



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

### **Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing**

**Q: What is the opportunity to use the bye week to reflect at what the team has done so far like for the coaches?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, definitely like you said, diving into a really, really extensive self-scout and looking for efficiency. What we're good at. What we're not good at. See if we need to tweak some things we're doing schematically. Also, gives us an opportunity to emphasize some of the things we're doing well or possibly even eliminate some stuff that we're not doing so well. We're definitely looking forward to diving into that and being able to come out of the week with some hard information that we can use."

**Q: Did you see growth in the Miami game and were there any encouraging signs from the running game?**

**Coach Downing:** "Absolutely. Certainly, it's been something I've talked to you guys about throughout the course of the year. One is to be able to develop our personality in the run game. Even when things didn't start with the most efficient or best numbers in the first half, we were able to kind of get our momentum going and hit some of those same concept runs. I was pleased to see that growth throughout the game. Some adjustments made on the sideline by [offensive line] coach [Mike] Tice and his staff and his crew. They really did a nice job of putting it to them in second half from a standpoint of staying ahead of the chains, the run game was good to see."

**Q: The successful third-and-3 run, despite not having much success with the run, is that a moment of truth as a play caller?**

**Coach Downing:** "I certainly want to show confidence and faith in the guys that put together the plan and the guys that go execute the plan. We felt good about that play throughout the course of the week. It was a moment, like you said, where I could have gone with something else, but thought, 'Hey, this has looked good all week. I'm going to show my faith and trust in those guys.' They did a great job of executing and we picked up the first. So, it definitely was a momentum starter, if you will. I think it lends itself to the hard work that everyone has put in throughout the year. We just happened to have a little more success on that play than maybe like the one we had in Buffalo. Very similar situation."

**Q: What did you see from Jared Cook on Sunday?**

**Coach Downing:** "Jared works really hard at doing the little things right. We knew that we could create a couple of matchups for him. That was something that we worked on in Sarasota throughout the practice week. He really did a nice job of the little things on route details, the depth of his route, the timing of his route, being able to come out of the break full speed. I just told him on the practice field, when you invest in all those things and it comes to fruition, it's great validation to do them all the time. I was really, really happy for him that he had such a productive game."

**Q: Does Marshawn Lynch bring some unique elements that you need to account for or is he a true power back? How does that play into how you have to scheme things?**

**Coach Downing:** "Each back has their own style. One thing that we don't want to do is get pigeon-holed into only doing certain runs with certain players. There are schemes that certain backs on our roster are a little bit more effective at. We want to be able to give them a chance to highlight their skill sets certainly, and Marshawn is comfortable in certain segment of schemes. So, we're going to give him an opportunity to be as successful as possible for us. That's my job as a coordinator to identify who we should have in and at what times."

**Q: What are some areas where you feel like you haven't been as productive?**

**Coach Downing:** "I think that's a pretty broad stroke statement to make because we're going to look at everything. We're going to take our time and dive into it. I can probably answer that better next week, but I don't want to put a necessarily a priority on things. I want to really spend some time diving into it. Look at myself first as the play caller. Where I called things. why I called things. Make sure that I'm very through in that process."



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### **Q: How do you go about addressing dropped passes?**

**Coach Downing:** "One thing about our culture here is we're not scared to tell the truth. If there is a hiccup like that, we do address it very directly. I like what you said, these guys work really hard. It's not like anyone is going out there and intentionally dropping passes or having a lack of focus and not finishing the route on purpose or something like that. For us, we look at it as how can we coach them better out of the information that we get. If it's a certain route type or if it's a certain ball placement. Or if it's a certain way their cutting, an in-cutter, an out-cutter, breaking to his right or breaking to his left. Those are the things that we have to drill down and that's the job of coaches to get their players better. Identify the problem areas and continue to work. I think it also falls into the category that you spoke of with the third-down run. You never want to show a lack of confidence in someone just because they had a hiccup of a drop. We understand that people work extremely hard at their craft out here. I trust that those players are going to step up to the plate and do a better job on their next opportunity. You'll never see me losing confidence in someone because of a hiccup like that."

### **Q: Could it sometimes be as simple as practicing with a wet ball?**

**Coach Downing:** "We certainly have done a decent amount of that the last few weeks. We'll sit out there with a Gatorade bottle. Adam Johnson, one of our equipment guys, just works tirelessly to help us have all the tools we need to practice. We sit out there and play catch. Not only taking snaps under center with a wet ball, but throwing to receivers. Yeah, we've definitely put some time into that. Any ways we identify as problem areas we can work on, we will and have. We'll continue to try to get better at."

