



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio

Opening Statement: “Looking forward to the matchup. San Diego is coming in, divisional team, a team that has been ahead... At each of the two-minute warnings in the fourth quarter, they’ve had a lead. This is a team that has jumped on people. They’ve been way out in front in the first half, I think, 80-30 up on people. It’s a good football team, well coached. I have a lot of respect for [Chargers Head Coach] Mike [McCoy] and his group and it’s a good football team. We’re getting ourselves geared up.”

Q: With the season that they’re having, is that just an example of the fine line between a win and a loss in this league?

Coach Del Rio: “Exactly. It’s a great example of it. When you look at the tape, they’re doing a lot of good things offensively, defensively and special teams. It’s a fine line in our league. For us, it’s about making sure that we’re prepared, that we’re recovered from a couple of road trips, you come back and be recovered. And then, really dig into our preparation and get ourselves ready to play a divisional opponent here at home.”

Q: What makes Derek Carr so good in the fourth quarter and late-game situations? What is it about his personality that makes him thrive?

Coach Del Rio: “I think it’s really everything with Derek. I think he is super competitive. He is a guy that is very well prepared. He’s really, I think, taken a step forward in terms of emotional control, the poise to be, kind of, surgeon-like and just be accurate with the ball and let his playmakers do their thing. So, it’s a combination of things but I think he’s definitely taken a step forward for us.”

Q: Have you seen a big difference this year in that poise?

Coach Del Rio: “That’s what we’re working on. I think the start, the first quarter of the year, has been good. We’ll continue to work on it. We’re a young football team that has a lot of growth in front of it, a lot of things to clean up and be better at. We’ll continue to work in that matter with the entire squad, Derek included.”

Q: Most of his interceptions last year did come in the fourth quarter and costed the team some games. Is that just poise or it just making smarter decisions, the rapport with the receiving corps?

Coach Del Rio: “I think it’s a little bit of a collection of all of that. It’s the experience that you get. Younger players come in, they’re going to learn from their experiences and I think, certainly, that’s a factor.”

Q: Can a quarterback and a receiver forge a rapport or does it just kind of happen organically?

Coach Del Rio: “Forge it, like really work hard at it? Spend the extra time?”

Q: Can you try too hard almost?

Coach Del Rio: “No, you can’t try too hard. I think, to me, it takes work, it takes commitment, it takes effort. I think time helps. I think for Derek, last year, he missed a good portion of the offseason. He had a tremendous year based on overcoming that. This year, we had a full offseason, had a full training camp. He has his full complement of receivers back and I think he’s very confident of being on the same page with those guys. I think that’s a big factor for any quarterback, to have his guys.”

Q: How impressive is the rapport he has with Michael Crabtree?

Coach Del Rio: “It’s growing and it’s been very special. I think from Day 1, Michael has been a guy that we all consider very friendly to the quarterback. He has great hands, he understands how to get open. He’s a very competitive guy. Getting all those guys on the same page is huge. I think what’s really impressive... We’re playing an opponent this week. They’ve had a rash of injuries at that position. They lost arguably their best guy in Keenan Allen and their best running back, [Danny] Woodhead, yet they’re averaging 30 points a game with [Philip] Rivers. What Philip does and what he’s done over the years, the guy is ultra-competitive. He’s always at or near the top in



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all the statistical categories for a quarterback. So, I've got a lot of respect for Philip. We're going into this game knowing that we need to get him slowed down and find a way to get a win."

Q: How do you see Perry Riley Jr. fitting in?

Coach Del Rio: "We're glad to have a veteran guy, a tough guy, inside linebacker. We'll see how it works and get him up to speed as quick as possible and find out how the rest of our guys are doing."

Q: Did you want to get another veteran in there or did it just work out that he was the best available?

Coach Del Rio: "I've actually been talking about him for a couple of weeks now, so I'm glad we pulled the trigger."

Q: You guys have sent Karl Joseph on some blitzes lately. Is that part of his skillset that he does well?

Coach Del Rio: "I think that's something he can do. He's an explosive athlete and he seeks the football, so we gave him a couple opportunities in the game to blitz a little bit. We'll continue to look for ways to use our guys."

QB Derek Carr

Q: What is the biggest difference with you late in games this year?

