



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "How's it going today? I'll be happy to answer any questions that I can. I was very pleased with our first two padded practices. Obviously, still some things we need to clean up."

Q: Can you just touch on the importance on practicing situational football?

Coach Gruden: "Well, there's so many situations and there's so little time to work on them. We try to jam a lot of them into every practice. Whether it be shorts or pads. Today we covered a couple of them that only come up once in a while. We are trying to teach everybody the situation, to have respect for it and when it arises, hopefully we're prepared for it."

Q: How long has Ian Silberman been in discussion at right tackle?

Coach Gruden: "Well he's been working in there. Versatility is a key at that position. When you're an offensive lineman, you can only have so many guys active on game day. You need your sixth and seventh offensive linemen to be able to play multiple positions. Ian is one of those guys that's a candidate to play guard or tackle."

Q: You've seen all the top receivers for the last 10 years, how close do you think Amari Cooper is to joining that group of the elite?

Coach Gruden: "Well I think what he's done his first couple of years in the league, first three years, has not been done by very many people. Hopefully we can put an offense in that he can play in for four or five or six years like most of the great players have a chance to do. I think continuity is important, not only for quarterbacks and football players at other positions, but also wide receivers. I think he has all the stuff you're looking for. He has rare size. He came in here at 223 pounds. He has very good speed. He's elusive. He's smart. He's a great competitor. He's really a good kid."

Q: Did you start taking going lighter on veteran players today at practice?

Coach Gruden: "We have a play for everybody. It's an opportunity of a lifetime if we take the edge off of somebody. It's a great opportunity for somebody to take this grip and run with it. I saw some guys do that today. We are going to be very aware of all the reps of all the players and we're going to take the veteran player into consideration during training camp."

Q: What's Jordy Nelson like in the meeting rooms?

Coach Gruden: "He's just a class act. I wouldn't say he has a lot of vibrato and he's not a guy to raise his hand and he's not real flamboyant, but he is polished. He's a pro. He's helpful to all those guys. I think Coop would tell you that. I think all of our young receivers would tell you. His presence in there, his experience in the slot, at split end, at flanker and big gains with a quarter back like A-Rod (Aaron Rodgers) that can make awkward throws from any platform is a great tool. It's a great resource. He's been sharing that with our guys. I'm really appreciative of that. I think we're getting that in a lot of our meeting rooms."

Q: How is Connor Cook doing?

Coach Gruden: "He's getting better a lot. I think he's doing better. He really is. I think he's taken to the offense. He's showing more and more command. He and EJ [Manuel] are in a real battle and that's a good thing. They've made progress since we started here in April."

Q: Are you concerned about Gareon Conley and that his injury may last longer than you'd like it to?

Coach Gruden: "I don't know if concerned is the word. I think disappointed is the word. He comes out to start training camp. He's in superb shape. He makes a great play and he gets a setback. Hopefully he comes back sooner than later. Disappointed is the big word I think. His heart is broken. He's put a lot into this and he knows he has to stay healthy and get out there for us because we need him."



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Q: Do you expect his injury to be a couple of weeks?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah I don't have a timeframe. I would think that would be a fair assessment, yes."

Q: Why hasn't Vadal Alexander reported to training camp yet?

Coach Gruden: "I'll let [General Manager] Reggie [McKenzie] handle the exact nature of that. I believe we're going to move on. I believe he'll be addressed by Reggie here either today or tomorrow."

Q: How impressed have you been with Kolton Miller so far?

Coach Gruden: "I really have. I think the best guy to ask is Bruce Irvin. We've really encouraged Bruce to give him your best stuff on occasion. We've asked [defensive coordinator] Paul Guenther to give us some tough looks. We've asked Derek Carr to change the protection at the last second and see if he can handle the physical and mental part of it. We've turned up the noise already. Some of this music, I don't even like, I'm listening to that to try to distract him. He even had to stand up and sing last night in front of his teammates. We're trying every way we can to get him to buckle under the pressure. But he has responded. When I met his mom yesterday, I could see why. He comes from great stock. He has a huge, huge, huge upside."

