



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders First-Round Draft Pick CB Gareon Conley Conference Call**

**Q: With everything that happened, were you expecting a phone call today?**

**Conley:** "I mean, my mom, she always tells me to keep faith. So I kind of was, but then there was some doubt that I wasn't. But it came. I'm really glad it came. I thank God that it came."

**Q: How emotional of a week has it been for you?**

**Conley:** "It's been real emotional, but I got through it. I just kept my faith strong and just kept listening to my mom, my agent, my support. Just kept my head on tight. Just had faith."

**Q: What was it like when the pick came through?**

**Conley:** "It made it 10 times more special. Just having that doubt in my mind, just not knowing. Just having faith and having doubt, I didn't know what was going to happen. When it came, it shocked me. It felt unreal, honestly. It still feels unreal."

**Q: Did you know that the Raiders were interested?**

**Conley:** "No, I didn't know at all, honestly."

**Q: Where does your situation stand right now? Have you met with the police? How confident are you that the situation will be resolved?**

**Conley:** "I haven't met with them yet. I'm scheduled to meet with them on Monday, but I'm very confident that it'll be resolved. I took a test today that helps. Then when I made my statement and all the evidence that I have, I feel confident that it'll be resolved."

**Q: What's your mentality coming to the Raiders?**

**Conley:** "I'm trying to come in and play early. Start if I can, and just add value to the nickel, corner, special teams, anywhere I can to contribute to the win."

**Q: How comfortable do you feel at nickel?**

**Conley:** "I just started playing this past season, but I feel comfortable playing at a high stage. There's a lot of good players in the Big Ten. I feel like I'm confident enough to play it."

**Q: Do you plan on coming here tomorrow?**

**Conley:** "Yeah, they're flying me out tomorrow."

**Q: Do you look back and think maybe you shouldn't have gotten yourself in a position where something like this could happen?**

**Conley:** "Yeah, definitely. Like I said in my statement, I could've made way better judgement. I mean, I didn't know what I was getting myself into, but I definitely could've made a better decision."

**Q: The Raiders talked about all the research they did before making this pick and they had no doubt that this whole thing will blow over. What communication had you had with them at all or was there a polygraph test, the result of which you sent to teams. What from your camp were you able to do to ease any teams concerns, including the Raiders?**

**Conley:** "I mean, I just talked to them. They did all their research, so you'd have to discuss that with them. They were confident in their research and confident in me and the person that I am to pick me."

**Q: Who did you speak to from the Raiders organization?**

**Conley:** "Reggie [McKenzie]."



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**Q: What was that conversation like?**

**Conley:** "I mean, I kind of couldn't hear most of it because my family was just screaming when I picked up the phone. But, he just told me that he was confident that everything will blow over, he was confident in me and wanted to pick me. It was just unreal, honestly. It was probably, it is the best moment of my life, not probably. It was the best moment of my life."

**Q: Was there a polygraph test that someone asked you to take?**

**Conley:** "They didn't ask me to take one. But, they had a lot of research. They were confident in me."

**Q: Did you volunteer one? You weren't asked but you did one anyway?**

**Conley:** "I'm sorry?"

**Q: Did you do one though?**

**Conley:** "Yeah, I did one. They didn't ask me to do one though."

**Q: Coming to a team that just finished 12-4 and a team that has Khalil Mack, what are you most excited about?**

**Conley:** "I'm real excited. I remember watching him my freshman year. He tore us apart at Ohio State. He's a great player. I'm ready to be a part of that defense. I'm just ready to be a part of the whole organization."

**Q: What would you say you're the most proud of?**

**Conley:** "Are you saying in my game?"

**Q: Yes, for instance, I came across an eye-popping stat that you get a 13.6 passer rating for opposing quarterbacks when targeting your receivers. Do you know about any of those kinds of stats?**

**Conley:** "I mean that stat really does because it just means that I'm locking down whoever I go against. I mean, just any stats honestly, I just go out there and do my best and just try to lock that man down because that's my job at the end of the day and that's what helps the team win."

**Q: Considering the situation you were going through, what is your appreciation like towards the Raiders organization for picking you?**

**Conley:** "It's off the charts, honestly. Just to know that they have faith in me, not even just as a football player but as a person like that, it speaks highly of them, and I really appreciate it. It's an honor to be a part of the Raider organization."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **First-Round Press Conference following the selection of CB Gareon Conley**

#### ***General Manager Reggie McKenzie and Head Coach Jack Del Rio***

**McKenzie Opening Statement:** "Good evening, guys. We got a new player. Just wanted to give a quick statement. Just wanted to let you guys know we did our due diligence throughout this whole process and we trust our research, reports, everything that we have on Mr. Conley. We feel really good about picking Gareon Conley and having him join the Raider team and having him be a great teammate for our players. With that, let's answer the questions."

**Q: The other day, we talked about accumulating all the information you possibly can form all the sources you possibly can and then just basically going with your gut. Was that pretty much the case on this?**

**McKenzie:** "Like I said, the research was done. It wasn't just a gut. It was based on research and we were very confident in all the information we had."

**Q: Beyond feeling comfortable in the research, how does he fit into what this team needs right now?**

**McKenzie:** "I'll let Jack answer most of the football questions, so I'll lean on Jack for that one."

**Del Rio:** "Really talented corner that is capable of playing man or zone. He's a football junkie. He loves to compete. He's been well respected with the people that I've spoken to personally about him. He's a guy that loves to compete, good teammate and a really quality kid. He has great length, great speed. Really, really strong workouts throughout the spring and then his tape is really good. It's one of those really clean players that we were fortunate to get our hands on here late in the first round."

**Q: Can you be more specific with your research?**

**McKenzie:** "I don't want to get into all the details about who we talked to, all of that stuff. But the bottom line is we've done miles and miles of research to make sure we were totally comfortable with our decision, which we were."

**Q: Was this pick based on the board or was this need as well?**

**McKenzie:** "This was totally the board. I mean it was hands down the best player left on our board."

**Del Rio:** "A lot of us guys say that this time of year though, don't we? (*laughing*) Definitely was a happy moment for us."

