been in contact with his representation and hopefully we get him in here soon. He's an exciting player. He's one of the best in football."



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Q: What did you think of your defense?

Gruden: "I like our defense. I like what we're doing on defense. Our defensive coordinator is really good. He creates a lot of problems. Bruce Irvin is playing his natural position on an every-down basis and I think he's a heck of a player. We've improved our inside pass rush. We've added a veteran presence. Some people don't like it, but I like Derrick Johnson, I like Marcus Gilchrist, I like guys that know what the heck is going on. Leon Hall, Reggie Nelson, Emmanuel Lamur, they know this defense as well as Guenther. They're a handful and they're going to be a problem for us for the next few weeks."

Q: Does Jordy Nelson look like the guy he was?

Gruden: "Yeah, he does. He's wired in. You can see why he was a security blanket for [Packers QB Aaron] Rodgers all those years. He can still run. He's proven to us he can still run. We can line him up anywhere we want and he can run any route we draw up. We're really encouraged by him. [Amari] Cooper came back at 223 pounds, so we've got two dynamic players on the outside."

Q: What are your goals for this training camp?

Gruden: "You like to stay healthy. You like to have your time together and show improvement every day. I want the competition to bring out the best in these guys. I believe it will. I think you're going to see some exciting, competitive drills as we put the pads on."

Q: How much rapport have you built with Derek Carr so far?

Gruden: "I can't say enough about him. He's special, that's all I'll say. I'll let him speak on that. I couldn't be more pleased. I've worked with a lot of really great quarterbacks in the past, but this guy is as in to football as any guy I've met. He is talented and smart."

Q: How are you and Marshawn Lynch meshing?

Gruden: "He gives me a hard time a lot. I love him. I love being around him. If you get to know him, you understand what I'm talking about. He's a little misunderstood to some people but he's a football player. A lot of people consider that cliché but he's all football. He loves it. He competes. I'm excited to see him with his pads on playing for the Raiders again."

Q: Talk about Derek's play-action passing this year.

Gruden: "I think the play-action is going to be dependent on your running game. If you can run it, you can get some strong play-action passes that have a lot of sting. We threw a couple today that were beautiful. If you're running the ball with Marshawn Lynch and you're able to establish that, I think he can be a great play-action passer. I think we've got some routes and some receivers that can get deep."

Q: You've been away from coaching for a little while, how have the new technologies affected it and what changes have you seen from it?

Gruden: "Some of it is just new technology. There's a lot of new technology, but it's not better technology. I got a new remote. I like my old remote better. Some of this new technology, I was a part of that in Monday Night Football. They kept bringing me new technology and the stuff we had was better. So you have to sift through what is better and what is new. You have to do what's best for your team. We're trying to do that. It really hasn't changed that much. It's a hard job. It's a big job. I know I've got a lot to prove but I've got a great staff and guys that are keeping me updated with technology and all the things that are changing."

Q: Previously you had two-a-days. Now you have one practice.

Gruden: "You have to be creative, like we tried to today. We had the horn blowing, we had a TV timeout. We tried to simulate that. We put the ball at the one-inch line, we came out of our own goal line. We had every third pass in seven-on-seven was third-down. We covered a lot of different situations, different personnel groupings. You have to be creative, but at the same time, we still have an afternoon practice. We are going to run 100 reps this afternoon."



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Nobody wants to watch it because it's a walkthrough. I had to do it just like you when I was a broadcaster. Every time I'd show up and watch practice, they were having a walkthrough. You have to adapt, which is what I'm going to do just like every other coach in the league. I have been watching what's going on, so I don't consider it a real challenge."

Q: What do you think about Arden Key's reps?

Gruden: "He's a good player, man. He's going to be really good. If he can go back to the Arden Key two years ago, we have ourselves an outstanding rusher. He's got a lot to prove, obviously. He's a young player. We're confident in him."

Q: Do you think you've earned the respect of your players?

Gruden: "I don't know. I don't know. I hope so. I'm doing my best and that's all I'll do."

Q: Last week you went to Ricky's for that event with the fans. What did that do for you?

Gruden: "I do stuff like that. When I go out, I don't go out very often, but when I do, I like to be around people that are like-minded. I go to Ricky's and hang out. You should try it. It's a great place. To associate with the real Raiders fans that support you thick and thin, that's good stuff. That's good for anybody before camp."

Q: What's the update on Donald Penn?

Gruden: "I think he's getting close. I talk to him every day. He's working independently with trainers right now but he's getting close. He still has to prove that he can change directions explosively and wake up the next day and do it again and again."

Q: What does Martavis Bryant bring to the offense?

