



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: "OK, we got a typical Wednesday type approach for us. Simulating a typical in season routine. How we get our information, how we get our information, how we study our opponent. Kind of the processes that we go through. Obviously, it's still the preseason. We still have a large roster with decisions to make, but in terms of how we go through the week, the structure is very much like in season. So that's how we're doing it. Questions?"

Q: Will you go through game planning this week?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, there's always a collection of what things are we going to do or not do. You just typically don't do as much during the preseason. Going through the process of how we put together our information that we provide the players, how the players get that information, whether it's on their iPad and the playbook, different things like that. Kind of teaching how we break down opponents, what we're looking for. The things that they need to be able to handle as we go through a week."

Q: Does playing Dallas later in the season have any impact on what you'll do in this week's game?

Coach Del Rio: "Not so much the fact that we play them again as what do you really want to show coming out of the preseason. They're going to see us and we'll see them between now and December. Plenty of opportunities. There's no real concern there."

Q: How important is it to get Jihad Ward back? What does he bring to the defense?

Coach Del Rio: "We're excited about the offseason that he had prior to needing to kind of mend. He's a good, young player that had a really strong offseason. We're excited about letting him compete and letting him show us what he can do. I know he's a big, strong, athletic guy. Certainly great to have him back at work and able to continue to develop him."

Q: Did he get stronger in the offseason? What did he do in the offseason?

Coach Del Rio: "He's pretty strong. He's pretty strong. I thought he was more decisive in everything he did. A little bit like Karl [Joseph] in terms of guys that are in their second year. They've kind of gone through it. As a rookie, you learn the ropes, you learn the kind of things that are going to come up, and you're a little more comfortable in your own skin and what you're being asked to do within the scheme."

Q: Are you worried the time off broke his momentum?

Coach Del Rio: "Well sure, he's going to have a little rust he'll have to work through. There's no doubt about that. He's been paying attention, and we'll get a good look at him this week."

Q: Is this a big week for Donald Penn in terms of reporting? If he doesn't report this week does it jeopardize his ability to start Week 1?

Coach Del Rio: "I'll just coach the guys that are here. I'm not going to really go further on the subject."

Q: What have you seen in Derek Carr in terms of improvements that's different than last year?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I think you're touching on something that I think is important for all of our players that you're constantly striving for improvement. I think he has. I think he has each of the years that we've been together. Each of the last couple of years he has gotten a little bit better each year. We're hoping that continues. He's still a young player. There's still a lot of growth in front of him. I think that's how he's looking at it. I think that's how Coop [Amari Cooper] is looking at it. That's how Khalil [Mack] is looking at it. These guys are good football players, but you have to sustain that and you have to grow that and continue to develop. I think all of those guys are working that way."



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Q: Is there anything specific that Derek has done? Leadership maybe?

Coach Del Rio: "I think it's a collection. When you're playing the quarterback position, it involves everything. Leadership is a part of it. The way you prepare. How you analyze. The timing you get down with your receivers. The command of the offense. The ability to direct the offense at the line. Those are all areas where he has grown as we've had him here over the last three years. We're looking to continue that growth."

Q: Is Nicholas Morrow a prime example of your stance that you don't care where guys come from once they get here?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, he's flashed a little bit. I think that's proof. I think Jalen [Richard] last year was a great example. Once they get here, it's really a great opportunity for them. We put action behind it. It's not just words. I think they understand that. Certainly, with Morrow, we'll see how he continues. He's done a good job. Done enough for us to throw him out there the other night and see how he'd respond."

Q: What have you seen from this group of interior defensive lineman? With Jihad Ward and Eddie Vanderdoes and Mario Edwards Jr., is this a vastly upgraded unit in terms of talent?

Coach Del Rio: "It definitely is a much deeper group than we've had. More athletic group than we've had. I'm very encouraged by the early signs that I've seen in pads, throughout camps against a very good offensive line that we have. Another great test this week to evaluate these guys because we're playing one of the better lines in the league. Great opportunity to evaluate, develop, continue to push, but we feel like we've strengthened ourselves there. It's probably the strength of the defense right now."

