



## ***Las Vegas Raiders Transcript***

### **First-round Press Conference with General Manager Mike Mayock following the selections of WR Henry Ruggs III and CB Damon Arnette**

**General Manager Mike Mayock Opening Statement:** “We feel like the Las Vegas Raiders got faster, we got tougher and we got more competitive tonight. We got the wide receiver at pick No. 12. He’s the fastest wideout in the draft. We got the corner at No. 19. We did an awful lot of work on him, spent a lot of time. I did school visits there to both places and I feel like I know both kids really well. So, [Head Coach] Jon [Gruden] and I could not be more pleased. The coaches are fired up, the scouts are fired up and trust me [Owner] Mr. [Mark] Davis, when we took the fastest wideout in the draft, Mr. Davis said that his father was looking down and smiling.”

#### **Q: What made Henry Ruggs III stand out?**

**Mayock:** “Yeah, all three wide receivers we felt were diverse and would bring different things to the Raiders and I feel like Coach Gruden and that offensive staff is so good they could have gotten the most out of all three of them. However, the distinguishing factor really was his speed, his explosion and his work ethic. When you’re in the division we’re in and you look at Kansas City and you look at what they have on offense and what their explosion looks like, we needed to get faster and we think that his addition opens up our entire offense. He can run the deep routes. He also gets the manufactured touches, the bubble screens, the jet sweeps. I think if you force defenses to roll coverage, it opens up our run game. You respect our deep routes, it opens up Darren Waller. I just think it does an awful lot of things for us offensively and I think the most important thing is I think Coach Gruden and the staff will get everything out of him.”

#### **Q: Why is CB Damon Arnette not a reach for you at the 19th pick?**

**Mayock:** “The reason he’s not a reach is because of his grade in our system. Did I think we could have moved down maybe and still got him? Maybe, but we didn’t want to lose him. What distinguishes him is No. 1, he can run. No. 2, he’s tough as nails and when you talk about competitors. He played most of the season with a cast on his arm. He can play inside, he can play outside, he can play left, he can play right. We feel like this is one of the most competitive football players in the entire draft. So, to answer your question, we don’t feel at all like it was a reach.”

#### **Q: Were you ever close at either spot to trading down?**

**Mayock:** “We did not initiate any calls, but we had a bunch of calls tonight from teams that wanted to move up at different times for specific players. We wanted to sit there and take Ruggs III at 12 and we did. We probably could have moved down if we wanted to at 19, but again we hung in there and we took the guy we wanted to take. So, we did not initiate any trade calls tonight, but we did get several calls.”



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**Q: Like last year, you are taking guys from programs that are successful, is that something that's an important factor for you guys, the programs these guys come from?**

**Mayock:** "It doesn't have to be, but there's certainly a sense of security when you're watching film and you understand the level of competition. You can put on the SEC championship games, you can put on the Big Ten championship games. The fact that both these kids come out of those kinds of programs and those kinds of teams is awesome. I just think, especially a year like this when don't get all verified numbers, there's more questions out there. I think we felt outstanding about both these kids, the level of competition, how many games they played for these teams. There's an awful lot of tape on both these kids."

**Q: Before the draft, you talked a lot about it being a virtual draft and what challenges it would pose. How did the first round go, and was there anything that popped up that you did not expect?**

**Mayock:** "The first round went really smoothly. I'm not going to lie to you, I've spent way more time on Zoom and Microsoft Teams and things I never heard of. We probably drilled our trade routine for the last four, five days, where every night I'd have group of my scouts that are in different states. We had an analytics guy [director of football analytics] David Christoff, [assistant director of college scouting] Teddy Atlas one of our scouts, [assistant director of player personnel] Trey Scott, Jon Gruden. We had a bunch of people on the line and we drilled and drilled and drilled on these trades. It really we worked out. We had several times where we had two or three teams on the line. There were no glitches, we were able to get the information smoothly, get the information easily. We're really happy with where our numbers are, where our stats are. Knock on wood, it went well tonight. It will get more and more complicated as we get less and less time between picks."



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**Conference Call with First-Round Pick (No. 12 Overall) WR Henry Ruggs III**

**Q: Were you aware that the Raiders were potentially going to pick you?**

**Ruggs III:** "I definitely did. They had a lot of interest. I talked to [Head] Coach [Jon Gruden] and they had expressed a lot."

**Q: Was it important to you to be the first receiver taken?**

**Ruggs III:** "Being the first receiver didn't matter. Of course I wanted to be, but it didn't matter. I was just waiting to see when I was going to go, waiting to get my name called."

**Q: What do you bring to the Raiders?**

**Ruggs III:** "I bring an explosive playmaker, a great receiver, a great all-around receiver. A guy that can make a positive impact."

**Q: Do you think your ability to stretch the field will impact the way the Raiders play on offense?**

**Ruggs III:** "I feel like I'm definitely that guy that can make a positive impact. I can help the offense stretch out and be able to do different things."

**Q: You obviously played with a talented receiver group at Alabama, how much did it impact the numbers you were able to put up in college?**

**Ruggs III:** "It definitely kind of held me back. Those guys have to make their plays too. We have to share the ball and share the love. Everyone has the goods to make the plays. With that group of guys, it only makes you better. It makes you want to take advantage of every opportunity, fuels you to be competitive."