Gruden: "I think it's a work in progress. He's obviously very talented and he's in a competitive situation right now. We've got a lot of good wideouts in the camp."

Q: There has been a lot of drama in the media about you and Khalil Mack not talking to each other. Is that normal?

Gruden: "Is that dramatic, really? Consider what is drama. I've talked to Khalil. Those guys aren't always 100 percent accurate. I talked to Mack when I got the job. I just haven't talked to him lately. Not much to talk about right now, sorry."

Q: What have you seen from Derek at camp?

Gruden: "We want to see everybody around him play to his level, really. Be comfortable with different speeds. We're going to come out of the huddle, we're going to use the no-huddle, we're going to change gears a little bit. Give them a little bit of freedom at the line of scrimmage. If he changes the play, everybody has got to know what to do. We need to get everybody wired in on the same page. That's a big challenge. Get his feedback on what he likes. Do you love this play? Do you like it? Do you dislike it? Do you have a complete understanding of it? That's a big part of the next two weeks."

Q: What attracted you to Tom Cable as an o-line coach?

Gruden: "I've known Cable's body of work for a long time. He ticked me off when he was with Atlanta with the outside-zone scheme. He's very diverse as a coach. He's portrayed as an outside-zone guy, but he ran a lot of gap-speeds coming up as a coach. He's very versatile. He's a world champion coach. He has ties to this franchise. He's a natural fit. A great competitor, a hard worker and happy to have him."

Q: Any flashbacks to your first Raiders training camp?

Gruden: "I had a few. I had a few when I first saw Jerry McDonald walk up. Back in the day, it was pretty hard security to get in here. It was pretty tight. It's really cool. It's what I came back for. I appreciate you guys being here."



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QB Derek Carr

Q: Where would you say you're at with learning Jon Gruden's offense?

Carr: "I feel like with him, I don't think there's going to be a time over the next 10 or so years where I'm not going to have to have something to learn. He pushes me every day. I'm constantly asking, 'What do you have for me today? Give me something else.' Those kinds of things. For where we're at right now, we feel very, very confident that we can go out and execute at a high level. We get a lot of plays in. I think we get more plays in than anybody in the league. Just getting those reps as a quarterback. Just rep after rep after rep. There's really nothing like it."

Q: What was the process like in the offseason to get to this point?

Carr: "Oh man, it was a lot of early mornings. A lot of late nights. A lot of time just spent laying by the pool, studying. Anything and everything we think of. A lot of time with my wide receivers, tight ends, running backs at just random parks. Just a lot of stuff. That's one thing we have done. That's one thing as long as I'm here, we will work our tail off. In the offseason, during the season, during practice. All those things. That's what we did. We obviously want to be better than last year, but we want to be really good. We understand that to do that you have to work really hard."

Q: Are you keeping Gruden-like hours?

Carr: "To an extent. To an extent. I don't know if that man sleeps. I don't know if he's slept yet. Have to. Him and I have to be on the same page. Him and I have to work the hardest out of anybody out here. If the head coach and the quarterback are the hardest workers, then usually that's a good recipe. It doesn't guarantee success, but it's a good recipe. For us to continue to be that way, carry that over from the offseason, absolutely."

Q: Has anything about Gruden surprised you?

Carr: "I don't know if anything with him surprises you. I will say this: He has not changed one bit. Since the first time I met him at Gruden's QB Camp till first day of actual training camp practice. He is the same person. That says a lot that he doesn't change. He's always fiery. He loves football. He wants to win. He loves his players. He loves his coaches. And he demands from you. I think all of those things are things I knew about him that day and things I know about him five years later."

Q: What are your thoughts on Kolton Miller?

Carr: "Kolton is awesome. He's really tall. I think that's the first thing I noticed. Very tall. Very athletic. Can move, can run. He's strong. You can tell that he put in a lot of work in the weight room before he came back. That's for any college kid, I don't care how strong you are, you can always get stronger. He put in all that work during that break. He came back and he's strong, ready to take those bull rushes. As a tall guy, you know that's coming. You know the bull rush is coming. But he's ready. He looks really good."

Q: What do you see in Jordy Nelson?

Carr: "I saw Jordy run good routes. He knew what he was doing and he caught the ball. He's good. I tried to sneak one in on him today a little bit, but for the most part, we know what Jordy can do. The thing that you hear about that he can't run anymore, that's false. I can tell you, he's one of the fastest skill guys that we have still. He can run. You see that by his route running. If he can win on underneath routes, that means DB's are scared about what he can do over the top. He's still Jordy Nelson, that's for sure."