**Q: What stood out about his game?**

**McKenzie:** "As far as I'm concerned, he's the type of corner you look for. I mean he is hard to get separation from. He can play the deep ball. He can play press. He's big, he's strong, he's fast, and he understands the game. You can tell he loves the game, the way he plays. Watching his tape, being around him, interviewing him, it was no question. We had no question about his skillset and his ability to play the game."

**Q: Are you envisioning Conley being eased into a roll because of the corners already on your team or are you going to let him compete?**

**Del Rio:** "No, I think anybody that we add to the roster this weekend, we'll let them compete and see what they earn. I wouldn't put a ceiling on him in terms of does he end up as the fourth best, the third best, the second best or the best corner. That's up to him when he gets here and the work that he puts in, him understanding our system and being a productive player. So, we expect him to come in and compete. We think he's a highly-skilled player and he's got the potential to become one of our better corners."



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**Q: Can he play the slot cornerback?**

**Del Rio:** "We'll determine that. He's mostly been outside in his collegiate career."

**Q: Have you been told that charges will not be pressed against Conley?**

**McKenzie:** "I'm not going to get into the details of it, but I just want to let you know we feel real good about the pick and the way it's going."

**Q: With Conley being so coveted, what does he do for you moving forward in the draft?**

**McKenzie:** "Well, hopefully there's Day 2 that will fall the same way. We're going to still follow our board. We know our needs, but, we will not let, we feel, a great player slip by just to satisfy a need. We will follow our board, that's for sure. There are a lot of good players, so we're expecting a good day tomorrow."

**Q: Did you have to clear any of this with Owner Mark Davis before you made the pick?**

**McKenzie:** "Me and Mark talk about all of the first-round picks, the possibilities. So, it's just not with Gareon, it's with many other picks. So, we're communicating all the time. This is not just one particular deal. But yes, we discuss it."

**Q: Was Conley someone that you were surprised had fallen that far in the draft?**

**McKenzie:** "Well, I can't speak for the other teams' thought processes. All I know is we had him on our board, and we like the player. We're glad he's a Raider."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Introductory Press Conference with First Round Draft Pick Gareon Conley**

#### ***General Manager Reggie McKenzie, Head Coach Jack Del Rio and CB Gareon Conley***

**McKenzie Opening Statement:** “Good evening gentlemen, ladies. Just for starters we addressed the issue regarding Gareon last night both from the Raiders and himself. Let’s just talk football with Gareon, alright? Thanks.”

#### **Q: Can you talk about your leadership abilities?**

**Conley:** “Yeah, I was captain this past year and a leader on the secondary. I felt like I earned that right through my experience and just how I handled myself on and off the field. A lot of the young guys looked up to me and always came to me for questions. That’s how I was when I came in. A lot of the older people Doran [Grant] and [Bradley] Roby they showed me how to be a leader in the secondary. What to do on and off the field, in the weight room, practice habits, games. Just leading by action mostly.”

#### **Q: Have you talked to Sean Smith outside of your interaction on Twitter? What’s it like to be teaming up with him now?**

**Conley:** “It’s an honor to be a teammate of his and just be a part of Raider Nation. I hadn’t talked to him before that previously. Somebody had told me that he shouted me out, so I wanted to get back to him and show my appreciation.”

#### **Q: What do you think about moving to Las Vegas?**

**Conley:** “I mean I just found out that like last week, I think. I’m just worried about being in Oakland right now, as we are. Ready to compete for the Oakland Raiders right now.”

#### **Q: Is the situation kind of unique?**

**Conley:** “Oh yeah. I mean wherever we go, I’m going to be a Raider. So that’s all I’m focused on.”

#### **Q: You said you couldn’t keep still on the flight out here. What was that like?**

**Conley:** “I mean, it just felt unreal. It’s an opportunity that I’ve been waiting for my whole life and now it’s here.”

#### **Q: What does it mean to be a part of this iconic brand?**

**Conley:** “Like I said, it’s an honor to come from somewhere like Ohio State into a program like this. It’s like a more rich program than Ohio State. So being in Black and Silver, I see all the fans, they show me so much love already and I haven’t even been here yet. It’s just an honor to be here.”

#### **Q: When did you first start thinking you could play football in college or the NFL?**

**Conley:** “Massillon [Ohio] is a football town. It’s kind of like a mini Ohio State with all their fans. The pressure is like a high expectation there. I’ve seen people who were going to college for football and I just felt like I could explore more opportunities by playing more sports. Football just gave me the opportunity and I took it and stuck with it.”

#### **Q: What’s life been like since getting drafted?**

**Conley:** “It was a short turnaround, but I know last night when I got that call I couldn’t even hear the phone call because my family just tackled me as soon as I put my phone to my ear. Like I said, I’ve just been shaking ever since. It’s just unreal. This is the most proud I’ve ever been of myself in my life because this is like a once in a lifetime opportunity. I’m just thankful to have it.”

#### **Q: How much sleep did you get?**

**Conley:** “Probably like four hours.”



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**Q: What was it that you like about football that caught your attention and what didn't you like about it before you started?**

**Conley:** "It wasn't that I didn't like it. I was kind of forced to play and so, I didn't want to do it just because I was forced to, I wanted to do something that I wanted to do. But, I learned to love it and I'm just a competitor all over. In football, it teaches you life lessons on and off the field and I like that about football. Just the high competition of football and being a corner, you're on an island out there and it's competition at the highest level every day."

**Q: What have you learned in the last week about everything?**

**Conley:** "To keep faith, always have a tight support system and just trust in yourself and never lose faith."

**Q: What do you think working with your group of defensive backs at Ohio State taught you and did it help you get ready for the next level?**

**Conley:** "Yeah, definitely. At Ohio State we have a high standard, high expectation to be the best and I feel like those guys pushed me every day because those guys are NFL-caliber players as well and they made me a better NFL-caliber player. Just going out there and competing, some of our practices were harder than games and I feel like that's what prepared us to be those NFL-caliber players."

