



## Oakland Raiders Transcript

### Head Coach Jon Gruden

**Q: What enticed you guys about C.J. Anderson?**

**Gruden:** "He's been a good player for a long time. Doug Martin hurt his knee and we're not 100 percent sure about his status for the game, although we think he'll be good to go. We can't take any precautions. We've got four games left to play and the Steelers blitz almost every play. We needed a back. Fortunately for us, C.J. Anderson was available and we're happy to have him."

**Q: Do you think it was just a bad fit for him in Carolina this year?**

**Gruden:** "Well, when you've got a guy like [Christian] McCaffrey, it's going to be hard to get any touches. Can't say I blame anybody for that. I don't know. I didn't really study the Carolina tape much, just the plays he played."

**Q: Are he and Doug similar?**

**Gruden:** "I think there are some similarities. They're both hard between the tackles. They can pick up blitzes. They're versatile. They're experienced. We felt with Martin's situation, already missing Marshawn Lynch, we couldn't take any precautions."

**Q: Has Ben Roethlisberger evolved?**

**Gruden:** "He doesn't look any different to me. He doesn't look any different to me when I was playing against him, when I was coaching last time or when I was in the booth or studying him now. He's still got a great physical presence in the pocket. He still creates a lot of offense when nothing is there with his scrambling. He's at his best when they need him the most. They need him a lot right now, so we're expecting the best from Roethlisberger on Sunday."

**Q: Mike Tomlin has done well for a long time. What do you like about his resume?**

**Gruden:** "He's an energetic coach. He's hired good assistants. They obviously know something about talent over there. They've been able to draft well. They know what Pittsburgh Steelers look like and smell like, and they've been able to develop them."

**Q: Talk about the rivalry here.**

**Gruden:** "When I was a kid, I remember watching those games. For the 'immaculate reception', it seemed like both teams were loaded with Pro Bowlers, future Hall of Famers and it was going to be a knock-down, drag-out, no matter where they played. So it will be cool seeing these two franchises go after each other again."

**Q: What's the best thing about Antonio Brown?**

**Gruden:** "They move him around everywhere. You don't know where he's going to be. He can run every route you dream up. I say that about other receivers but he can run double moves, he can run by you, he can run crossing routes, he's very good after the catch. What's the greatest thing about this man, I've told all of our receivers, if you get a chance to watch him practice, you'll see what unlocks the greatness in him. He's the hardest working man, I think, in football. Hardest working player I've ever seen practice. I've seen Jerry Rice, I've seen a lot of good ones, but I put Antonio Brown at the top. If there are any young wideouts out there, I'd go watch him practice. You figure out yourself why he's such a good player."

**Q: Why do you think Jared Cook is having a career year this season?**

**Coach Gruden:** "It's all coaching probably (*laughing*). He's really a good tight end. He's always been a good tight end. He's had good numbers and good statistics at Tennessee, St. Louis and certainly Green Bay. He had good numbers here last year. We're just trying our best to feature him every way we know how. He's also doing a lot in pass protection and the running game. He's got to be a Pro Bowl tight end this year, I think."



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**Q: Why did you bring in Damontre' Moore?**

**Coach Gruden:** "Well we just have some injuries. We're going to bring Kony Ealy back as well. Damontre' Moore is a guy that has a little history here. We've seen him play. We've had some association with him. We'll put Shilique Calhoun on injured/reserved. He's hurt. We let Fadol Brown go, so we're going to bring in Ealy and Damontre' Moore to fill that void. Hopefully they can deliver some plays for us. We need to improve there. We're going to put Martavis Bryant on injured reserved. We've signed Bene Benwikere, a corner, to help us there with Leon Hall's injury. We signed Denzelle Good, an offensive tackle from the Colts. We've had a busy couple of days here."

**Q: Is there a key to keeping guys in the right frame of mind when the season doesn't go as they thought?**

**Coach Gruden:** "We're not alone. We're not the only team. I know Green Bay is playing, Atlanta, they're both four wins I think. This is a tough league. You're going to be in it for seven or eight years, you're going to have some years where you're going to have to really prove your mental toughness. But we're playing for a lot. We're in our first year here. We feel like we're making some strides. Internally, we feel like offensively we're getting a lot better. Defensively, we're seeing a few players really step up. We're excited about. We need more of that. We're going to keep building, laying the bricks, trying to lay the foundation for the future of this football team."