**Q: Everybody associates you with your speed. How eager are you to prove you're more than just a fast guy?**

**Ruggs III:** "I can definitely show that at any time. Of course, my tape speaks for myself, but when I get out on the field, I can show that I can do more than just run."

**Q: What's your message to Raider Nation?**

**Ruggs III:** "Just don't be disappointed. I'm definitely here to not disappoint you guys. I'm ready to go, I'm ready to get to work and do big things this upcoming season."

**Q: What does it mean to be the first pick of the Las Vegas Raiders?**

**Ruggs III:** "It means a lot. Just that they used their pick on me for the first wide receiver and first draft pick in Las Vegas. That's big with me. I'm excited. I'm ready to go. I can't wait to get there and get to work."



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**Q: How much time have you spent in Las Vegas before?**

**Ruggs III:** "None."

**Q: You have never been to Las Vegas. How much are you looking forward to coming to this city and seeing what it's all about?**

**Ruggs III:** "I can't wait. I'm excited to get there. You hear a lot of things about Vegas. I'm ready to experience it."

**Q: As far as the stadium, you'll be playing in a new stadium. What are your thoughts on that?**

**Ruggs III:** "I'm excited. Starting fresh. Ready to go. Get it going on the right foot."

**Q: A lot of people were commenting on your draft outfit tonight. Did you ever think you'd be wearing a robe at the draft?**

**Ruggs III:** "I definitely didn't. It was something I talked about, it came about. I was like, 'Dang, let's go for it.'"

**Q: Did you get a chance to talk about Josh Jacobs, and if so, what did he tell you about this Raiders team?**

**Ruggs III:** " He was telling me to be ready. You never know what is going to happen. When I was talking to him, he said, 'Be ready for anything. Whenever you get to wherever you're going, just do your thing. You got it.' He knew that I was ready, so that was pretty much it."

**Q: How confident are you in your ability to not only play outside but inside?**

**Ruggs III:** "I'm very confident. I know when I'm on the field I can do everything. I'm not afraid to show that. I'm not going to shy away from any challenge or any competition."

**Q: How ready are you to likely put in a lot of work remotely as we continue self-isolation?**

**Ruggs III:** "I'm ready. I'm getting it in. Work is work. I have to get somewhere, start all over, start fresh. So, I have to be ready going in."



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**Conference Call with First-Round Pick (No. 19 Overall) CB Damon Arnette**

**Q: Why did you choose to go back to school for your senior season?**

**Arnette:** "I chose to go back to school to rewrite my legacy at Ohio State. I felt like I wasn't the best player I could be on or off the field, so I decided to come back to regather myself and start over."

**Q: What were your expectations going into the draft? Did you think first round was going to be a possibility for you?**

**Arnette:** "I mean, I consider myself one of the best players in the draft. So, I feel like the best players go in the first round, so I wouldn't say I'm surprised, but I'm definitely thankful for it and grateful for the opportunity."

**Q: What allowed you to improve in your senior season and what do you think can help you improve at the next level?**

**Arnette:** "I'd say what improved is my mentality on how I approach certain situations on the field, off the field, everything. So, once I got my mind right, everything else just fell in line. I've been the same player. I'm not faster than I was a year ago or things like that. I'm the same person, I just had to get some things right and everything else just fell in line."

**Q: How would you describe your playing style and how does that fit the Raiders?**

**Arnette:** "I'd say I'm a physical corner, competitive corner, dog, all the above. And I feel like the Raiders, we're going to do the same thing. We are going to go out there, run fast, hit hard, execute and that's the type of football player I am. Bring some juice, you know what I'm saying? Celebrate your teammates and all that stuff."

**Q: General Manager Mike Mayock called you one of the most competitive players in the entire draft, he mentioned how you played most of the season in a cast. Where does that stem from?**

**Arnette:** "Always being looked at as underdog, always getting the short end of the stick in my athletic career. When you asked, 'are you surprised you're in the first round?' I'm not, certain people might be surprised. I know those people are surprised because I'm always the underdog. But I already know what time it is every time I step on the field regardless of what someone has to say about me."

**Q: When you got the call from the Raiders what was that like and what was the conversation like between Head Coach Jon Gruden and Mike Mayock and you? What did they say?**

**Arnette:** "It was hyped up. I was very excited, they were very excited. We chopped it up real quick. Basically we said, 'time to go now'. It's time to go now. Time to be first round pick and come in and get it going."



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**Day Two Press Conference with General Manager Mike Mayock**

**General Manager Mike Mayock:** "I'm happy with the way today went. We had three picks. We made the first two picks at 80 and 81 with Lynn Bowden Jr and Bryan Edwards. We moved down from 91 to 100 with the [New England] Patriots. Tanner Muse was target whole time, we were able to pick a fourth round pick and swapped five's. At the end of day, we're getting faster on both sides of the ball. We have a bunch of really competitive kids in this draft so far and I think that's what we're most excited about so far. It played out the way we'd hoped it would."