Q: What's Gruden like in the quarterback meetings? Is he more calm there?

Carr: "No, he's the same. He's very energetic. I've had people come up to me and be like 'What was he yelling at you about in the meeting room?' I said, 'Oh nothing, we were talking about good things.' He is just energetic all the time. That's just him. He is so passionate about the game of football. I don't think anyone can be mad at that. I don't think anyone can get mad at that. So when he demands from you, when he encourages you, it's in the same tone every time. I think that's what we respect about him is he never changes. He's not going to be this way and



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then the next day or next week or next year he's going to be this way. Like I said earlier, for five years, he's been the same person every time I see him. Even in between these last five years when I see him. He's talking about protections or he's talking about coverage. 'Hey, did you see this new blitz?' It never changes."

Q: You made it clear that you never get into another man's business transactions, but have you been in contact with Khalil Mack? Are you eager to get him back and do you have any idea when that might happen?

Carr: "Oh, of course. I think it's fair to say that we would all love to have Khalil here. If I tried to answer it politically correct and all those things, we all know that we want him back. I think everyone feels that in our whole building. We all know that when it comes to how things are done and all of that, I don't go to that. I have been in contact with him. He's my brother. We came in the same class. We're going to leave together some day. I'm fully confident with where Khalil is at and where our team is at. Obviously we want him back, but again I try not to step into that. He was over at the house and we didn't talk about it one time. We played pool basketball and I dunked on him."

Q: Is this the deepest receiving group you've ever had?

Carr: "You know, I would say yes because even the undrafted guys...We came in for the pre-camp and Coach Gruden said, 'If you see something audible, I don't care. They have to play. They have to know.' We're audibling, changing stuff, doing these things with undrafted rookies that you would think they're trying to learn where to line up. What's a so-and-so route. We're audibling, doing those things. They're on it. They went on their routes. Now, obviously they have a lot of work to do. They're not all All-Pros or anything like that, but they all have a chance to be very extremely helpful players. It'll be fun to watch those guys battle every day."

Q: What have you seen from Isaac Whitney's growth?

Carr: "He's definitely more confident once you break the huddle. Last year as a young guy, terminology, it's tough for everybody, but having that year to learn, he played a little bit. I actually threw him ball, a deep ball, against I think it was the Giants. Just the fact that I even threw it to him let him know that, hey man, if you're in there, we have to play. I think that that little confidence, you can tell this year he's kind of like, 'Yeah, I got this. I know what I'm doing.' As long as he can keep those mental errors down, because his speed, his athleticism, it's elite man. He's fast. He can go. He can do certain things. He can run all the routes. I think for him, it's just the mental side of things. I just have to make sure he's on top of every assignment. He can handle it, he just have to prove it every day."

Q: Amari Cooper always seems to come into camp a little bit bigger and faster than the year before. What are your expectations from him and what have you seen from him thus far leading up to camp?

Carr: "I feel like he came into his rookie year like 16-years old, so he comes back bigger and faster every year. It's like 'Coop', hey man, chill out a little bit. *(laughter)* Don't get too big, we'll move you to running back or something. No, I don't know what else to say about him, he's awesome. He's healthy, he looks great, he feels great. You see him catching balls and finishing all the way down to the goal line. He's practicing on scoring long touchdowns and things like that and I think that some of that stuff Jordy brought, some of that stuff Martavis brought – just learning from other guys. We have a whole staff of coaches that have come in and taught me different things that other guys did and all of these things and guys that worked with Peyton [Manning] and Andrew Luck and I can go on and on. Anyone who comes in, you learn something like, 'Oh man, that's awesome. I want to learn that.' So, I think the same thing has happened for Coop, where he's come in better and stronger – he's always in shape – he takes this seriously. But, he's also learning some things mentally and some things practice wise that can help."

Q: How easy has it been to build a rapport with Jordy Nelson?

Carr: "You know, it's been nice. Honestly, it's so funny, when we first started, every route's on air and his route was the only one I would mess up. *(laughter)* And then we'd go to team drill or something and we'd hit it perfectly. He's just a guy that when it clicks man, now it's a little different, we spent some time in the offseason, but now when you get out there on the practice field, he's just a guy that it's easy to throw to him because he's open. Like I said, there's some guys that are good at running some routes, a guy will be there that's strong at catching the ball or whatever,



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he just gets open. He's very route savvy, he's very smart, he's always constantly on the coaches, 'Yell the coverage out, I need to know my adjustment.' He's pushing the envelope that way as well. I can't say enough good things. I can't believe Green Bay let him go, but I'm glad he's here."