Carr: "Just trying not to do too much. I still feel that I can go out there and make all of the throws, make every play, and, I'm just learning that I don't have to do that. We have a great weapon with our punter. We have a great weapon with our defense. When we've needed them, they've come up big. So, I needed to learn last year that I don't have to make every play, and I think that alone right there took so much stress off me when [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio said, 'Hey man, you don't have to do it all by yourself. We're going to help you.' I thought that was really cool and it kind of made me realize and put me in a different perspective."

Q: Has that allowed you to be more poised late in games?

Carr: "Yeah. I pray for that. Because, I'm so excited and I love those situations, I get so fired up that I have to just calm myself down. You have to stay calm and it's not like, 'Oh no, the game's on the line.' It's like, 'Yes, the game's on the line.' That's stuff that you dream of as a kid. But, hopefully that stuff will continue. We'll hopefully continue to make plays because we work really hard in the two-minute drill in practice. So, as long as we keep working hard at it in practice, it'll pay off in the games."

Q: Is there a fine line between being aggressive by nature and holding back?

Carr: "Yeah, it's tough. It's hard for me, but there is that fine line of, the biggest part is the situation. There's going to be times where, 'Hey, we have to throw the ball in the end zone,' or, 'Hey, we have to force it,' or things like that. Then it's OK, but when you don't have to, it's being smart with the football and making sure that the ball ends up in our hands and it's something I work really hard to do. It's something that San Diego does a really good job of, taking the ball away. And so, that's something that in practice you have to be smart situationally and knowing when you can do things and when it's probably better not to."

Q: Do you feel more pressure with the possibility of a shootout?

Carr: "No, I don't think of it that way. I never think of it that way. Some of these games, I've been in games where people say, 'Hey, it's going to be a shootout.' And it was 10-7. So, the NFL is so crazy man. I just prepare the way I prepare and get ready."

Q: Are the Chargers a display of the fine line there is of what it takes to be a winning team with their losses coming late in games?

Carr: "I don't know. You know, I know that the league is set up and created for everyone to go 8-8. *(laughter)* Some people don't and some people do, you know? It's crazy how level it is and how close that line is. They're just a few points away from being 4-0. So, I think I said this the other day, I never look at someone's record and say that's



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who they are. Because, when you turn the film on and you see that defense running around, that's definitely not what it looks like."

Q: What type of commitment and leadership did you see from Michael Crabtree when he first got here last year?

Carr: "I think you used the word right there, commitment. He was so committed to running the routes how I wanted it done, he was so committed to our relationship being right. He was so committed to making sure he made so many plays for me that I would always look his way, that's what he wants and so far he's done that, man. You have to give him credit. The guy's worked his tail off and he's super competitive to get to where he's at to where if it's one-on-one, he's a great matchup. That's all you want to know in the back of your head, like, 'Hey I got one-on-one, is that a great matchup? Yes.' No matter who's guarding him. You always want that to happen, but it doesn't always work out that way and with 'Crab,' it has worked out that way. So, we stood right in that hallway over there and I said, 'Hey man, I won't promise you balls and all of these things but I'll promise you we're going to work our tails off.' We have and so far we're seeing it pay off."

Q: Are there times where you throw him a ball and even you're amazed he caught it?

Carr: "Yes, all the time. *(laughter)* Yes. There's sometimes like I'll even mess with him and try and throw it extra hard and early just to test, because I want to see it, because it's cool to me and he'll just turn around and just catch it with one hand and it makes you feel like you can't throw the ball hard at all. It's just effortless to him, sometimes he'll catch the ball and he's not even looking. He's already looking to make his move, he sees the ball coming, he'll catch it and he's already looking. I mean, the stuff he does is ridiculous. He can get away with it because he's gifted in that way. I wouldn't tell little kids to try and catch like that."

Q: Does he ever drop balls at practice?

Carr: "He has before. I think that's what motivates him so much. That's what drives him. When he does, it's not just like, 'Oh well, we'll get it the next time.' He wants to run the route again. I'm already thinking, 'Let's throw it again.' He practices the way he plays. That is what I think sets him apart. When he practices, there are certain routes where he's the clear out guy. He knows he's not getting the ball. He runs that route 100 percent, just in case. Especially with me, you never know. He'll just take off and run. That's what sets him apart from a lot of people. He has all that talent, but he practices like that."

Q: You opened up your press conference talking about the weapons you have and the first thing you said was the punter. How big has he been for you guys?