Q: You mentioned the versatility factor with the line, is that why Brandon Parker is getting some reps over on the left side?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah. Well, we like what [David] Sharpe has done. We weren't real happy when we got here. A lot of the linemen were overweight, heavy. Sharpe came back and lost a lot of weight. He's 338 pounds. He's a contender at right tackle. He has the size and the thump and the mass and the potential to be a really good right tackle, but he's not right now. But he sure has an upside and he and [Breno] Giacomini are taking reps over there. While Donald Penn is out, Kolton needs a break and right now Brandon is the guy that's in the mix."

Q: Did you get those guys in shape here or did they do a lot on their own?

Coach Gruden: "Both. [Strength and conditioning coordinator] Tom Shaw has done a great job and his staff. These guys had to go home for a month. We're not allowed to talk to these guys. I don't even know if you're allowed to email these guys or Snapchat them either. I think they showed some real effort in getting it done on their own and I appreciate that."

Q: You guys are down a couple of running backs right now, do you expect to have Chris Warren or Jalen Richard back at practice soon?

Coach Gruden: "I think Richard will be back. He probably would've practiced today, but he had a calf strain. I really like him a lot. Chris Warren knows he has to get out there. We had a young back from Iowa come in today and do a couple of nice things in the 9-on-7 drills. Hopefully both guys will be back on Wednesday."

Q: What did you think of James Butler and what he was able to do today without having been here since mini-camp?

Coach Gruden: "It was tough. We got a good running back coach, he probably told him what to do on a few of the plays. That's what you have to do. Every year there are surprises in every camp. We'll see what happens."

Q: Is there anybody you can think of that look as good in pads as they did in shorts?

Coach Gruden: "We've only had two days of pads. Marshawn Lynch is what is advertised. He's pretty good in pads. The pads are where the big guys show up. I think Justin Ellis' game is a lot different in pads than it is in shorts. I'm impressed with Tahir Whitehead. I'm really encouraged with our linebackers. Marquel Lee, I think Derrick Johnson's leadership is another big story here in this camp. We've seen some of young backers really pick it up. [Nicholas] Morrow is having a good camp also."



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Q: Is Ellis a guy that doesn't necessarily need to get to the quarterback but can change the pocket a lot with the push he gives?

Coach Gruden: "We've had so many different offenses and defense here the last 10 years. They keep changing coaches and changing coordinators and changing schemes. When you're running a three-man line, you need a nose tackle. You need a mammoth, big, space-eating nose tackle and Justin Ellis is really become that kind of player. Now in the 4-3, we'd like some more penetration and more push in the pocket and he can do that. He did that in college. He's doing that now. Ahtyba Rubin is a big guy. We have two guys in the bullpen I'm anxious to see P.J. Hall and [Eddie] Vanderdoes. I hope we get them back out on Wednesday or Thursday. It's about time."

Q: Is the kicking competition getting sorted out up here or is that going to take some time?

Coach Gruden: "We're just going to have to wait for games. We're charting everything. I get tired of looking at all the charts – hang time, kickoffs, get off time, accuracy, right hash, left hash, length of kick, positioning the ball, targeting the ball on kickoffs. We're looking at everything. They're both talented guys. They're both good people. The kid from Florida has a strong leg and he's going to have to beat out a good veteran to get this job."

Q: How much fun are you having being back?

Coach Gruden: "I feel like I never left now. I feel like when you get seven, eight days in training camp the nostalgia of everything is over now. We have to do something with this opportunity. It's really great to be back and see the fans at practice. I like this team. I like where we're going. We obviously have some issues that we need to get solved."

Q: First impression of Daryl Worley and Nick Nelson?

Coach Gruden: "We're really happy with Nick Nelson. We haven't seen Nick. We never got to see him do anything in Alameda because he was still rehabbing the injury. He has playing strength and he has good size. I think he's going to be a versatile guy that can compete for that nickel job. TJ Carrie was a good player for us. We need somebody that has some physical substance to him that can go in there and take on blocks, blitz, cover the slot, handle the tight end. He gives us some versatility. I forgot the other guy you were talking about. Worley? He's moving up on our depth chart. He's a savvy guy. I think he's put what happened to him behind. I think he's focused now. I credit [defensive backs coach] Derrick Ansley and Paul Guenther. The scheme, I think, suits these guys quite well."

