



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **General Manager Mike Mayock**

#### **Q: What was today like for you?**

**Mayock:** "I did all of it myself. I was cut and resigned and you have no idea how I empathize with these kids. Every cut was brutal. I had tears in my eyes with several of these kids. Every one of them handled it with class and distinction. My style is very direct. I told everyone of them where I thought they were as a football player and what I thought they needed to improve upon. They were all direct conversations, some longer than others. You're right, I had to do some cutting before. Since I took the job, there's been several moves, a lot of moves. But the last two days for me, were emotionally draining because I know what those kids feel like sitting in that chair and I feel just as bad as they do."

#### **Q: A lot of people might be surprised that Anthony Rush did not make the roster. What went into that?**

**Mayock:** "Anthony Rush, we liked him, 340 pounds. We picked him up off the street after Philadelphia had cut him. Felt like we gave him some real good exposure and opportunity. We kept four defensive tackles and obviously, we had signed Corey Liuget. I'm not sure we're done at a bunch of different places on the roster. There's still more to come. But at the end of the day, he's very raw. He's a guy that I think has a future in the league, but for us today, it was not his day."

#### **Q: What excites you about the 53 that you did keep?**

**Mayock:** "I think [Head Coach] Jon [Gruden] and I took a step back today and looked at the overview of it. The last couple of days were a frenzy. I took a look at last year's 53 before the L.A. Rams game, Week 1. We have over 30 guys on this 53 that were not on that roster. There's been significant change. Eight of our nine draft picks are on the roster. I think we have four undrafted free agents. I think we're excited because we kind of feel like what we hoped to accomplish eight months ago when Jon and I sat down together and talked about it was to get younger, more athletic and the right kind of mentality in this building. We think we've been pretty consistent with that and we're real excited about the guys on this roster."

#### **Q: Was it a numbers game with the receiver group in terms of not keeping Keelan Doss?**

**Mayock:** "Yeah, I mean it's pretty obvious that we went with a veteran group. I have strong feelings for Keelan Doss. I thought he did a great job. Local kid, great story. That was a very difficult cut. J.J. [Nelson] has been out for a couple of weeks with a mild ankle. He brings a speed element. We loved Hunter Renfrow from Day 1. [Dwayne] Harris, of course, is one of the top returners and special teams players in the league. At the end of the day, there still could be some more movement at that position, but we really like how we line up Week 1."

#### **Q: Can you talk about what went into letting Brandon Marshall go and only have four linebackers on the roster?**

**Mayock:** "Brandon Marshall is a guy that took a while to get his flexibility and his speed back. He worked through the (Organized Team Activities) OTA's and the early part of training camp. We were just starting to see that burst that we were used to. I think what really happened is if we're only going to keep four or five linebackers, which is the way the NFL is going these days because of the spread offenses, that fourth or fifth linebacker has got to be a special teams player. He has to be a core special teams player. If Brandon wasn't going to be the first guy in on base and play a high percentage of snaps, than we were going to need him to play almost all of the special teams. We really didn't see that for him. Rather than try to force it, I wanted to get him out of the door early so he had the best opportunity. So we let him know yesterday out of respect."



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**Q: Can you talk about why it was important to get Rodney Hudson's extension done now as well?**

**Mayock:** "Yeah, I think since I've been here, you start to kind of get a feel for the heart and the pulse of a locker room. You can put the tape on and I could tell you Rodney Hudson is one of the top centers in the NFL. But when you get around the guys and you get around that offensive line room, and I'm a huge believer in building the offensive line, and you get around that group and watch what's going on and he is the quintessential glue player. He's a glue guy. He doesn't say much publicly. He doesn't smile too often, but when he's with his guys, everything revolves around him. His work ethic. His toughness. We thought it was really important as we continue to develop this offensive line. We bring in a new free agent tackle in Trent [Brown]. We got Kolton [Miller] in Year 2. We thought it was real important to keep the anchor of that line together as we head to Vegas a year from now. We're excited that Rodney agreed to the contract."

**Q: Do you plan on using the IR/Designated to Return tomorrow?**

**Mayock:** "Well, you don't have to do that anymore. You get two return guys regardless of how many you have on. The caveat is that they have to be on the roster for the final 53. So, you could have eight guys and you can pick any two and they have to be off for eight games."

**Q: When did it become clear that Justin Ellis was not going to be able to return this season?**

**Mayock:** "I think with Coach, the big thing is availability. Since he's been here, Justin's been hurt – to know fault of his own – I mean it's a legitimate football injury. So, 'Jelly' has been hurt. It's been really hard to evaluate him because of that. I think, again, as we go ahead philosophically with younger, more athletic, consistent, available players, we felt like that was a roster spot we could use in a different direction. We have a lot of respect for him though, he's been a really good football player in this league."

**Q: Having three quarterbacks, was that pretty much always the plan?**

**Mayock:** "When you work with Jon Gruden, it probably is. *(laughter)* An yeah, I mean, bottom line is that Jon loves his quarterbacks, does a great job developing them and I think we pretty much knew all along, especially if all three of them played the way they did, I think it became obvious that we were going to go with three."

**Q: What did you guys see in Dallin Leavitt?**

**Mayock:** "I saw a kid with a chip on his shoulder that couldn't wait to prove to people that even though he wasn't drafted, he belongs with the big boys. He's become a core special teams player and that's how you have to make it in this league, if you're not a draft pick and you don't have a job because of your draft status, you got to make it on special teams. And this kid committed to it, he's made plays, he's a core teams player and he's gotten better and better. He's making plays at safety and if you watched the game the other night for instance, in the fourth quarter he made three or four tackles in the open field, 1-on-1 tackles in the open field and that's what a safety has to do. Last line of defense, it doesn't have to be pretty, but you got to get him on the ground. So, to me he's the kind of kid I'm proud of. He didn't have a lot of fanfare when he came out. I think he was a tryout guy a year ago, to get through to the practice squad a year ago and now he's on the 53. I think he's a testament to hard work, passion and love of the game."

**Q: What does it say about the four undrafted rookie free agents to make the team?**

**Mayock:** "I can't tell you how excited we are about those four guys. I mean, Alec Ingold, we had in the Senior Bowl, knew he was going to be a target. Andre James, I'll tell you, [offensive line coach] Tom Cable has done a great job with him. He was a left tackle at UCLA, and not really a highly rated left tackle. We projected him inside as a scouting staff and Tom's taken that and Andre James had an outstanding training camp. A.J. Cole was a tryout punter and Keisean Nixon was a guy that we identified early as a below-the-radar, core special teams guy, which he was playing safety at South Carolina. We thought he was a corner, so we are real excited about those four guys"



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and obviously the big picture is there is a lot of transition with this roster. Again, underscoring youth, athletic ability, size, etc., and I'm excited these kids are with us."