



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "I'd be happy to answer any questions that I can. Obviously, really excited about being back in Indianapolis."

Q: How attractive is the first overall pick?

Coach Gruden: "Pretty attractive. That's why we're here trying to measure every possibility."

Q: What are the key things you are looking at this week with the players?

Coach Gruden: "Health. I want to see if they're healthy. I want to see if they love football and want to see what their measurables are. That's about all you can really find out here in Indianapolis. You have to study the tape. You have to gather information, but those are the three key ingredients."

Q: With these multi-positional defensive backs nowadays, how does it impact how you project your transition to the NFL as opposed to 10 or 15 years ago?

Coach Gruden: "Hard to do. Hard to do. Right now, we might be playing seven defensive backs at a time. If you watch Kansas City play in our division, you might need to play eight. They're throwing the ball unlike any team I've ever seen. So, you have to find guys that can match up against big guys, smaller guys, guys that can line up in the box and play the run. We're looking for versatile guys for sure."

Q: Is there any difference in the interview process at the Senior Bowl compared to here at the combine? And if so, how?

Coach Gruden: "Not a lot different. Here it's a little bit more restricted because you have 15 minutes and horns are blowing every three minutes, so it's hard to have a legitimate conversation. It's just more players, less time. A lot of urgency though to get the information."

Q: What are your thoughts on the AFC West division after this year and what do you have to do to get better in order to compete?

Coach Gruden: "We have to get better at every phase of our football. We got, obviously needs, offensively and defensively. [Joe] Flacco's coming to town in Denver, he's a World Championship quarterback. We know want [Patrick] Mahomes just did and Philip Rivers is still very dangerous. So, defensively we have to improve at all three levels and offensively we have to improve as well."

Q: Does the first-round pick, being that it is the No. 24 selection, you received from the Chicago Bears impact how you view the trade in retrospect?

Coach Gruden: "No. It just doesn't. We have no control over what happens really other than what we do with the pick."

Q: What do you look for when you're evaluating edge pass rushers?

Coach Gruden: "Production. Can you win when you're one-on-one? Can you win in adversity, when the back is chipping? Can you line up on the left side? Can you line up on the right side? Can you go inside over the guard? And what's your playing style? Can you play 75 or 80 percent of the snaps? That's how it is in pro football most of the time for the great players. A lot of these guys in college football haven't played more than 50 percent of the snaps. So, what's your endurance like, and obviously arsenal of moves? Do you have a number of ways to get home? Power rush, do you have an alternative move? But, we're looking for instincts and a lot of things. Can you stop the run? You don't get to rush if you don't stop the run."

Q: Will you use your draft picks to potentially build a young core as opposed to maybe using one of those picks to bring in an established player who might be able to help right now?



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Coach Gruden: "We plan on obviously trying to get younger. We'll see how it goes. You never know what trade opportunities will present themselves. Every veteran player comes with a price tag. These contracts are very expensive, so you have to measure the financial part of things as well as does he fit your scheme and your operation?"

Q: Talking about the passing game, is it just the flavor of the month what some of these teams like the Chiefs, Rams and Saints are doing? Can teams sustain it and can you win a championship doing it like that?

Coach Gruden: "I think so. I think you can. The guy in New England can still throw it, too. You have to be able to, I think, run the ball in key situations, run out the clock at the end of the game. You have to be able to convert some third-and-one's, some goal line situations. You have to set up some play-action passes. [Tom] Brady proved that. They had the best play action in all of football. But I think, yes, to answer your question. With the way the passing game truly is today with all of the RPOs [run-pass options], I think you can go all the way with a great pass offense."

Q: With Kyler Murray, what are the physical concerns and how do you as a coach, as a person who schemes, transcend that?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know what the physical concerns are. Are you talking about the height? I think that's been proven to not be as much a factor as maybe it was years ago. If you ask Russell Wilson or [Drew] Brees, or the kid in Cleveland, I don't know that it's a true impact on the position or the performance."

Q: Does today's passing game change how you evaluate defensive backs?

Coach Gruden: "Well, you have to be able to tackle, you see. I think it all starts there. Everybody gets enamored with the coverage ability, the length, the speed and all that stuff. You have to be able to tackle these guys in one-on-one situations. We had a guy walk in our room last night, a receiver out of Ole Miss, his name is [D.K.] Metcalf, I mean he looked like Jim Brown. He's the biggest wide out I've ever seen. You have to ask yourself, who is tackling this guy? So, if you're a 175-pound corner and you're tackling a 235-pound back or a 230-pound wide out or a tight end, you have to ask yourself, is this what I want to do? You have to find guys that can tackle big time. I think sometimes that is overlooked."

Q: What are your thoughts on expanding replays?

Coach Gruden: "I don't have any interest in expanding replay. I have a strong interest in eliminating replay, but that's for another day."

Q: What do you think of the quarterback class this year?