**Q: There's a good mood in there among the guys. More so than you might think in a year that's not going well. Is that something you try to foster?**

**Coach Gruden:** "I hope so. I mean I want to have fun doing this. This is a great sport. This is a great time, I think. The Raiders, we're trying, like I said, to bring the right kind of people in here that can build a championship football team again. That includes the rookies. That includes the veterans. I think there's a good comradery, a good moral here. It's a credit to the veterans and the assistant coaches because usually I'm a grouchy son of a [expletive]."

### QB Derek Carr

**Q: What do you know about C.J. Anderson?**

**Carr:** "CJ is a great guy. Obviously, I competed against him. I know that his mom is a Raider fan, so shout out to mama for her son coming to play for the good guys. Nah, but he's a great guy. I saw him earlier this morning. He's a guy that obviously gets here early and is trying to figure things out, trying to learn protections and all those kind of things. Running, I guess, is easy for those guys. It's the pass game and figuring out those things. I love him and I'm glad that we have him. He's a good football player."

**Q: In the past, at the end of a tough year the mood in the locker room can be negative. It doesn't seem to be the case this year. What's been the key to fostering positivity, humor, or whatever it is, to keep going?**

**Carr:** "You and I both know. We've both been a part of that. I've seen times early on in my career where I'm like, 'Why is everybody so sad? We are playing in the NFL.' Obviously, we are not doing the things we want to do. I think the thing with this team is, we understand now the vision. We understand we are laying the foundation. We understand that whatever was here before, it's gone. We had to start it over and the way we wanted to start it over, we said, this is going to be a positive place. It's going to be a fun place to work and I've been a part of times where it's not fun to go to work, to be honest with you. That just makes it miserable for everybody. Again, I think I said it after the game, you play worse when that's the kind of atmosphere. I think our guys have really grabbed a hold of that, especially the young guys. I've been trying to instill that these times don't last. These tough times, it doesn't last. Obviously, it's tough and it's hard. Trust me, if you continue to do right, you see it around the league with different teams. Teams that flip one year after the other. If you just continue to do right it will change. That's the thing that, honestly, we have been trying to instill."



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**Q: When you are in meeting rooms, are you still seeing coach Gruden's personality come out?**

**Carr:** "Yes, he has not changed one bit. I think that's why our team respects him so much. You hear veteran guys say all the time they love playing for him. We love being around him. We love meeting. He runs every offensive meeting. Just his voice, his jokes, his love for football. It never gets old. I'm laughing because I think about three things that he said today that had the room dying laughing, but at the same time he gets his point across and we try and go out there and execute it. He has not changed since I met him at the QB camp. He hasn't changed since April. He hasn't changed since the season hasn't gone how he's wanted."

**Q: What do you see from Big Ben [Roethlisberger] when you watch him?**

**Carr:** "I think Ben is someone that, he's not fast, but people don't always talk about him extending plays. The way he can extend plays. He doesn't do it all the time outside the pocket, even though he can. You see like defensive lineman hanging on with two hands and his such a big guy, obviously I'm not 6-5 and whatever he is, 200-and-something [pounds]. You see those things and you respect it because that's the way he's got to play. He's not going to take off and run for 40 yards. He can but he doesn't do it that much. At the same time, he lives in the pocket and he can extend. The plays that he creates, that aren't designed, are really cool. They are really fun to watch and that's why the guy has got two rings. He's been a really good pro at it."

**Q: Coach Gruden told us earlier this week that he has a lot of plays for Martavis [Bryant] that are going stale in his office. How much do you think is still unlocked potential?**

**Carr:** "Oh my goodness. There is a lot of potential there. Potential is a tough word in the football business. He definitely has potential, he has something that a lot of people don't have. I think we've all seen that, especially in camp. Hitting him on some deep balls, hitting him on some big explosive plays. Even in games that we have played together, hitting on some big plays. There is so much there that you just want to untap and hopefully we'll get to do that for a lot of years together."

