



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Head Coach Jon Gruden**

**Opening statement:** "First OTA. Really the first time that we have had our rookies with our veterans. Covered a lot of different situations today. I was pleased. Got a long way to go. I respect that, so do our coaches and players, but I'll answer any questions I can."

**Q: What have you seen from the rookie offensive linemen, Kolton Miller and Brandon Parker, so far?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We like what we see. We like it a lot. Number one, we changed plays, I think, 30 times today. We went with a no-huddle offense, I think 16 times today. We ran numerous gap blocking plays, zone blocking plays, different protections, so the mental part of it is what's most exciting. We already know we like them physically. Both of these guys can handle a lot of system football and process information quickly. That was really impressive today."

**Q: What do you think about the players who went back to school to finish up their degrees this offseason?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, we've been celebrating that internally for the last couple of weeks. Jylan Ware and Amari Cooper, Bruce Irvin, Gabe Jackson. We talk about finishing, that's a big word here in football with the Raiders. Finish the game. Finish the drive. Finish the play. And finish your education is more important than all of that. For Bruce Irvin to go back and get his degree at West Virginia is outstanding. An unbelievable accomplishment. I hope a lot of young people out there can research Bruce Irvin, see where he's come from and his life to get that piece of paper. It's exciting. We're really proud of them."

**Q: On that topic, Bruce within his journey to the NFL, he was someone who when he got to the league, maybe before the draft, people said, 'Oh, is he a character concern, off the field type of guy.' One thing he's shown is he's not that guy. He was the Walter Payton Man of the Year nominee last year. He's a college graduate. What kind of example do you think he is for some of your rookies? Just to see how he's developed in the league and what kind of man he is off the field.**

**Coach Gruden:** "You just summarized it. That's a great success story and it just goes to show you, you can't judge a man's character just because he's made a mistake when he's 21 or 22 years old. You have to try to create an environment where people can flourish. Young people can develop and mature and become great. Bruce Irvin is a great example of that. He was surrounded with greatness in Seattle. He was put in a channel of success and he took advantage of it. Hopefully we can provide that for some people down the road."

**Q: Was it good to see Gareon Conley out there today?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, it's great to see Conley out there. We're counting on him. We need him. But to see Rashaan Melvin and Conley and [Daryl] Worley competing is really exciting. Conley is special. He's a top pick in this draft for a reason. I think from a confidence standpoint, he needs to get some work in out here."

**Q: What does Amari Cooper need to do to get back to the level that he was at two years ago?**

**Coach Gruden:** "He has to stay healthy. He has a little twinge in his hamstring right now. He has to stay healthy, number one. Derek Carr needs to stay healthy. We have to pass protect as a whole better. We have to do a lot of things better for him to be better, but number one I think it's health."

**Q: What was the reason behind starting Breno Giacomini and David Sharpe at tackle?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's the first day here. Derek Carr is at a level of football that these rookies aren't. Obviously, they just got here. Breno's been here. He's taken a majority of the reps at right tackle. Donald Penn takes the left tackle reps when we have walk-throughs. He's limited because of that foot. Sharpe has lost weight. He's done what we've asked him to do. He's shown some versatility to play left and right tackle, potentially go inside. We're bringing these young guys along fast. It's competitive. It'll bring out the best in all of them, but I think you saw how we started. That's how we'd start if we played a game tonight, but we don't play one tonight."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: Kolton Miller is working on gaining weight. What did you guys want to see him elevate?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Not so much gaining weight, just gain strength, yet remain athletic. He's one of the most athletic tackles that I've ever seen. I mean ever seen. At the combine, his broad jump, I think, was almost 11 feet. That's outstanding. Ran a sub five flat. We don't want to take away from any of his athleticism, but remember, he's an underclassman. All these draft picks have been on this tour, this rock-n-roll tour. Get to go to all these facilities and eat all of these meals. So, we just want to get him in great shape. Get him stronger but maintain his flexibility and his athleticism."

**Q: Is it important to get the younger guys reps with the veterans with the secondary and the offensive line?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, we don't know what we have right now. This is our first practice. We've been working against garbage cans. Robots and mechanics, that's what we've been allowed to practice against. What you saw today is what I saw. The first practice, it's the starting line. Guys are jockeying for position. Guys are trying to formulate our depth chart. We can make predictions and put a bunch of names on a depth chart right now, but over the next nine or 10 OTA practices, we'll have a pretty good idea of who's dialed in mentally and who can physically make the plays and who deserves to be number one and number two and number three."

**Q: How close does Obi Melifonwu look to joining the team?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It doesn't look close at all. I'll leave it at that. He doesn't look close, to me, at all."

