



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Raiders Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: "I'll just hit the obvious question on Kenny [Norton, Jr.] since I haven't seen you guys. I just felt that a change was needed. It wasn't easy to do. In fact, it was very difficult to do. I really felt like I needed to shake things up. We couldn't continue doing what we've been doing to this point. I made the call. The whole idea is to change what we're doing, to make sure that... What I'm looking for at the end of the day is to play fast on defense. We weren't playing fast enough. We weren't playing confident enough. That decision was made. It's always what's in the best interest of the team and nothing else. I had to put personal feelings aside. With that, we're excited about our preparation getting ready for Denver. I think both of these teams have gone through the first 10 games a little disappointed. I think both teams are feeling similarly. I think when you look at the biggest indicator, to me, it's the turnover ratio. Last year we were plus 10 at this point. Right now, we're minus nine. Nineteen turnover differential that is probably the biggest indicator about winning and losing in the National Football League. The other area that we've got to improve on, a tangible area that we've got to be better at these last six games, is third down. We have to get off the field on third down. The result is, we're not getting enough opportunities offensively due to ineffectiveness defensively. We've got to get the ball back for the offense. We've got to force turnovers, get off the field on third down. That's what it is. That's our charge and we've got to get it done. Looking at the Broncos, really good football team that's had some struggles. Their defense is playing outstanding. Their offense is running the ball just about as well as anybody out there. They're making a change at quarterback and we're getting ourselves ready to go against Paxton Lynch. Questions?"

Q: You mentioned on Monday that a team can't change greatly what they're doing to do with regards to Bill Musgrave coming in at offensive coordinator for the Broncos. How is that different defensively for you guys?

Coach Del Rio: "I think similarly, you're not going to reinvent the playbook after 10 weeks, 11 weeks. They'll be some things that Bill likes that he'll get to. They'll be some things that 'Pags' [John Pagano] likes that he'll get to. There's no way that either team is going to completely reinvent their playbook."

Q: What do you have to do to get the team to play fast?

Coach Del Rio: "Well we're going to focus on the process. I think one thing that's maybe gotten away is the focus on winning. We need to win, we need to win, we need to win. Yeah, everybody needs to win. Everybody wants to win. For me, it's about the process. I've given you a shortened version in the past: recover, prepare, compete. That's the short version, how you sum it up. When you dig in to what that means, what does that mean when you're recovering? The detail of what you're doing. What does that mean in your preparation? How are we bringing to life the things we're doing? The detail in the meetings, the detail on the practice field, the accountability, the principles that we believe in. Those are the things you have to fight for. When you do those things and you build your confidence, you play fast. I've been in this league a long time. I've been a part of some great defenses and one common denominator is that they play fast. They play fast. I want to see us play fast."

Q: How much of that is on the players though? Are the players doing their part?

Coach Del Rio: "It's always shared. A change was made, obviously. We all share it, all of us, starting with me. It's coaches and players, it's a team game. We're all in it together. Nobody is coming to help us."

Q: In your experience, does a change put a spark in the players?

Coach Del Rio: "Listen, I know one thing: Nobody should feel comfortable because what I've been watching is not good enough. Nobody should feel comfortable."

Q: Having a defensive background like you do, does that make the move easier?

Coach Del Rio: "There's nothing easy about it. It's one of the toughest things to do, in this position, is to make these kinds of decisions. There's nothing easy about it."



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Q: Do you think guys have been feeling too comfortable? Has that been an issue?

Coach Del Rio: "I'm not speaking in code, I am just making a statement. I think it's clear that I want to see better."

Q: The offense has been impacted by some of the defensive shortcomings...

Coach Del Rio: "It's a team game. It's a team game. We're impacted by each other's performances, good and bad. All three phases to what the team is about. Players and coaches are involved in all three phases. I talk about complementary football and I gave the illustration the other day. I think it was misunderstood. I gave the illustration of the way New England closed the half. If you go back and look at last year how many times we did that; closed the half scoring, get the ball back to start the second half and score again. So, closing the half well and deferring and getting the ball, that's how you blow somebody out. That's how you create that 10-, 14-point swing. Those are the kinds of things that, as far as situational awareness, that we need to be on top of and handle it."