**Q: How do you envision using Lynn Bowden Jr?**

**Mayock:** "Lynn Bowden we announced as running back. Ultimately, he'll probably be what we call a joker, which is what I love in [Head Coach] Jon [Gruden's] offense. It's somebody who can do multiple jobs. But day one, he's going to come in and be a running back. In the SEC two years ago, he caught 60-70 passes as a slot. Last year as you guys know he was quarterback/wildcat. He gained over 1,000 yards. We think he's one of the most athletic, tougher guys in this year's draft. We're going to train him to be running back, if he's able to do that job, we'll be able to do some other things with him. Move him around, let him catch the football. He's a really good punt returner. That will be his role originally."

**Q: There seems to be a very specific theme – speed and versatility – especially through these first days. How important is that for the scheme Coach Gruden wants to run?**

**Mayock:** "There's a couple things here. Number one, let's be honest, the entire league is chasing the Kansas City Chiefs, but we're in same division. They keep getting faster and more athletic, more dynamic every time you turn around. Other teams have to do the same. We're trying to do that on both sides of the line scrimmage. Obviously, Henry Ruggs III is a difference maker, yesterday on the offensive side. Ruggs is a difference maker. Lynn Bowden Jr, we talked about him and what he can bring to the table. Bowden can return punts, Ruggs III can return kickoffs. We're trying to do more than just draft guys that play one thing. Versatility is important. The overarching thing is Jon and I look at each other and say, 'Is he a Raider?' We think what we're trying to develop is some toughness. We talk about foundation players last year. You've got to love to ball. I think on both sides of the line of scrimmage and on both days, we got guys that have a little edge to them, guys that love football, have speed, and above all they love the game and are tough kids."

**Q: Last year you drafted a lot of Clemson players and you dipped back in that well with Tanner Muse this year. Was he a guy when you were looking at the Clemson players last year you bookmarked him?**

**Mayock:** "It's hard to bookmark Clemson players because there are so many of them, but you're 100 percent right. I was at their National Championship game a year ago. I watched that tape at least eight to 10 times on both sides of the ball. I told Tanner when we had a Zoom call with him last week, I start all the calls with these kids, I said, 'You know I watched you stick your foot in the ground against Texas A&M early in the season and chase down a screen from 30 yards behind'. I said, 'At that point at least



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you played like a Raider'. He started laughing and loved the fact that we remembered that play. We talked about a couple other plays. So yeah, last year he impressed me because he played all over field. He was not just a safety, a strong safety, he played some linebacker. He came off the edge, he covered the man. He blew a lot of people away when at 227 pounds he ran 4.39. The rub for him day one is to be a core special teams player. While he's getting 20, 25 snaps a game at special teams he's got to learn how to learn MIKE and WILL linebacker. He's predominately a safety but he's going to be a linebacker for us. We think he's one of the smartest and most intuitive players in the draft and we expect him to learn both positions in addition to playing special teams."

### **Q: Coming off drafting Ruggs III in the first round, what motivated the decision to go ahead and double-dip at wide receiver at 80 and 81?**

**Mayock:** "Bowden is a running back for us. From our perspective, even though he was a slot receiver at Kentucky, for us running back. Ruggs III obviously is the wideout. And we see Edwards an outstanding 'X', meaning he's a big physical tough fast wide receiver on the opposite side. We think he can win one-on-one matchups. We loved his production in the SEC. We wanted to get more dynamic on offense, and that's what we're trying to do here. We got Ruggs III, the fastest guy in draft. We got Bowden at running back. We got Bryan Edwards, a big strong, physical guy that can run fast. On offense, we think at the skill positions, we've got more dynamic and that was really the plan."

### **Q: Did you try to move up into the second round or were content to stay where you were?**

**Mayock:** "I'm not going to lie, I got tempted a couple times to moving up. There were some guys sliding that I had graded higher and I was tempted. Jon and I talked about being patient and let it come to us. I was hoping for a trade down opportunity for another pick tomorrow. We had action at 80 and 81, but we really wanted to make those picks back-to-back. There was nothing that blew us away, so we made the pick at 81, New England came back a couple times. We were really happy at that point to move back and pick up a 4th."

### **Q: During the offseason you talked about the fact that you were great at moving the ball, 11th-most offensive yards and great on third downs, but there was a bog-down factor in the red zone and inability to put the ball in the end zone. Do you feel like you've addressed that?**

**Mayock:** "The biggest issue is not just red zone, and we did have problems both in red zone and in goal-to-go. I think the bigger picture for both Jon [Gruden] and I, was 'how do we get more dynamic?' You look at our offense last year, I think Jon did an outstanding job. We used two or three tight ends just about more than anyone else in the league. [Tight End] Darren Waller came out of nowhere to catch 90 balls. [Running Back] Josh Jacobs came out of nowhere to gain 1,200 yards. I think Jon did an outstanding job without us having significant wide receiver production. And when Jon and I sat down in the offseason, it was about trying to get more dynamic. 'How do we get more dynamic?' When you look at Ruggs III, when you look at Bowden, and you look at Edwards. We're more dynamic not just on



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offense, trust me, Henry Ruggs is a kick returner, and Lynn Bowden is a punt returner. We're really excited about that also."

