



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Head Coach Jon Gruden**

**Opening statement:** "Good afternoon. I don't have any injury updates but I'll be happy to answer any questions that I can."

**Q: Clinton McDonald, after having just joined you guys a couple days before the game, plays more than 50 defensive snaps. How much is that a testament to his conditioning and how do you feel he faired with such a high workload?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We were in a tough spot yesterday, certainly with [Brian] Price playing for the first time. [Johnathan] Hankins and Clinton basically just showing up before the game. He did a heck of a job. He not only played a lot of snaps, he played some good snaps against the run and he gave us a little bit of pass rush in there. That's been his history. He can play the nose or the three-technique and that's what he did yesterday."

**Q: Clinton said, in hindsight, he feels like he made the wrong decision in March. He should have been here all along. What was your vantage back when he chose to go a different direction and your regard for him as a player?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, we liked him. We wanted to sign him. He was injured, and we couldn't pull the trigger at that time for that sole reason. It was a medical issue, he wasn't ready to play. Fortunately, as fate has it, we got him at some point here. We are happy to have him. He's a good player, he's a great team guy. We are going to need him here in the next several weeks."

**Q: How do you think Kolton [Miller] faired against [Broncos OLB] Bradley Chubb?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Pretty good. We like [Kolton] Miller a lot, he is going to be a heck of a player. He's played against two of the top defenses in football his first two outings. The film speaks for itself."

**Q: He [Kolton Miller] seems to be growing in confidence. Have you seen that with him?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, we think he's a long-term, big-time player for us at a critical position. That's why we drafted him. His range, not only as a pass protector but you saw him get out on the quick screens. He's got tremendous athleticism and he's just getting started. It's exciting."

**Q: What is the physical recovery process like after a day like yesterday when you have to get ready to go to Miami?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We will talk to Rod Martin, the trainer. I think we came out of the game pretty healthy. It's taxing on both teams. You can only have so many guys active. It'll be a challenge again in Miami. We will be wearing black jerseys, I believe. The last time we went down there I was hot and I'm not even playing. That tests are mental toughness. We will try to be creative on the practice field to get our work done and to get the players rest they need."

**Q: What did you see from [Gareon] Conley on the play where [Broncos WR] Tim Patrick got free and put the Broncos into field goal range?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well, it was man-to-man coverage. It looked like a smash route, a hitch route, five-yard hitch route. I just think we got to find a way to get him on the ground. We missed a couple tackles on that play. It is what happens when you play one-on-one coverage against some of these receivers. They



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are very talented and hard to bring down. It was a great play by them in that situation...When you are playing one-on-one coverage and you're blitzing, you roll the dice sometimes."

**Q: How did you see the defensive line fair against those one-on-one assignments up front?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I think we said it after the game, we got to make improvements there. Across the board we got to make improvements. It was pretty obvious."

**Q: Jon, after both games you have addressed the lack of a pass rush. Does it make you regret your trade decision?**

**Coach Gruden:** "No, it doesn't make me regret...We made the trade. We made the trade. There has got to be hindsight, 50-50, all that stuff. We would have loved to have him here and I'm not going to keep rehashing this. I would have loved to coached him, loved to have him here...but he's not here. Somebody's got to step up. We got to keep building our football team and that's what we are going to do. Hopefully, we see more from Arden Key. Hopefully, we see more from PJ Hall when he gets healthy. Hopefully, we prove that in the long term we did the right thing."

**Q: You have a lot of new players here that haven't played together. Do you buy in to the sentiment of 'players learning to win together'?**

**Gruden:** "I try to stay in shallow water, not to get real deep and philosophical. We had an extra point blocked. We had a fourth-and-one that we have to convert, we had an offensive pass interference that was critical at the end of the game, we had a false start on second-and-four. We missed a couple plays we needed to make. Guys are fighting. Guys are working hard. We're a work in progress. We got a long way to go. we're going to get there. I'm going to remain confident indeed."

**Q: When you look at those five or so plays, is it easier to learn from?**

**Gruden:** "I know what we were doing. I have a pretty good feel for what's going on here. I know what the reality is. The reality is that our quarterback played great yesterday, in a one of the toughest places to play against one of the most formidable fronts in all of football. We pass protected very well. We had balance. Disappointed in the outcome. Going to continue to see the glass half full. At the same time, going to put my head down and keep digging, keep scratching, keep looking for ways to build the foundation of this football team."

**Q: Any chance of P.J. Hall being back this week?**

**Gruden:** "I doubt it. I don't think so. Keeping my fingers crossed."

**Q: What do you say about a guy like Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie playing special teams as a veteran?**

**Gruden:** "It's a credit to him. It's a credit to Jordy Nelson for returning punts. I don't think he came here with the intention of being our punt returner either. I just met our longsnapper. I just met Jonathan Hankins. Wasn't sure what number he was until I saw him in 90 out there. We talked about McDonald. Brian Price played. We have our areas that we have to continue to develop. Hopefully we'll get some men healthy."