**Q: You talked about the play the other day where you threw it out of bounds and it was the right play. Then coach Gruden tells us Monday, 'I think he could have made that throw.' Was he being serious or is he just prodding you?**

**Carr:** "Yeah, I think he's just messing with me. That's the other funny thing. He thinks I can make every throw, even the throws that I'm trying to make myself not throw. He's like, 'that's a good decision but I think you could have made that.' I'm like, 'stop, don't do that to me.' He likes to mess with me in that way, for sure."

**Q: You had the play the other day where you threw it out of bounds and it was the right play to make because you had second down coming up. Then Coach Gruden tells us Monday that he thinks you could have made that throw. Is he being serious or is he just messing with you?**

**Carr:** "(laughter) I think he's just messing with me. Now, that's the other funny thing, he thinks I can make every throw, even the throws that I'm trying to make myself not throw. He's like, 'that's a good decision, but I think you could have made...' I'm like, 'stop, don't do that to me.' (laughter) He likes to mess with me in that way for sure."

**Q: Do you feel like you're playing the best football you have ever played?**

**Carr:** "I definitely do. Look, the season hasn't gone how we've wanted. We all know that. But, there's no denying when Coach Gruden got here, just learning from him and [offensive coordinator Greg Olson] Oly and [quarterbacks coach Brian Callahan] Cally, that I feel like a better football player. Anybody can say whatever they want, we can turn the film on and go deep into that and see, man this is what they've taught me, these are the things that I'm doing better, all that kind of stuff. I'm just thankful to them, I really am because since they got there, it's been a learning process. Coach Gruden throws a lot at his quarterbacks and it's been fun. We're getting to that place where we're getting on the same page, we're



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communicating. That doesn't mean that it's always going to be perfect and just continue to have crazy things happen, but what it does mean is that we're going to be able to move the ball, we're going to be efficient, we're going to be really good together. That right there is exciting to me."

**Q: Everybody back in training camp was telling saying how you could stand up and recite all of these play calls. It's one thing to do that and another thing to actually apply it.**

**Carr:** "Absolutely. I know a lot of people, we all can think of some, that can stand out there and talk about what the right thing to do is, but to go out there and do it is a lot harder. Trust me, it was not easy, taking all of that information, but the reason he did it is because he wanted to throw everything up on the wall and see what stuck. I tried to make everything stick. There was a couple checks in the past couple weeks that we've made that were things we talked about in April. We'll do it and he'll just come off to the side and give me a high five, but the more time that we can have together, it's going to make it easier to do. At first, it was a process and no one likes that word, especially in sports, but it was and it is. Hopefully we can just continue to grow that relationship because it's a lot of fun."

**Q: How are you and Jared Cook continuing to grow and still have a great connection?**

**Carr:** "Well, I think everyone can continue to grow. Same thing when [Michael Crabtree] Crab got here, when [Amari Cooper] first got here. We're both willing to work at it, we're going to get things done. That's the thing about 'Cookie', he's been relentless. His film study and his communication with me and it gives me confidence on big plays or third downs, got-to-have-it situations or anything like that where, if we get the look or the matchup or the coverage to check a play to him or go to him verses tight coverage even, there's been times where it gets a little aggressive to Cook but I just trust him that much. Him and I, we've had a great relationship since he got here and we just continue to grow because it's a lot of fun. To have someone like that that just loves to work, to have somebody that just wants to work his tail off and execute on the field and loves playing football, loves the games, how does a quarterback not like that?"

**Q: In what ways have you improved on offense since Coach Gruden has arrived?**

**Carr:** "Oh my goodness, the way that they've taught me things just inside the pocket, just little drills and things like that that we've done. And again, that just comes with even more years of training. They're not completely different drills that I've done before, but just another voice, another way. The way that we read certain things, the way that he wants my eyes to start, just all these little things that have led to us being able to complete a lot of balls, you know? I think I've said it before, I've never completed this many balls in games in my life. I thought college was a lot of fun, we threw a lot of bubble screens, but we're throwing real routes. We're throwing a lot of real concepts and down the field and things like this, and if it's not there, check down and seeing the back get eight or nine. It's been a lot of fun just learning that. I feel like I have so much farther to go. So, it's been fun to see what we've been able to do, but hopefully this week and just continuing on that I continue to grow. I know I won't stop working at it, that's for sure."