Q: Marcell Ateman made a nice play.

Coach Gruden: "I like Ateman. Ateman makes plays every day. What was most impressive about that play is Carr saw him. It was man-to-man, we had a different play called. He saw Marcell in press coverage, he changed the play and he went to him. He knew he had press coverage. He like the match up. That's rare where a veteran quarterback calls a rookie's number with the media here. The kid makes the play. Three days in a row he's gotten behind people and adjusted on the back shoulder. That's why we brought him here. He did it at Oklahoma State, too."

WR Jordy Nelson

Q: What do you think it will take for Amari Cooper to reach the elite level?

Nelson: "From what I've seen, he has the ability. His quickness and athleticism, the way he understands the game, hands, everything. He has it all. When you get to that elite level, more than anything it's the consistency aspect of it. I haven't watched him too much so I don't know, but he's still a young guy. When you think of the elites, you think of someone like [Larry] Fitzgerald, who are good year after year after year. I think that's how you get there and sustain that. Being consistent, which I think he's been doing a great job as far as I can tell since I've been here, day-in and day-out. That's where it starts, out here in practice. It'll transfer into games."



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Q: Have these three or four days felt different since you'd only been in one place for your career?

Nelson: "It honestly hasn't felt much different since day one or day two since being with the organization back in April. I think the transition has been extremely smooth, a lot easier than I honestly expected going into the unknown. Once we've gotten into football and into practice, it's been smooth. It's football again, just different guys."

Q: You've come in and taken on a leadership role. What do you think you bring as a leader?

Nelson: "There's a fine line. These guys have been together, so it's a unique situation. They've been together, I'm new but also this whole coaching staff is new so we have a new offense. I think we're all trying to learn the system and learn what the coaches want. I can't come in and coach these young guys or anyone up on how to run a route if it's not how they want it done here. It might be different than what I've done in the past. It's understanding all of that and then once I see something and as we progress and understand what the coaches want, then the conversations that I have with the coaches or Derek [Carr] I can relay that on. That will continue to grow through camp and through the season."

Q: How similar is this offense to the offense in Green Bay?

Nelson: "Very similar. Some different verbiage, but for the most part the routes are the routes. We just have to understand what they're calling certain concepts and what that means to them here. I think I've gotten a good grasp on that and, for the most part, done a good job of deleting stuff that I brought from Green Bay so I'm not trying to compare systems like 'this is what that was, and this is what that was.' It's when I hear something now, I know what it means here and it allows my thinking to go quicker and get set and ready to go."

Q: Raiders have brought in a lot of veterans. What's the benefit of that?

Nelson: "I think experience. Guys who have been around understand the game. They've been through a lot so you don't have to worry about them having to deal with the NFL life or dealing with the team or travel, all that. We've been through that and been through a lot of situations. We've been in offenses that are similar so it's easy to pick up. Those are some of the advantages. Then, obviously the leadership role is one reason as well. I think we have some great leaders that were already here and they brought in some great ones as well. It's all about meshing that together. I'm not coming in to try to take over the room. Obviously Amari has had the room for the last two years so it's just fitting in there and finding your role and being successful at it."

Q: Do you have to treat your body differently now than when you first came in the league?

Nelson: "Oh absolutely. There's no doubt about that. I think that's true for everyone that is going into their 11th season. It changed a few years ago. When you fully understand your body changing, There's just a little bit more work behind the scenes of making sure you're prepared and taking care of it. That's just all part of the game. As everyone gets older, you have to do it. Everything changes."

Q: Derek said he met with a few of his teammates in the offseason, were you able to be a part of that?

Nelson: "I was able to be a part of one. By the time I got my family back out here, we were able to meet up with them one time and throw some routes. It was just running routes with him, talking verbiage, nothing over the top. Just trying to stay fresh with it. I don't know what they accomplished or what they did the other times that I wasn't there, but every time you're around each other whether it's about football or not about football, it's another way to grow chemistry. Anytime you see him throw a ball, it's going to help."