### **Q: It's as simple as getting that Gatorade bottle and squirting it down?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah."

### **Q: What was your reaction when Marshall Newhouse picked up that fumble and started running?**

**Coach Downing:** "I think I started screaming, 'Get down,' as soon as he touched it."

### **Q: What progress have you see from the two rookie offensive linemen?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, they work extremely hard on the show team. [Assistant offensive line coach] Tim Holt does such a good job in that show team huddle of looking up at the cards and trying to put it in our vernacular. Those guys are learning our system and growing at the techniques and double teams that we've asked them to do. They've done a nice job in that. We also sprinkle them in for the vets because you never know when somebody's number is going to be called. We talk a lot about the next man up mentality around here and those guys are preparing themselves to play and be ready when called upon. I've been pleased with their growth. It's been nice to see how hard they work and that they don't become distant in the game plan or don't take notes because they don't think they're going to play. They've been on point and I think that they're growing."

### **Q: What did you see from Marshawn Lynch last week?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, he seemed to be very energetic. I think he was very happy to be back around his teammates. I told you guys a number of times, he's a really good teammate. He's energy to have around. I think it was good for everyone to have him back and get back to work as a whole unit."

### **Q: Does Lynch have a name for his celebration handshake?**

**Coach Downing:** "I have no idea, all I know is I had some good fist pumps on the sideline. That's about all I got."



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

### **Defensive Coordinator Ken Norton, Jr.**

**Q: You didn't get involved in the bocce ball tournament yesterday did you?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "I didn't actually get involved. I was just enjoying the surroundings."

**Q: How do you breakdown and evaluate the penalties from Sunday's game?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, we just talk through them. I think a lot of times a lot of guys are aggressive or really proud about how they play. But I think we all look at them, not all of them are what we feel are correct, but at the same time we have to correct them, talk to the players about playing with poise, using the right technique and putting ourselves in better position. Because a lot of times those penalties lead to points and put us in bad situations. We don't need any more bad situations."

**Q: What needs to get better when the defense blitzes?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Blitzing is universal. It's about putting pressure, it's about getting the quarterback off the spot and then you have to cover. And then you have to cover and make your plays and put yourself in the right leverage. It's a connection between the rush and the coverage. They have to work together."

**Q: What were you not doing fundamentally in the Miami game when it came to tackling that you were doing earlier in the season?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "That's a good question. *(laughter)* That's a good question because I asked the guys, what's the one thing you know you're going to get from our defense. They said, 'Tackling, coach.' And then they go out and miss the tackles. So I think maybe the guys are trying really hard. It was a little wet and a little slippery early with the rain. But tackling at the end of the day is about 'want to.' It's about getting the guy down. It was unfortunate but I don't think that's an example of who we are. I think the players understand the value that we put in tackling and that good tackling is a good representation of your group and I don't think that's something we'll get used to seeing."

**Q: What have you seen from your two rookies on the defensive line?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "We see a lot of learning. I think they're not making the same mistakes over again. They are surrounded by some good veterans and I think that they are continuing to improve. As long as they stay available, stay healthy and continue to learn, I think it's only making us all better, making them better, making us better. I think that we like the track, we like the direction that they're going."

**Q: What has Sean Smith shown you over the last two weeks?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "When he has opportunities, he's gone in and played well. They threw the ball deep on him the other night, he stayed on top. So I think that he cares. I think that it's offered Dexter [McDonald] a chance to play a little bit and I think for the group, they've been solid. I think that again, we're continuing to improve and I think this last half of the season for us to get what we want, I think the rush and the pass and the tackling and the turnovers and the red zone, all of those things have to come together to get what we want in this second half."

**Q: I think Obi Melifonwu got out there for seven snaps. How do you think he did?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "We were excited just to be out there and to be available and to run and to sweat and to get knocked down and to coach him on the sideline to see how he responds to the pressure, to see how he responds to the lights and the television and the coaching under the adverse situations. It's good to see. Because you practice one way, but then you play, it's an entirely different situation. The players are different under the stress. So he's cool, he's collected. You can talk to him, he listens. It's not too big for him. So I think that as the games go, he'll get more time and he'll get more exposed to better players. I think that the next time we play we have pretty good matchups for him. So, we'll see how he plays in the big matchups."



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**Q: Have you seen guys you have either played with or coached that sometimes the game is too big for them?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well sometimes, and sometimes practice is a little bit different than in games. You have players that you see them at practice and sometimes they don't look as well, but the game comes on and they're gamers. Obi seems the type that really likes the games."