**Q: Before the draft you spoke about the importance of whoever you bring into this team being able to put in the work given the state of the pandemic across the country. What was it about the guys you've drafted thus far that make you feel confident they'll be able to learn on their own and put in the work on their own with little likelihood of being able to see them this preseason?**

**Mayock:** "It's an intriguing conversation. Everybody around the league is talking about it. Depending on how much of an offseason there actually is, how much can you realistically expect from a rookie class. Obviously, last year we got a lot out of our rookie class and we expect the same thing this year. When you speak with these kids, as an example, Lynn Bowden Jr. walked into our combine meeting. We didn't know anything about him other than watching his film and you only get 15 minutes. The kid was a quarterback, he played wildcat, he played slot and he was a punt returner. We didn't really know what we were going to get. Jon did a little mini-install with Bowden Jr. and he gave him all Raider verbiage. Jon spat it out quickly and challenged him. Then we put Bowden on the board and to our surprise, Jon drilled him and he spat all of our information right back at us. All of our verbiage - he understood all of our concepts. He walked out of the room and Jon and I were like 'that's a freakin' Raider'. That's what we're looking for. We did the same thing with Bryan Edwards on zoom. Tanner Muse knocked his zoom meeting out of the park. Tanner Muse played safety and we questioned him for an hour on linebacker fits and he knew everyone. To answer your question, the three guys we drafted today, we fully expect that whether it's August 1st, July 1st or June 1st, whenever we see them, we expect they're going to get up to speed immediately."

**Q: So far in the virtual way that things were done this year, how would you say the process has gone? And what would you say about the NFL's efforts to try and be able to make this as seamless as possible in kind of a weird situation?**

**Mayock:** "I guess it cuts both ways. Publicly some people were critical with why the NFL would go through with it and that's way above my pay grade. Once the NFL told us what they were doing, the Raiders were all in. In all honesty, as long as all 32 of us are operating under the same rules, I'm good to go. I thought our scouts did a phenomenal job in the fall. We had all our reports in and we stacked the board in February before the pandemic even hit. We felt like we were prepared and ready to go. Then the coaches picked it up and once we were confined to our homes, these zoom interviews were outstanding. We put more tape work in with these kids and worked them for an hour on zoom. We learned a lot and as long as all 32 teams had the same constraints, we felt like we'd be fine. I'm a dinosaur and I kind of liked it. I kind of liked going back to sit at my dining room table and getting on the phone and talking to these kids. We're not complaining at all. We're going to stand up and say we embraced it and we were in favor of it."





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**Q: When you draft two receivers like Ruggs III and Edwards, how much do you worry about how they'll work together? Do you look at them as a pair at all or not really?**

**Mayock:** "I think they complement each other. I would throw [Nelson] Agholor in there too as a guy that compliments the group that we're really excited about. When you look at Ruggs III, I love the fact that Jon Gruden knows how to use him and maximize what he does well. Not only can he run vertical, and trust me he will, but we'll also have a bunch of manufactured touches for him. Whether they're jet sweeps, bubble screens, or just an ability to get him the ball in space and use that speed. Bryan Edwards is a different cat. Bryan Edwards is a guy that if you go three receivers on one side and put him on the other side and let him run down the red line. You throw him back shoulder fades, slants, all the big-body throws where you think he can win. He's physical, he's tough, he's got great hands and Bowden is another intriguing piece for us too. We got him as a running back, but he can catch the football, we can move him all over the place. The cool thing is I think they all complement each other and I have ultimate confidence in Jon Gruden getting the most out of them."



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**Conference Call with Third-Round Pick (No. 80 Overall) WR Lynn Bowden Jr.**

**Q: Before you got to Kentucky, you went through a lot in life. What does it mean to go from Youngstown to coming to the Las Vegas Raiders?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "I'm lost for words right now. I've been through so much, so many ups and downs. I always got this chip on my shoulder and I'm still going to have it. Being drafted here just motivated me more and more. Looking in my son's eyes and seeing how happy he was for me, I know I have to go hard."

**Q: You played quarterback, a little wide receiver and a little running back in college, all over the place. Where do you see yourself, what position do you see yourself fitting in the offense?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "Whatever they need me to play. I'm not set on one position. I'm trying win as many games as we can, get the championship. Wherever [Head] Coach [Jon] Gruden wants me to play, that's where I'm going to play."

**Q: Have you discussed it?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "Definitely. He said he wants to do a lot of things with me ready. I'm ready to get on board."

**Q: When was it clear the Raiders were really interested in you?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "I had a Zoom call, it was every coach on the staff on the Zoom call with me. I knew it was the right fit for me. Coach Gruden shot it straight with me, he liked me. That's what it was."

**Q: You're going to the Las Vegas Raiders but you're also joining Henry Ruggs III and Bryan Edwards. Does that excite you to see how many dynamic players are coming to the Raiders with you?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "Definitely, I'm ready to go compete, make each other better and make this team better. I'm very excited. I'm cheesing. I have my whole family out here ready, I'm ready to get to work."

**Q: Were you concerned about being at quarterback the last eight games and that it could hurt your potential at other positions on the field?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "Not really, I like to win games. That was the best decision for us to make. If it were to hurt draft stock, I wouldn't consider going back. It shows guys how I can move around the field in different positions and still make plays."

