



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: “Real quick, we do have a roster change. We are putting Dwayne Harris on Injured Reserve, he has an ankle problem. And we are signing Preston Brown, linebacker, former Bengal, former Buffalo Bill. Excited about adding Preston to our team. And once again, really pleased with the effort, happy to win. I’ll be happy to answer any questions I can.”

Q: What did you like about Preston Brown and what do you think he can bring to you guys immediately?

Coach Gruden: “Well he’s 27 years old. We really liked him coming out of Louisville. He had three straight 100-tackle seasons as a Buffalo Bill, went to Cincinnati and obviously things didn’t work out, but he has the intangibles first of all that you look for in middle linebacker. He’s charismatic, he’s intelligent, physical guy, football junkie and he’s been productive in the league. We’ll put him in the room with [linebackers coach David] Lippincott and [defensive coordinator Paul] Guenther and see if he can get caught up quickly and we’ll try to fast track him.”

Q: There is such a fine line between winning and losing in the NFL. Sometimes the opponent doesn’t matter and circumstances don’t matter, but when you are transitioning from where you’ve been to where you want to be, is there sort of a mindset to winning games when it might not be your best days?

Coach Gruden: “Yeah, that’s an awful deep, philosophical way of putting things for me. (laughter) I’m a pretty shallow guy, but it was different. You’re on national television, it’s a night game, Thursday night. Now it’s a hot day, it’s one o’clock. It’s different. It’s never the same. You are playing a team that’s a bit of a mystery, the Bengals. They have a new quarterback, their defense although they had a struggle against the Ravens. Everybody struggles against the Ravens and when you study Cincinnati’s defense they are playing against the Ravens twice, they’re playing against Kyler Murray, Russell Wilson, quarterbacks that run around and they are not going to defend us the way they defend them. So, we are not quite sure how they are going to play against us, so there was a lot of adjustments, but I think our team was emotionally ready to go no doubt. They had a great week of practice and I knew that we were going to get the Bengals best shot. Paul Guenther was the defensive coordinator and he knows [Carlos] Dunlap, he knows Geno Atkins and he knows [Shawn] Williams and Will Jackson, and I could tell in pregame warmup they were ready to roll. So, you got to be ready in this league as you know, and you got to be ready to adapt and adjust and we’ve been able to do that at a pretty good rate.”

Q: Do you feel that sense of urgency though when you guys are up by four and get that field goal. It was kind of like a now-or-never type of a situation. Did you feel that urgency from the players?

Coach Gruden: “Yeah, I did. I really did. I really felt a sense of confidence when we hit the field. We expected to score. We expected to score a touchdown there, not a field goal. I didn’t agree with that call by the way on the one-yard line, but that’s not an excuse and then I felt our defense was excited about going out there and getting a closing stop and that’s a good feeling to have, a confident group especially with the amount of youth that we have.”



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Q: For two youngsters to make a play, Maxx Crosby's sack and Trayvon Mullen's interception, how big is that for their confidence and the confidence of the players around them as well?

Coach Gruden: "It's big. I mean success is a great confidence builder and when you can have success and win as a rookie in this league it goes a long way. Sometimes it takes two or three years for that to happen for a young player in particular. Some guys don't get to play until their second or third season, but we are getting a lot of production. It's been pretty well documented from our rookie class and we are going to continue to raise the bar for them and for Raiders fans out there we do have five of the top-90 picks next year. We plan on adding five more really good players next year, so that's the exciting thing and it's a credit to all the players and coaches, they've worked well together."

Q: Did you have to talk yourself at all into putting so much on first-year players this year as you have done?

Coach Gruden: "We try to put more on them every week. The game plans are very long and extensive. We're not limiting anything. I think that's the key for their development. Even Darren Waller ran two routes yesterday I've never seen him run before. A little option route, in the fourth quarter he ran a little option route in the red zone. You got to keep challenging these guys, giving them more and more things to do and experience and man have they responded. A big part of that is their talent level and also their passion to do it, and it's fun to come to work with guys like that."

Q: Are the college and pro game more similar now maybe than they were? Is that leading to rookies being able to contribute more?

Coach Gruden: "Maybe. I think the way the salary cap is now I think has a lot to do with that. You get four or five years into your career, you get into that second contract, you can't have everybody making that amount of money in this salary cap era. It's a combination of everybody in high school, college and pro kind of merging towards the spread type of football, but we're a little bit different. I think we probably play a little bit older school brand of football. Hopefully Raider fans can appreciate we are trying to do a little bit of everything."

Q: Your short yardage ability to convert has been just about perfect this year and you've usually had a back that you trust to get that yard. What are the qualities that go into that and how does Alec Ingold play into that?

Coach Gruden: "Well, Ingold has to do a lot. He's got to be able to catch it, he's got to be able to run it and he's got to be able to be an escort. And I don't know all the other fullbacks in the league. I don't think a lot of teams use them. I know New England has a great fullback, [James] Develin. Haven't seen New England on our film much this year, but if there's a better fullback in the league right now, I'd sure like to see him. He can run it, he can catch it and he can certainly escort. And he can line up in a couple different positions, so he has some versatility. I think that combination helps us in short yardage. I think the game planning from our staff has been pretty good. We've thrown it, we've run it, we've taken some shots and the great short yardage teams that I know; you know we're running, they know we're running, and everybody knows we're running it and we can still find a way to get that one yard. And it's a credit to the offensive line certainly and the tight ends and the entire group."



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Q: On that touchdown pass to Foster Moreau, was that exactly how it was supposed to work out and how the defense was supposed to react?

