



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

### **Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing**

#### **Q: What stood out about Jared Cook's route running on the late play in Thursday's game?**

**Coach Downing:** "It was designed to have a little bit better spacing than we had. We wound up with a couple of guys in the same spot that came from a little bit of a defensive re-route and then a little bit of an exaggerated seam release. Jared has that size and that go-get-it ability where he has that big catch radius to him. It was a good opportunity to throw an opportunity ball if you will or a 50/50 ball to him and let him come down and make a play for us. We've been saying for a long time, that's why he's here. He has great playmaking ability and he certainly made a play to help us win that game."

#### **Q: Will the dynamics of the run game change at all without Marshawn Lynch?**

**Coach Downing:** "Not necessarily. There's schematic things that we'll do a little bit different. I won't get into specifics with that, but we feel very good about those other two backs and their ability to run a multitude of schemes. There's nothing that we say, 'Oh, we can't run them because they're in the game.' Or, 'Man, if we had Marshawn, we would've run this.' It's just a matter of getting those guys going and figuring out what they're familiar with and comfortable with."

#### **Q: Did you see the video of Lynch practicing against his high school team?**

**Coach Downing:** "No. Somebody was saying about it walking out to practice. To be honest with you, I'm so focused on this situational Thursday. We have third down, red zone, all of that going in today. I was dialed in on Buffalo."

#### **Q: Was there a different approach with Amari Cooper last week?**

**Coach Downing:** "Not really. We moved him around a little bit, which we've done previously in the season. We had more opportunities to empty the call sheet a little bit more. Converting some of those first and second downs gave us an opportunity to call more plays. I think we had 83 plays on our grade sheet. I think it came out to 73, 72 on the official stats. Certainly, a lot more than we have been getting. Gives you a chance to call some more things. Then when you can call some more things, you can highlight him a little bit more. He made a couple of great plays and was very opportunistic with the opportunities that he's had. I know that 19 targets shows up as like, 'Wow, that's drastically different than the rest of the season.' But it was not a considerate effort to force feed him. It was all within the scheme."

#### **Q: Do you like seeing that Lynch is practicing while he's away?**

**Coach Downing:** "You know, like I said, I haven't seen the video. I don't really know what it was. I know that he loves football and he's a football junkie. I wouldn't expect anything different. We're excited to go put on a good showing with Buffalo and meet up with him after that."

#### **Q: What do you think of the Bills defense?**

**Coach Downing:** "Very, very well coached. They don't make a lot of mistakes and they're very opportunistic. I think they're plus-10 in the turnover ratio this year so far. It's because they are where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. We know that we need to protect the football. We need to be on point with our field landmarks that we were talking about earlier and timing in the passing game. They're a good team up front. A couple of those guys are still there from when I was there. I know they're hard workers and they're going to be rallying to the football and finishing plays. We need to protect the ball and we need to be assignment sound to be able to put on a good showing against them."

#### **Q: What have you seen from Micah Hyde?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, I've played against him a number of times back to when he was in Green Bay and I was with the Lions. He's a very talented player. He's a savvy guy. He has good vision on the quarterback and he has good ball skills. That paired with him being a coverage guy in background and now playing safety, he's a guy that can ball hawk



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a little bit. You have to be careful about those opportunity balls in his direction. You have to be on point with your ball placement and anything you're throwing downfield."

**Q: There were a couple of plays late in Thursday's game where guys got grouped together. Was that by design?**

**Coach Downing:** "No, that's what I was alluding to earlier with the Jared play. We had guys get re-routed a little bit or pushed off their track a little bit. Or maybe take a path of less resistance on their vertical which wound up kind of crossing wires a little bit. We'll get that cleaned up and be on point from here on out."

**Q: In what ways can you prepare for the wet weather?**

**Coach Downing:** "Every once in a while, even if there's not bad weather forecasted, we'll do some wet ball drills and do some things with the receivers to make sure that we're just used to the ball being a little bit wet. It's one of those things that you show up on game day and kind of deal with the conditions that are there. When you believe in your abilities, the elements, if you will, don't affect it too much. We did some wet ball drills today and we do them all the time. I'm pretty confident in our ability operate."

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

**Q: What goes on with NaVorro Bowman and you pre-snap with him having the green dot and earpiece?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, NaVorro is a seasoned veteran. He's an All-Pro a few times over, so he understands the game. It's just a matter of him getting our terminology, which for him has been no problem. And to be able to talk to him, a linebacker who understands what we're talking about, and you can see the type of result that you get – he's smooth, he's smart, he's a playmaker. He brings a calmness to the huddle that we haven't seen and we're very happy that he's on our team."

**Q: Did you or any other coach spend a lot of time with Bowman one-on-one last week to get him ready?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Oh, he and the linebacker coach, Sal [Sunseri], spent a lot of time together in the off times before work, after work, a lot of homework. He was dedicating himself. He was obsessed with playing and playing every down. We came into it trying to give him just little pieces of the meal and he wanted the whole feast, he wanted the whole plate. He was prepared, he was ready, he wanted it. His performance was just a result of the way he prepared during the week."

**Q: With it being his first week last week, were you more-so thinking to just get him around 10-20 snaps?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, again, he's a seasoned veteran. He's an All-Pro who's been playing at a high level for a long time. You can't put any limits on a man like that who has a high opinion of himself, a high opinion of his game and he's played well. He's been considered the best linebacker for a while. To have him on our team and to see it first hand and to have the younger players see that example of that's what it takes, that's what it looks like and to get the type of results he did is very important for our young guys. Because we have a lot of young people in that position."