**Q: Have you watched the NFL a lot and watched guys like Taysom Hill, players that are utility type players?**

**Bowden Jr.:** "I watch them, there's a lot of guys in the NFL. Hill is one that they always compare me to. I'm happy about that. I feel like I'm going to wake the world up, It's only a matter of time."

**Q: Obviously, the switching back and forth from quarterback to wide receiver is disruptive to anybody's development. Where would you say you are in your development as a wide receiver?**



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**Bowden Jr.:** "I've been back in the lab ever since the season was over, ever since I played my last game I've been back in the lab. I was never out of the lab. Even when I moved to quarterback, I was still working on receiver stuff."



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**Conference Call with Third-Round Pick (No. 81st Overall) WR Bryan Edwards**

**Q: There's a lot of competition in the receiver room with the Raiders current roster. How do you plan to navigate that?**

**Edwards:** "I'm just going to come in and work. Just going to do my part. Do all I can do and just work. That's all you really can do when there's competition in the room, just work and show your film."

**Q: What is it that you bring to this team?**

**Edwards:** "I just feel like I'm a play maker, man. I feel like I can make plays with the ball in my hand. I can win 50/50 balls. I can help the team win."

**Q: What goes through your mind when you see a defender trying to tackle you?**

**Edwards:** "I just feel like it's the mindset that I play with that I won't let one person tackle me. Just trying to get as many yards as I can with the ball in my hand and try to score every time I touch the ball."

**Q: How's your foot healing and how do you think that injury impacted where you were drafted?**

**Edwards:** "I feel like the foot and the injury definitely played a part and probably slipped me a little bit in the draft. But I feel like everything worked out as God has planned. Obviously, everything worked out for the best."

**Q: Is there any particular part of your game that you wanted to show at the NFL Combine but weren't able to because you couldn't attend?**

**Edwards:** "I just wanted to show people what I could do in general. I felt like I was just kind of a slept-on prospect coming into the whole pre-draft thing. I felt like those things were going to help me kind of put my stuff in front of a lot of people. I didn't get an opportunity to do those things, but it still worked out for me."

**Q: What are your impressions of your new teammate WR Lynn Bowden Jr.?**

**Edwards:** "Oh man, he's a guy that kind of stands out. Runs the ball extremely hard. He plays with a lot of passion? You can tell he's committed to the game. I love the way he plays the game."

**Q: When during the process was it clear the Raiders were interested?**

**Edwards:** "After the Combine when the Zoom meetings started and things like that. I got on a call with them and was talking to [General Manager] Mike Mayock and [Head] Coach [Jon] Gruden and the whole staff. They seemed very interested in me and thought highly of me, so I thought they were pretty interested."



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**Q: Do you remember any of your matchups against your new teammate Trayvon Mullen?**

**Edwards:** “Trayvon Mullen was a really good player at Clemson. Every year going up against them we knew it was going to be a fight. They always had long corners, and he was one of them. They always pushed very well. I feel like he’s a really good player. I’m looking forward to going up against him in practice.”



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**Conference Call with Third-Round Pick (No. 100th Overall) LB Tanner Muse**

**Q: What do you see your role being?**

**Muse:** "I see myself being a full core special teamer, just a special teams war daddy and getting into linebacker sub packages. Being able to do just everything I can, but mainly just linebacker and special teamer."

**Q: How much did you talk to the Raiders throughout this process?**

**Muse:** "I didn't talk to them much at the Combine. I had a Zoom call about a week and a half ago with [Head] Coach [Jon] Gruden, [General Manager] Mr. [Mike] Mayock, and we had a really good conversation. Just talked ball and I felt really good about it. I think that really helped me in this process. That video chat went really well and then just talking to the guys. Clelin [Ferrell], he's one of my best friends, I've been talking to him through this and I've been training with Hunter Renfrow here and there, so it's been good. I've always been connected in some shape or form."

**Q: With Renfrow, Ferrell and Trayvon Mullen getting drafted last year, did you follow the Raiders pretty closely ?**

**Muse:** "Yeah, I always tried to keep up with them. Just to see their record and to make sure they were doing alright. Me and 'Cle', we have always stayed in touch. We're basically best friends. We came in together, we grinded it out together. He left a little earlier than me, but we ended up at the same destination, so super blessed to get back with those guys again: Hunter, Trayvon. Trayvon is one of my brothers as well. We've been together on the same side playing at Clemson so I'm really looking forward to seeing them boys again."

**Q: What were your expectations for the Draft? Where did you think you were going to go and what do you feel about where you went?**

**Muse:** "Yeah, I had a pretty good feeling with the Raiders just from that video call I had. That was one of my better ones. I thought I slipped into the third round and I really just felt like as a player teams were really going to give me a chance in the third round and my family really thought it. But realistically I thought I might have been more of a Day 3 guy just because there hasn't been a lot of hype around me, but I think Coach Gruden and Mr. Mayock really took to what I was putting on film and they knew what they were getting as a player and I'm super excited to come down and start playing."

**Q: What are your impressions of Henry Ruggs III and Bryan Edwards?**

**Muse:** "Bryan Edwards has always been a problem for us. We play them every year and it's almost like Alabama is one of our rivals as well playing them every other year. Super talented guys. There are always some guys we have to game plan for, so that's the biggest compliment I can give them is how much we have to game plan for certain guys and they were definitely two of them. So, they're super talented and I'm just blessed to be on the same field as them coming soon."