Q: Is Michael Crabtree a guy that's gotten better with age?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, he's been pretty darn good since he's been here for us. He's been very reliable target for Derek. I think they're comfortable with the rapport they have. He's had a strong camp and is playing well for us. I'm very pleased with the way things are going there."

Q: Was Keon Hatcher considered a bright spot in last week's game? What have you seen overall from him that night?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, we got a group that we're trying to sort through right there at the wide out position. He had a good late game performance. I think there's several guys that did some good things in that game. It's not just what they do as receivers, recognizing coverages or getting open and catching the ball, but how they perform on special teams is also a big part of it. He's certainly in the mix of guys for us that they all have an opportunity, but he's certainly one of the guys that's done a nice job with the opportunities that he has had."

Q: What's Seth Roberts late scratch injury related?

Coach Del Rio: "He's got an illness. I gave you injury information (*laughing*)."

Q: How do you plan on rotating Jon Feliciano with Cordarrelle Patterson in those kickoff return drills?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, that's a tough decision (*laughing*). How can we get the ball in Feliciano's hands. That's what we're looking for. No, obviously we're glad we have an athletic guy there and able to catch punts and able to take that ball and get some yardage. We'll stick with 84."

QB Derek Carr

Q: You and Khalil Mack made the decision to do what you did during the national anthem. What has been the reaction and response to it?

Carr: "It's been 100 percent positive. I haven't had one person say they didn't like it because, again, Khalil and I were not protesting our country. We love our country, but we know it's imperfect, so we just wanted to show that we



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love each other and that that's OK, and that actually it's right. That's all we wanted to do, so honestly, if someone is mad at that, we're going to have to question them."

Q: Is the first drive the other night an example of what you can get out of the tight ends this year?

Carr: "Yeah, absolutely. Obviously, when things are designed, it's built for all different kinds of coverages and people can get other balls, but if they want to take 'Coop' [Amari Cooper] and 'Crab' [Michael Crabtree] away, then they have to cover Jared [Cook], Clive [Walford], Lee [Smith], like we've talked about, as we've joked about. That's something that is important, like I said after the game, it's important that we're not limited by a personnel grouping. That if Lee is in the game, they can only do blank, or if Jared is in the game, they can only do blank. Being able to have those guys do everything – because Jared is a really good blocker as well – really helps our team and puts stress on the defense so that they can't just sit and play one coverage and take away everything. So yeah, I really hope it's a sign of things can continue, because that will help those other two outside."

Q: Will that especially help in the red zone?

Carr: "Yeah, absolutely. If you saw on the touchdown that Lee had, that safety has to favor one side or the other if they're going to play a close coverage like that. He obviously chose the other side with 'Crab' and 'Coop' but I think we all would. That leaves those two other guys one-on-one. I think that that's a thing, just on that specific play call, he decided to take that away, then we're going to take this. If you want to take that away, we'll take this. If you want to drop everybody, then we'll hand it to No. 24 [Marshawn Lynch]. We have things for that and we have things for if they drop everybody, we have passes for that too. That's the cool thing in coach [offensive coordinator Todd] Downing's offense. We can run anything out of any formation out of any personnel grouping. We don't try and be limited by it."

Q: What were your feelings before the game, your first since the injury last year?

Carr: "Before, I was overly excited. I'm not going to lie to you, when I took that first snap on the pass to Jared on the shallow, as I was dropping, I had to take a deep breath and just try and focus because I was so excited to be out there again. That's one thing I had to was calm my... It wasn't nerves. I was excited for the game. I was just so happy to be back out there that I forgot how to be calm for a second. That's something that I have to do, especially playing quarterback, but leading up to it pregame, coming out of the tunnel, I was overly, overly excited so I had to take a step back."

Q: If Donald Penn does end his holdout this week, what would it mean to get your left tackle back?

Carr: "It would obviously mean a lot, if that's what he decides to do. He's our teammate. We want all of our teammates here. We want to work hard together, we want to be together, we want to joke together. It's more than just football. We want to be there in his life with him, those kind of things. It would mean a lot and obviously, I would love it."

Q: What have you noticed about Marshall Newhouse protecting your blindside?

