



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening Statement: "I would just like to say thank you to the Detroit Lions. That was two really good practices. I thought other than the one incident earlier, I thought the teams did a great job showcasing professionalism and etiquette. I think we got a lot more out of these two days than we ever could have, had we not done this. I'd like to compliment our players certainly and the coaches, and their players and coaches for working under some tough situations. It's very competitive and very physical out there. A lot of guys got nicked up. I don't have anything official to report but I'll answer any questions that I can."

Q: Connor Cook seemed to do a good job today moving the offense up and down the field. What have you seen from him in the past couple weeks since you've been in Napa?

Gruden: "He's made great strides. Since he stepped foot here in Napa, he hasn't turned the ball over. He's made good decisions. He audibled two or three times today to big plays. He's throwing the ball short, medium and deep accurately and he's showed really good command, and this will be a really good test for him Friday night. He'll get a good amount of playing time."

Q: Is Martavis Bryant slated to get a full set of run in the preseason?

Gruden: "Martavis is not a good talent, he's a great talent and we're going to continue to work him into our offense. Today showed I think what he's capable of doing. But to answer your question, we have big plans for him."

Q: Do you almost get more out of these two days than you do in a preseason game especially for the veteran guys?

Gruden: "You just caught it there. That's the thing I like the most. You go into the preseason game, the number one preseason game Friday night and you're not going to play your starters. If you do, you're not going to play them very much but they got quality reps. You're seeing Derek Carr versus Matt Stafford, blitz pickup, nine-on-seven, two minute drill, move the ball and it's as close to the real deal as you're going to get so you get a lot of work done and now you taper it off for the first team guys and you get a chance to really isolate who you want to see in the preseason game. I think it's going to be real beneficial."

Q: For us Detroit guys out here, you've got some local products on your roster. What kind of impression has Maurice Hurst made early on for you guys and what has he done well out on the field?

Gruden: "Love Hurst. He's been well coached at Michigan. He's polished. He's got a great motor. That's why we traded up to get him. He's exactly what we thought he was. He's going to continue to get better. I think going up against Osemele and Gabe Jackson and Hudson all camp has made him better. It's made him stronger. It's made him play with better technique and leverage. He still has a ways to go but he and P.J. Hall both give us an element that we need here."

Q: There were a few turnovers the first day but I didn't see any out there today. Are you pleased with that?

Gruden: "Yeah we had two tipped balls yesterday. Those things happen. One on seven on seven and one in the two-minute drill. We're not cut blocking so sometimes tipped passes happen in practice but we're stressing the ball every day. You see it before practice. We're trying to take the ball away on defense and we're trying to take care of the ball on offense. It's a winning edge in pro football or any level of football but I'm pleased how we responded today."

Q: Do you have an idea when Donald Penn might return?

Gruden: "No I don't. I do not. He's getting close. I think Rod Martin, our trainer, is pleased with the progress he's made. Hopefully that time is soon."



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Q: A lot of fans are very excited that you're here. What do you have to say to them particularly at this time in the history of the franchise?

Gruden: "Well I've tried to say it all along, I even said it at Rickey's Sports Bar before I came up here. I tried to thank Raider fans for their support as much as possible. I don't make any promises, I just say that we're going to give the best effort we can and it's an honor to be back here and it's a great story but I also just want to do everything I can to try to help this team win again but I love the Raider fans, I love Oakland and that's the primary reason why I'm standing here."

Q: Jared Cook and Derek Carrier had a field day against the Lions defensive pass protection. What have you seen from them and how have the offenses attacked their defenses?

Gruden: "Well we wanted to feature the tight ends the last couple days. Honestly, we think that Jared Cook is a rare receiving tight end and we think Carrier is interesting. I think he's been under the radar. He played wide receiver in college. We acquired him from the Rams. We think he's an intriguing mismatch problem for some teams. So we want to look at different personnel groups. Like I said when I got here, we might go back to 1978 and be a two back, full back-oriented team, we might not. We might use two tight ends, we might use three, and we might use one. So we have a lot of different personnel groupings and packages just like every team I know of in this league and the best group to help us win that particular day is the guys we're going to feature but we did feature the tight ends the last two days."

Q: I know it's the first preseason game. It'll be your first game back in Oakland. I doubt you've really given it much thought but do you expect it to be for the fans a little different atmosphere than maybe a first preseason game?

Gruden: "They're all the same to me and Raider fans. You got to understand that preseason games, postseason games, pick-up games in Oakland, it's all the same."

Q: Are you looking forward to the first preseason game?

Gruden: "I am looking forward to it. I am looking forward to it big time. I've got some things obviously I've got to work out. Anticipating situations, communicating with coaches in the press box, the referees on the field, the new rules interpretations. So I've got to work myself through calling plays again and managing some tough situations and I'm anxious to see if I can do it."

Q: Have you figured out how much you're going to go with Carr and the starters?

Gruden: "Not much. I don't have an official count but this game is not about Derek Carr, not yet. It's about finding the right fifty-three men. I think you saw today we've got a lot of contenders. There are a lot of guys that have put themselves on the brink of making this football team and we got to make sure we give them every opportunity to showcase their skills. Obviously we have a number of guys injured and beat up. So, availability will have a lot to do with who plays with who."

Q: Coach, you had a couple of high school football teams out here. Why did you guys want to have those guys out here and what do you think they've learned from this?

Gruden: "We love high school football and you know I think it's smart for everybody at this level, pro football, NFL, to give back to youth football. We've got a problem I think in this country. The game is under siege by a lot of people who don't think it's a safe game. They don't think it's a good game anymore and I think that's hogwash. We've got to encourage kids to play, get the benefits of being on a team, and try to support these programs because they're not getting much support anymore. We want these kids to come out, see some of the guys they look up to, get some autographs and get excited about their season."



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Q: Do you think the pro game has been affected yet by attitudes towards youth football? Do you feel that fewer young athletes are getting into football?

Gruden: "I don't know. I got a strong opinion on that. I just drive around the streets and I don't see kids playing in the yards like they used to. So, that's for another day. I just want to encourage kids, if they do play football, you're going to learn about mental and physical toughness and teamwork and sportsmanship and accountability and all the qualities that make a young man a man."

Q: With the first game coming up, have you given any thought to the national anthem? Have you talked to the team about it?

Gruden: "I haven't yet. I haven't yet. I have not yet but I'm proud and I'm going to stand and I'm excited for the national anthem. I'm excited to play on Friday night."

Q: Obi Melifonwu wasn't here yesterday and today and Seth Roberts wasn't out there today. Any update on them?

Gruden: "Seth's sore. We didn't play Seth today. Hopefully we have him available here in the next day or so. Obi has had a flare up. Lower body injury of some kind. We're still looking into that."

Q: How much do you plan to ramp up the playbook in the first couple preseason game? Do you want to throw a lot at these guys and see how they handle it?

Gruden: "There's a fine line. We have a big playbook for this game because if you give them a small playbook, that's what they study for four days. So, if you give them a whole big playbook, they have to study the whole gamete and they really don't know what you're going to call and you have to have a big playbook I think because after the second quarter you run out of players. You know, you don't have the same receivers that you want to call a play for in the third quarter. You might get a guy nicked up and you can't use the two tight end set so you have to have some adaptability and with that said you have to have a pretty thick nucleus of plays available and I like it because it makes them study."