



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **WR Amari Cooper**

**Q: How does it feel coming into camp after the season you had last year?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, it feels great to be back here at camp, to be back. It feels good."

**Q: Are you aware that you're younger than some of these rookies?**

**Cooper:** "Nah. I'm not aware of that. Who am I younger than?"

**Q: Obi Melifonwu.**

**Cooper:** "Oh, really?"

**Q: What did you do differently during your offseason?**

**Cooper:** "I always workout hard in the offseason, so I would say probably about the same. I had some time off to spend with my family, so it was cool."

**Q: What differences have you noticed about the offense from last year? Are they subtle changes?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, there's definitely subtle changes because we have a new offensive coach, but pretty much the same at the same time."

**Q: Do you think you guys will be taking more deep shots to stretch defenses this year?**

**Cooper:** "I mean, hopefully. I would like for that to happen."

**Q: What have you taken in these past two years from your experience playing in the league that you've been able to apply in your third season?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, I mean I definitely learned from the past two seasons. The season in the NFL is longer than the season in college. That's one of the things I've learned, like how to take care of your body throughout the season and stuff like that."

**Q: Do you think about what could have happened last year or are you already focused on this year and what are your expectations for this season?**

**Cooper:** "Never looking too far back because there's not really anything we can do about it except learn. I think we've learned from last year and we're just moving forward. The expectation is to win."

**Q: Do you feel bigger and stronger this year and will you be able to translate that onto the field?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, I mean, I always get bigger in the offseason because I'm training. Hopefully it translates to the field."

**Q: Do you plan on playing bigger this year?**

**Cooper:** "I am bigger than I have been, but I usually lose a couple of pounds during camp. I don't know."

**Q: What's your weight at now?**

**Cooper:** "Like 217."

**Q: Where did you play last year?**

**Cooper:** "Like 210."



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**Q: Is there something that you've specifically focused on this offseason going into next season to improve in?**

**Cooper:** "My main focus this season is to take advantage of every opportunity that I have. If I get the ball thrown to me 10 times in practice tomorrow, I want to catch 10 passes. I just want to maximize my opportunities."

**Q: What's the comfort level like between you and Derek Carr compared to your first training camp?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, we had a great mini-camp. We had great OTAs. We've definitely grown in our relationship, and I feel that he trusts me more. I definitely trust him more. He knows how I'm going to run my routes. I know how he's going to throw every route. So, we've definitely grown."

**Q: Does adding a guy like Marshawn Lynch change the team in the locker room or on the field at all? He has that swagger but he can also produce on the field. This team has been somewhat conservative when it comes to words. You've been short with words. Does that dynamic in the locker room change what you guys do on the field and the confidence?**

**Cooper:** "I don't know. That's kind of a hard question to really answer. For real. But I do know that Beast Mode is a great player, so he's going to add a lot of value to our team."

**Q: Are you hoping to make more plays where you get to show your athleticism and make tough catches?**

**Cooper:** "Oh yeah, of course. I definitely would love for my quarterback to trust me even when I don't really look like I'm open. Just throw it up there and depend on me to make a play. So of course, yeah."

**Q: How does that aggressiveness translate into getting more opportunities in the red zone?**

**Cooper:** "I'm not really sure."

**Q: Is getting more targets in the end zone something you've thought about more?**

**Cooper:** "As a skill player on offense, you want the ball every play if you can. So yeah."

**Q: What changes coming into this year after having a winning season last year?**

**Cooper:** "I mean it definitely gives us confidence going into this season knowing that we can win games. That's what it's all about. It's all about winning games. So I would say it gives us confidence."

**Q: Has having back-to-back 1,000-yard receiving seasons given you more confidence in yourself?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah. I mean 1,000 yards, it's not really that hard to get a 1,000 yards in a 16-game season. I've had a lot of games where I didn't produce like I thought I should've. I definitely have a lot to improve on and I feel like I can make that improvement this year."

**Q: Do you come out of most games thinking about what you left out there rather than what you did?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, I think every player should have that mentality."

**Q: How do you go about bulking up without losing any explosion in terms of training and diet?**

**Cooper:** "Well the way I go about it is I just train my hardest. I just go out there to the gym and just work every day. When you do that, you'll gain a lot of muscle."

**Q: Do you think you'll be bigger than 210 when the regular season starts?**

**Cooper:** "I'm not sure."

**Q: Do you fear that it impacts your speed or do you feel like you get faster as you get bigger and stronger?**

**Cooper:** "Yeah, I mean you actually do get fast when you get stronger in your lower body."



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**Q: Have any rookie receivers stood out to you?**

**Cooper:** "I haven't been here during the pre-camp, but they all stood out to me in OTAs and mini-camp."

### **C Rodney Hudson**

**Q: How was your wedding?**

**Hudson:** "It was fun. It was a blessing. It's a blessing to celebrate with some teammates and family and friends."

**Q: Does it change things at all when you think about being a husband now?**

**Hudson:** "Not a whole lot for me. Me and my wife have been together for a while, so not a whole lot."

**Q: Do the expectations for this team change the vibe going into camp?**

**Hudson:** "We take it one day at a time. I think all our guys can say you can't look too far ahead. You have to take it one day at a time. Stay in the moment. One meeting at a time, one practice at a time because looking that far down the road, the season is so long."