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**Q: Even though you played some safety in college, at what point did you get the indication that you'd probably be seen as a linebacker in the NFL? And did you start to train for that possibility?**

**Muse:** "We always knew at Clemson that the potential was going to be there but we just couldn't build enough depth at safety and it forced me to stay at the position and play until we could really gain some depth from the young guys and then towards the end of the season we got more guys to be able to play that position where I could come down at linebacker more. It's always been something I've been conscious about just talking with Coach (Dabo) Sweeney, a lot of the teams wanted to see me play there. So, it's always been something that I thought about and we've really been training for so the main thing is just going out there and showing that I can do it."

**Q: What are your thoughts on being part of the franchise's first season in Las Vegas?**

**Muse:** "I'm super excited. The stadium looks great. I can't wait to go see the inside of it. I'm just super blessed just to be a part of such a great organization. They've been one of the dream teams for a long time just the way they've always carried themselves through the years and the swag that they bring week in and week out. I'm just super blessed to be part of such a great organization."

**Q: Mayock said you knocked your Zoom call out of the park with the Raiders. How does one knock a Zoom meeting out of the park?**

**Muse:** "I think Coach Gruden does a good job of weeding out the guys that are about the football life...I mean his questions are very strategic, saying that I mean you just got to know your ball. You might not have the same terminology as other people, teams, things like that but you just got to know your ball. You got to know the schemes, leverages, coverages, things like that. It was more of a conversation, it wasn't like a test. I know they were testing me to see what I knew, but it was more of a conversation and if it's a conversation you know it's going in the right direction."



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**Day Three Press Conference with General Manager Mike Mayock**

**Opening Statement from General Manager Mike Mayock:** "This was a rollercoaster of a weekend; we had a blast. We feel like we got better this weekend and that obviously is the goal. Tough time nationally and internationally, and all our thoughts and prayers go out to the people around the world. Unique circumstances this year, so it was a little bit of a reflective time. I'm here to answer your questions and talk a little bit about the Raiders and our future."

**Q: You guys drafted John Simpson today and you signed three guards this offseason, what does that say about the future of Gabe Jackson?**

**Mayock:** "The future of Gabe Jackson? He's our starting right guard. We signed [Eric] Kush and we signed [Jordan] Devey, but both those guys can play all three interior positions. They're inside guys and I think Gabe Jackson is our starting right guard. That's exactly what it says."

**Q: Both of the players that you took today were expected to maybe go a little higher in the draft, were you surprised that they were there in the fourth round?**

**Mayock:** "Yeah, I went to bed last night with a plan to trade up - wasn't sure with who. We started calling teams last night and continued early this morning. We ended up getting the third pick in this round with Detroit and we really wanted to get that Clemson guard. He was a guy that we had on our board for yesterday, depending on how the board fell. We would have taken him in the third round. We kind of felt like he was going to go quickly. We were able to use our fifth-round pick to move up and get him. Then [Head Coach] Jon [Gruden] and I started talking about pick 139 which is the pick we got from New England yesterday. Jon asked me about Amik Robertson and I said there's no way he's going to get to pick 139. Boy, were we excited when he did. He's a competitive, tough kid and if he was two inches taller he would have gone yesterday. That's the only knock on him. He's a competitive, tough and smart kid. We were thrilled with the way day three went."

**Q: Is Robertson someone that can play outside in the slot? Where would you project him initially?**

**Mayock:** "Yeah, I think ultimately he looks like a nickel [back] to me. He played mostly outside at Louisiana Tech. I talked to his defensive coordinator this morning, Bob Diaco, who I've known for years. And Bob jumped up on the table for him both as a person and a player. I asked him the same questions to confirm what I saw on tape. He's an inside out guy. Bob said 'Yeah, you're not going to like his length outside but you're going to love his speed, toughness and competitiveness.' Ultimately to me, he's got the physical traits and toughness that you would love as a nickel in the NFL."

**Q: It seems like he has got pretty good ball skills. That's been an issue with the Raiders for a while – getting turnovers on interceptions and defending passes. Is that a strength of his?**

**Mayock:** "That's a fair point on both sides. He had 14 career interceptions. He's always around the football. He's an instinctual kid and he's not afraid to go make a play. I think that's underrated - he's





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looking to make plays. It's interesting because when he gets beat occasionally, it's because he's trying to make plays. We need to get much better at taking the football away on defense. This is the kind of kid who thrives on that. So, I think that's been a point of focus."

**Q: With no fifth, sixth or seventh round picks and no offseason program this year, was this a year where it was going to be harder for lower round picks to make the team?**

**Mayock:** "Another good question. We didn't have any sixth or seventh round picks heading into this weekend and one of our concerns was depending on what happens with the pandemic, we think there's a pretty good chance we're not going to see our rookies in person until maybe training camp. If that's the case, you better make sure your rookies are smart, hard-working and accountable because they're going to have a shortened period of time to make the team. We had seven of the first 139 picks and that was a little bit of the thought process about not trying to trade down out of 139. We had some offers to move out of there and we wanted Robertson if he was there. The further down you get in the draft, the more concerns we had about a kid being able to compete, realistically compete to make the roster."