**Q: What prompted the move inside for you and how was the transition for you?**

**Conley:** "We played Nebraska and they had a really good slot receiver. My coach, he asked me if I could get it done. He just said he needed somebody to lock a guy up in the slot and I said I could get it done. Ever since then he kept me in the slot, so I played both outside and inside."

**Q: Coach Del Rio, can you talk about the culture you have instilled?**

**Conley:** "Yeah, [General Manager] Reggie's [McKenzie] done a great job even prior to me getting here of making sure that we're identifying good people that are committed to the team, the organization, to being respectful of each other, being good teammates, to coming in and busting their butt to help us win a championship. When guys come in new, as you continue to grow, you get guys like [QB] Derek Carr and [DE] Khalil Mack that are now taking the torch and they're showing the guys that come in what it looks like; the [C] Rodney Hudson's, the [LT] Donald Penn's. He'll start meeting them when he comes back in and he starts working with the team, this weekend for the mini-camp and throughout the offseason. But, that's what happens. The players end up taking that message and then making it their own. We've created that culture and now it's a matter of sustaining it and adding a guy like this right here, Gareon. Really a good, young man who's been a great teammate and we want him to come in here and be great teammates here as well."

**Q: Knowing that he was drafted by the Chargers, what was the battle like against WR Mike Williams in the game against Clemson?**

**Conley:** "He was a great receiver. I was watching film on him all year and I knew he was projected high. That battle in the game, it was a real good battle. I feel like he's probably one of the best receivers I went against all year last year. Props to him. But, I'm always going to compete against him and I look forward to seeing him again."

**Q: What did your first experience getting benched against Michigan State do you for you as a player?**

**Conley:** "I feel like it changed my whole career because I kind of lost self-confidence and I feel like my coaches and my teammates were really the ones who helped me in that situation because no one batted an eye, no one talked bad about me during the game while it was happening and they were all cheering me on. I felt like they had that much confidence in me, I had to have that self-confidence in myself and I realized that after that game and that's what turned my career around."

**Q: Do you think Charles Woodson will forgive you from de-committing to Michigan and going to Ohio State?**

**Conley:** "Hopefully. *(laughter)*"



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Press Conference following the Third Round**

#### ***Head Coach Jack Del Rio***

**Q: What did both Obi Melifonwu and Eddie Vanderdoes show at the Senior Bowl? How important was that showcase game in the evaluation process?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "That's the biggest thing you hit on there, part of the evaluation process; another opportunity to evaluate these guys. I think the Senior Bowl, in particular, is a very competitive bowl game. Yeah, guys [who] do well there typically do well for this league."

**Q: What do you see out of Melifonwu? What can he bring to this defense?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I don't know which of the guys was describing him. I think it was [Mike] Mayock. I think he did a pretty good job describing him because I think he can do a lot of different things. He's very gifted athletically. The tape is good. He's done a variety of roles. He's played on tight ends. He's played on receivers. He's been in the back. He's been in post safeties. Kind of done a little bit of everything. He'll come up and strike you. We like him and happy to be able to get him."

**Q: What do you like about Eddie Vanderdoes?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Active defensive lineman. He's got awareness. He's not a guy that just pushes blocks and has no idea where the ball is. His film is inconsistent, honestly. There's some that's better than others. I just talked to him a little while ago and said, 'We're looking for the high energy guy, the motivated guy.' He's a really good athlete. He came out of high school highly regarded. Went down to my rival school, UCLA. I told [defensive coordinator] Ken [Norton, Jr.] I wouldn't hold that against the two of them. He's a good, active defensive lineman that we think his best football is in front of him. He had an ACL a couple of years ago. His weight has been up and down. We expect him to come in here and be a real professional and work hard with [head strength and conditioning coach] Joe Gomes and the strength staff and get himself ready to roll. Come in here and add depth to our defensive line and give us a little interior push."

**Q: With Melifonwu's combine, do you think that with all of these traits that you can kind of mold him into a quality NFL player?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "No, I don't think you ever do that. Anybody that runs well or jumps high and all those kinds of things, that just kind of confirms that the tape was good and then they can do that. That's what it's about. So it's really the tape. He has good tape that tells you he's a good football player. Then you watch him workout and you're like, 'Wow, he's a good football player with upside.' Look this is no secret, we've struggled for the last couple of years covering the opponents' tight ends. We think this is a guy that can help out with his length, matchup against some of the bigger tight ends, some of the better tight ends. We'll put him right in the mix. I was asked yesterday about [Gareon] Conley and what does that do for the other corners. You can ask the same thing about Reggie [Nelson] and Karl [Joseph] and what does that do for the safeties. We're going to let these guys compete. Who's one, who's two, who's three, who's four. That'll get determined in training camp. We're going to let these guys come in here and compete. They have a good skillset. We're looking for vastly improved play out of our defense, and all three of these guys are going to get an opportunity to compete and create their role."

**Q: Is Vanderdoes a guy you believe can help fix the interior pass rush?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yeah, I think he has a shot. Look, I said earlier this spring, I think it's important that we develop the guys that are here, that we get a good offseason with 'Haddy' [Jihad Ward]. He's attacking this offseason, and Mario Edwards Jr. I think we got to expect these guys that we've taken over the last couple of years to take a step forward for us as well. But certainly, Eddie has an opportunity."



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**Q: Can you take us through the tape of how Vanderdoes shows up on tape one day and can disappear another?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "That's the difference between the first round and the third round, the third round and the fourth and fifth round and on and on."

**Q: Do you have to actually see Vanderdoes here when it comes to which version you're getting?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yeah, that's what you have to do to survive in this league. That's what you have to do to earn a spot on this team. And that's what you have to do, so it's like part of joining a culture that's going to demand that. That will be all of our players, it will be the same way, but that's kind of the state of how we do things and everybody that we bring in we expect them to live up to that standard."