Q: How has that process gone with Derek as far as timing and chemistry?

Nelson: "Just continuing to grow with it. It's something that will take time and will never stop. Even after being in Green Bay for ten years, it was something that we were working on there. You continue to learn something new. You continue to finetune things, because the defense is finetuning things. It will continue to grow until I'm done playing."



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Q: About a week from now, you'll be having the joint practices with the Lions. What's your experience with joint practices?

Nelson: "I've never been a part of one. With the Packers, we never did a joint practice so it will all be new to me. From what I've seen on TV, they can become interesting. Hopefully it doesn't."

Q: Do you expect more clarity on the catch rule?

Nelson: "I don't need any more clarity, I understand it."

Q: Is it possible that if someone has won at the highest level, they still want to prove things?

Nelson: "Absolutely. We experienced that when we won the Super Bowl in 2010. Everyone said 'oh, are you going to take a deep breath and relax?' You don't. You have that feeling, you know what its like and you want it again. Losing is never fun, no matter what level you're at. I think you have the pride factor. There's nothing that's going to motivate you more than being successful at your job and winning games. I don't care how many yards you catch, if you go 6-10 or 4-12, it's not any fun no matter what you're able to accomplish individually. It's all about winning games. That's what we're going to look forward to do."

Q: You were teammates with Jared Cook in Green Bay. What have you seen from Jared then and now?

Nelson: "Great player. More of the same. We were disappointed when he left us. I think he wanted to stay but it's just how, as I just found out, things work sometimes. He was huge for us. He did some great things, he made some huge plays. You can see him continue to grow and some of us sit here and wonder why he's bounced around the league like he has. It's great to be back with him and have that guy out there as well running down the middle and having that mismatch. If you can have him in the middle or on the outside, he creates that mismatch that every offense is looking for now with their tight ends."

TE Jared Cook

Q: When Jordy signed, did you have a dollar figure in mind if he asked for 87?

Cook: "No, we're not talking about jersey numbers around here anymore. Some people get sensitive about jersey numbers so we're not going to talk about that anymore, man."

Q: What does he bring to this offense?

Cook: "A vet presence that you can't coach. Just knowledge of the game, great route running, great speed, great timing. When I was in Green Bay, a lot of the guys looked up to Jordy and he played a huge role in our offense, not only as a player but as a person in our locker room. The all-around person that he is and his insights to the game that he brings is huge for our team, especially for the young receiving corps that we have. It's pretty huge."

Q: What has it been like to be around Gruden?

Cook: "Never been around him before. It's been pretty awesome to have him here. He brings knowledge to the game and we're learning things about not only current football but old football that I haven't learned in my ten years in the league. Not only knowledge of the game but energy every day. He makes it fun for us but he makes us work, which is good. He gets everything out of us mentally and physically, which is what we need."

Q: How does he present older football?

Cook: "He's bringing up film from like 1976 when you didn't even think they had film. Like grainy film where you can barely see the players. He has that knowledge. He's been watching football since he was a kid and he's been in the league since he was a kid. Everything that you're seeing and everything he's teaching you is things from his background, not only current background but pre-dates 1987 which is when I was born."



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Q: Are you able to understand the message with the grainy film?

Cook: "Absolutely. There are actually plays that we're putting in and schemes that we're running that are older schemes. He's bringing players in to talk to us. Ricky Dudley has been a huge influence on me, just from knowing him from OTAs and camp, just talking to him every day. I'm in his ear asking him questions, because he's been part of this offense so he knows. It's things like that Gruden is introducing us to that we have never had before. It's pretty awesome."

Q: Does it kind of feel like it's your first year here because of all the changes that's happened?

Cook: "Yes. I feel like that every time I hit a new team or there's a coaching change or offensive playbook change. I feel like that all the time. Essentially it is. Every year you have to prove yourself. Every year you have to come out here and show what you've got, show who you are."

Q: How has that been for you because you've been through a lot of change?