Carr: "He's been huge. We've been in some backed-up situations where we get pinned back and he'll completely flip the field with a 60-yard punt, put it out of bounds at the 10. Stuff like that, that is just ridiculous. It's not normal. You can tell that man spent a lot of time in the offseason at the park and at the fields just punting, over and over and over again. He's a different cat, Marquette [King], and I tell him that all the time. But, I love him. He works extremely hard and he's a weapon for us."

Q: How'd you like his Ray Lewis dance?

Carr: "I loved it. I want to know what Ray thought about it."

Q: How much will it affect you guys without Lee Smith?

Carr: "Oh my goodness. Not just because of the kind of football he is, but the kind of person he is. Everybody in that locker room loves Lee and knows that if you're going to go down in a back alley, he's one of the top three people you're taking. You know he will fight for every single person on this team. He will do anything he can to make sure that you're OK. We're praying for him and we can't wait to get him back."



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Q: Earlier this offseason, Crabtree compared you to a Brett Favre. Now he's talking about the rapport with you is better than he's had with any other quarterback. How do you build a rapport with each other?

Carr: "You spend time together..."

Q: It's that simple?

Carr: "Yeah. You guys spend time at work... For us, it's easy. That's how we were created. That's how we go about our business. It's doing reps and doing extra things when you don't want to do it, when your body is completely done. We still say, 'I'm not going to give in to that, and trade what I want for the moment for what I want most.' And what I want most is to be great. That's what he wants. We always consistently push each other to make sure we're getting those reps. On top of that, making sure we're always talking. Even during the games, we sit near each other and he'll come up to me before the drive. We'll talk about the situation. He's in the game like a quarterback. He wants to know what I'm thinking at all times."

Q: You're 3-0 on the road and 0-1 at home. Is there extra incentive this week to win at home?

Carr: "We need to win at home, there's no doubt about that. We need to win at home. Our fans are too awesome. They deserve it, to have a win in front of them. It's going to be a tough task, obviously, in the division. We need to go out and we need to set a standard at home. We definitely need to do that."

Q: I'm going to tell you a stat: Derek Carr has thrown for nine touchdowns and Amari Cooper has zero. What's that about?

Carr: "I don't know. I never really pay attention to that but it hit me one time and I couldn't believe it. I was thinking about the games and I was like, 'Wow, that's true.' Obviously Atlanta was playing soft coverage, taking him away and trying to do those things. Certain other aspects of coverages that people do towards him, he's going to get special attention. He knows that and he's learning that. It'll be just a matter of time. He'll get back in there. That's what he does for a living so he'll get back in there. It's funny that he doesn't have one yet."

Q: You talk about slowing yourself down in big moments, in big games. How do you do that?

Carr: "I'm dead serious when I say I pray about it. I just try and calm myself down. I try and get to realize that it's just a game. It's just a game. I've done this moment over and over, whether it's on the practice field or in Madden against my brothers. I've done this moment. So far, we as a team have done a great job. It's not just the quarterback that needs to be calm in those situations. Receivers have to run the right routes. They have to make sure their adjustments are right against coverages, because you're playing at a faster tempo. It's sometimes normal for them not to read the coverage or things like that. Those receivers ran every route exactly how they were supposed to in that two-minute drill. The offensive line picked up the blitzes exactly how they were taught to. If they don't do those things, the quarterback gets hit or it's a pick or something like that. Those guys have to be on it, too."



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Chargers Head Coach Mike McCoy

Q: When look at how the Raiders' games have come down to the wire and your games have as well, but with opposite results, does it illustrate the fine line there is in the league between winning and losing?

Coach McCoy: "Well the competitive balance in the league, it's amazing how so many games, year in and year out, come to some drive late in the fourth quarter to determine who's going to win those games; someone making a play at the right time or making a big stop defensively or a big return or kicking a big field goal, whatever that is. You turn on SportsCenter Sunday night and you see so many of those, or you have an opportunity at some point and time to put a team away and there's some breakdown and that team comes back at the end to give them a chance. That's the NFL today."

Q: How do you turn around from losing the lead in the fourth quarter?

Coach McCoy: "Every game is different. I think [Raiders Head Coach] Jack [Del Rio] would say the same thing. How they've won at times and what they've done this year, each week is different. Same thing [with] us. The way we've unfortunately haven't finished games, there's different reasons for it. It's not the same. It's not just one phase not doing something. You look at those games that just one play somewhere or one decision, whatever that is, but that's the game here. There's a lot of talent on every team, on all sides of the ball and the kicking game. You have to make those plays. That's what the game's all about."