**Q: Is that something you have to caution young guys not to get caught up into?**

**Hudson:** "We're constantly talking to them anyways. Just trying to bring them along. That's part of our job, to bring the young guys along. It's part of your role as an older guy, to bring the young guys along. That happens constantly anyways."

**Q: Gabe Jackson's contract came through when you were at your bachelor party and you couldn't get him to buy one dinner?**

**Hudson:** "No, he was good. We were just trying to have a good time. I'm happy for him. It was well deserved."

**Q: What was that experience like being there and seeing it all come together?**

**Hudson:** "It's definitely gratifying, I guess you could say, to see a young guy who has just been putting in work and just working and not focusing on anything else. Just working and trying to get better every day. It really makes me proud."

**Q: Is it nice to work at a place where they value interior linemen?**

**Hudson:** "Yeah. Yeah, we're a big part. Everybody is a big part, but the offensive line is unique. You have to have five guys working together, focusing on one thing. So, yeah."

**Q: There's a report that Donald Penn is not going to show up because of contract issues.**

**Hudson:** "We've talked throughout the offseason. I haven't quite spoken to him today, but those things are going to work themselves out at some point."

**Q: How did it feel to have success last year?**

**Hudson:** "It just, honestly, keeps you hungry to take that next step, to go farther and win. Like I said, we're taking it a day at a time. Not looking 10 weeks from now or five weeks from now or tomorrow. We're focusing on today and focusing on getting better and focusing on what we need to do."



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**Q: How much pride do you guys take in the offensive line knowing that you can tear anybody apart?**

**Hudson:** "We take a lot of pride in it. It's part of our job. To play at this level, you have to love it. You can't just like to play, you have to love to play. We take a lot of pride in it."

**Q: How eager are you to block for Marshawn Lynch and see him play in pads?**

**Hudson:** "Very, very eager. He's going to do really well for us. Excited to have him. Looking forward to working with him."

**Q: What is Penn's value to the offensive line?**

**Hudson:** "He's been a big part of us. I've been here two years and he's played well. Like I said, with whatever is going on, it's going to work itself out. That's usually how it goes."

**Q: How tough is it to see Austin Howard say he's leaving?**

**Hudson:** "You know, that's the tough part about this business. There's so much turnover every year. That's just the tough part about it. It's part of it, unfortunately. We wish him well."

**Q: Can you put your finger on why the offensive line had so much success last year?**

**Hudson:** "Well, first of all, we're coached really well. We have some really good players in the room. I think the most important part is we all work well together. That's the big part. It's not about one guy playing well or four guys playing well. It's about five guys playing well, communicating, which I think we do really well. Off the field, communicating with each other on how the other person sees it. Like I said, [offensive line] coach [Mike] Tice does a great job with us. We're also surround by some really good skill players. They help us out a lot."

**Q: Have the changes with the offensive coordinator been subtle?**

**Hudson:** "I think every coach is different. Every coach is different, but football is football as far as plays being ran and what not. I know for us, I won't speak for skilled positions, but it's been a good transition. We're excited."

**Q: What's your reaction to all the buzz around the team?**

**Hudson:** "I don't really watch a lot of T.V. like that. I don't really focus on it too much. Like I said, just focusing on one day at a time. Being in it for a few years now, that's something that I've learned. You can't look too far ahead. You have to focus on what's now and take that task at hand with what you have to do today."

### **LB Marquel Lee**

**Q: I know you start practice tomorrow but what has this whole week been like for you?**

**Lee:** "Just prepping, getting ready for the real thing. Rookies going over basic stuff defensive-wise, offensive-wise, special teams. Getting into the swing of things and practicing again."

**Q: Is there a lot of overlap from the spring?**

**Lee:** "Yeah, I would say so. Getting back from that month off and getting into the swing of things. Getting in with the guys and having chemistry again, playing with each other again and things like that."

**Q: I'm sure you stayed in your play book over that six weeks break, does it feel like you are picking up where you left off?**

**Lee:** "Yeah, coach preached that we weren't starting over when we came back, that we were picking up where we left off and advance and get ready for the season."



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**Q: What's your mindset coming in with no clear starting for linebacker, do you come in with expectations getting that starting role, do you come in saying I just want to make the team?**

**Lee:** "I feel like its mixed emotions. Of course I would love to get that starting position but I'm here to compete, I'm here to earn the spot just come in, compete, make myself better and make the team better."

