



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders QB Derek Carr

Q: What do you remember about the high school game between you and Andrew Luck?

Carr: "Man, I remember their fans chanting Carr sucks. (*laughter*) I remember we ended up winning the game, I remember that, barely. I remember him just running all over us. I remember he ran over somebody and I was like, 'Quarterbacks can do that?' You know? I just remember him being super talented. It was a fun game but I think we got beat the next week or something short thereafter. So, it was alright."

Q: Did you know of Andrew Luck going into the game?

Carr: "Yeah, I knew of him. We obviously knew of him and knew he was a great quarterback. We all knew he was going to be in the NFL someday. We didn't talk or anything like that."

Q: Why is this team not letting up this year like most teams might after clinching a playoff spot?

Carr: "Yeah, I've only been playing three, so this is my first run at it. So, being able to go for the first time, I don't see a team letting up, especially in this league. No one's going to let up, we're going to give everything that we got."

Q: Does it help focus knowing that Indianapolis needs this game to stay alive in their own playoff hunt?

Carr: "Oh yeah, that's why after the game I was so focused on Indianapolis because they have to win out to make the playoffs. So, they have their back against the wall and we know we've had our back against the wall a couple times. We're going to come out and fight. So, you have to expect that when they come in."

Q: How does it feel to be in a position where you can only improve your playoff seeding after playing so many close games this season?

Carr: "Yeah, we've won a lot that are close. So, that's how crazy this league is. Sometimes you're going to win them, sometimes you're not and that's why I never look at somebody's record and say, 'That's who they are.' Because, you turn the film on and you're like, 'These guys are rolling right now.' The game that they just had against Minnesota, they're hitting in all facets of the game. You turn the film on and you see what kind of team they are, you know that their backs are against the walls so they're going to fight and you just come out expecting their very best shot."

Q: Knowing that if you win the last two, you win the division, how does it feel to not have to watch the score of other opponents?

Carr: "Yes, very nice. It's nice to go out there and just concentrate on the game at hand because nothing else really matters. It really doesn't this time. I say it all the time, but in real life, it really doesn't matter. We can just go out and compete and try and win games. That's really all that matters to us is going out there against Indianapolis and however we have to do it, coming home with the win."

Q: Has there been something that has changed from the beginning of the year with regards to your early success in the red zone compared to now?

Carr: "To be honest, especially the last two weeks, we played two good defenses, you know? Obviously, we had our plays that we could have made and should have made and I think that it just comes down to we didn't do a good job of making those plays, to be honest. On third down, they got us off the field and we kicked field goals. Which is good, you always want the points. But, anytime we can get the touchdowns, obviously that's what we want."

Q: Does it have something to do with running out of the shotgun near the goal line?

Carr: "No, we ran for more yards those last three games than before. So, I think it's a myth when it says under center and those kind of things. We ran the ball just fine."



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Q: Are you seeing defenses really putting an effort in taking Amari Cooper away?

Carr: "Yeah, I think so a little bit. There's a little bit of that and I just think that honestly, the reads, there was one where he could have got, but Seth [Roberts] was so wide open and I had to throw it to Seth. There's a couple of times where obviously we'd like to get him the ball, but I'm never going to force it. I'm never going to force it to somebody, never going to do things like that and put the team in a bad situation. But at the same time, obviously, he's a great playmaker and you want the ball in his hands. So, there's a fine line when it comes to that, but I leave that to the coaches. I don't even go near that, I just try to read the defense and throw it to where I'm supposed to."

Q: With as many skilled players as you have, does it make deciding where to throw the ball to easier?

Carr: "Absolutely. It's so nice to have guys [that are skilled]. We've seen our running backs, our tight ends make explosive yards, explosive gains for us. So, if people try and take away one person with two or with putting their best guy on somebody and things like that, it only opens up opportunities for other guys and we have a lot of good other guys."

Q: After leaving a lot of points on the field, do you feel like these last two games are an opportunity to peak as an offense?

Carr: "We left a lot of points, but I will say we played a lot better against San Diego than we did against Kansas City, obviously. We moved the heck out of the ball, we just got stopped in the red zone. So, we're doing the right things, we're doing good things, but there's always going to be things to quarter-turn and tweak and try and get better, try and be more efficient. But for us, we're honestly focused on playing a good game against Indy. We don't care about peaking or getting ready for the playoffs, we're ready for the Colts."



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Colts Head Coach Chuck Pagano Conference Call

Q: Was the game against Minnesota the game you guys had been looking for?

Coach Pagano: "Yeah, the guys played, obviously, really well. Great complementary football. Got off to a fast start and then kind of never looked back. That's obviously a blue print you'd love to be able to replicate. We understand the challenge that we're presented with coming up on Saturday. A great Raiders team and well built. They have a great roster and a bunch of talent. Playing really hard. [Head Coach] Jack [Del Rio] has done a great job. That team and that culture and that environment and the way they're playing and well coached. Like I said, it's going to be a huge challenge for us. We're going to need to be able to execute and be efficient and play that kind of game to have a chance in this one."

Q: What was your reaction when the Raiders clinched their first playoff spot in 14 years?

Coach Pagano: "I just told the media here, I was blessed and fortunate to have had the opportunity to work for Mr. Davis for two years in 2005 and 2006. History speaks for itself. What a great organization and great franchise and great man Mr. Davis was. I learned a tremendous amount of football and a lot of things from him. Again, I was very, very fortunate and had a great two years, me and my family, out there. Again, it's just a testament to that organization and Mark Davis and the job that he's done and the job that Coach Del Rio and his staff have done and those players. They're playing at a high level right now and playing with a ton of confidence. He has a bunch of good players. The way they play the game, when you put on the tape, offense, defense and special teams, again a testament to what they've put together out there and the job that Jack and his staff have done."