Q: What have you seen from Derek Carr as a rookie until now?

Coach McCoy: "His success doesn't surprise me one bit. I go back to the days in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Carolina Panthers training camp when Derek was a high schooler, and I was coaching David. He'd come out there and throw with us after practice or before at times and saw the talent that he had, the love and passion for the game. He's the same player he was back then, and when I say the same player, his attitude and his love for the game. You just love the way he goes about it and he plays. He'll sit in the pocket, take a big hit, jump right back up with that smirk on his face like, 'I got it. I completed the ball.' He just keeps on going. You just love the way he plays. He's very talented. Had a great career at Fresno. We were very high on him here coming out, when he came out of the draft, but it doesn't shock me at all the success he's having."

Q: Do you see on film that he's more precise and taking less gambles?

Coach McCoy: "I think with any young quarterback that's in this league, you learn over time. You play at the collegiate level [and] you have so much success. You can make certain throws. You're not playing against the same type of competition you'll play in the NFL. You're playing with a lot of great players. Even in practice, I'm sure with the players that he's played in the secondary there since his first day walking into that building. You understand that, 'Hey, if you miss this throw, it's probably going the other way, so you have to make sure.' You learn how to become a pro. You learn more. You read coverages quicker. Having worked with [Raiders offensive coordinator] Bill Musgrave, he's got a great offensive mind. So I think the longer you're with a coordinator, the more comfortable you are playing. You're not seeing things for the first time. You react quicker and the game slows down a little bit for you. It's not going as fast as it was that first you're in the huddle."

Q: What's been the difference in getting Melvin Gordon going this year?

Coach McCoy: "I think it's really all 11 guys doing their job better. It's not just Melvin. Everyone wanted to put certain things last year in him or the way the line [played]. I always believe in the running game in every play in football. It's 11 guys doing their jobs better. Playing the first couple of weeks with the same offensive line, you saw the way we ran the football. The way 'Mel' had his confidence going and the way he was finishing, doing certain things. 'Mel' had a phenomenal offseason program. The way he went in camp. The way the line played in camp. All 11 guys doing their job. The receivers blocking the force when they need to, so it's 11 guys playing better together and opening up some holes for him. Him also making that cut. Putting that foot in the ground and getting that ugly three or four yards which is great."



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Q: How difficult have all the injuries been?

Coach McCoy: "It's an opportunity. You tell the players from the first day of the offseason program, everybody has a role on this team and you never know when your role is going to become a little larger. We've had our fair share from early on in training camp until just recently. It's something you have to deal with. Every team deals with it at some point and time during the year. Unfortunately, we have a number of players that have been put on I.R. for the year and it's not just a couple of weeks. But hey, I give the players and credit, the players and coaches, excuse me, a ton of credit for the way they've worked and fought through a ton of adversity early on in the season with just the first quarter of the season being over."

Q: Is Philip Rivers as good as he's ever been right now?

Coach McCoy: "Philip Rivers is one of the best of all time. The one way I could say, the best word to describe Philip Rivers is special. He does so much for the team, for the organization. He's a great human being. His preparation. He's the real deal and like I've said, he's one of the best of all time."

Chargers RB Melvin Gordon

Q: What's it been like falling short in a few tight games thus far in the season?

Gordon: "It's frustrating to know that you're better than what your record shows, but we can't blame anyone but ourselves. We just have to finish."

Q: How have you dealt with the upsetting finish from last week's game coming into practice this week?

Gordon: "I mean, it's early. It's early in the season. So, you can't lose faith now and all of the work that you've put in to this point. You just have to get back on the saddle and go. That's just our mindset. Just try to win out."

Q: Has it been nice to get into the end zone early on?

Gordon: "Yeah, yeah. It's definitely good stuff, man. So, hats off to the guys who have been helping me get that and get that achievement so far. But, it's a good feeling knowing that I didn't get in there once last year."

Q: What has been the biggest difference for you and the run game between this year and last year?

Gordon: "It's just confidence, man. You just kind of know what's going on around you. You know if they give a certain look, how it's supposed to be blocked up, just better note taking, more of a student of the game. So, you can just play that much faster and you kind of know where your cuts are supposed to be before you make them."

Q: What stands out on the Raiders' defense?

Gordon: "Just physical, especially up front. They have some big boys up on the line. Obviously, everyone knows about Khalil Mack and the pass rushers. They're physical, man, they're physical and big and they're playing with a swagger right now."