Coach Gruden: "You know, it's very interesting. I had an opportunity, a unique opportunity to coach some really good players in Alabama at the Senior Bowl. The kid from North Carolina State impressed me, I think Daniel Jones out of Duke has a huge upside. I think Drew Lock's got a quick release, accurate passer, lot of production. [Dwayne] Haskins we met last night, met Murray last night. It's a good class. If they get in the right system with the right coach, it could be a great class."

Q: Did Murray convince you that he wants to play pro football?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I believe him. My dad drafted Bo Jackson, so I asked him three times, 'Are you serious?' Really?' because no one thought Bo would play baseball back in the day. At least we didn't in Tampa. It is a sensitive issue. Obviously the Oakland A's drafted him, we are with the Oakland Raiders, so you want to make sure that the information you gather is correct."

Q: How do you see the depth at the receiver class this year?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, pretty interesting. We'll see how they run. College offenses, you sometimes have to use your imagination with the route trees and things like that, but there is some speed, there is some size, there's some playmakers and there's some small packages that can really create some offense as well. I think it's a good group of receivers, it really is."



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: When you see a receiver like D.K. Metcalf, is there any skepticism if he has lost flexibility to get that big?

Coach Gruden: "Maybe. We had pictures of him with his shirt off, it made we want to get into the weight room last night. This guy is really put together, but he shows good elusiveness, good change of direction and I think he is healthy. I think he has been cleared medically which is the number one thing we wanted to find out."

Q: Do you feel better one year into coaching again?

Coach Gruden: "No, not really. We won four games. We got a long way to go. We have a long way to go and we are going to get there. I'm confident – very confident – in the staff that we have. I think Mike Mayock's addition is really exciting, he fires me up. A lot of energy, a lot of intelligence, a lot of creativeness that is going to help our building. We are eager to try and get better through free agency, through the draft and through our development of players."

Q: Would age or the finances take you out of the market for a veteran player like Antonio Brown?

Coach Gruden: "Well, I don't like veteran players, so I'll just leave it at that. I'm not going to speculate about anybody. We are going to look at every vehicle possible. Certainly the financial part of every acquisition has to be considered, but we are going to look into everybody's availability and what we think is best for our team."

Q: If a quarterback doesn't have the ability to move around and throw on the run, is that a huge flaw?

Coach Gruden: "I don't think so. Like I said, the guy that keeps winning the Super Bowl isn't going to win the short shuttle championship. The guy is just an amazing football player and he's proven you don't have to get on the edge and run for first downs or attack the perimeter. There is a lot of ways to get things done and it all depends on the supporting cast and the performance of your team."

Q: Would you agree that Derek Carr is a franchise quarterback?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, I would. I think it was well said."

Q: Is he the Raiders franchise quarterback?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, he is our franchise quarterback, yes. Try to make that clear."

Q: What do you think about other football leagues like the AAF?

Coach Gruden: "I love it. I think it creates opportunity for coaches, too. I love football at any level and I think the more leagues there are, the more opportunity there is, and I think that league is off to a great start. They even got some good broadcasters, I was listening to it the other night."

Q: Are your personnel guys tracking those leagues?

Coach Gruden: "They are, every game. Every game. We get a writeup every game of who stood out and, like I said, we are evaluating the coaches in that league as well."

Q: What is your opinion on Dwayne Haskins?

Coach Gruden: "Impressive guy, man. Redshirt sophomore, 50 touchdown passes at Ohio State. He's a big guy, you feel his presence when he walks in a room. He's a really calm, cool customer and they did a great job at Ohio State transitioning from an offense from a running quarterback to a passing quarterback. That's why Urban Meyer is one of the great college coaches of all-time."

Q: How much do you consider a player's measurables and are there any particular players that don't fit the prototype, but you are looking at?

Coach Gruden: "No, I don't discriminate against anybody size wise."

Q: With the league trending to passing more, does that make it more imperative to find interior defensive lineman?



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Coach Gruden: “Yeah, I think edge pressure sometimes is perceived to be the most important but the closest you are to the quarterback is right in front of you. When we won a championship, Warren Sapp was a big part of that and when we were in Green Bay Reggie White was a big part of that. If the quarterback can’t step up it really helps your edge rushers and that’s important. We drafted two young pass rushers inside last year and we might be in the market for another one.”

Q: Looking at your own division, what position are you looking to add at in free agency?

Coach Gruden: “We are looking at the safeties in free agency and the draft. When [Travis] Kelce is in your division and Antonio Gates is in your division, you would be looking at safeties too.”

Q: Where do Gareon Conley and Karl Joseph fit into what you want to do defensively?

Coach Gruden: “They are really important guys. Conley is very important. He was injured as a rookie. I thought he played pretty good last year. When he was healthy he played very well, had a streak of four or five games where he showcased some really good stuff. Karl Joseph has asserted himself as a leader on our football team, and those are two young guys that we are going to count on.”