Carr: "He did a good job. He did a really good job. At one point, they switched and put [David] Sharpe in as well and I didn't know until like two plays into the series. I was like, 'Oh snap, a rook is in. OK.' (*laughing*) But like you said, that means they're doing some good things, which means when Donald gets back, we have a lot of good offensive lineman and that's something that as long as Mr. [General Manager Reggie] McKenzie is involved here is going to continue to happen. We're always going to have good offensive linemen."

Q: How nice is it then as a quarterback to not have to worry about who's on the offensive, who's in the huddle and just know that things are going to keep rolling?

Carr: "Yeah, from past family experience, I know that if an injury happens or anything like that or if someone breaks a shoelace, that we're OK still. Let alone with our starting five. It's a good thing."



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Q: Has Michael Crabtree gotten better with age?

Carr: "It looks like it, right? My brother would always tell me stories about him when they were in San Francisco together and just the things that he could do. I don't know however many years ago that was, but now I'm seeing him do those same things. He's not slowing down. 'Crab' is a guy that genetically he's going to play as long as he wants to play. It's not going to slow down for him. He ran a go route on the one that threw to 'Coop' on the right sideline. 'Coop' went up and got it, you watch Crabtree run on that play and you can answer that yourself. He has not slowed down one bit. He knew on that certain play, he wasn't even getting the ball. The corner was 20 yards off and he still tried to out run the guy and it looked impressive."

Q: What was your excitement level when you called the play to handoff to Marshawn Lynch?

Carr: "Oh my goodness. See the worst part is on that certain play we had a check involved, so our crowd was so juiced, I was like, 'I hope they give us the right look so I don't have to check it at home.' But yeah, to turn around and hand that guy the ball, especially as a guy that looked up to him and was a fan of his growing up, to turn around and hand it to him, it was pretty cool."

Q: When you see the tape of Cooper this year, do you see tangible signs of growth?

Carr: "Yeah, obviously he's becoming that guy that we can throw it up to. We all know 'Crab' can do that. In 'Coop's' rookie year, he'd come down with a few of them, but it's consistent now that he wants to be a guy that has every aspect of the receiver game. He put it on display on the one that I threw up to him. I tell the receivers before every game, 'If it's you one-on-one on a go and that's the play call, I'm always going to give you a chance. I don't care what it looks like. You go make the play or nobody does.' I guess 'Coop' really took that to heart, because he wants the ball to keep coming to him. I think that that's the aspect this year. He's just playing so physical. He's not going to let anybody push him around, and that's his personality since I've known him. He doesn't want anyone to push him around. He doesn't want to take anything from anybody. I think that each year he has gotten so much better at both of those."

Q: Did you ever have a moment at practice where Nicholas Morrow flashed and you noticed him?

Carr: "Yeah, absolutely. Obviously, I saw him running in with the backups. Our lockers were by each other in camp, so he's obviously asking questions. He's a really quiet guy, too. He was always asking questions and those things. Finally we get on the field, and I through a slant to somebody and it bounced up. It was cover zero, so you know if it bounces in cover zero, you're like, 'Oh, incomplete.' This man comes out of nowhere. He was actually blitzing. He runs and dives, 15 yards away dives and picks it off. I said, 'Who is this guy?' That's really when he put it on the scene that I started paying attention to what he was doing. You see athletically that he has it. Mentally he has a good grasp for the kind of football he was playing before he got here. It's obviously a different level. I don't think that the game is too big for him. I think that he's going to be a big player."

Q: From your time at Fresno State, what do you remember about playing against Nevada?

Carr: "I remember winning. *(laughing)* I'm just kidding. They beat me my sophomore year. I just remember we played there my junior year. It was the coldest game I've ever played in my life. We walked on the field and it was crunchy. Then they had that motorcycle come running out of the tunnel, which was crazy. I remember one year, too, they put about 80 motorcycles on our sideline on the track right behind us so we couldn't hear anything. They were revving them up during the game. I don't think Fresno Bulldogs and Nevada Wolfpack get along too much. Me and [Equipment Assistant] Adam [Johnson] do a good job, our equipment guy, we get along alright. I think that that's where I draw the line."