Coach Gruden: "That was exactly how you'd hope it works. You know we executed it pretty good. Sometimes you roll the dice and you get what you're looking for, you hit the lottery. You know that was a good play. We got the coverage we wanted and we got the look we expected and we executed. That's what happens on the goal line sometimes. Guy do pop clean as you know."

Q: Moreau said he knew that was a touchdown the moment they lined up. Did you have the same feeling?

Coach Gruden: "I don't ever have as much confidence as Foster (Moreau). (laughter) I'm old, I'm an old man now. Look I'm wearing glasses. I have a black eye. But I have a high expectation certainly when we break the huddle and you see the look that we practice it against. You have a high expectation that good things will happen."

Q: Curtis Riley had his most extensive play since Minnesota, a game he did not play well in. What does it say about him to stand at the ready and let other guys play and then be ready when called upon?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, it's tough you know. It's really hard you know when you have a bad game or you have a game that's not up to your standards and you get knocked out of the rotation a little bit and your role diminishes. A lot of people out there quit. They want to go home, and they become distant or whatever. But he still has maintained a lot of life on the practice field. He's shown that no matter what role you give him, he's going to give you everything he has, and he deserved an opportunity to redeem himself. He's a good player. He's a young player. And he knows that we need him now. Thank goodness for Curtis Riley and D.J. Swearingen and our defense."

Q: Has your mindset changed at all in using rookies over the years? Were you always as comfortable as you seem to be this year in trusting rookies?

Coach Gruden: "There's a lot of people out there that know that I like veteran players. When I went to Tampa Bay, we didn't have a first-round pick or second-round pick the first two years I got there. When I got here in 1998, we drafted pretty good. We had Jon Ritchie and Charles Woodson and two punters. A punter, a kicker, we had Mo Collins and (Matt) Stinchcomb. We had a lot of guys come in and play as rookies. When we got here, we felt we needed to fix this roster, change the dynamic of the roster, become a 4-3 team. We had a lot of veteran players in the last year of their contract. We needed to draft. We needed to bring in some young people, correct our salary cap, and do a lot of things. I've always taken pride in developing players no matter who they are. Guys that come in Week 10 or guys that come in through the draft, and that's just what teaching and coaching is all about. I've taken a lot of pride over the years in hiring coaches that are the best, that have a similar interest in not really worrying about fourth rounder's or seventh rounder's or 37-year olds or 17-year olds or 26-year old guys. Just play the best player and coach the guys that have earned the right, and that's kind of the flag that we wave here."

Q: How did you feel Dion Jordan played yesterday against the Bengals?

Coach Gruden: "Did pretty good. I mean, we asked him to go inside and rush. We're trying to keep [Clelin] Ferrell and Maxx [Crosby] and [Benson] Mayowa outside, and Dion [Jordan] gives us another guy with length that can go inside on the guards and give us some athleticism and some chase down ability,



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and I think he showed he still can do that. We've got to keep working him back into football shape and try to get him some more turns."

Q: What are you seeing from your pass rush as a whole beyond the sacks? Are you seeing some elements of progress that gives you confidence that they can maintain this level of pressure and heat as we move forward?

Coach Gruden: "Yeah, you know like we said last year, we were 4-12. We didn't have a lead a lot in the fourth quarter. When you don't have a lead, you can ask around the league, you don't get the rush. You know the other teams in the four-minute drill and they're running the ball and running out the clock. But the other night Phillip Rivers, we knew he had to throw it so you're going to get a chance to rush. We knew they were going to throw it in Detroit, and we get a chance to rush. And at the end of the game yesterday we knew they had to throw it, so you get some opportunities to swing the bat. We've been better against the run and we've given ourselves more third-down opportunities than we did a year ago. So, with that being said I think that has something to do with it. And we're much improved. You know we've got better rushers and we're getting better results."

Q: You mentioned you left some points on the board yesterday. What did you see watching the film in regard to your offense? What wasn't clicking?

Coach Gruden: "I'll credit Cincinnati first of all. They're bigger and stronger and better than most people think up front. You know they're a hard group to block and they presented a lot of looks obviously like I said earlier that you know you don't get a chance to really scout and get ready for. They did a nice job with their front. I don't care what anybody says about [Geno] Atkins and [Carlos] Dunlap, [Sam] Hubbard is another guy. I mean, they are good up front. Started there, but I thought we had a couple penalties you know, holding call midfield. We had two penalties on the same play after DeAndre's [Washington] big run hurt us. Three sacks put us way behind in the sticks while we're moving the ball hurt us. We had the interception, uncharacteristic interception. What that free safety did, [Jessie] Bates, on that play I've never seen before in that coverage, fooled us completely. And we had the fumble at the 6-yard line, so those are things I've got to clean up myself. We have to clean up as coaches and players. At the same time we did a lot of good things. You know we had some explosive plays. We had some good ball distribution and we had some balance again and you know I was proud of that."

Q: As it gets deeper into the season to where the rookies haven't played this many games in a season before, do you at all have to monitor or manage how you're using them or do you feel like they'll be equipped to handle it?

Coach Gruden: "What did you say? *(laughing)* I can't, no I'm not going to even bring that up. I don't want to get that thought out there. You know, 'hey look at me guys I'm tired, my eyes are droopy here.' We've got to play harder. We've got to prepare better. We've got to be smart as coaches and we have been with how we practice. We'll be very cautious of that, but you know this is pro football. This is what you live for. You know games that are relative in November and December and who knows how we'll do but at least we've put ourselves in position to be here."