**Q: How do you eliminate drop passes?**

**Coach Gruden:** "There's a lot of people that look at Pro Football Focus and they think that Pro Football Focus knows that's a drop. Maybe that wasn't a drop. Maybe that's some guy's opinion at Pro Football Focus. I just want to say that I think that's a great product, we use it. Sometimes the quarterback throws the ball in there early. Maybe he didn't take the proper drop. Sometimes the receiver might lack concentration. There's a lot of reasons. You have to catch the football. We have to catch the ball better. We have to improve. Our receivers have to rise up, play better than they've ever played. We've made changes there in this core and they have to obviously take the torch and run with it."

**Q: When you say Melifonwu doesn't look close is that health or lack of grasping the concept?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Oh, he doesn't look ready to roll yet. So, I don't let anybody practice without being able to go physically. He doesn't look like he's 100 percent. I haven't seen much of Obi except in the training room."

**Q: How is Nick Nelson coming along?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think he's on his way. We expect to have him ready for training camp. We'll give you updates as we move on."

**Q: Is there any update on joint practices?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, we're working with a partner. I would give it to you, honestly, but until it's official, that would be foolish of me to tell you what team we're talking to. We're going to do everything possible to try to get a couple practices against another NFL team prior to training camp ending."

### **WR Amari Cooper**

**Q: What was it like for you to go back to Alabama and finish your degree?**

**Cooper:** "It was cool. Kind of nostalgic, because I haven't been back since I left. It was cool seeing everybody."

**Q: What was the main motivation behind finishing your degree?**

**Cooper:** "I just wanted to finish what I started. It was important for me to go back and get that degree."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: How many classes did you have left to take?**

**Cooper:** "When I first came out here, like four or five."

**Q: Did you take them online?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah."

**Q: What did you earn your degree in?**

**Cooper:** "Criminal Justice."

**Q: Was it self-motivating on your part or were there family members that were pushing you to finish?**

**Cooper:** "It was a little bit of both. I wanted to go back and finish. I knew I would always go back and finish, but if it was up to me I probably would have waited a little bit longer, but I had some people on me about it really telling me to go back and finish. So, yeah."

**Q: Is a career in criminal justice something you're thinking about when your pro career is over?**

**Cooper:** "Not sure yet."

**Q: When you heard Jon Gruden say that you were going to be the focal point of the offense, what was your reaction?**

**Cooper:** "It was cool. Obviously as a receiver, you want to go out there and make plays for your team and win. So for him to say that, it really meant a lot to me. I'm just ready to come out here and work and prove that I deserve to have those opportunities."

**Q: What do you like about the offense that you have seen thus far?**

**Cooper:** "I mean, so we have a whole lot of plays even right now this early. We have something for everything. Every defensive look, we can audible to something to get in the right play for any defense."

**Q: Tim Brown said you would flourish in this offense and be pushed in ways you never have been before. Can you see that?**

**Cooper:** "Oh yeah. I can see it already. We're getting pushed in the weight room and conditioning. We're being pushed in the meeting rooms to learn the offense because it's a lot, but it's necessary. So, I can definitely see it."

**Q: What's it been like being around Jordy Nelson and Martavis Bryant?**

**Cooper:** "It's been really cool. Been learning a lot from Jordy, obviously with him being in the league for such a long time. He knows a lot and he's always sharing his wisdom in the receiver room. It's been cool being around Marty as well."

**Q: What do you think having a guy like Bryant will do for you? Will it open things up for everyone else?**

**Cooper:** "Exactly what you just said. It will open up the offense a lot more being that he's so fast, he's so dangerous with the ball in his hands. Man, we have a lot of threats on offense."

**Q: Are you working in the slot more?**

**Cooper:** "Well, he's doing a good job of moving us all around right now. We have to learn every single receiver position on the field because he wants to move us around a lot."

**Q: Do you like the slot?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, I love the slot."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: I asked Bruce Irvin what his personal feeling was towards Coach Gruden and he said that he had never seen somebody's face be read for all seven periods. What's your initial reaction to Coach Gruden?**

**Cooper:** "(laughter) He brings a lot of excitement to the team. He's funny. He makes us laugh a lot in the meeting rooms but he's also really serious as well. So it's been real cool so far."

**Q: Was there anything you wanted to focus on this offseason?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, I wanted to focus on everything – getting bigger, stronger and faster – focusing on the fundamentals of the game."

**Q: You look toned up a bit...**

**Cooper:** "Y'all said that last year. (laughter) I just work hard in the offseason. The results just come."

**Q: What's your assessment of your season last year after having some time to think on it?**

**Cooper:** "Well, I wouldn't say it was great. Definitely some things I need to work on coming into this year and some things that I have been working on so that I can be better on for this season."

**Q: Derek Carr said that you were battling through a lot of injuries last season but you would never admit to it. How much were you battling through injuries?**

**Cooper:** "I mean, every player is hurt every year. So, that's not really an excuse for everything. I've been hurt every year I played football."