Cook: "I'm not tripping. It's part of the game now. The moving, the change in personnel, the playbook changes, family changes, all that is part of the game at this point. You just have to come out here and focus and do your job."

Q: Does your role change in this offense much?

Cook: "Roles change all the time. It really never stays the same because week-in and week-out your offense is going to change. You're lined up in different positions, doing different things. You have different plays lined up every week so really, your roles never stay the same."

Q: Are you doing things in this offense that you haven't done before?

Cook: "Some things. Coach Gruden is going to challenge everybody. He lines you up and he sends you through a gauntlet of plays and he expects you to get every single one of them right. He's always challenging you to get better. He's always challenging you physically, but mostly mentally. He wants to make sure that every time you line up on Sunday that your mind is in the right place, you know where to line up and you know how to do your job and do it well."

Q: What does Amari need to do to make the jump to an elite receiver?

Cook: "Amari is out here working. He's getting better and I think Jordy is going to be a huge influence on him. I think [wide receivers coach Edgar Bennett] EB is going to be a huge influence on him. Those guys know a lot of football. EB has coached receivers for a minute, so I think him grabbing onto him and even Coach [Greg] Olson and getting into those guy's pockets. Those guys can help Amari a lot and his growth as a young player."

Q: Does Derek look any different to you?

Cook: "Derek looks like a completely different person in my eyes, just from the way he's attacking the game. From the way he's attacking the challenges that Gruden has been giving to him. Every time that Gruden asks him a question, he gets it right, no hesitation. Every time Gruden asks him to get up in front of a meeting room and call out a play, run a play, get to the right check, get to the right audible, he does it every time. That's a responsibility that Derek never had last year. You see a totally different player out of him. He's attacking the game differently mentally and he has a totally different attitude going in to this year."

Q: How different is it having a head coach who is so involved with the offense?

Cook: "It's huge. It's totally different. I think when you can put the people in place when you're not on one side of the ball, on the other side of the ball, you can put people in place that can actually handle the challenges thrown at them and that can handle putting together an offense and defense, I think that's important to a team. With Coach Gruden being our head coach, he's not spending as much time with the defense but, he trusts [defensive coordinator] Paul Guenther with his life, to make sure that defense is right. Even though he's not spending time over there, he trusts that Paul Guenther is going to handle his business. So, having him over on our side of the ball, which is different from last year, is huge. You're hearing everything from the horse's mouth, you know? Everything he



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wants, you're hearing it directly from him, so there's no confusing, no kind of lull in communication. Everything that you hear is from him, so you know how he wants it, you can get it done, you can get the job done faster. There's no more time to waste, it's straight to the point."

Q: Were you a part of any of the offseason workouts with Carr and other players?

Cook: "No, I wasn't, but a lot of those guys did get together. A lot of those guys did stay on, stay in the playbook and get right. A lot of them went to Southern Cal. And got work in with EJ [Manuel]. We kept in touch, we kept in communications, but we're here now. That's all that matters."

Q: Coach Gruden has talked about how he likes to bring in veteran players, is that a positive in your eyes?

Cook: "Heck yeah that's a positive. It helps the maturity of this team. When you got young guys, especially nowadays, these young guys just don't get what the NFL is about. Even something as simple as veteran presence and veteran leadership, they don't understand that. Veteran respect, they don't necessarily get that. So, having vets in the locker room and having vets around you that know the role, know how things go and that hold other people accountable – and that's the biggest thing, accountability, holding other people accountable for their actions – is huge. You can't buy that anywhere, because vets know how it's supposed to be done, and they're going to get it done the right way it's supposed to be."

WR Amari Cooper

Q: What does having Jordy Nelson mean to you and how much do you cling on to a guy like that?

Cooper: "Yeah, I do. Obviously, he's a seasoned player. He has such a presence in the receiver room, he's won a Super Bowl. So, any advice he has to offer, I'm all ears. He's always speaking up on the small things when it comes to small details and route running and things like that. I'm always listening."

Q: When you see receivers have always put up big numbers with Head Coach Jon Gruden as their coach, does that excite you?