**Q: Do you feel better knowing this team has that funk behind it, that they are in the playoffs now? This used to be a team no one wanted to come to and now the expectations are different. When you were drafted, were you like, "Yeah now I'm going to a team that's established."**

**Lee:** "Yeah, definitely. I felt energized and felt good coming into this situation and organization. Having watching the playoffs last year made me excited about this year and what's to come."

**Q: What do you expect for training camp?**

**Lee:** "The grind, that's all I've been told by the guys in the league. Just to grind and stay constantly in your playbook, stay focused, don't let up and just give it your all."

**Q: I know it's early, but is there a mentor for you, has someone pulled you aside and made that connection yet?**

**Lee:** "It's a little early. I haven't made that connection yet but I'm sure it will happen throughout camp. We have a lot of guys who are veteran guys who I've looked up to when I was playing, Khalil Mack and Bruce Irvin. I'm looking forward to working with those guys and getting better with them."

### **S Obi Melifonwu**

**Q: Are you happy to get your deal done and begin camp?**

**Melifonwu:** "Yeah, it was a long process, but I'm happy it's over with and I just get to play football."

**Q: When you were drafted by the Raiders, what were your first thoughts?**

**Melifonwu:** "Excited."

**Q: Did you expect them to draft you or was it surprising?**

**Melifonwu:** "It actually really came out of the blue. I met them one time at the NFL Combine, talked to them one time, but I was honestly surprising, but I'm excited it happened."

**Q: What do you expect out of yourself this season and how do you think you fit with this defense?**

**Melifonwu:** "I definitely expect myself to make a big impact, hopefully on special teams and alongside the defense. I'm a guy that holds myself to a high standard, so I think I should definitely do something to help the team win."

**Q: What's it like to have somebody like Reggie Nelson with you in the room?**

**Melifonwu:** "It's honestly a blessing to have somebody, a pro, he comes in here and handles his business. Really pick his brain to find things to help my game become better is definitely going to be something I look forward to."

**Q: How do you want your name correctly pronounced?**

**Melifonwu:** "I want to go by Obi Melifonwu."



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**Q: Would you say that Nelson is a guy whom you have looked to the most?**

**Melifonwu:** "I feel like all the guys I have gravitated towards an equal amount. Everybody gives me something different, so there's not really one guy in particular. I'm just excited to be a part of the team."

**Q: Is there any catch up that you're having to play after missing the first couple of days of pre-camp?**

**Melifonwu:** "No. During OTAs, I had a good OTAs, good rookie mini-camp. I was in my playbook a lot this offseason. So, there was really no big deal to get back into it."

**Q: Were you confident that your deal would get done before today?**

**Melifonwu:** "Of course. Of course."

**Q: How would you like to be known as a player, can you define yourself?**

**Melifonwu:** "That's actually really hard to do that. I think I'm a guy that does a lot of great things well. I just want to be known as an all-around great football player, an all-around great teammate and an all-around great person."

**Q: What about as a player?**

**Melifonwu:** "I think I want to be [known] as a guy that has good range, a guy that can close and a guy that can make plays."

**Q: What are your thoughts on possibly playing a hybrid-type role?**

**Melifonwu:** "I'm excited about it. It's something that's new to me, but with the coaching staff it's definitely something that can be learned."

**Q: What do you think the biggest difficulty is with that position?**

**Melifonwu:** "Just run fits, run-pass conflict, especially in the NFL. You have teams that playaction pass and do things like that. So, that's definitely going to be something that is going to have to be learned."

**Q: What is the biggest difference between what you've learned in mini-camp and what you've done in college?**

**Melifonwu:** "I think it's the game speed. Everything happens so much quicker. In the NFL, everybody is fast and the quarterbacks are a lot more elite. So, definitely the game speed and just slowing the game down."

**Q: How does the playbook from here to college differ?**

**Melifonwu:** "It's really not that much of a difference. In college, I went through three different coaches, three different defensive schemes, so I'm a guy that can pick up a playbook pretty well."

**Q: What was the experience playing against tight ends in the spring?**

**Melifonwu:** "It's fun. I like to think of myself as a guy that can cover man, can also cover in space, play the post. So, it's definitely a challenge, but it's something that I'm looking forward to."

**Q: What was it like going against a type of player like Jared Cook with his size and speed combination and what will it do for your preparation into the season?**

**Melifonwu:** "It will work wonders. Working on leverage, working on his route stem and just really being able to lock on a guy like that is definitely going to help during the season."

**Q: Are there any other receiver or tight ends that you've had some back-and-forth with conversations with?**

**Melifonwu:** "Not yet, not yet."



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**Q: Did you go out and buy something special when you signed your new deal?**

**Melifonwu:** "I was just honestly excited to get the deal done. I'm just really excited. Just focused on football now."

**Q: Who's your roommate at camp?**

**Melifonwu:** "Brady [Sheldon]."

**Q: Have you kept in touch with Gareon Conley?**

**Melifonwu:** "Not really. Like I said, I was just focused on myself really, my family and getting out here and playing football."