



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Greg Olson

Q: Derek [Carr] said he is still trying to find that middle ground. Where do you see him in terms of finding out when to be aggressive and when not to?

Coach Olson: "I just think it's more a matter of situational awareness. In that situation, where we were at in the game, how it started and how the drive processed throughout that series. Being more aware of clock management and situational awareness is probably the biggest thing. We certainly like his aggressiveness and we are always going to coach aggressiveness. He saw that as the opportunity, he felt like, that time to take advantage of the matchup outside but we will do a better job with him in the future."

Q: When Derek was a rookie you guys realized that this guy is ready. Cleveland is figuring that out now with [Baker] Mayfield. How do you know when to pull that trigger with your rookie?

Coach Olson: "A lot of it is the makeup of the player. I think when you see Baker Mayfield, he had a lot of success in college much like Derek. He played a lot of football games, much like Derek did in college. He's got, certainly, a great passion for the game. You see that in him and the way he plays. I'm sure it's very similar to the way he prepares during the week. I think as a coaching staff when you see how a quarterback prepares during the week you got a pretty good feel for whether or not he is ready for the game."

Q: You guys face a lot of good pass rushers in the division. Where does [Cleveland DE] Myles Garrett fit in?

Coach Olson: "They've all been good. He is another one of them in a long line throughout the season. Every team it seems like has one of those premier pass rushers. He's a younger player right now in this league that's emerging. Certainly, we will have our hands full, but he's a very solid pass rusher."

Q: They have had a lot of takeaways this year. Is this a team that takes chances defensively or how have they gotten them?

Coach Olson: "It's kind of a [Cleveland defensive coordinator] Gregg Williams style of defense you know? It presents a lot of different issues for quarterbacks and if you are not up on your game poor decisions are made, and they have done that. Throughout his career, I think Gregg is always about trying to confuse the quarterback with different looks. They have had success with it so far this year."

Q: How have you felt about your interior running game so far? It seemed like you started to get it going with Lynch and Doug Martin getting some carries.

Coach Olson: "Yeah, we feel good about that. Really, again, we are only three games into it, but we like how it's coming together. I think [offensive line coach] Tom Cable is doing an excellent job and the guys up front have had a chance to play together now for a while, so that helps as well, being able to keep those five guys intact. Lost Donald [Penn] for a period last week but hopefully he's ready to go this week. I think it helps having the same five players in there along with the different types of backs that we have."



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Q: Martavis [Bryant] hasn't put up big numbers yet, but when you look back at the times he's in there do you see him impacting the game?

Coach Olson: "We feel great about our receiving core in general. Each week it's about matchups. We've had three different matchups for three different receivers. For our tight end in the first matchup and then obviously [Amari Cooper] Coop and Jordy [Nelson] in the last two games. We just think it's a matter of time before he breaks out as well, but we like where he is at right now."

Q: Is that something where you went into the game thinking week one will be Jared, week two Amari and week three will be Jordy? Or is that something that developed as the games went on?

Coach Olson: "I think as the game went on, but certainly when you go into the game there are matchups we are looking to and matchups we are looking to avoid. Follow the plan for those guys but again we've liked the core of receivers that we have. They have all proven they can step up when their number is called. We've seen that. We feel the same about Martavis Bryant, that when his number is called and when we find that matchup that week, he'll come through."

Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther

Opening Statement: "I'm going to say this once, and I probably won't talk about it again. I feel bad for the players. I feel bad for the officials. It's tough to watch. We saw a guy on the other team get hurt trying to avoid landing on the quarterback. The way I understood it is if you have a guy, you're sacking the quarterback and you intentionally try to put your weight on him. To me, that's what the rule is for, you know? The quarterback, I'm all for player safety. The quarter...I understand that they're high-paid guys, but a high-paid pitcher who gets a line drive back to his face and gets hit or on his shoulder. Or a high-paid batter is hit on a high fastball. I mean, there's risks to all of this stuff. It cost us seven points and the ball game the other day. To me, when I saw the play, there were seven guys around the quarterback, there's four or five guys around the quarterback, and we're just tackling. It's a form tackle. Nothing was intentional about the sack. It's just a shame. I think the rules have gotten a little bit out of control. You have to have a rules expert up in the booth to clarify what's a catch, what's not a catch. What's roughing the passer, what's not roughing the passer. We just got to work through it. I just wish that we could simplify the rules a little bit and get back to what football once was. I'm all for player safety, don't get me wrong, but there's just too many of these going on. I think on Monday night, there was three or four of them, and one of the guys on the Dolphins [DE William Hayes] actually is out for the season because he's trying to avoid not, you know, putting himself in a bad position to try to get the guy on the ground. It's just a shame. I think it's gotten a little bit over the skis a little bit with all of the rules. We just got to keep preaching it to them and do the best that we can with it."

Q: You can't change what you teach at all, other than what you already have?