Cooper: "I mean yeah, it's exciting. Obviously I can't go off of what other guys did. I kind of have to do it myself."

Q: Does your role change in your offense? Do you see things being different for you than they have been the past couple years?

Cooper: "I don't know. *(laughter)* Obviously, I just want to be a playmaker out there, make plays for my team so that we can have the best chance at winning."

Q: Coach Gruden was impressed by the muscle you have put on and that you weigh around 223 pounds, is that correct?

Cooper: "Yeah."

Q: What was this offseason like putting that weight on and how important was that for you to do?

Cooper: "I really didn't have an emphasis on putting a lot of weight on, I just was training a lot and it just came on that way."

Q: Jared Cook said that Derek Carr is more assertive this year, have you noticed a change in him?

Cooper: "He's always had really great preparation, always one of the first guys up in the morning studying, in the weight room and what not. The only thing that I would say has probably changed is he is more seasoned. He can see the defenses and he'll be better at that."



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Q: What has Coach Gruden as an offensive head coach been like for Carr and you personally?

Cooper: "It's been cool, man. He's like an offensive guru. He has a lot of plays in his head. It's been cool, we just have a lot of plays and I'm just trying to learn every position."

Q: How much of an emphasis is there for receivers to know all the positions?

Cooper: "He's really emphatic about that. He wants everybody to know each position on the football field. He puts an emphasis on running the same play a different way. So, you have to know every position."

Q: Can you see that this offense is going to create mismatches?

Cooper: "Yeah, I see it all the time in practice. That's what he's here for, that's what he wants to do. He ran some plays today that were just like you explained."

Q: Carr said this feels like it is the deepest group of receivers he has had. What do you think of the new guys, Martavis Bryant and Ryan Switzer?

Cooper: "Yeah, I think we have a variation of receivers. We have speed guys, we have guys who have really strong hands – possession guys. Whatever you want in a receiver, we have it."

Q: What did you think of Kolton Miller's singing voice with him singing to the team the other day?

Cooper: *"(laughter)* It was pretty surprising. *(laughter)"*

Q: Do you know what he sang?

Cooper: "I forgot the song, but it had a melody to it. *(laughter)"*

Q: What has it been like to have Coach Gruden show the team old film from before the 1990's?

Cooper: "Like I said earlier, he seems like he has so many plays in his head that he's seen from being a coach, from being an announcer. He has plays that he's seen 20 years ago that he still remembers and that he knows still work. It's been cool. He's been putting up film from a long time ago. You can't really see it that good. *(laughter)* But it worked."

Q: How much confidence does it give you as a player to know that Coach Gruden is going to put you in the right position to succeed?

Cooper: "When we were in meetings, I kind of get the feel that he knows exactly what he's talking about, because it seems like he never sleeps. Sometimes in meeting she can go on and on and on, nobody tells him what time it is and he'll keep going. You know that he's been up all night studying, watching these plays and he knows that they'll work."

Q: Coach Gruden said many times he wanted you to be the primary weapon of this team. Are you seeing that type of responsibility?

Cooper: "Yeah, we definitely have a lot of specialty plays for myself and for other guys as well. I see it playing out well. We try to execute it every day out there on the field and so far it's been going really good."

Q: Do you like having the expectation that you're going to be the top guy?

Cooper: "Yeah, of course. That's what you want as a wide receiver. That's what you want as a playmaker. You want the ball in those crucial situations. You want to be depended on, you want to be counted on when it's time to make a big play."

Q: What are your thoughts about breaking up camp with the Detroit Lions next week?

Cooper: "It'll be my first time doing that. I think it's a good thing because you get a game-like atmosphere. It'll be like a scrimmage out here. You get to play against guys who you know want to get the best of you. So, kind of see where you're at before the preseason."



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Q: Jared Cook was talking about how you are challenged with the list of plays that you are expected to know. Can you see where when you get to Sundays, that will be easy?

Cooper: "I definitely can. You have to go in your room and study every night if you're going to remember these plays, especially with him wanting you to know each wide receiver position. So, when we get into the game, it will definitely be easy because we'll have so much in our head, we'll be just like Gruden."