### QB Derek Carr

**Q: What do you tell some the rookies, some of the guys going through their first bye bout how to handle themselves physically and mentally?**

**Carr:** "A lot of our rookies are guys that are on the practice squad or show teams, so their workload is different this week. Wednesdays and Thursdays are their big days, so you make sure they know they still need to be running, they still need to lifting hard and getting in shape so that when we need the looks next week, they don't come out here and pop a hammy or something like that. Those are just little things that I've seen over the course of my four years that could help those guys."

**Q: Have you guys given Marshall Newhouse a hard time about the play where he picked up the ball and ran with it?**

**Carr:** "Yeah, absolutely. *(laughing)* I think Coach Del Rio said it best, 'When a big man gets the ball, all he sees is green grass and opportunity.' The opportunity was there, it just didn't end up the way he wanted."

**Q: On Sunday, on average, you held the ball a little bit longer instead of getting rid of it quickly. Was that a conscious effort on your part or was that part of the game plan?**

**Carr:** "No, it has to do with the coverages they play and how they're matching certain things. It has to do with the coverages they play, our protection. Are they making us hot with certain blitzes and certain things. I'm not going to bore you with all of it. There are so many things that go into it, but it was not conscious. There were a couple of times where we were able to hold onto it."

**Q: Jared Cook is your top receiver in a lot of different categories. How has having him as an option altered how you go about things?**

**Carr:** "Absolutely. Those throws are closer. Ninety percent of the time, he's going to be somewhere in between the hashes or at least inside the numbers. Those throws are closer. The ball is in the air less. He does a good job of running with speed and getting vertical on all of his routes, so you never know what route it is because if you wait too long or if you sit on something, he can run right by you, as we saw it, I think it was the first third down. He ran by the linebacker and so if you hesitate for one second, he can run by you, but also his ability to run all the routes inside and outside. It's really a quarterback's best friend; that and a good offensive line. Those two are a good thing to have. It takes a lot of pressure off of a lot of the other guys as well."

**Q: At the end of the first half, you guys run a play that leaves one second to spare and Giorgio Tavecchio is able to kick the field goal. That's got to be closer than you want to cut it, but Jack Del Rio said it was perfectly executed.**

**One second, really?**

**Carr:** "If that's what he said, we'll go with that. *(laughter)* I'm on his side."

**Q: You must have been concerned though.**

**Carr:** "To be honest, so T.D. [Todd Downing] told me in the headset, 'Hey, we're going to go such and such play, just make sure to let these guys know to get down and we'll get the timeout.' You guys know how T.D. and I are, we're just super calm and we're just going to do what we're told and so we were able to execute it and as you can see as I threw the ball, I'm already jumping up trying to scream timeout. Rodney [Hudson] is mid block going timeout, so we had some heads up guys. It worked out well for us and obviously it helped us with the ending score of the game, we needed those three points."



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**Q: Being totally sensitive to the topic, given its nature. You posted a biblical passage yesterday on Twitter without any real context. Do you have any context to add to it?**

**Carr:** "No, and I know you have to ask. It had nothing to do with what was said. I don't give false claims any due. If you see anything, you see I've posted a lot of scriptures. Literally, you could ask anybody who has the YouVersion Bible app, that was the scripture of the day and I just posted it and then everybody started, 'Oh shade,' this and all that. I'm bigger than that. I don't pay any mind to that kind of stuff because making false claims about somebody before you know them and about a group of guys, that has no business in our world if we're trying to promote peace and love. I don't think that has any place."

**Q: What did you think of how Marshawn Lynch came off of his suspension? He seemed to have a lot of drive.**

**Carr:** "Yeah, absolutely. His helmet came off a couple of times. That stood out to me. I told him he might need to cut his hair. He said, 'No chance.' Having him back there the way he can run physically, how gifted he is with his vision, as you saw on the trap play, he got up into the second level, third level. He can make somebody miss and go. The more we can help him do that and those kind of things, it's going to be better for our offense. Having him back was awesome. Obviously, he had the two touchdowns and I don't even know if there was a thought in my head to throw that second one. Make sure I give him the ball."

