



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

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

**Opening Statement:** “Before we get into talk about other things, I know we will, I just wanted to relay a story about incredible grit, toughness and determination to be there for his teammates yesterday. Rodney Hudson, yesterday, had a kidney stone that he was having significant pain with leading up to the game. He was able to somehow tough it out. Obviously, modern medicine helped a little. It’s just an example. I didn’t want it to go by without it being discussed or at least being pointed out. Pretty remarkable for a guy to be there for his teammates. There was never doubt. It was like, ‘Hey, are you going to be OK?’ He was like, ‘I’m playing.’ From the very beginning it was like, ‘I’m going, I’m going to be there.’ I just wanted to point it out because I really admire when a guy goes above and beyond like that. While we’re talking injury type things, it is true that Donald Penn will have surgery Wednesday and will be out the remainder of the year. That is an accurate story that I think is already out there.

“Yesterday was a game I thought we played with a lot of great energy. We started slow offensively. We fought and hung in there. At the end of the first half, we had a chance. I thought we had a touchdown. I think it should’ve been a touchdown. It was not ruled a defensive hold, which it was. Instead it was ruled an OPI [offensive pass interference] and they took it off the board. That was disappointing. I think the tape verifies that. It was disappointing. Then we missed the field goal. So, we missed an opportunity there. That’s kind of two plays there. We fought hard. I think defensively we did some good things. Sean Smith had his best game, getting two interceptions and a near pick-six. Khalil Mack showed why he’s one of the top players in the game with two more sacks. Defensively, we held them to 2-of-10 on third down and 59.5 quarterback rating, which is a season low for our defense, which was good. Their top back got a little bit going early, but at the end of the day he had 3.8 average and was held to 10 yards on seven carries in the second half. That was good. It gave us a chance. At the very end, we had the mysterious ruling on the fourth down, which was a pretty gutsy go for it by them in their territory which really, basically, gave us the win. Except it was not called that way. For some reason, we didn’t recognize the space involved there. We deal with that as we have to, and we move on. We had a chance right at the very end, and we fumbled the ball through the end zone. I think I might have missed the 100-yard touchdown return that was called, but rightly so. There was definitely a hold on the play. Anyway, good effort. We don’t believe in consolation prizes. We’re about winning. We’re about getting it down. We came up a little short, but I was proud of the effort that was put forth and the energy we played with and determination. So, questions?”

**Q: Is this a game, when you look forward in your career, that you’ll never be able to make sense of?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “Nothing really surprises you after 32 years, things happen in this league. But, that was unusual.”

**Q: Michael Crabtree was pulled out on the last play of the game. Have you had guys pulled out for concussions by the spotter? How often does that happen?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “Yeah, I mean, I’m almost certain we have had people pulled out. That was something that we’ve been told is going to be in play. That’s a prime example of one of the things where you’re hesitant to allow that mechanism to be there, but you know you have to do the right thing for all of the players and their safety. So, it’s a little bit of a catch-22. I think at the end of the day, you’re trying to err on the side of player safety and caution there. I know Crab was frustrated about it. So, it’s out of my hands.”

**Q: Are you surprised that the mechanism to measure a first down is still the old chains that you have to run in from the sideline?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “It’s been tried and true. Just stretch the chain and if it’s inside, if there’s space, it goes the other way. I thought everything was in place to get an accurate call and I saw space and in my opinion, it should have gone the other way and a turnover on downs. I haven’t had a chance to call and get the explanation. I mean, I’m sure there will be some kind of explanation but whatever it is, I’m going to disagree with it. I know what I saw, I saw it myself from the sideline. But I also saw plenty examples on Twitter. (*laughter*) The guy ran out there with the camera and put the camera right down on it, so the whole world got to see what it was. It’s not like we’re making something



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up. The guy with the camera was right there. So how you can look at that and then get up with a smirk... I don't know, that's hard to take."

**Q: Do you see Vadal Alexander taking over at right tackle moving forward with the injury to Donald Penn? And how do you think Alexander performed in relief yesterday?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Vadal battled. There were some times where he needed some help – we gave him some help. There were some times where we didn't and Derek [Carr] got rid of the ball quick. He battled. I think that the group as a whole battled. We ran the ball fairly effectively most of the night. We didn't get sacked, so I think you have to be pleased with losing your starting tackle and being able to go the remainder of the game and remain productive the way we were."

**Q: Was Derek Carr running more often by design, something you talked to him about, or the coaching staff encouraging him to do so more often?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I mean not directly, but yeah. If there's some opportunities, take it, that's who you are. Be who you are. Just be yourself. That's kind of a part of that, I know you guys grab different themes that I mention throughout the week – there's the 'hair on fire,' 'let it rip,' 'getting your mojo back' – and all of these different things that are our themes of the week. And that was an example of him being him, being aggressive and taking off and making some plays with his feet."

