



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing

Q: How is Marshall Newhouse doing?

Coach Downing: "He's the definition of a pro. A guy that can bounce around that much and play at the high level that he's played at, that's a really impressive thing to do. Especially in a new offense, having to pick up new terminology. The underrated things sometimes is the communication with the guys next to you. He's done a nice job of ramping that up each week and getting used to the guys that he has to talk to and be in communication with. We've been really, really pleased with what he's done."

Q: You had the ball 21 out of 30 minutes in the fourth quarter the last two games. Is there a balance between milking the clock and being aggressive to score?

Coach Downing: "The good thing is that [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio doesn't really want to come off the gas. That's been something that he's instilled in the entire staff. We stay aggressive with our game plan but certainly clock management is something we take very seriously around here. There are purposeful and intentional calls that are still designed to be aggressive and move the ball, so we've been pleased with how it's been but always looking to improve wherever we can."

Q: Has that always been your approach to put on the gas every time or were you more conservative before?

Coach Downing: "I think the way I was raised, certainly the first time around with [offensive line coach] Mike [Tice] and working with Scott Linehan for a long time, I've always had that philosophy of staying aggressive and letting the guys go play and not pulling the reigns back on them. If you train your guys well enough in situational football throughout the course of the offseason and training camp, then you get to rely on their training and trust their ability to make good decisions within four-minute, two-minute, whatever the scenario may be."

Q: You guys will put all your receivers in the slot one time or another in a game, how hard is it to train guys to be able to do that?

Coach Downing: "We have such a talented staff here. They do a great job, [wide receivers coach] Rob Moore does a great job along with [assistant wide receivers coach] Nick Holz, at training our guys to be concept football players. You have to learn the concept in our offense. You can't just learn one spot on the receiving tree. That way we can run similar concepts and still move guys around. It's a fun part of what we do here and we're really pleased with the way guys have handled it."

Q: You have to do that with less reps than you did years ago. Is a lot of that done in the film room?

Coach Downing: "Certainly a lot of the intellectual side of that comes from working in the film room and working in the classroom with the coaches, but also getting on the field and being willing to put in a little extra time after practice to maybe run a route that you didn't get to run in practice that day or in individual that day. It's a dedication from those guys and they've done a nice job."

Q: How have you seen Cordarrelle Patterson respond to the opportunity to be involved in the offense? Was there a promise in recruiting him during free agency that he would be more involved?

Coach Downing: "I don't know that I call it a promise because I think our staff just kind of stands that our yes's are yes and our no's are no. We mean what we say when we intend to get people involved. Whether it be C.P. or somebody else in the offense. What's been fun about him is it's easy for us to invest in finding ways to get him the football because he invests so much in trying to do things the right way. I remember talking to you guys in the spring about the leaps and bounds he had taken as a receiver. That's because he was purposeful and really dove into becoming better as a true receiver. Just the mechanics of playing the receiver position. Then as we started to get him involved in a couple of the runs, he really wanted to understand the blocking scheme and how he could help set up the blocks. In his mind, maybe pair it with a return or something like that. It's been really impressive to watch him take ownership of everything we've given him. As a coach, that's what you're looking for. It makes you want to invest in that guy and give him more."



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Q: How much of an asset is it for you to have interior linemen that can get into the second level and move deep down field?

Coach Downing: "I'll tell you, it's impossible to do anything we do offensively without those guys, all five of them up front. They are the straw that stirs the drink around here. We're really fortunate to have them. The interior three, in particular, bring such a unique skill set and play at such a high level. In my opinion, they're all the best at their position in the league. They're really the ones that enable us to be so versatile and run some things that might require a lineman to get down field and get a block. Not just at the line of scrimmage but finishing and springing those long runs."

Q: What's the biggest difference you've seen in Jalen Richard?

Coach Downing: "I think Jalen is really working on his craft. He doesn't want to be just a flash player. He wants to prove that he can be an every down back. He's worked really hard in protections. He's worked really hard in his route running. Not just the free release stuff, but understanding how to get out on time in some of the six-man protections. He's just gaining the knowledge of football and really understanding the way we want him to do things and really investing in trying to grow in the areas we challenged him on in the offseason."