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**Q: For two straight games on the opening possession, your offense has scored. What goes into that opening script?**

**Gruden:** "We try to do the same thing with every possession, honestly. We try to move the football, put points on the board. Ultimately, you try to get your best players involved early. Go with your best stuff. Things that you think have the best chance of working, things your quarterback really loves, and what you anticipate the defense doing. We had a great drive to start the third quarter. The only problem was that we only had three possessions the whole second half. We just need to try to get better field position when a drive does start. Try to get the ball more to the offense so they can do something with it. I was pleased with the way we started the first and third quarter for sure."

**Q: Derek was very accurate, even when pushing the ball downfield. Why do you think he was so successful there?**

**Gruden:** "I just think he's a heck of a player. I think he sees the field. I think he's got an incredible arm talent. I think we've got good receivers. I think getting our big guy out there, #12 [Martavis Bryant], I think he makes a difference. His presence out there makes a difference. Coop was hot. Amari had a great game. I think when you have 10 targets and 10 catches, that is extremely uncommon and hard to do. He really should have been 11-for-11 after bagging that ball deep down the sideline. It's a combination of all that, and a protection. We had good pass protection for most of the day and that's a great accomplishment."

**Q: What was your take on the double pass interference call?**

**Gruden:** "I don't know. I was disappointed, to say the least. Very disappointed. It was on our sideline, too. You see a lot of disappointed Raiders."

**Q: From what you've seen from the first two games, what makes you think this team can still be a contender?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I'm not going to sit here and make predictions here today. I'm not going to do it. Like I said, we're going to keep building our football team. Whether that translates into one win or four wins or any wins, I'm not going to make any predictions. I want to continue to play good, hard-nose football. Keep improving. Keep improving and good things will happen. I'm not going to sit here and make any predictions about anything other than we're going to play hard and provide the best effort we can."

**Q: Is there a way team's can get better at closing out games?**

**Coach Gruden:** "You can close them out in a lot of ways. There's a number of ways we could've closed that game out on offense. Maybe call a better play on fourth-and-1. Get that conversion. Perhaps improve your field goal protection, your PAT protection. Perhaps eliminate the penalty on second-and-4. Defensively you have them second-and-20 on their own 10-yard line with no timeouts. Somebody has to make a play. I got to do a better job coaching. It all starts and ends there."

**Q: Rashaan Melvin when he first got here didn't previously know some of the techniques that you guys have him doing. He's more accustomed to having hands on a receiver in a route. How have you seen him progress?**

**Coach Gruden:** "All of these guys are learning new techniques. When you acquire a guy from another team who's been on four or five teams, certainly they have to learn a new technique. They have to learn a new offense. They have to learn a new way of doing things. He's been open minded. It's a credit to



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him. He's still a young player. He hasn't had a lot of starts under his belt. He did have a big interception yesterday. I've said it a number of times, I think we have as good a secondary coach as there is in football. I think the young man [Derrick] Ansley is going to be a head coach. He's helping all our corners. Gareon [Conley] has just started a few games in his career. So everything is a work in progress, but they are open minded. Rashaan, as I think, is reaping the benefits of being around a pretty dog-gone good coach."

**Q: What have you seen from Melvin's maturity when it comes to understanding the process of getting better?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I hope he appreciates he's in a competitive situation. With [Daryl] Worley coming back soon. Nick Nelson is banging on everybody's door, too. We need to get him on the field. It's a credit to him without a doubt, but it's also important that he does continue to improve and take advantage of the playing time."

**Q: Do you try to be consistent with your approach the day after the game or do you approach it differently depending on how you played? Is it different this Monday than another day?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Yeah, probably. Obviously depending on how you play, if it's a short week or not. Sometimes you don't have a lot of time to spend on the previous game. This will be the first time we get a chance to really study the tape collectively as a group. Yeah, it'll be different on a weekly basis depending on the schedule of the following game and how we played and what we need to correct."

**Q: What have you made of Bruce Irvin's contributions thus far?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well obviously we need to get more out of our captain. He's put in some tough spots, certainly. He's a good player. He's had some really good snaps. We need more and more from him. I know he's giving us everything he has and it's tough on him, certainly, because we do have a lot of new guys around him upfront. We're happy he's here."

**Q: When you looked at the film on the final drive, the final two minutes of offense...**

**Coach Gruden:** "Are you trying to make me mad here today or what? *(Laughing)*. Go ahead."

**Q: Well the physical exhaustion...**

**Coach Gruden:** "It was the hottest day in Denver Bronco football history. So it was hot. It was hot. Like I said, three of our defensive linemen, we have not really seen play in a game. Really very many practices either. That's double trouble honestly. The heat, the altitude and not knowing what kind of condition everybody is in. It affects everybody upfront. It affects [Frostee] Rucker. It affects Irvin. It certainly affects [defensive coordinator Paul] Guenther, the man calling the plays. You have to go from a base defense to a nickel defense back to a base. Then they go no huddle. Then pretty soon your guys are getting tired of running on and off the field. It's a challenge. It was a challenge to say the least. It certainly didn't help the outcome of the game yesterday."