**Q: Is that a fun part of the team, knowing the player you could have with the development?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yeah, I mean that's part of the fun of coaching, you know? They're all different types of players and athletes that you get to work with. To be able to touch them and inspire them, motivate them and help them be their best, I think for me even going back to my playing days, if I knew a coach could help me be better, I was going to listen to everything and soak it all up. We want to be the coaches that can deliver and help these guys improve and be at their best. In doing that, they'll soak it all up and give everything that they have."

**Q: What does Marshawn Lynch bring to the team?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Authentic passion is what I see. He is a homegrown guy, he's extremely excited about joining this football team, being a part of the Raider Nation and we're excited to have him. There's going to be questions about how much is left in his tank and things like that, and we're going to find out. I don't know if I've ever seen anybody else be more excited or pleased to be joining a team, my team, our team, you know? I told him, I said, 'You're lucky, man, because I didn't get a chance to do that as a player. I wanted to finish here as a player too, I didn't get that chance. You're getting that chance.' He's fired up about it. He's a big man and he plays with the violence that we like and appreciate. I think he looks forward to running behind Gabe [Jackson] and K.O. [Kelechi Osemele], Rodney [Hudson] and those guys up front."

**Q: You mentioned that Eddie Vanderdoes weight has been up and down...**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Just like a lot of big guys. Vic's has his weight go up and down... *(laughter)* I'm sorry, I was just taking a shot."

**Q: Where do you think his ideal weight should be?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I don't really spend a lot of time with that, I trust Joe Gomes. We've got dieticians and trainers and conditioners. All the things that we need to do to get him to be at his best. Ultimately, Joe will lead us through that. We'll scan him, get a real exact reading on what his body comp looks like and how it stacks up and what he needs to do to be his best. We'll help educate him that way. Then it will be up to him to embrace the things that we talk about and do with our guys. We're going to seek to maximize all of our players and Eddie will be in the same boat. There won't be a special 'Eddie Watch.' We don't have one for [Justin Ellis] 'Jelly.' We don't have one for any of the bigger guys. They work hard. We give them a weight that makes sense for their body scan and body composition and we demand that they work within that. Our guys have been really good about it and I think Eddie will do the same."

**Q: Where do you envision him in the interior of the line?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Somewhere in the interior. Really, he can go from a six-technique and in. I don't know that he'd ever be out as a nine out and out wide, out as an edge rusher like Khalil [Mack] or Bruce [Irvin], but more inside. A lot like you saw [former Raiders DT] Stacy McGee, who we lost, similar to how he'd bounce around. He'd go anywhere from a nose to a six-technique. I think Eddie shows the traits to be able to do the same."





## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Second-Round Draft Pick S Obi Melifonwu Conference Call**

**Q: What were your expectations going in? Had you heard a lot from the Raiders?**

**Melifonwu:** "No, actually the only time that I talked to the Raiders was at the combine. I had a formal interview with them. The interview went great. The interview with [cornerbacks coach] Rod Woodson went great, the head coach, the GM. I left feeling pretty good but I wasn't expecting them to call."

**Q: What do you think your best at, with aspect to your game?**

**Melifonwu:** "I think I'm best with my range. I feel like I'm a guy that can cover a lot of ground. I'm a guy that can really track down balls and make plays."

**Q: How are you at covering tight ends?**

**Melifonwu:** "I feel like I'm a solid cover guy, especially versus tight ends. I feel like the majority of tight ends that I go up against I'm going to be faster than and really be able to cover them."

**Q: What was your reaction to being called and finally being an NFL player?**

**Melifonwu:** "It was surreal. I was so excited to get the call, especially by the Raiders. Those are the colors that I wear and I love. Just being there with my family and them enjoying the experience was great. Plus the fact that you guys got Marshawn Lynch, that was icing on the cake."

**Q: You were born in England, right?**

**Melifonwu:** "Yes."

**Q: When did you move over here?**

**Melifonwu:** "I moved here at the age of three and I went back at the age of 10. It's funny because all my uncles and aunts from England flew up on Wednesday to be with me during the draft."

**Q: Where are you right now for the draft?**

**Melifonwu:** "I'm at home in Massachusetts."

**Q: What do you think that the scouting combine did for you? You obviously put on quite a show.**

**Melifonwu:** "I think it did a lot for me. I think it showed my character, my poise and the ability to perform under pressure. And really the fact that not only am I an explosive player, I'm a player that has great hips and great range for somebody my size."

**Q: Did you get some work at cornerback at the Senior Bowl?**

**Melifonwu:** "Yes, I actually did that the last two days at one-on-ones really well. I think that's something that I wanted to go in showing that I could do at one-on-ones. I'm glad I got the opportunity to do that because I showed a lot of teams and the Raiders that I could also play corner."

**Q: Who would you say you model your game after?**

**Melifonwu:** "I model my game after a lot of people. I try to really study the safeties in the NFL. Definitely because we really have the same size, Kam Chancellor. He's a guy that I look up to. He's a player that I kind of want to be, but at the same time, be my own player. So, there's definitely players, you have Richard Sherman, you have guys like Devin McCourty that I look up to. I definitely look up to a lot of different players in the NFL."

**Q: What would your thoughts be on playing gunner in the NFL and in general what is your special teams experience?**

**Melifonwu:** "I think I'd be a great gunner just because my get off, my speed, and the fact that I'm a guy that can move around and I'm elusive. I played my freshman year, I was on every single special teams except for kickoff



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returns. Obviously, the last three years I haven't really done it, but that's something that comes natural and I'd be able to do at the next level."

### **Q: What was the game like where you had 24 tackles?**

**Melifonwu:** "That just goes to show my ability to tackle. I think I'm a sound tackler, but that really was my last game of my college career. I really wanted to go out with a bang and just really go remembered as a great safety that played for the University of Connecticut. So, that was really a memorable moment to have 24 tackles because not a lot of players can say that they have done that."

### **Q: What was the Senior Bowl experience like?**

**Melifonwu:** "It was great. It kind of was like a trial run for the combine. It was a lot of the same stuff; meetings, just being under pressure and things like that and then practicing with the best. Meeting all the coaches was definitely a great experience."