**Q: How important is it to have the bye week right in the middle of the year?**

**Carr:** "I think we can all feel, everyone that's always here every week, it's a perfect time. We got a win. We know what's ahead of us. Let's recharge a little bit, get fresh, get some guys healthy that are banged up. This is a great time to try and get healthy again for everybody. Even if they're not on the injury report, somebody is dealing with something, so you need to try and get back to full speed as best you can. Now, we have a little mental break too. I think that's the biggest thing for me. We joked about me having my iPad or my playbook, but it's not to the same level. I have a process that I've done for the last three years, so I am going to do it again this year in how I go about the bye week to get ahead, but at the same time, this is a time to recharge up here (pointing to his head), have fun with your family, spend time with your kids and take your wife out to eat. That's more important this week."

**Q: We all saw Johnny Holton's touchdown celebration. What was Marshawn Lynch's business-like celebration about?**

**Carr:** "I thought, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, I thought he's done that since Seattle. At least I thought I remembered him doing that. I don't know. He just started doing it. The first time I noticed was on gameday the first preseason game at home, the Rams. He comes out, we're high-fiving and he goes shaking peoples' hands. OK, that's what we're doing. That's the first time I noticed it. I was like, 'Alright, whatever you want, man. Just keep running hard.' By the way, I just thought Johnny did this (looking up to the sky) after the game, then I saw what he did. I had nothing to do with that. *(laughter)* Nothing to do with that. Zero. Zero percent."

**Q: Todd Downing has said that your run game has been evolving throughout the year. Where have you seen encouraging signs that it may be turning and getting more consistent?**

**Carr:** "It's so crazy. When you're on the field and what happens to be a two- or three-yard gain when you're like, 'Dang. What the heck?' And then you turn the film on and you're like, 'Oh, wow. We're right there.' It's like one little turn here or one little read here, whatever it is. And now we're starting to pop some explosive runs, and when you can pop explosive runs and then have the weapons that we have outside, that's a recipe for good things. We have to continue to get that going. We have to continue to run the ball well and take pressure off of our wide receivers and tight ends in the pass game. It helps our offensive line. When you're running the ball like that, the pass rush on the first and second downs is different. The calls coming in from the defensive coordinator are different. If we can continue to do that, it will only help us going forward."



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**Q: That third-and-3 play late where Marshawn Lynch gets the first down and then the next play where you fake it to him and then throw deep to Johnny Holton for the touchdown, are those plays related?**

**Carr:** "Yes, so whenever you can pick up a third down off a run, as a defense, that's kind of like, 'Dang.' They're sitting there getting their blitz package ready on that down and distance. They are sitting there getting their coverage schemes ready for that down and distance. Who is where, how are we going to cover this and help here, help there, and then you run it on them, that kind of throws it out of whack. It mixes the calls up, so then we get the next play and then they play a two-high coverage, but with the safety going to match Johnny. We had the opportunity. If that safety was 10 yards deeper, we wouldn't have been able to throw that ball. But the fact that he was down there, possibly run, my eyes went run to him. I'm making my fake and my eyes are right on him. As long as he stayed at a certain level, we were going to have a chance. It definitely goes together."

**Q: What have you seen in terms of Holton's growth since he's got here?**

**Carr:** "Oh man, a lot. When he first got here, we saw him run. I think we were watching film and we saw him take off running on clear route to help someone else get open. We were like, 'Golly, who is this guy?' We started asking questions like, 'What's this guy's name?' Trying to figure him out. I remember one of the first balls I threw him, it didn't go too well. I don't know if it touched his hands. Right after that day I was like, 'Man, this poor guy has all of this juice, speed, and oh man, I don't know.' The next day he just came out and started balling. Catching the ball and running routes, like double move routes. He wasn't just a straight-line guy. We started seeing like, 'Hey man, this guy has something to him.' Then we get to training camp and I'll never forget, I hit him on a post corner. A big for like 70-yards. He took off and it wasn't even close. It was that moment right there I was like, 'This guy is going to make the team and be special.' He ended up only have like two catches last year, but now he's finding himself a little role where he can come in. He's a good blocker. He can come in and catch deep balls. Today with some of the veteran guys getting a little bit of rest, he gets in there. I'm throwing him routes that I'm throwing to any of my receivers. I say that to say that from day one to what happened today, it would've been hard for me to believe, but he worked his tail off."

**Q: You ever seen someone get a 15-yard penalty for playing around like Lee Smith?**

**Carr:** "That's the crazy part is I'm sitting there and I see Lee laughing and going like this because guys know how he plays. The game is different over the years, so he's joking with the guy and the guy is laughing. Then they're sitting there talking about it and this ref runs by and I go, 'They're joking.' He's like, 'I know.' Then a flag from like left field comes in and we're like, 'No!' He didn't see what was going on. I felt bad for him. He was thankful that we were able to get the touchdown on that drive."