**Q: What's the emotional reaction to Keith McGill II's play?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, you have to keep coaching, you have to keep teaching, obviously. We have to teach him how to catch better, you know? But Keith worked really hard to get himself back on the field. He worked really hard to get himself in that position and it's about making plays. It's one thing to study it, it's one thing to practice it, it's one thing to actually be on the field, it's another thing to go up and make the play. It's a process that has to be done and I think that younger players or players who haven't played a whole lot of football, those things, it's not an easy game. It's very difficult to put it all together; it's hard. That's where he is in that position – he has to put it all together. Now, finally, make the play to finish the whole thing off. He didn't do that, obviously. *(laughter)*"



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**Q: Were the two big stops late in the game validation regarding your faith in this defense?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "One thing in our fabric, we've always played really hard. We've always finished really well and I think that the guys take a lot of pride in their effort in stopping in the high two-minute type part of the game. I think that's something that we've always done. We've been inconsistent in some areas, consistent in some areas, but that's an area that we've always been really consistent in – being really strong, finishing strong, making plays when we have to. And I think that a game like that and really looking at the positives – 'Hey guys, this is who you are. This is the fabric of who we are.' That's something that is more consistent."

**Q: Is that the next step?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Right, that has to be the next step. For us to go on a run, for us to make this season what it's supposed to be, it has to be a consistent high-level urgency the way they felt at that game. Because what happened in [Los Angeles] was similar – we had to stop them at the end and we didn't. And they didn't want that to happen again. So we go into the very next week, three minutes left, you have to make a stop... Hey, it's on the defense and let's go and make the play. And they did it separate times."

**Q: When you see a guy like TJ Carrie at cornerback leading the team in tackles, is that indicative of teams moving the ball down the field? Would you like to see a guy up front leading the team instead?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, it just means they're throwing the ball a lot. That's a lot of throws. There's a lot of passes, that's all that means."

**Q: What stands out to you with regards to Carrie being a very cerebral player?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, TJ has been outstanding. He's been consistent, he's been one of our high-level, very good players, somebody you can really depend on. He's the type of guy that's a professional. You know what you're going to get every day. He comes to work, to practice, to study, to ask the right questions, to learn – he's a pro. Again, we're very glad he's on our team. We need a lot of pros. If we had a team full of TJ's, we'd be pretty good."

**Q: What kind of challenges does Tyrod Taylor present?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well, the obvious. We played him last year and it's obvious, he's like [LeSean] McCoy playing quarterback. He's mobile, he's elusive, he's very good with the ball in hands. He can run it, he can throw it, he can run the run, he can throw. He's smart and he's a gamer. He's certainly a really good football player. It's going to be a team effort to stop him and contain McCoy. We're up for the challenge."

**Q: Is the danger of using the spy on him that he may run by the guy?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "I'm not spy like... What's a spy? *(laughter)*"

**Q: Like someone that's assigned to him?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "I'm not going to get into game specifics."

**Q: I'm saying in general. Is the danger of using someone to track him, is he too fast that it may work against that strategy?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "I'm not going to talk any specifics. I don't know."

**Q: Despite having zero interceptions this season, do you see your guys in position to make some of those types of plays?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Oh yeah, you can go to a few plays. We played the Redskins, the ball was in the air, 50/50 ball on [David] Amerson. Reggie [Nelson] dropped one. There was a couple of 50/50 balls against the Jets where the guy has to go up and make the play. The ball isn't just going to come to you. You have to go up and get it. You have to want it. You have to practice it. You have to play make it. You have to go up and make the play on it. We spend a lot of hours here. We get here really early in the morning. We stay here really late at night. Really getting our players in position to make plays and to talk to them and to teach them. Get them in the right plan. Once we get to the field,



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it's about all that being instinctive and making plays on the ball. Something that has been very consistent for us over the years is getting after the ball and getting the turnovers. It hasn't happened yet. It's going to happen. It's our fabric. It's who we are. It's a matter of us continuing, emphasizing, working it, making it important. It's going to come. We know it's coming. It's just a matter of we don't want to wait any longer. Let's do it now."

**Q: I don't believe Khalil Mack went back to Buffalo to train this past offseason. Was there anything in particular that you guys wanted him to focus on this past offseason?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well Khalil, I'm not sure where he works out in the offseason. You'll have to talk to him about that. But Khalil is, again, a high-level player. Just like we talked about NaVorro Bowman. They understand and they study and they watch other players. They are always trying to get better and trying to find different ways to get an edge. He's that type of guy that has that extra intangible to always trying to improve and get better. Some guys you worry about and some guys you don't worry about. He's one of those guys you don't worry about."

**Q: How are interceptions emphasized on a day like today?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "Well it's talked about, it's shown on film. It's emphasized on the field. We go to the field where we have to get three turnovers today. We have to get so many tips on the ball. Different drills, turnover circuits that we may or may not do. It's just an emphasis on the ball and how important it is. There's stats out there to show you win a lot of ball games if you get one turnover. Your percentages are higher when you get two turnovers in a game. Those things are really important to our winning. Winning, everybody likes to win. We need to continue to stack these wins together. To get those wins that we want, getting that ball is going to be a big part of it. So, turnovers are greatly emphasized."

**Q: What elements does Deonte Thompson add to the Bills' offense?**

**Coach Norton, Jr.:** "He's highly targeted. A good player. A guy that the quarterback likes. We're up to the challenge. We're up to the challenge to cover him."