Q: How much of your success in the fourth quarter is related back to having Jack Del Rio as the head coach?

Carr: "I remember one game, I didn't play my best the first year he was here. He sat me down, we always have a weekly meeting, he sat me down, and he started comparing me. He started showing me plays and stats and these things compared to some Hall of Fame guys. He started showing me things on film that I was doing that were really good. He said, 'I want you to know, I have your back. I want you to know that you can be one of these guys.' What



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that confidence did, I knew my head coach had that much confidence in me. That meant whatever he said, I just felt like we could do it. So every time in the fourth quarter, we have a two-minute drill or a situation, I always go to him and I'll be like, 'Hey, what do we want here?' Even if it's, 'Duh, we want a touchdown.' Hey, what do we want? And he tells me, like in New Orleans, 'We need a touchdown. We're going to go for two. We're going to win this game.' OK. I think it's that confidence. And I say all of that to say it's that confidence. He's so good at instilling it in each one of us players. When he takes the time to grab you and show you something like that and show you what you can be and show you what you're capable of, that's something that sticks with you. It lets you know like, 'Hey man, this guy believes in me.' It takes you up another level almost. Everyone needs people to encourage them and believe in them. Especially when it comes from the head coach, that's something, I think, that is a real gift that he has."

Q: Do you recall which game that was he said it in?

Carr: "No, it was early on. It was early on my first year after a loss, but I don't remember which game."

Q: What are your thoughts of the NFL expanding to new markets?

Carr: "I think obviously, that it's awesome. Obviously, we play a game in Mexico again. This is the second time. I've played in London and all those things. We're moving someday. I think that all of those things that the NFL tries to do to get more people watching football and in the thing, but for right now I'm in Oakland and I'm focused on winning here."

Q: Is it strange that for the second year in a row you're playing a team in the preseason that you'll face in the regular season?

Carr: "Yes. Last year it was Tennessee right? Yeah, it's like, 'Can we get someone else so we can run some stuff?' You go into a game against Dallas, they're going to be basic, we're going to be basic, because you play each other in the regular season. Everyone knows that. It's not secret. I'm not giving anything away. That's just how it is. You go out there and you compete your tail off. You try to win. But at the same time, you're more focused on playing them in the regular season than you are in the preseason."

Q: You're hoping to play them a third time right?

Carr: "That'd be nice. That means it's good."

WR Amari Cooper

Q: Was your training this offseason geared towards making plays like your 31-yard reception against the Rams?

Cooper: "Yeah, I mean it's always good to make a big play, and it's always good to have your quarterback believe in you to throw it with three defenders over there knowing that you'll come down with it, or at least you won't let the defense come down with it. That's just the type of plays I like to make."

Q: It seemed like the offense ran the exact same play a bit earlier, but was unsuccessful, and then came right back again with the same play call. What does it say to you that they're willing to try it again?

Cooper: "It wasn't the same play call. *(laughter)*"

Q: What inspired you to start your book club?

Cooper: "For a lot of different reasons. One of them was just to keep me accountable for reading because I love learning. But sometimes, you know, you kind of push it back. So, I know if I started a book club I would have to be accountable with keeping up with the materials."

Q: What kind of response have you had?

Cooper: "I've had a really good response."



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Q: What audience are you trying to reach? Everybody?

Cooper: "Yeah, everybody. It doesn't matter."

Q: I read that you did not like to read as a kid, how come?

Cooper: "It can be boring at times. *(laughter)*"

Q: What are you reading now?

Cooper: "It's a novel called the Maltese Falcon."

Q: What areas do you think even Michael Crabtree has gotten better since you've been with him?

Cooper: "He's always been kind of the same player. He has great hands. He plays physical at the line of scrimmage; no one can ever jam him. And even when he's still covered, he can still come down with the catch. So, he has a great skillset."

Q: I've seen Crabtree come over to your locker, has he been big on going over things with you and making sure everyone is up to speed?

Cooper: "Yeah, I mean 'Crab' is a gamer. He loves game time, he gets really hype. When you see him doing that, he's always giving me motivation right before the game."

Q: What have you learned from Crabtree when it comes to getting off the line?