### **Q: Did the numbers you put up at the combine surprise you at all?**

**Melifonwu:** "Going into training right after my last final, right after school ended on the 16th, I went immediately into training on the 27th of December and I knew if I did everything I was supposed to do, I knew if I worked like I was supposed to work and focus on the things I was supposed to focus on that I would go to the combine and put up the numbers that I did."

### **Q: Where did you train?**

**Melifonwu:** "I trained at ASPI [Applied Science and Performance Institute] in Tampa, Florida with my trainer Yo Murphy, which is a guy that did a really good job at preparing me and making me ready when I needed to be for the combine."

### **Q: What do you attribute your jump in numbers during your senior season to?**

**Melifonwu:** "Just having a better sense of the game of football. My defensive back coach Anthony Poindexter was a great college safety and a great NFL safety. He really did a great job of helping me fine tune things like run fits, formations and really keyed every week to watch and how to watch the game of football, how to study the game of football which in result, helped me have the season I had."

### **Q: Is your default position safety?**

**Melifonwu:** "Yeah."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Third-Round Draft Pick DT Eddie Vanderdoes Conference Call**

**Q: When the Raiders looked at your UCLA tape, there was a player that saw and they were really excited about what you showed. I'm sure they were talking about earlier in your career. And then there is other tape that they were less enthused about. How do you go about making sure that the player that you envision yourself being becomes an Oakland Raider?**

**Vanderdoes:** "That's going to be the player that I'm going to be – the one that I was earlier in my career. I had a bad season. That wasn't me. That's not the person that I am. That's not the character that I hold. I'm definitely going to bring that to the Raiders' defensive line. I'm going to bring that energy and I'm really happy to be an Oakland Raider."

**Q: How difficult was it going through the ACL tear? Do you think it took you some time to get back to 100 percent? Do you feel like you're there now?**

**Vanderdoes:** "Yes, 100 percent. I am definitely back 100 percent, very confident with the combine, the Senior Bowl. I got my explosiveness back. I got my speed back, my athleticism back. I am definitely at the top of shape right now, so I'm ready to get back to work and show them the player that they saw on the film and the player that they wanted to draft and I'm also looking to turn even more heads and do things that some people might expect that I couldn't do."

**Q: How much weight did you lose from the end of the season to the combine?**

**Vanderdoes:** "Forty pounds."

**Q: How much do you weigh now?**

**Vanderdoes:** "I weigh 302."

**Q: So you were 342?**

**Vanderdoes:** "Yeah, around there, 338, 340."

**Q: Were there other things that perhaps led to the tape that they didn't like in terms of being motivated or motivation? Were there things you had to find within yourself?**

**Vanderdoes:** "No, not that at all. I've never had a problem with motivation. I've always been a motivated kid. This season, my weight just got out of hand. That's the way it was. I played on a high ankle sprain this season that I got rolled up on and I fought through with my team. I never once thought about quitting or anything like that, so I kept going and kept playing and doing what's best because I love football. I missed a whole year of football in 2015 and that made me really realize how much I love this game."

**Q: Was your ACL tear still affecting you in your senior season?**

**Vanderdoes:** "No, not at all. My knee didn't hurt one single bit the whole season at all. Some people kind of misinterpret that my knee was hurt this past season. I had suffered those three ankle sprains and was out of shape and that was the biggest problem. I had suffered an ankle sprain a day or two before the Wazzou [Washington State] game and that was a game-time decision. Taped it up, fought through, kept playing on it. Right before the Colorado game, I sprained my ankle as well, re-sprained it. I got rolled up on. Taped it up, kept playing on it and same with the Stanford game. I had gotten rolled up as well, so I was playing, basically on one leg, so it was never an issue of my ACL hurting or it not being as strong."

**Q: Have the Raiders given you any indication that the weight you're at now is the weight they want you at?**

**Vanderdoes:** "We'll get more in depth with that once everything settles down and the draft is over. They'll kind of map out a plan on what they expect of me as far as the weight they want me at and how they see me fit in the scheme exactly. I'm guessing the weight that they'd want right now would be the ideal weight that they'd like to see me play at."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: You tweeted that whoever drafts you is going to get the biggest steal of the draft. Is that the kind of confidence that you're going to bring to the Raiders?**

**Vanderdoes:** "One hundred percent. I 100 percent am going to come in and I'm going to compete to my full ability. I'm coming in expecting to contribute and play right away. That's the mindset that I've always had. I've come with that mindset that I need to be the guy to step in and do what I do and dominate. I definitely think people slept on me a little bit this past offseason. I love the fact that they slept on me, I think that's what motivated me every morning waking up, knowing that I get to prove people wrong. I think I've done a good job so far of that and I'm going to keep doing as well being an Oakland Raider because I know I'm at the bottom again. I have to work my way back up."

**Q: You seem pretty fired up.**

**Vanderdoes:** "Absolutely."

**Q: Being a Sacramento guy were you a 49ers fan or Raiders fan?**

**Vanderdoes:** "Most of my family is Raiders fans. Some Niners fans, but I think those Niners fans are Raiders fans today, a lot of people that I know in my hometown. I'd say Auburn is a little Raider Nation bubble now, for sure. They've always had my back and they've always supported my dream and what I've done. I'm definitely excited to share that experience with them."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Fourth-Round Draft Pick T David Sharpe Conference Call**

**Q: Can you talk about your decision to come out as a junior? Why did you feel now was the right time to go to the NFL?**

**Sharpe:** "There was a lot of talk with my coaches and my family. I had pretty good games at the collegiate level. I went against some of the top guys and got some pretty good film, started 26 games, and they thought it was best for me to come out this year."

**Q: What has Luke Del Rio told you about the Raiders and his dad coaching here?**

**Sharpe:** "It's actually crazy, man. It's a great offense, everything. He actually texted me this morning and said his dad called him and asked about me. There was a little hint there, so that was cool."