**Q: The play at the end where Derek Carr is reaching for the goal line, what do you coach your players to do there? Obviously, you want them to have a shot at a touchdown, but where is the balance between it and caution?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "There's a fine line there. Obviously, you want to make plays to win. You need to play to win. You need to be aggressive to win there. Would love to have seen him secure it with two hands and try and stretch it across with two hands. It was in his left hand and the safety came over and there was contact and that jostled it loose. So yeah, we do talk about securing the ball and not being careless with it and being sure. I think when you know there is going to be contact, you want to lock it down. It was really close, but unfortunate."

**Q: Does it make sense to you that if you fumble a ball and it goes out of balance at the two-yard line, you get to keep it, but if you fumble the ball and it goes out of the end zone, it's a touchback?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I don't know that it does. There are a few rules that are in the playbook that maybe should be relooked at. I think whenever the competition committee has brought it, they didn't have a really good answer, so they kind of left it how it is. It's kind of on the responsibility of the runner. I'd have to agree that it shouldn't count so much against you when you're that close to the goal line. If you were a yard back, it would have been fine. You would have kept the ball. I'd say you don't get a touchdown, but you have to go back to where you fumbled it. That's not the rule right now. That part of the rule was called exactly as we all would expect it would be."

**Q: Jihad Ward saw greater involvement in the defense. Was that also part of an active effort to get him more involved based on what you guys have seen from him in practice?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "No. It really was a result of... He's practiced pretty much the same all year. I think for the most part, Mario [Edwards Jr.] being out, them being a team that likes to play with big packages, and they opened the game in the big 13 group, three tight ends, and he was going to play in that, so he ended up getting a start. So yeah, he was going to be play and he played and did some good things, and did some things we'll want him to be better at. He had a good week of practice and he brought a lot of energy and he was excited to get a chance to suit up and play."

**Q: Is there any chance Amari Cooper gets back this week?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "We'll see on the injuries. Donald, I know, is out with surgery. The other guys, we'll see where they are as we go through the week. We've got an extra day to kind of heal up, so we'll see on Thursday."

**Q: Will you look at David Sharpe at all at left tackle?**

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



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**Q: Do you expect him to start there this week?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "We'll see how the week goes. That's why he's here, and then obviously the way we finished the game the other night is an option, so we've got some work to do through the week in practice and see how guys prepare and how they work. [Offensive line] Coach [Mike] Tice, obviously, and I will talk about that and [offensive coordinator] Todd [Downing] and kind of work through it and make the decision that is best for us."

**Q: With the season where it's at right now, is there an inclination to go with younger players to get a look at them at this point?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "We're going to play to win. We're just going to play to win. We're going to do everything we can to get over this 'close but no cigar' finish we had and we'll have an extra. We'll do our Tell the Truth tomorrow, then we'll have an extra day of recovery and then we'll get in with the normal game week leading up to our opportunity on Christmas night."

**Q: What have you seen from David Sharpe this year so far?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "My son was in town this weekend and they were teammates at Florida and the first thing he said was, 'Wow his body looks a lot better like he's really been working,' and he has been. He's been working. He's been working with [head strength and conditioning coach] Joe Gomes and the strength department. He's been working with Mike Tice and his teammates, practicing. I think he's a guy that has a chance to be a player for us in the future. I'd like to play him for sure, but he's going to have to earn that in practice. He's done a nice job of working and developing and he's increased his lean muscle mass and decreased body fat and things like that. He's been working at it while he's been largely inactive. He's been active a couple games but largely inactive on the year. He's been working and doing the things he needs to do to be a good player for us."

**Q: He's acknowledged that he got a little to hyped for his snaps against the Giants and maybe his technique went out the window a little. Is that common for a young player?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "It can be, guys are excited to play. That's a good thing. We'll work on the settling down part. Coach Tice will work the group and, like I said, we're playing to win at all costs. It's all about winning any way we can. All decisions will be based on accomplishing that."

**Q: Is there honor in finishing the game the way you did yesterday as opposed to finishing it like other games that you have this year?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "That's more like we want to see it around here. You can put your head down on the pillow and know that you gave it all you had. The team was into it for 60 minutes and we came up a little short. I don't think anyone questions what we saw in terms of effort and energy and grit and determination and those things. That's at the core of what I believe in as a competitor. That's what we're going to bring. I am proud of seeing that, but there is no consolation prize at the end of the day. We need to win games, that's what we're here for."

**Q: Were you aware that they were doing that from the sideline?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I didn't see any index card last night. I saw it only on social media. I did not see that process happen. I saw the chain. Like I said, I saw space and I was like, 'Alright, they just made a big error going for it right there and this is a turning point.' It's four [minutes] and change in the game and we've got the ball on the 40 going the other way. That was pretty ballsy and it really didn't work, except they got the fortuitous reaction from the crew."

**Q: Since taking over the play calling, have you seen John Pagano have his personal touches and make the defense his own which have paid off?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I think he's done a good job of providing clarity on assignments. I think he's a good teacher. I think he does a good job with the group. I'm pleased with the way he's worked at it, but it's exactly what I expected him to do. Want him to continue to deliver and us to continue to grow and improve as we finish up. Play our best ball coming up here in Philly."