Coach Guenther: "What Mo [Maurice Hurst] did, it was a form tackle on the guy, and when you're form-tackling a guy trying to...I mean, Tannehill's a big guy. There's a lot of big quarterbacks in this league. So, when he's just trying to take him, it wasn't like he picked him up and slammed him down. It was just a form tackle. So, I guess he's got to turn to the side, and it's hard. And all of a sudden, now you turn to the side, and the quarterback gets out of the grasp, and he's running, and I'm yelling at the kid for that. It's just frustrating. I just think, again, it's going to be the last time I talk about it. I just think it's gotten a



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little bit out of control with just all the clarity of everything and what we're doing. I just wish we made the rules a little bit simpler and got back to football the way we know it was. That's my rant for the day."

Q: The jet sweeps, you had a couple of them that went for big plays. Is there a common theme with them?

Coach Guenther: "You know, the first thing we have to do is we just have to identify that it's coming. We have to adjust to it accordingly. The second one that scored on us, I knew that when they were putting the guy in the game there was a good chance that that play would happen. So, I actually had a call to stop it. That's the frustrating part. It gets out and it shouldn't have gotten out. We just have to do a better job identifying the motion and those types of things and handling it better. We will, we worked on it this week. Hopefully it's not an issue."

Q: How do you explain the difference between your defensive numbers from the first half to the second half. Obviously the second half isn't what you want.

Coach Guenther: "Yeah, I don't know if...I've never been through anything like this really. You hold a team to, I think the first game was like 90 yards or 80 yards, the Rams. Then the second game was 84 yards. Last week I don't know what it was, but it was under 100 at halftime. For some reason or another, we just have to continue to do the things the right way. The plays and the calls weren't much different. We defended them good in the first half. I don't know if it's us running out of gas or mental lapses because we're new and everybody is new in this thing. I think we'll work through that and that's something that we're going to emphasize this week."

Q: Do you think conditioning could be a part of it?

Coach Guenther: "It could be. I mean it was 95 degrees or whatever it was two weeks in a row up in Denver and then in Miami. I don't blame that. We do enough running out here on the field to get it done. I just think it's more of mental lapse on some of the things that we've had. We haven't had a lot of blown assignments, really. Whether a guy gets beat 1-on-1 or they make a great throw. I thought the first touchdown they scored in the first half was just a tremendous throw and catch. We're right there and the guy got his feet in bounds. Sometimes that's going to happen. But I preach to the players, if we just do things the right way all the time and concentrate on what we're doing, that we're going to win more games than we're not. Sometimes a guy's going to come into the gym and score 50 points on you. You know what I'm saying? You can't control it. He's hitting every three. But if we can control the things we can control, we're going to be fine at the end."

Q: It seems like part of that disparity in the halves has been pass rush. I think all three of your sacks have come in the first half. Now you got a few guys injured. How much of your approach to that can be done schematically and how much is it guys learning their assignments?

Coach Guenther: "The front in particular, we've had quite a bit of new guys this early in the season go in there. The Clinton's [McDonald] and [Johnathan] Hankin's. Some of the other guys that have been in there that are new. Every week they are getting better and learning kind of what we want, so hopefully as we go that will continue to improve. That's what I'm looking for."



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Q: I think as a defensive coordinator you'd like the idea of facing a rookie making his first start? What is your assessment of him?

Coach Guenther: "He's a good player. It's funny because last time I played a rookie was against Cleveland and [Johnny] Manziel. He did the same thing. He came in the Buffalo game and then started the very next game against us. You know he's a good player. For a young guy he stands in the pocket and remains a passer which you don't always see that. He will move around some in the pocket, so we got to make it uncomfortable for him in the pocket. It seems like he's got good command of the offense so it will be a good challenge. They got a good team. I'm familiar with the coaching staff. Obviously, I worked with Hue [Jackson] and [Cleveland quarterback coach] Ken Zampese. Gone against [Cleveland offensive coordinator] Todd Haley many times in Pittsburgh so it will be a great challenge for us."

Q: Just to clarify, you said you were able to get that call in for the second jet sweep. You said you had a call ready for that?

Coach Guenther: "Yeah, when I saw the guy who ran the jet sweep the first time come in the game in that personnel grouping, I had a pretty good idea of what was coming. The call was in. It's just we got cut off and we weren't fast enough to get there. We just got to identify a little bit better. Again, it's just some of the things that when you are with a bunch of new guys for the first time, the first time is always new. As you go and build the repertoire of situations that you've seen with the group of guys you have, it becomes a lot more instinct. Right now, we are building towards that."

Q: Reggie Nelson has taken some heat in the last couple years but no one can seem to dislodge him from the starting lineup and coaches like him. What does he bring your defense and why do you like him?

Coach Guenther: "I just think, I watched tape last year. I watched the tape this year and I said this before with Reggie. Reggie didn't cost us a game here or a game there. There is 11 guys out there. Reggie is a veteran guy, he knows what to do. Obviously, Erik Harris played some in there so like I said before I'm rolling these guys through. I'm trying to put them in the best positions to utilize their skillset. Reggie is a guy, again, that gets a lot of heat. I don't understand totally why because there's 11 guys that put this thing together. I'm all for playing the best guys, trust me. I don't care if they are a 13-year pro or rookie player. If they are the best guys that we have available right now that's what's going to happen."