**Q: Some NFL scouts have said you are legally blind in your right eye. Can you address that?**

**Sharpe:** "I'm not blind. I'm not legally blind. The information is false, all of it is false. I just had a little cataract removal when I was younger and I've been battling that since I was young. But it doesn't affect my play or vision or anything. I'm not blind."

**Q: Does that make you mad that that's out there and still being talked about?**

**Sharpe:** "Kind of. It doesn't really make me mad. I just brush it off. It was just false and I addressed it."

**Q: Do you think you can play on both sides, left and right?**

**Sharpe:** "Yes, I believe I can play on both sides."

**Q: What was your time like at Florida in terms of how you felt you progressed? What was important in your development?**

**Sharpe:** "Every year progressing and getting better, really. Just being behind some of those guys in my freshman year, learning the way they did things. With [Florida Head Coach] Coach [Jim] McElwain coming in and teaching us discipline and how to practice, things like that. Taking the game more serious, being in the classroom, being in the film room, going hard at practice, he didn't make it easy. Becoming that leader and leading by example, that helped a lot."

**Q: Do you feel like these false reports out there about your eye contributed to you being available on Day 3?**

**Sharpe:** "I'm not sure. It could be the reason why, but I'm not sure."

**Q: When you were at the combine, did they have you perform an eye test?**

**Sharpe:** "Yes, but they pretty much already knew about it so I didn't have to do much for the eye test."

**Q: Is your vision worse in your right eye compared to your left?**

**Sharpe:** "Yes, it's a little blurrier but not much."

**Q: But, it doesn't affect you on the field?**

**Sharpe:** "No."

**Q: Before Luke reached out, did you have an idea the Raiders were interested?**

**Sharpe:** "I did a little bit. I didn't talk to them much at all actually, but I did at the combine. I had a formal interview with them and things like that, but other than that I didn't talk to them much."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Fifth-Round Draft Pick LB Marquel Lee Conference Call**

**Q: What sense did you have during the pre-draft process that the Raiders were interested in you?**

**Lee:** "Until the combine, I really didn't know about any interest the Raiders had in me. After I did the bench press at the combine, the coach came to me. We talked a little bit, rapped a little bit. Then after the combine up until this point, my agent has been telling me that the Raiders really liked me and were going to try to get me in the draft."

**Q: How about your pro day?**

**Lee:** "I can't remember if any Raider scouts were there, but I was just trying to show what I can do. I can move well in coverage. I have good footwork and all my talent."

**Q: You didn't run at the combine, right?**

**Lee:** "No, sir."

**Q: Was that an injury thing?**

**Lee:** "It was kind of an injury thing. It was mainly I got injured in January. I hurt my foot. My timeline to peak at the combine wasn't set. I was on schedule to peak at my pro day, so I ran at my pro day."

**Q: When was your Pro Day?**

**Lee:** "March 8, I think, or March 9. One of those two."

**Q: What was your time on your 40-yard dash there?**

**Lee:** "I think my fastest clock was 4.69, 4.7, something like that."

**Q: Some linebackers are more sideline to sideline coverage type of guys. Would you probably say that although you'll do whatever is asked for you, you're more of a run fit, give you a lane and let you wreak havoc in it, type of physical guy?**

**Lee:** "Yeah, I'm a physical player at the line of scrimmage. I shed blocks really well, so I feel like I can go sideline to sideline as well. Just being a motor type guy. My motor, I don't see it ever stopping in games. Just being put where I'm best seen fit. Anything I'm asked, I'll do to help contribute to the team. That's the type of person I am. You can ask anybody that's been around me for my whole life. I'm just trying to learn."

**Q: Is there a spot where you feel most comfortable?**

**Lee:** "I mean, I played Mike my whole college career. I would say I'd be most comfortable there. In the 4-2-5, it's a little different than other defenses. I feel like I can play at any spot."

**Q: Are you aware of the big whole they have in the middle?**

**Lee:** "Yeah, the general manager explained that to me and everything, and said he wanted me to come in and compete at that spot. That's what I plan to do."

**Q: Are you aware of the big hole they have here in the middle of the defense?**

**Lee:** "Yeah, the general manager explained that to me, and everything and he said he wanted me to come in and compete at that spot. That's what I plan to do."

**Q: How much did Wake Forrest utilize you in coverage and how comfortable are you?**

**Lee:** "I mean, I felt like I was pretty good in coverage over my years. Just polishing up my attack on the ball and going after the ball, I think that's where I need to improve myself. In coverage, I mean zone dropping, I have good hips, I've shown that I can cover at the combine. I mean, I do any of the drills and stuff at the combine that translate to the field. I feel like I can cover anybody."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q: Did McKenzie say he wants you to compete at the Mike spot?**

**Lee:** "Not necessarily the Mike spot. He said just come in and compete at any of them. I mean, wherever I'm at or to be put, that's where I'll compete at."

**Q: How much special teams have you played in your career?**

**Lee:** "A lot. I mean not a lot, but a fair amount I would say. I mean, I played all four facets of special teams my freshman year, played three facets of special teams my sophomore year and then as my play time has risen, I've been asked to do less and less. But, I still play kickoffs some and I played on the punt team this year as well."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Seventh-Round Draft Pick S Shalom Luani Conference Call**

**Q: How was today for you? Nerve-wracking or did you know you'd get picked?**

**Luani:** "I don't know what to say. I'm really excited to be part of the Raider family."

**Q: When did you start playing football?**

**Luani:** "As a freshman in high school."

**Q: Why'd you switch from soccer to football?**

**Luani:** "I just gave it a shot, to be honest. I have a couple cousins that had played football before me and they were really good so that's inspirational for me. I just gave it a try and that's how it started."

**Q: Are there skills that translate from soccer to football?**

**Luani:** "I would say my footwork and my speed. In soccer, we run a lot and do a lot of footwork and stuff and that translates to football, and my footwork as a DB."