### **LB Bruce Irvin**

**Q: What did graduation mean to you and what was that day like for you?**

**Irvin:** "It was big. Being the situation I came from, since I dropped out and got my GED, the odds were stacked up against me to get my bachelor's degree. It was a surreal moment. I kind of put it up there with the Super Bowl, neck and neck. Super Bowl probably would have been better if we'd won two in a row. It was a great moment, not only for me but for my son and my family. I'm glad I got to experience it."

**Q: Was it self-motivated to get it done?**

**Irvin:** "Really just me and letting my son know that his dad is more than a football player. When kids come up to him, they can say that his dad was a good football player and he can stop them and say he was a good football player but he also got his associate's degree, got his bachelor's degree. He wasn't only a football player. He put education up there right along with his job. It was bigger than me. It was for my son and his kids and generations after me."

**Q: How many classes did you have to do?**

**Irvin:** "I had like 12 hours, but since West Virginia loves me so much, they did something where I did a portfolio and did community work. That's how I actually started getting into the community, because I had to go out and do it for my degree and I actually liked it. I thought, 'Dang, I actually like doing this,' so that's when I really got into it, going into the community and feeding the homeless and stuff like that."

**Q: Are you the first in your family to get your degree?**

**Irvin:** "First ever."

**Q: What was your degree in?**

**Irvin:** "Sociology."



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

**Q: Was it something that when you came out you knew you wanted to go back, or did it not hit you until later?**

**Irvin:** "When I came out, my first check was \$2.5 million. I wasn't thinking about going back to West Virginia after that. As I've grown, had a son, it became more and more important to me each year. I said, that's one thing they can't take from me. They can take this football stuff from me, they can take everything else, but that degree is forever. I'll always be a college graduate of West Virginia University."

**Q: How old is your son?**

**Irvin:** "He's four. He'll be five on June 13th."

**Q: Old enough to remember probably.**

**Irvin:** "Definitely. He talks like a 12-year-old. Kids nowadays get ahold of these iPads and things. They will be four or five years old going on 23. He's a smart kid. Everything I do is for him."

**Q: We saw you live-tweeting the whole graduation.**

**Irvin:** "Oh yeah. I'm trying to lay off Twitter though."

**Q: Looks like you're having a lot of fun at defensive end with your hand in the dirt.**

**Irvin:** "I'm just having fun getting back to football period. You can ask anybody in the locker room, they'll tell you I talk smack. It's what I do. There's no hard feelings, but you're going to hear me. The transition from linebacker to end has been very smooth. Seemed like defensive end is more natural to me. A lot of going forward and reacting instead of me dropping in coverage and knowing receiver routes. I think defensive end is a more natural fit. It gets me going and reacting more instead of thinking and covering people."

**Q: Have you been able to bounce anything off Khalil Mack yet?**

**Irvin:** "No, I haven't talked to my man. I miss him though. That situation... I'll never speak on another man's situation. That's him. I wish him nothing but the best but I have to get these guys who are here ready. Arden Key, Maurice Hurst, P.J. [Hall], those guys. Those guys are going to be important for us. Khalil's situation will take care of itself, but for me, it's my job to get these guys ready for the Los Angeles Rams."

**Q: What do you see from the rookies and what sort of leader are you with those young guys?**

**Irvin:** "Like I said, we need them. I don't know if you all watch the same football I've been watching, but the last two years we've been dead last in sacks. We need those guys. For me coming here, I'm in a different situation. I'm a leader now. Guys look up to me. If we have 10 reps in the weight room, guys are looking if I do seven or eight or if I'm doing the whole 10. That's big, so I have to carry myself different. I have to talk different. I have to motivate different. I'm in a great situation. I wouldn't ask for no other place to be. We have a great group of guys, great defense, great new assistants, and things are really going good and I can't wait to get it started during the season."

**Q: What has been your observation of the coaching staff and their energy?**

**Irvin:** "Have you all seen Jon Gruden? *(laughter)* What you see is what you get. Rah-rah guy. I've never seen a person's face stay red for seven periods at practice. *(laughter)* The whole practice he was just red. He's a great motivator. The biggest thing for me that I got out of him, the guy has been out for eight or nine years. Back when he was coaching, it was the old CBA. Two-a-days were allowed. Tackling at OTAs were allowed then, so I think the biggest thing was for him to adjust to guys because it's millennial babies now. It's not like older guys anymore. I'm not talking down on anybody, but football is different now. I think he's done a great job of adjusting to the new CBA and taking care of his guys and letting his leaders control the locker room."

**Q: How have you adjusted to his way of coaching?**

**Irvin:** "He talks [expletive] like I talk [expletive], so we get along. We've got a great relationship. He speaks his mind, I speak my mind. I come to work, he comes to work. You couldn't ask work with a [better] person like that. A guy



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

who is football, football, football. That's all it's about – winning and football. That's the type of coach you want in the building."