Q: How has Bruce Irvin looked and what does his presence do for a guy like Kolton Miller?

Carr: "Just to go against Bruce every day – go get the quarterback, you know? He's playing defensive end, we know that. And for Bruce to do that, it's scary for opponents. So for Kolton to see that every day, that's going to make him work. Bruce has a similar skill set to what Von [Miller] can do and some of the other guys can do in our division, so it's good for Kolton to see, get a taste of that and try and lock that up as hard as it is. Bruce is a great player, he's one of the best, I think, in the league. We've talked about our division pass rushers all the time, but to see that every day...And then Bruce, he's awesome. I remember when he was a free agent I was begging them, 'Please get this guy. Please. He is awesome.' They asked me of my opinion of him, I was a huge fan of his even since West Virginia. So, I love Bruce, I think he's a great player and going to have a great year."

Q: The connection that you and Coach Gruden have, can the same be said about you and defensive coordinator Paul Guenther? Is that challenge a benefit?

Carr: "I'm telling you, one of the first things Coach Gruden said to us in the meetings, he said every day we're going to have to earn our completions. I mean, usually you can go play a team and say, 'Oh man, they play a certain way, we can throw this all day.' Boom, boom, boom and you'd go 20-for-25 and move on. Against this guy, he doesn't give up anything for free. You have to earn everything and just the mental side of things for me and Coach Gruden to against him and try to figure him out, try to gut him and try to give him a bad night of sleep, make his meal taste a little worse at lunch, that's what we're trying to do every day. I just love that mentality. Coach Gruden is on me all the time instilling that, 'I want to kick Coach Guenther's butt every day.' I think he wants to embarrass us as well. That little rivalry, that little work is the same. But you'll see us all three at dinner together – we're a team – but it definitely helps us come the season. Ask any quarterback in the NFL, Coach Guenther is one of the best in the NFL and it's not even close. He gives you the most problems, he presents the most challenges, he makes you think more than anybody. He's one of the best and I'm glad he's here."

Q: With the new coaching staff, what do you think is possible for the season?

Carr: "We just want to win. What's possible? Anything is possible, right? Who said that, Kevin Garnett? Didn't he say that? *(laughter)* Kevin Garnett said that anything is possible. We just want to win. I don't ever predict anything, I don't do that, and honestly I don't care what anybody else has to say because at the end of the day, me and Coach Gruden are going to go into our office and study, we're going to come out here and give it our best and he's going to correct me. As long as we can get better, I think we can do some really good things."

Q: What were some of the things you worked on this offseason that helped you elevate your game to where you think it should be?

Carr: "I always have a list of things, once the season ends, obviously I never share it, but once the season ends, that coaches give me. Coach Gruden, we sit down, watch every mistake, interception, fumble, bad play, bad decision. We talk about all of those things, so a lot of it is mental, mental stuff on the film, what happened here? Why did this happen? Was it something that you didn't talk about at practice? Was it something that you didn't mention at lunch that you were going to get to, this check or whatever it was? Was it your footwork? I have a list of those things and as I hit the offseason I train. We have drill work. [quarterbacks] coach [Brian] Callahan, [offensive coordinator Greg] Coach Olson, they say hey, 'Do these drills. This is the best thing for you.' Those are the drills I do. The routes and things I need to throw better, Coach Gruden tells me, 'Hey, this is an area you need to throw better.' I'm throwing a thousand of them. Trying to master them. One thing I learned about Peyton Manning, he's really not into going out and throwing 300 different routes, I'm going to throw two routes if I have to but I'm going to throw them 300 times. I'm going to master it. Just learning that, I think Peyton's one of the best and just learning that from him was really cool too."



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Q: How often did you meet up with receivers and tight ends while you guys were off and was it more than in previous seasons?

Carr: "Definitely more, which is really nice. A lot of the guys they live other places and I'm not one to take anyone from their family. Because I would not do that, so I don't like doing that. But, a lot of guys stayed close and we had a few spots where Connor [Cook] was working, EJ [Manuel] was working and I was working. We had different guys in those areas where we were working with them. I would say that we were just more calculated. We were more on top of reaching everybody, making sure we worked with everybody, making sure we were still pushing the envelope. To play here, it's not easy mentally. To play here in this system, it's not easy. And so, you can't go a whole summer break and not talk about it, or you're going to show up and be lost on Day 1. We say our guys today, we were checking some things, we were making certain calls that you usually don't make until Day 4. But, it's good to see. We have to, we're already behind. We haven't been together but a couple months. We had to do those things, so we definitely worked hard together, the guys bought in to spending some time with us and then we played some golf too, so that was good."