Q: What signs of encouragement have you seen from the offense despite the lack of total plays run?

Coach Del Rio: "I think for us I'd rather spend less time reflecting on the last 10 weeks and more time focusing on the next six, starting with this one. We've got a really good defense coming in, offense has its hands full. It's a really good group and they're very talented. They're playing really well. So, we're just dig in on the preparation."

Q: You go the ball inside the opponents' 40-yard line 20 times last year. This year, it's only been four times. Are turnovers, complementary with everything?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, it's all the things that I've just been talking about: getting off on third down, creating turnovers, complementary football, special teams, getting the return or whatever it is. So, there's a lot of different ways to create that field position that an offense loves to have and take full advantage of. That's why I say, it's not as simple as you might think. You want to have an easy fix, it just doesn't work that way."

Q: What kind of dynamic does Paxton Lynch represent?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, we know he's a big, athletic guy. Obviously, they're are putting together a package where he'll be most comfortable. They've been running the ball very well. Obviously, any quarterback appreciates a good run game. So, clearly that will be a point of emphasis for us."

Q: Does Bill Musgrave being there help you understand how he deals with young quarterbacks?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, I think for me, it's about preparing for their football team. Certainly, 'Pags' has gone against Bill before, understands some of the things that he likes. And then looking at what they do, their system and the players they have now."

Q: Is the lack of explosiveness in punt returns more of a "block away" type of thing?

Coach Del Rio: "Quite a bit. In our return game, that's one of the things that we talk about – 'Hey, he's just a block away.' A block away means you didn't get it done. But the execution in that phase can be better, the punt return part. I think kickoff returns we've been pretty solid. I think [Cordarrelle Patterson] C.P. is a real threat and has done a pretty solid job with it. We just need to get Jalen [Richard] some more blocks and get him going."

Q: Do you view John Pagano as this defense's play caller beyond this season?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I do. That is more of a question for after the season, but you asked it. Yes, I do."

Q: Bruce Irvin didn't seem too happy with the move yesterday. How do you handle guys who may not agree with your decision to let Norton, Jr. go?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I don't try and handle them. I think the biggest thing is to understand the relationship, respect that, give him a little space and then at the end of the day, we're going to get on with our work. But, I'm human. It wasn't easy for me either."



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Q: What's holding Jihad Ward and Shilique Calhoun back from playing?

Coach Del Rio: "Well, you'd certainly like to have them heavily involved, but you get what you earn. They haven't earned it to this point."

Q: How much of that is it about special teams regarding Calhoun?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, in order to be up, he's got to be counted on to help us on defense or special teams. That's just part of it, it's a numbers game. Anybody on our squad, we'd love to have them up. We're going to make choices that we feel give us the best opportunity to be good in all three phases."

Raiders QB Derek Carr

Q: How do you handle the mood of the team today as one of the leaders of this group?

Carr: "You're talking about coach, right? It's always tough. I go back to whether it's someone getting traded or released or signed off the practice squad. A coach being let go and things like that, it's always hard. It's always hard because we put so much work in together. We all genuinely care about each other just as people. At least we do here. I talked to coach Norton. Texted him. Let him know how thankful I was for our time together and all those things. He sounded great. He sounded good. Obviously as a competitor nobody wants that to happen, but we just know that's how this business is sometimes. He's moving forward. We're moving forward. But anytime you lose someone who's part of your family for so long, it always stings a little bit."

Q: Did you address it with the other guys yet?

Carr: "Everyone finds out and you're like, 'Oh man. You good?' Then the guys are like, 'Yeah, I'm good.' It's one of those things where your emotion is like, 'Dang, it sucks.' But we have to move on. It's just like when one of your best friends gets released or gets traded or anything like that. It's, 'Dang bro. Love you man.' You've got to move on, I have to move on kind of a deal. That's how this league works. It's unfortunate, but it's a part of it."

Q: Is there an advantage for Bill Musgrave with him knowing this defense a little bit?