**Q: You targeted wideout and cornerback, how do you feel about what you got in the draft?**

**Mayock:** "We went into draft knowing we had to get better at wideout. I think everyone in league knew it, even the causal fans knew it. We feel like we addressed the wide receiver position in two different and dynamic ways. [Henry] Ruggs III flies. You all know that – fastest player in draft. We think he changes what we do offensively. [Bryan] Edwards is the opposite, big, physical, tough. We love the physicality he brings. We feel we've brought in two distinctly different receivers. I keep saying I trust in [Head Coach] Jon Gruden and what he does on offense. He knows how to use guys and put them in the best position to make plays. On defense, we think [Damon] Arnette is one of the toughest kids in the draft at any position. You find a corner with his instincts and toughness. We love him. We thought he was a special football player. We think he'll come in day he's going to compete. We expect him to compete for a starting job. We talked about [Amik] Robertson already today. Inside or outside it's another competitor, another guy [assistant head coach/special teams coordinator] Rich Bisaccia is going to love him on special teams. We expect all of these guys to come in and compete on day one."

**Q: You begin offseason virtual OTAs on Monday, can you give us an idea of what that looks like and do you feel you can get a lot of work done even with the restrictions in place?**

**Mayock:** "It's tough. The rookies can't even start on Monday. They have to wait for the virtual rookie minicamp in May. So it makes it even more difficult. The one thing I learned over last month or six weeks or whatever it's been, I couldn't believe how creative our coaches got with our Zoom presentations to the college players. I guarantee you they bring the same creativity to our Raider players as we go through the virtual. It's going to be learning more than anything. I know our coaches have put in a lot of time and effort. It's not unlike the kindergarten teachers and the third grade teachers and everyone around the country trying to put their best foot forward to teach people from home. That's what I stress



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with all the veterans I talk to and every single rookie we drafted. Once we could get them integrated into our virtual program, we expect 100 percent attention. They better be ready to hit the ground running whenever we're allowed to."

**Q: With the moves you've made in free agency and now the draft, do you feel you've closed the gap at all with the Chiefs.**

**Mayock:** "That's a loaded question, that's a tough question. They're the World Champs. I've known Andy Reid for a lot of years. Watching the way he and Brett Veach approach the draft, all they do is get faster. They drafted that great running back from LSU then they drafted Willie Gay, the linebacker I love. They keep getting faster and keep raising the raise bar. I don't know the answer to that just yet. We feel like we got better in free agency and I know we feel like we got better in the draft. Nobody is going know how much or if at all until we get out on the field and compete. That's the thing I love about it. I cannot wait, so many of our guys are texting me and calling me. They miss the fact they won't be there on Monday. That's what I love about our group of guys."

**Q: Have you had a chance to talk to Derek Carr yet? He has some nice new toys to play with, as does Coach Gruden. Any idea or any feedback from him on what you guys were able to do?**

**Mayock:** "We've been texting back and forth over the weekend. It started with Ruggs III pick. He doesn't know who we're picking. I got about five texts with 'W-O-W-!'. He was just fired up with that pick. Then we get [Bryan] Edwards and [Lynn] Bowden [Jr.], I don't even know how to make emojis. I was just looking at all these emojis like 'I guess he's happy, that looks good'. Bottom line, what I said last night is what we're trying to do is get more dynamic on offense and I think that's what Derek recognizes as well."

**Q: You lean towards trusting your evaluation rather than the consensus on rounds or where a player is graded. What does it take to constantly take that approach going into the draft?**

**Mayock:** "It's interesting, because I've spent so many years watching the other GM's do it, 18 years watching 32 teams draft. I got close to a lot of different people around the league. I have a lot of respect for a lot of people. I texted good friend of mine yesterday who is a GM and said to him, 'I love your draft. You stay patient every year and you trust your board.' It sounds really simple, but it's so frickin' hard to do. That's what they've done for years and that's what Jon and I have been talking about ever since I've been here. We're joined together at the hip. Let's be patient, let's trust board. We've done all the work. We really don't care what anybody outside our building thinks. We have one goal and that's winning the Super Bowl. At the end of the day, nothing else matters. I think Jon and I have stayed consistent and we've had a lot of fun doing it too."



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**Conference Call with Fourth-Round Pick (No. 109th Overall) G John Simpson**

**Q: You just became the fifth Clemson player the Raiders have taken in the draft in the last two years, at some point did you almost figure you were going to go to the Raiders?**

**Simpson:** "I never really had an idea of where I was going. I talked to the [Raiders] General Manager [Mike Mayock] a week before the draft, so it kind of made me comfortable that I would get drafted. To know that I'm going to the Raiders is really huge."

**Q: Were there any of the other Clemson players on the Raiders that you were friends with that you're looking forward to reconnecting with?**

**Simpson:** "Oh yeah, all those guys. [Trayvon] Mullen, 'Cle' [Clelin Ferrell], Tanner [Muse], Hunter [Renfrow], and all those guys. We're all like brothers. It's a bond that you can't break."