Q: How has Frank Gore been able to maintain his production level?

Coach Pagano: "He's a great pro. He takes great care of himself. He's a talented guy. He has such great passion for this football game and great passion for his team and his teammates. Again, he's a tireless worker. He prepares extremely well. He's as tough as they come; one of the toughest and fiercest competitors that I've ever been around. He's probably been told for a long, long time that he can't. He maintains and continues to play with that chip on his shoulder. The guy absolutely hates losing more than he loves winning. He's a driven, driven young man."

Q: Do you see parallels between Andrew Luck and Derek Carr with both coming from football families and being able to play as rookies?

Coach Pagano: "You knew what kind of player he was coming out. We know the history and all that stuff. He's a great, great competitor. Great player. He has talent. He has mobility. He has arm strength. He's doing a great job of running that offense. He's making great decisions. He's taking care of the football. When things aren't there, he's athletic enough to run and extend plays and run for first downs. He's a nightmare right now. He's playing with a great deal of confidence. His leadership skills, the intangibles that these great quarterbacks have like Derek and like Andrew, it's off the charts. They're competitors. They're great leaders. They're great teammates. They're smart. They're tireless workers and all that stuff. When you put the tape on and you watch him, it's easy to see why he's having so much success."

Q: What have you seen from Andrew? What were your impressions early on and what have they been these last few games?

Coach Pagano: "He's playing well. He's had a lot of moving parts around him, adversity and things like that. We've had some different lineup changes, but again, the guy's a great competitor. He's smart and he's talented and prepares really well. He puts his team on his back and continues to grow. You never stop growing, you never stop learning. He's one of those guys that he's his own worst critic. He's always evaluating and trying to get better at all the little things. He's made great decisions. He's taking care of himself. He's taking care of the things that he needs to do in order to help us win."



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Q: Will this game have a playoff feel because of what it means to you?

Coach Pagano: “Based on our season and the way things have gone, we don’t look at any of them any different. It’s a must win for us and again, we’re going to have to play our very, very best in order to give ourselves a chance to compete and to give ourselves a chance to win this football game. It’s a great football team that we’re playing and we’re playing in a hostile environment and on the road and all that stuff against a bunch that’s playing really good football right now. All three phases are playing with a ton of confidence.”

Q: The Raiders’ defense is ranked 30th in the league. What jumps out about them on film?

Coach Pagano: “I don’t look at numbers. You can be a bean counter and all that stuff, but they’ve got a bunch of guys over there that are really good football players. They take the ball away as good as anybody. I think they’re third in the league with 26 takeaways with 13 interceptions and 13 fumble recoveries. They put a ton of pressure on you. They have two edge rushers that are as good a tandem at rushing the passer as anybody in the league. Cover guys and a safety with four interceptions in Reggie Nelson. Linebackers, interior defensive lineman, they do a great job. Again, forget all the numbers. They’re a strong unit. We faced a good one last week and we face another one. That’s the National Football League. They have a bunch of really good football players on that side of the football that love to play. Again, anytime you can take the ball away the way they take it away and rush the passer the way they can, it’s always a matchup issue.”

Q: Is there any one thing that sticks out in your memory from your time with Al Davis? Anything you’ve carried with you?

Coach Pagano: “There’s a lot of things, but his passion for that team. His passion for his players. His passion for winning was unparalleled, second to none. I can’t say enough. Just the way he knew about players and about building a football team. Probably the most was just his passion for winning, his passion for excellence, what he expected from his players. He loved that football team and he loved his players immensely. There was nothing more important to Mr. Davis than that football team and his players and winning.”

Colts QB Andrew Luck Conference Call

Q: We thought this was going to be your first matchup against Derek Carr, but you guys have played each other in high school.

Luck: “Yeah it was a playoff game, senior year for me and I think it was junior for Derek or sophomore year, in Houston. He came out on top. I’ve always admired him. What a great job he’s done in the beginning of his career, especially this year.”

Q: Did you guys know each other besides being high school opponents?

Luck: “No. No, they had not.”

Q: What do you remember about that game?

Luck: “Losing, which is never any fun. It being a tight one and unfortunately we didn’t come out on top.”

Q: What do you see when you look at this Raiders defense, specifically Khalil Mack and Bruce Irvin?

Luck: “Yeah, it’s obvious. It’s the first thing you see, two very special, premier players. There’s a lot more than that. It’s a stout, stout front seven, linebackers that can play, big, fast, physical, athletic. Some really good cover guys. We know we have our work cut out for us. It should be a fun one. A great challenge.”

Q: What were the emotions like on Sunday knowing it’s going to be a lot of work to make the playoffs?

Luck: “We went up to Minnesota to win a ball game and not worry about what anybody else did. We understood the position you put yourself in when you can’t control your own destiny. All we have to worry about is ourselves. If things work out, great, but we have to take care of our end of the deal. We were excited to win.”



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Q: Was that game how you envisioned your team playing this year?

Luck: "Yeah, it certainly was a good, positive game. We managed to put a bunch of good, positive things together. Certainly, it can be the blue print."

Q: Was there anything you noticed about Carr in high school that was impressive?

Luck: "You could tell, obviously, that he was going to be a really, really good football player. I think he's more athletic than people give him credit for. He runs around and makes some great plays. He does a great job of taking care of the football. I'm a big fan."

Q: Having a football background also, what kind of advantage does that give guys like you and Carr?

Luck: "I think it certainly helps in certain situations. I've always leaned on my dad for advice if something comes up that I feel like I need his input. I obviously can't speak for Derek and how the Carr family operates, but I've heard a bunch of great things about them."

Q: Do you have any thoughts about Christian McCaffrey passing on the bowl game to get ready for the drafty?

Luck: "No thoughts on that."