Carr: "I don't know. Coach Pagano and coach Musgrave have obviously gone against each other, so that's familiar for both of them I guess. It's just completely different jerseys and things like that. It's funny, again, how this league does things. Coach Musgrave is one of the smartest not only football coach but people I've ever been around. He knows how to game plan and call plays. I'm sure that he'll have his guys ready to play."

Q: They have one of the top five defenses in the league. Is that going to be a challenge?

Carr: "Yes. Every time. It is very familiar with these guys. As I continue to get up in my years, I guess I begin to get more familiar with certain teams, especially the three that I know really well. These guys are coming into our place this time. They beat us last time. Had a close game. I wasn't able to finish the game. I'm definitely excited to play against them again."

Q: What do you see different from the Broncos?

Carr: "You know what on defense, because I don't see their offense, on defense they're playing great. They're playing really good football. Top five in the rush. Top five in the pass, as always. That seems like a familiar saying when we talk about these guys, but the challenge is always there. I like our plan. I'm excited to go compete against them."

Q: Nobody has run away with this league and you guys have six games left.

Carr: "How crazy is that? Again, this will be the third time I've said it how crazy is this league that we haven't been able to do exactly what we wanted, and we're still right there. What is it? A game and a half out of the wild card, two games out of the division? When we get to play K.C. another time. That's down the road, but you sit there and you look. Everything that we want, everything that we planned and put out as a goal is out there for us. If we can



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just get hot and get on a run, I'm sure the bandwagon will get full again and all those things. It's definitely possible. It's definitely possible. There's no doubt in or mind that we can do it, but we have to go out there and do it."

Q: When the Raiders made the change at offensive coordinator, they mentioned how close you and Todd Downing were, which could have alluded to you not having a strong relationship with Musgrave. How would you sum up what Musgrave did for you in his time here?

Carr: "Obviously, I went to two Pro Bowls with coach Musgrave. Like I said, he's one of the smartest people I've ever been around. Every time I see him I give him a big hug. When we went and played at Denver, I went straight to him, gave him a hug, talked to him, asked him how his boys were doing. That's definitely the farthest thing from the truth that me and coach Musgrave didn't like each other."

Q: How can it impact the offense when the snap count is down?

Carr: "It works both ways. If we get a three-and-out, we hurt our defense. If there's a penalty or something crazy on defense, it gives us less chances. This is a team game. We understand that. We have good leadership that teaches us how this game works. We just understand that hey, sometimes it's like that. Sometimes you're not going to get as many chances. That's on us as an offense that with the fewer chances that we're getting, we have to score. We have to be more efficient. There's a lot of games, if you watch during Sunday's that three-and-out, three-and-out, three-and-out, three-and-out. Oh, touchdown. Oh, touchdown. Now, oh, 21-0. But you did go three-and-out a whole bunch of times before that. There's a lot of give and take that goes with that. We need to hold up our end of it as an offense. That's what I'm concerned about. When we get a chance to score, we have to go do it. Just talking to our guys on the other side, they tell us, 'Man, we got your back.' Just like we tell them we got their back. It's just one of those things that it works together. Like I said, stats sometimes are misleading because of a lot of different things."

Q: You haven't really had any short field drives this season. How much does that affect the offense?

Carr: "Right, it hurts stats. That's about it. Easy touchdowns and things like that, as a team we just know, 'Hey, if we're not going to have short field, we have to go down and make a long drive.' You have to be more efficient because it takes obviously more times than not more plays to get down there and score. That's what we're concerned about. Our defense is working their tail off. I know that those turnovers come in bunches. So, as soon as those start coming, which they're working really hard and they're getting them in practice, so it's only a matter of time. When they start getting them, which they well, then we can hopefully capitalize when we get those short fields."

Q: Did the offense change too much from last year?

Carr: "No. Again a lot of those stats have to do with total yards and those kinds of things like that. It all works together. There's not, honestly tweak-wise, there's not a lot of tweaks. Game plan wise and things, we do things a little different. We call things differently now obviously because he's in the division. But route concept-wise and things like that, we do a lot of the same similar stuff. Any time there's a change, a coach is always going to have their tweaks. It doesn't matter. Coach Musgrave going there, he's going to tweak a couple of things this week how he does things. it just kind of works that way, but I would say for the most part, it's been kind of the same."