Q: Jalen Richard says that the backfield is better than it was a year ago, not because of Latavius but because he and DeAndré are more mature. Are you able to do more now because of the maturity of Richard and DeAndré Washington?

Coach Downing: "First of all, I love [Latavius Murray] 'Tay' and I wouldn't say it's better, it's different. You're able to do some different things and Tay's a heck of a football player in his own right. Where I'd say that those guys have really expanded their roles or expanded our abilities to increase their roles is that they're better at some of the techniques that they were maybe a little deficient on last year. So, really our versatility there speaks a huge a testimony to those guys' hard work this offseason and growth as players."

Q: You guys switched out of a play by using an audible called 'Seattle' near the goal line. How cognizant do you have to be of opponent's hearing and noticing your audible calls at the line?

Coach Downing: "First of all, you all crack me up with that because you didn't watch the TV copies for the first two years, because we've had Seattle in our terminology for a long time, well before Marshawn [Lynch] got here. *(laughter)* But, to address your question on the terminology we use and the verbiage we use out there, there's a lot of dummy stuff and there's a lot of real stuff and we keep really close tabs on charting the real stuff and what gets paired with it so we know whether we have to change it up or not. But, we're certainly very aware of that, yeah."

Q: Is Derek Carr grading out pretty well when he makes those changes at the line?

Coach Downing: "I think he's done a nice job. And we're not trying to make it a scenario where every play he's walking up to the line of scrimmage and has to evaluate something. We want to him to be able to go play fast. It's probably not as frequent as it may seem, but when he does have those opportunities, he's really done a nice job of helping us out. As I told him, if he sees something that makes me look like a better play caller, have at it." *(laughter)*

Defensive Coordinator Ken Norton, Jr.

Q: What has stood out about Karl Joseph's development as a player?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "If you watch him closely, I'm sure you have, you see his development has been really, really nice. He was very active last week. He's really good close to the line of scrimmage. He's a really good tackler in the open field. He also plays well on the back end. I think his development is right on time right now."



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Q: Is he one of the examples of the strides that the defense has made?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Right, it's about our improvement. It's about our growth. It's about us working together as a team. It's about the teaching. It's about the process of practice. It's about the competition that we create amongst the players. Then it's about the meetings and showing up on game day and getting things done right, working together. You see the rewards of their hard work. When no one is watching, you can see it happening on game day."

Q: How do you prepare for Jordan Reed, given his health?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Again, it's about us and our preparation. If we sat around and worried about all the injuries and what other teams were doing, we wouldn't have time to work on ourselves. It's important that we get our execution down, our game plan together. Our ability to work hard and play really hard and tough as a team and be physical and get after the ball. Those things are important to us. I think if we play our style of football, it doesn't matter who we play."

Q: What does it do for you when the offense is able to kill the clock in the fourth quarter?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Well, in my history and in the long time I've been around this game, the best defense is a really good offense. Really good ball control. Having a really good run game and an offense that really understands how to eat up the clock and just grind out the yards. That's really important for us to be on the sideline and really rooting them on. It's important for us to get the ball to the offense as often as possible. That's one of our big goals."

Q: What did you see from Gareon Conley when you watched the film from Sunday's game?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Really excited. We've been waiting a long time to get Gareon on the field. Very unfortunate that he wasn't available to us early in the camp. Seeing him and his length, his ability, and being on the stage for the first time, the way he responded and the way he played and the way the guys and the players really rallied around him. He wasn't doing it by himself. It was an entire defensive unit working together. Really, really good to see a young player start off really good like that because it's really good for his confidence. Now, there's no limits to how good he can be."

Q: What's the key to a really good safety blitz?

Coach Norton, Jr.: "Timing. A guy who knows how to blitz. A guy who knows how to finish. But it's all about timing and how bad do you want it."