**Q: Where were you following the draft?**

**Luani:** "I was following the draft here in Arizona with my family and friends."

**Q: Did you know the Raiders were interested?**

**Luani:** "Yes, I knew when I came to visit and stuff like that. It was exciting."

**Q: I know you spent a little time at Chabot College, did you and Coach Del Rio talk about Hayward since he's from there?**

**Luani:** "Oh yeah, he talked a little bit about Hayward, but not really."





## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Seventh-Round Draft Pick T Jylan Ware Conference Call**

**Q: Did you have any contact with the Raiders leading up to the draft?**

**Ware:** "I had one of those top 30 visits going on to the Raiders. I know I talked to a couple of scouts during the season, but that was all my experience that I had with them."

**Q: When you had the visit out here, did you think it was a possibility that you would come here?**

**Ware:** "Everybody seemed to be really supportive. Everybody seemed to be really behind me when I was there. I had my mind out to it. So yes, it did seem like a possibility."

**Q: Do you have any idea why you jumped on the draft radar late?**

**Ware:** "I would say maybe because I had a bigger platform, you know all-star games and pro day and everything I was doing at the time. I think that's pretty much it. I just had a bigger stage because you know Alabama State isn't the biggest school."

**Q: Did you put on weight since Alabama State? What are you at right now?**

**Ware:** "Yeah, I put on a little weight toward the end. I'm around 315 right now, 310, 315."

**Q: Have the Raiders talked with you about the size they'd like you to get up to?**

**Ware:** "Not really. They told me I was at pretty good weight where I'm at now. So, that's where I kind of stayed. If they say anything differently, I'm willing to do whatever they need."

**Q: Were you lighter than you usually are at the combine?**

**Ware:** "I wasn't invited at the combine. I was a little heavier at my pro day. I was told to put on a little bit of weight by certain teams so I did."

**Q: Mike Mayock referred to you as a 310-pound dancing bear. What do you think of that description?**

**Ware:** "I think that's an interesting description. A lot of people have said I'm very big and I am very athletic. I am able to move a little better than a lot of people my size, so I can see why he drew that comparison."

**Q: Did you have scholarship offers in basketball, too?**

**Ware:** "A couple of teams were talking about it. Not full on like, 'We're going to offer you a scholarship.' A lot of teams were talking to me about basketball scholarships and other sports."

**Q: Was it a tough decision picking football over basketball?**

**Ware:** "Oh no, it was an easy decision. Football is what I wanted to do, always what I wanted to do. Other sports were kind of just for fun."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Seventh-Round Draft Pick RB Elijah Hood Conference Call**

**Q: How would you describe today?**

**Hood:** "Yeah, I had no clue what was coming, so I was kind of sitting here waiting. I was getting all kinds of butterflies and everything. I finally got that call. I'm too blessed. I feel like the most blessed individual in the world right now. I want to thank God and just be grateful for the opportunity that's set before me. That's all I can say."

**Q: What do you think of joining the Raiders' running back group?**

**Hood:** "I mean Marshawn Lynch, growing up watching him play, honestly as a runner, that's one of the running backs I tried to model my game after the most. I mean Beast Mode. I just can't wait to be in that running back room with him. He has so much to offer. He's a veteran. The way he conducts business, he's a professional. I feel like I have so many questions I need to ask him and learn from him about the game and NFL and what it takes to be successful. It's just so much to take in. I'm about to be in a room with this guy. He's literally the man who I wanted to become as a running back. I have nothing but blessings upon blessing coming into this situation. It's like God selected it for me. I can't ask for more."

**Q: Can you even imagine the idea of heir apparent to a guy like Lynch?**

**Hood:** "I know. I couldn't imagine something like that. I'm sitting here right now and it's amazing. I have nothing but work ahead of me, and I can't wait to do it. I just want to get through it because I can't wait to be out there in Oakland and Las Vegas. I'm just trying to do what I can to help this team out. I'm Silver and Black all the way through now, just like that. I don't have anything else but God and blessings on me. It's just work. I can't wait."

**Q: Have you considered playing in a fullback role?**

**Hood:** "I will do whatever it takes. Honestly, they told me that they wanted me to slim down to get prepared for running back. I already slimmed down. The situation is already set. I'll do whatever it takes. I'm just ready to play ball. Get me on the field. Get me the chance. I'm just ready to work. There's nothing else. I'll do what it takes. They give me a job, I'm going to go and get it."

**Q: You said you slimmed down, what is your weight now?**

**Hood:** "I'm 220. I've been running straight sprints. All I've been doing is running sprints. Just trying to get as fast as I can. I'm just ready to do what I can."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Raiders Seventh-Round Draft Pick DT Treyvon Hester Conference Call**

**Q: What was the whole process like for you today?**

**Hester:** "Just honestly being patient the whole way through. I didn't really have views of going or going late. I just really wanted to hear my name. It's an honor to be able to come to a city like this."

**Q: Did you have any idea that the Raiders were interested in you?**

**Hester:** "Not really. But, if I was on their radar, it's an enjoyable moment right now and I'm just filled with a lot of emotion."

**Q: Do you see yourself fitting in as a three-technique on the defensive line?**

**Lee:** "I'm not limiting myself to any category. I can play anywhere on the defensive front, wherever you feel like lining me up at. Wherever my best fit is for this team, to help this defense become better, I'm ready to do it."

**Q: What does it mean to you to become a part of the Oakland Raiders?**

**Hester:** "Oh, man. It's a historic franchise. I'm born and raised in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, so I know about football. I was raised around football and I know about the Raider Nation. I know about the fans, the fan atmosphere down there. I know that it's crazy, I know that they love their team and I'm just ready to come out there and bleed for them."



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

### **Press Conference following the 2017 NFL Draft**

#### **General Manager Reggie McKenzie**

**Q: What do you like about David Sharpe?**

**McKenzie:** "He's big. He's a guy that can play both tackle positions. He's a big man, big wingspan, boatloads of talent, good feet and very coordinate with his hands and feet. He has the ability to move people and also stay in front of the pass-pro guy. We like a lot of things. He's got a lot of refinement that he has to do, just like any young player, but we like his potential."