Cooper: "I usually use my feet to get separation off the line of scrimmage at the top of my route. But, one of the things I've learned from him is you can also get the same results using your hands."

Q: Is that beneficial when you have less room to use your feet such as in the red zone?

Cooper: "I wouldn't say that, but I would say that it's a good change of pace. The defensive back, he wouldn't know. Are you going to use your feet? Are you going to use your hands? So it's a good change up."

Q: Are you entering this regular season hoping to be a more physical wide receiver than you have been in the past?

Cooper: "If I need to be."

Q: What strikes you about this team's mindset under Head Coach Jack Del Rio and how you hand yourselves late in the fourth quarter?

Cooper: "I think it's the way that we train and the way that we practice. I think that we're a relentless team. Derek [Carr], he does a great job of studying every week so that he can be poised in those situations and we're able to come down with the wins at times."

Q: What have been your thoughts on the NFL expanding into new markets?

Cooper: "I'm not really thinking about it much."

DE Jihad Ward

Q: So was it hating clowns, or clowning haters that you put in that tweet?

Ward: "That's just for everyone, people just hate."

Q: What are they hating on?

Ward: "They're just trying to hate people trying to do what they have to do, keep on pushing. That's all. That wasn't just for... there will be critics everywhere. People are going to hate regardless. People are going to hate on y'all doing this, it is what it is."



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Q: How are you feeling right now?

Ward: "First step. Feels good to be back. I'm glad I'm out here with my teammates. This is the biggest step. I'm happy that I'm back."

Q: Coach Del Rio was saying that he felt like your postseason was going well. Do you feel like you lost any momentum with the setback?

Ward: "Hell no. Nope. I'm still doing what I got to do, rehab-wise. Taking some mental reps in the d-line room. I can't sit on my ass all day so I have to do what I got to do. Other than that, I'm just chilling and getting ready. I'm happy to be out here."

Q: What have you seen from the interior linemen?

Ward: "They're doing good. We are just learning. There are things we have to work on. We're just moving. I can't wait to get out there. Like I said, I haven't been out there with them. I'm just happy to be out here for the first step so I can go out and get into motion, do some physical things with them on the field during walk-through. Everything is good."

Q: How much did you miss it?

Ward: "I missed this stuff every day. Offseason, when they say breaks, there really aren't any breaks. No days off in football."

Q: What's the biggest change from year one to year two?

Ward: "Just like what Karl Joseph said, it's more slow. I'm getting everything now. Just working at it, keep going with the flow. It's easier now, just like Karl Joseph said."

Q: Last year, Jack said you reminded him of Malik Jackson in Denver, a guy that was real close his first year and then in his second year, things took off for him. Do you feel that way?

Ward: "That's how it is. Your first year coming here, you're thinking too much. Now it's like 'OK I get it now.' That's how it is for all rookies. They just have to learn what's going on, so I feel it. Everything is easier now, it's my second years now. It's regular."

Q: We know it happened in OTAs, but how exactly did it happen?

Ward: "I felt like I had something, a little tweak. I told the trainers that I had something going on and to check it out. Like I said, I feel good now. That's in the past. I am not worried about that stuff now."

Q: How much improved can this defense be?

Ward: "If we do what we have to do, learn from our mistakes and keep moving, I think we are going to be a great defense. We have to do it together, there is no selfish acting. We all need each other. I think that's the problem with people, people have a habit of thinking one man can do it all. For instance, Khalil Mack. He's a good [expletive] player. He's the Defensive Player of the Year and all that, but he still needs us at the end of the day. He can't do it by himself. We're all we got, and that's all we need."

Q: What have you seen from Eddie Vanderdoes?

Ward: "Quickness. He shows a lot of power. He's just a good player. He's taking everything real serious. He was just like me last year, still learning everything. He's got that twitch and that's what I like about him. He's a hell of a player."

Q: Are you able to talk to him about certain stuff that you learned as a rookie last season and apply it to him?

Ward: "We're all rookies coming in. I used to do the same thing, ask questions. He asks questions and we're giving him the answers of what's going on. Film-wise, practice-wise, how everything goes, it's a cycle."