**Q: Have you had a chance to talk to Head Coach Jon Gruden and Mayock? And what kind of role do they have for you in the early stages?**

**Simpson:** "Right now, I'm going to go in there and compete as much as I can. I'm not really sure what role I'm going to serve, but whatever it is I'm going to try and do it and do my best."

**Q: Do you have a preference between left or right guard?**

**Simpson:** "Preferably, I'd like to stay on the left side, but it doesn't really matter to me. I've been practicing coming out of my right-handed stance. I'm trying to be as versatile as I can."

**Q: Do you think playing at a high level at Clemson and playing in the kind of games that you played in is going to help transition to the next level?**

**Simpson:** "I think that plays a part in it. I don't think that's going to do much, but I definitely think it plays a part. I think where it comes from the most is preparation and paying attention to details. At the next level everyone is just as good as you or even better, so you have to be prepared."

**Q: How do you think things went overall in terms of you having to communicate with general managers and coaches and using Zoom?**

**Simpson:** "I thought it was pretty good. It went as smooth as it could. I'm sure it was different. I don't really know how it was before. I know we would have to go visit them, but I thought it went really smooth. A lot of things got accomplished without having to go anywhere."

**Q: We're in the fourth round here and I think you're the third guard taken in this draft. Does that surprise you? Do you think the position is a little undervalued?**

**Simpson:** "I don't think that it's undervalued. A lot of teams draft a lot of tackles and move those guys into guard." (remainder of response inaudible)



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**Q: What sort of things are you already aware of from college to pro that you need to work on? And what things have you started working on to speed up your footwork?**

**Simpson:** "I do a lot of drills. I do a lot of sand work now. I'm working in the sandpit using ladders and change of directions drills, things like that. I realize that has been one of my downfalls. I'm also working on trying to get my hands better. I'm trying to use my hands before I make contact instead of using my helmet. Just things like that I'm trying to do every day to get better."

**Q: Have you found that even in quarantine all over the place, there's a lot less to do? Are you able to go out and get some training in at a private facility? And has it made it harder or maybe a little easier because there's nothing else to do besides train for yourself?**

**Simpson:** "It's definitely been easier, I think. Like you said, there's nothing to do. Me and my roommates go to this gym around the corner from our house and they have everything that we need. We can get all our workouts in there and then we can go to the facility and use the sandpit. We can get our workout in there as well."



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**Conference Call with Fourth-Round Pick (No. 139th Overall) CB Amik Robertson**

**Q: Did you have an inkling the Raiders were interested in you? Did you have any prior relationship with them leading up to the draft?**

**Robertson:** "I did, but I didn't. I saw a lot of teams pass up on me. I was getting discouraged. [safety Johnathan] Abram and I have great relationship. I figured they needed a guy that can force turnovers, help Abram on the back end. It was a surprise, but I'm relieved that they believed in me and I told them that they're not making a mistake."

**Q: You sent out a tweet that said you have a point to prove. What point do you have to prove?**

**Robertson:** "I want to prove that Raider Nation didn't make a mistake. They got the best DB in this class. Ballhawk, corner, nickel, safety, whatever – the best hybrid in the class that can force turnovers and get ball back to the offense."

**Q: General Manager Mike Mayock made point of saying this team is trying to catch the Kansas City Chiefs and build a team similar to it with versatility and speed. How do you fit into that equation?**

**Robertson:** "I fit in perfectly. I'm a big versatile player. Wherever they put me, I'm going to make an impact, easy. If that's corner, nickel safety, special teams too. If they want me to slide in and match up with Tyreek Hill, that's what I'll do."

**Q: A lot of analysts had you as the best slot corner in this draft, why do you think you dropped to 4th round?**

**Robertson:** "I think, in my opinion, everyone didn't know if I'm healthy or not. I did have surgery on groin. I had surgery on my groin January 17th and I was cleared by Dr. Meyers a couple days before combine, so I couldn't compete. I guess people thought that I was still hurt. I'm 120 percent."

**Q: How do you know Abram, how did you get your relationship?**

**Robertson:** "He's signed with my agent, so we're every close. We also played against each other in college and I saw him fly around the field. He played similar, a bigger me. He's similar to me. I get the ball more, I get hands on ball more than him. At the end of day, he's a guy I looked up to throughout this whole process. I took notes from him."

**Q: Do you feel like you've been overlooked because of your size despite the fact that there's so much tape of you playing very well against bigger wideouts?**

**Robertson:** "No doubt. I've been doubted my whole life. On the field, I'm going to prove to the world why I belong. I'm excited and ready to work. Raider Nation did not make mistake on me. When time passes, they'll see why."



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**Q: You said Abram is like a bigger you, would you say he's a guy you would model your NFL game after or is that someone else?**

**Robertson:** "I would say probably the mental part of game, yeah. The way he's a truck on the field. He's a guy that flies around. He's not scared to hit. As far as modeling my game, I'd say I probably model my game after the Honey Badger [Tyrann Mathieu]."

**Q: Have you been to Las Vegas before and how excited are you to start the Raiders history here.**

**Robertson:** "I've never been to Las Vegas. Everything happens for a reason. I just got off the phone with John Abram. We're on the same page. I'm ready to work. Not only get better as individual but get better as a teammate. I'm ready to win."