Q: So in looking at why the offense hasn't been performing as well, that would not be one of the reasons?

Carr: "Absolutely not. Nope."



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Broncos Head Coach Vance Joseph Conference Call

Q: Can you talk about your choice switch up offensive coordinators?

Coach Joseph: "I'll start by saying this: My first call after accepting this job was to Mike McCoy. Mike McCoy is a good friend of mine and a great football coach. He had many options and he chose to come to Denver, so that wasn't an easy decision to let Mike go. Unfortunately, we've lost six in a row and we've had 17 turnovers in six weeks. It hasn't gotten better for us as far as playing a cleaner brand of offensive football. I thought it was the right change for our staff and for our players to have a chance to play a cleaner brand of football. But again, that being said, changing Mike, it wasn't all on Mike. Obviously, when that change happens, you have to coach and you have to play better. If we would have done that around him, he probably would've still been here. But ultimately as the coordinator, it falls directly on your shoulders how the offense performs and the turnovers, we just couldn't overcome them the last six weeks and that's been one of the main reasons why we haven't won football games."

Q: How much do you lean on Bill Musgrave with his familiarity with the Raiders?

Coach Joseph: "We've played those guys already. Obviously, you play in the same division, so the players know the players so it's just business as usual this week with Billy [Musgrave] calling the plays. I'm excited for him to have a chance to put his spin on the offense. I'm excited for Paxton Lynch to have a chance to go out there and compete at the highest level. I'm looking forward to Sunday's football game."

Q: How does the Raiders' change at defensive coordinator change your preparation?

Coach Joseph: "Well, obviously John [Pagano] is going to call it different than Ken [Norton, Jr.], but the overall scheme can't change that much. John has been there for 10 weeks obviously and OTAs and training camp. I would assume that John has already put some of his spin on defense. Now how he calls it, I can't tell you. It's going to be a guess, but I'm assuming the overall structural change... And again, offensively, we have rules, we have certain reads and keys that we key, so whatever he calls, I'm expecting our guys to play a cleaner brand of football."

Q: Will you be looking back at Chargers games from last year to try and identify tendencies?

Coach Joseph: "Absolutely. You always track the coordinator's history. It's no different than playing a guy Week 1 when you don't have any live game information on a guy, so you just track his history. Absolutely, we'll go back to San Diego and kind of get John's calling patterns because every coordinator has them. We'll do that, absolutely. Again, we're looking forward to playing a cleaner brand of football and taking care of our responsibility first before we can worry about the Raiders."

Q: What are Bill Musgrave's strengths as a coordinator?

Coach Joseph: "His communication skills, coaching the young quarterback. Obviously, he's done it over the years and even having a guy you've got there with [Derek] Carr, watching him work with Carr and watching how Carr has grown, I think he's got the right experience to build the system for a young quarterback so that he can be successful and to allow him to have completion passes and allow him to have plays where he can bail himself out when things get a little sticky. Again, that's why we hired Bill Musgrave because of his experience working with young quarterbacks. We've got two young quarterbacks here along with Brock [Osweiler], who is also a young quarterback, so he's been great with the quarterbacks as far as explaining the game, teaching the game of how to play NFL quarterback."

Q: Why was this the time to start Paxton Lynch?

Coach Joseph: "It's been a six-game losing streak and we've turned the ball over 17 times. I thought with the coordinator change going to Billy and where we are as an offense, it was the perfect time. Paxton just got back about three weeks ago so he's totally healthy now, so I thought it was the perfect time to insert Paxton. Again, he was the number two coming out of camp and he got injured. If Paxton wasn't injured, he would have been probably in when Brock inserted, so I think it's just time. He's a first-round pick. He's got talent, so it's going to be fun to see where he's at and also have a chance to win a football game on Sunday."



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Q: Did the Raiders' defense play into the decision at all, thinking that maybe this would be a good first game for Paxton Lynch?

Coach Joseph: "No, I didn't consider that at all. I was more concerned about our football team and where we are. That's why I chose Paxton to play this week. That had no consideration."