**Q: There were some reports that he was legally blind in his right eye. What's been your findings?**

**McKenzie:** "We've had all that researched. He's fine. He has great peripheral vision. I don't know what the formal diagnosis is, I'm not up here to be a doctor, but he's fine with his vision. He's not legally blind."

**Q: You got a linebacker. What do you like out of Marquel Lee?**

**McKenzie:** "Number one, he's very instinctive. He's an inside linebacker primarily, he's a middle linebacker. He plays with strength. He has a feel for the game. He's a great size. He's what we look for in a big, middle linebacker."

**Q: You took six defensive players overall, how much do you think you can get out of them?**

**McKenzie:** "How much do I think I can get out of this group? I hope a lot. They're all going to come in and compete. We're signing guys post-draft also. We're going to give them all the opportunity to compete with the veterans that we already have on board. We hope that out of it all, the competition part of it, the cream rises and we have a very good 53-man roster."

**Q: Elijah Hood had a lot more production in 2015 than he did last year. Were the injuries the biggest difference?**

**McKenzie:** "We feel like he's going to be a good player. He did have a couple injuries, but not to the point that we see a big drop-off. Their offense has gotten better with the quarterback and the way they're throwing the ball around a little bit and we think that played a little part in it. We like him. He's a big, physical running back and that's what he liked about him."

**Q: It seems like almost never does anybody know exactly who you're going to take. Even the players that come on the conference calls, the majority of them didn't know the Raiders were going to pick them. Is that how you like it?**

**McKenzie:** "I'm not going to say we try to hide things, but we like a lot of players. When our pick comes, I'm not going to sit up here and say other players were not picked right before us because that happens. We know who we like. We try not to inform a player as much to kind of let them know. We feel good about the interview process, attending pro day, meeting with them at the combine, whatever. If we feel good about it, we kind of lay low from that point. It's a constant study in talking to others about that person. We get our information one way or the other. I'll call you next time before I pick and maybe that'll help you out." *(laughter)*

**Q: Reggie, you say let the board talk to you as the draft goes on. Now that the draft is done, what do you say back to the board? How would you describe this draft?**

**McKenzie:** "Talking to the board. I've gone crazy. *(laughing)* I think the way it fell, we got a lot of players, at the end of the day, it looks like we needed. We felt like we got a lot of good players with high talent levels from top to bottom. Some are going to be more raw than others. We're going to have to see down the line, more so. I think talking to the board, you said, 'Job well done.'" *(laughing)*



## **Oakland Raiders Transcript**

### **Q: What do you like about Shalom Luani?**

**McKenzie:** "That guy is a playmaker. You can look at one quarter of football and you know he loves the game. He's very aware as a football player. You can tell he's a student of the game. You can tell he loves the game. He is a, as they say down south, a football playing Jessie. Whatever that means. *(laughing)* It's a country saying, but that's what he is. He's tough. He's physical. He has ball skills. He can kind of do it all. They did a lot of things with him, so it's hard to pigeon hole him as a particular type of safety because he's more like a rover. He does a lot of things. We just like the football player."

### **Q: Do you like having a lot of picks late in the draft? What does that do for you?**

**McKenzie:** "Here's the deal. When we feel like we have more priority free agents that we really like than one particular player that we just have to get, I'd rather get the numbers. Because sometimes I can like three guys more than just gung-ho about one. So, that's the case this year. There was a lot of guys that I really wanted to add to the roster. So when I had the opportunity to make a trade, I did so, and I was still able to get the players that I coveted."

### **Q: How do you feel about the linebacker group adding Marquel Lee? Does Neiron Ball still have a chance?**

**McKenzie:** "Well Neiron is still going through rehab. So, it depends on how he feels physically. We feel good about Marquel and whoever else we bring in. We're just going to let them all compete. [Ben] Heeney will come back. We got Jelani [Jenkins]. We got all the other veterans that were here from last year. We're just going to let it play out and see how it goes."

### **Q: What do you think about Jylan Ware?**

**McKenzie:** "He's extremely athletic for a big man. Great size and great length that really registered in his play. He's a guy that he's going to need a lot of work from a technique and strength standpoint. He is very talented. He plays extremely hard. We're excited to get him where we did."

### **Q: How important was it to add Gareon Conley and Obi Melifonwu?**

**McKenzie:** "You have to have speed to play the game the way it's going now. You have to be able to play in space. You have to be able to match up. We took all of that into consideration when we brought these players in. To the players that you mentioned, Obi and Conley, both of those guys have great range, speed, very athletic. So, they make tackles in space. That's one of the things that we looked at. Make sure short to medium plays don't turn into big plays. I think they will help in that scenario."

### **Q: Is the door still open for Perry Riley Jr.?**

**McKenzie:** "We'll see. That's an ongoing evaluation. We'll see what we got coming in. We'll have the rookie mini-camp and then we'll have everybody together. If we need to add someone else, we will. No, I never close the door until it's time to get the roster together."

### **Q: What does Jelani Jenkins bring into the mix with the linebackers? Is he an inside linebacker and can he start?**

**McKenzie:** "Yes, he's an inside linebacker. He's started a lot in this league. He too, is another guy that's highly instinctive and aware football player. He plays in space. Now, his game more is the weak inside linebacker, but he's played both. But, he doesn't have the same stature as Marquel Lee in size. But, he is a good, physical football player we just wanted to add to the roster. So, he'll compete with the rest."

### **Q: What does it mean to get Marshawn Lynch in the door on Wednesday?**

**McKenzie:** "Well, it was a process. A process mostly because there were a lot more parties involved. So, coming out of retirement, you know, he's already on another team's roster. So, we [needed] to get permission to do this and that. It was a process. We weren't rushed for time, but I just wanted to make sure everybody was on the same page and it never wavered. It was just all about the timing of it. We're extremely excited of the way it turned out. We're excited, he's excited, and that's what excites me, the fact that he's really ready to put on a Raiders uniform."



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

**Q:** When we talked to Elijah Hood on the conference call, he started crying tears of joy. Is that one of the best parts about your job, calling these guys and telling them their dream is coming true?

**McKenzie:** "No question. I remember the dream, so yes. No question."