**Q: How do you use your journey to the NFL as a testimony to reach some of these younger players?**

**Irvin:** "I was always a guy who I had to get burnt a couple of times and learn. That didn't change when I got into the league. I had the suspension. I got locked up two weeks before the draft and I got the suspension, so when I got into the league, I still was immature even though I had been through what I had been through. I still was young-minded, I still was a kid. For me to go through what I went through, getting locked up, getting suspended, overcoming that and look at me now. I'm one of the team leaders here. It's big. Guys don't often get second or third chances, but I was one of those guys who was fortunate enough to get it. I'm just happy that I didn't blow it and I learned in time. Like I said, guys can learn from me. It's never too late. You can mess up but just get the right people around you, surround yourself with the right people and it'll take care of itself."

**Q: Is that what Seattle was for you? The right people around you?**

**Irvin:** "It was a bunch of rebels in Seattle. They knew how to tame us. If there was one thing about us in Seattle, guys come to work every day. It was football. If it was football season, there were no clubs, there weren't no nothing. We were coming to work and we're going home to our family. We're waking up and we're coming back to work in the morning to try to reach our goals. That's kind of the culture we're trying to install here and I think it's on the way."

**Q: What have you seen from Kolton Miller and Brandon Parker?**

**Irvin:** "I didn't really go against them, but they're two big kids – long. They've got enough body to put on a lot of weight. Brandon is athletic. I watched film on him and Kolton is athletic also. They've got two great guys to learn from in Breno [Giacomini] and Donald Penn. We're really depending on those guys. We're going to need those guys also, so I wish them luck and I am going to try to wear their ass out in practice."

### **G Gabe Jackson**

**Q: How was graduation day?**

**Jackson:** "It was fun and exciting. Something I've been looking forward to for a few years now."

**Q: Did you go back and finish or did you finish online?**

**Jackson:** "It was a deal online. I couldn't go back to the actual classroom."

**Q: What inspired you to get that finished?**

**Jackson:** "For one, that's what you go to school for, to get your degree. Get your education and get a reward for it, and that's getting a diploma. My mom and my dad, everybody in my family, it's been a big deal to them to have that. I wanted to get that also."

**Q: Did they pry you to get it or did it come from within?**

**Jackson:** "Initially when I first left school and went on to start training for the combine, my mom was like, 'When are you going to go back and finish? When are you going to go back and finish?' She kind of was after for the first year about it, but after that she left me alone. It was more of me really wanting to get back and get it."

**Q: Was it hard to get back into it?**

**Jackson:** "No, it wasn't. If you really want to do it, just go do it."

**Q: How many credits did you have to go back and get?**

**Jackson:** "I was just one class short."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: What was that last class?**

**Jackson:** "It was a stats class."

**Q: Were you saving the best for last?**

**Jackson:** "Yeah, if you want to say that (*laughing*)."

**Q: What did you get your degree in?**

**Jackson:** "General studies."

**Q: With your degree now, do you know what you want to do with your degree?**

**Jackson:** "Yeah, I want to go back and get some more things. There are some other things I want to do later on. I don't really want to talk about it right now, but I have a few plans I want to do. That'll be nice."

**Q: What are your first impressions of Tom Cable and the new system?**

**Jackson:** "To me, they have the answer for everything. It's a good system. I can't go into details about it, but it takes some studying to get in to it, to learn everything. I wouldn't say it's easy. I wouldn't say it's the hardest, but you have to really pay attention to detail."

**Q: Do you find that you guys are challenged mentally?**

**Jackson:** "Oh yeah. They want to test us mentally and see what can we handle. Just see where we're at as a group. We've been doing a good job at it and they're doing a good job of coaching us to get us to that point to understand."

**Q: What are your first impressions of Kolton Miller and Brandon Parker?**

**Jackson:** "Good. They don't talk much. I've said a few things to them and they're real quiet guys as of now. They probably may be talkers, but they've been quiet. But they've been working, working hard."

**Q: What do you think of Breno Giacomini?**

**Jackson:** "He's really smart. He knows the game. He's a character. He's funny. He knows the game and knows what's going on. A good person to be beside."

**Q: You look healthy. What was this offseason like for you?**

**Jackson:** "Yeah, just getting my body back. You're never going to always be feeling great, but just feeling good. Getting things that were bothering me during the season worked out so I can be at my best."

**Q: How much were you battling through last year?**

**Jackson:** "Well the main thing was my foot one time and then a few weeks after that it was the other foot. It was a continuing thing throughout the whole year, but I got it done."

**Q: Did you have to do anything to take care of it?**

**Jackson:** "Mostly just let it rest. You can try to do stuff to try to strengthen things, but mostly just let it rest before you get in the swing of things."