**Q: I saw you and David Carr are going to break down film for the fans at the event you are holding at Valley Children's hospital?**

**Carr:** "Yeah, March 2nd I believe it is. We're going to do that, obviously to help Valley Children's and things like that. But, it's just a fun way, instead of just standing there and shaking hands and kissing babies, we get to talk football too. So, that's always fun."

### Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin (Conference Call)

**Q: What did you learn about Derek Carr from your time working with him at the Pro Bowl?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "Really, Orlando, at the Pro Bowl was the first time I had the opportunity to be around Derek. I was really just impressed by him, his general football demeanor. His passion for the game was obvious. He was upbeat. We knew because he was the youngest guy in the quarterback group that he'd be



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in the game at the end. He just did a really good job of leading us through those circumstances and helping secure victory. Had a really good experience with him.”

**Q: When you look at the Raiders offensive scheme and the advance nature of any creativity that you see from a schematic standpoint, what strikes you about their design offensively?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “I don’t know that I’ve been looking at it in that way. Obviously with each week we’re presented with different schematic challenges. This week obviously is one of them. I think the utilization of [Jared] Cook, in particular the way he’s able to attack you in vertical spaces, is going to be a big time challenge. It has been for everybody that’s played him over the course of the year. I think he’s having an incredible season. I think the autonomy that Carr has at the line of scrimmage and the options that Coach [Jon] Gruden is always giving guys that plays quarterback for him is as challenging as anything.”

**Q: Do you see this offense matches up week to week more than most in terms of the personnel groupings?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “I think that’s always been a signature of Coach Gruden ball. He’s going to do what’s required week to week. He’s going to play the personnel game and lean on matchups. They may be different from week to week as evident when you watch the video. What those are, the significant ones will be revealed to us throughout the game and we understand that.”

**Q: It seems like every week we’re talking to another coach that work with Gruden at one point. Your situation was different in that he came to a staff that was already intact. I’m curious how did he come in and get everybody on board with his way of coaching?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “Really it wasn’t the staff that was intact. Really it was just four defensive coaches, Marty Kiffin, Rod Marinelli, Joe Barry and myself. All the other guys had been let go or gone on with Coach [Tony] Dungy. Jon has a lot of passion about football. It was obvious that he was the right man for the job. We quickly got behind him, and the rest is history. I don’t know that it was an intact staff the way that you portrayed it there.”

**Q: What do you anticipate from your backfield?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “We’re working these guys this week. We haven’t practiced yet. We’re comfortable with [Stevan] Ridley as a veteran ball carrier. A guy that’s kind of been in those circumstances at the professional level in the past. We’re encouraged by the growth and development of Jaylen [Samuels] as a young guy. Particularly in recent weeks. We’re excited about watching that develop. I think we’re going to discover that through preparation and see where the week leads us.”

**Q: Where is Jaylen from a pass protection standpoint?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “He’s been playing in those circumstances over the last several weeks. He’s above the line. We’re comfortable with him from that perspective and have been for some time now.”

**Q: How has Ryan Switzer been for you since you guys acquired him?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “He’s been a real developing asset for us. Obviously, he kind got on the moving train. As you mentioned, he spent a majority of the offseason over there, so it’s been a developing process but with each week he’s been increasingly significant. Particularly over the last several weeks, not only as a kick/punt renter, but with things on offense as well.”

**Q: Darrius Heyward-Bey was a real high draft pick for the Raiders and did some good things toward the end, I don’t know if he ever ascended to the draft status, but he’s still in the league after all these years. Why is he a good guy to have on the roster?**

**Coach Tomlin:** “It’s not about what he is capable of, although he’s got some really strong capabilities, it’s about what he’s willing to do. He’s a multi-positional guy. He’s a passionate and detailed special teams contributor for us. He plays gunner for us at a high level and has for a number of years. We appreciate



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what he brings, but it's interesting, he's a football player first and a wide receiver second. A lot of the contributions he's had over the course of his career here has been in the area of special teams and it has been a significant one."

**Q: How do you regard special teams coach Rich Bisaccia?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "Rich B., that's my brother from another mother. My relationship with him is a personal and professional one. I love that guy. Professionally, I got a lot of respect for him and the job that he does and has done for an extended period of time. I think his resume speaks for itself. He's a quality, quality football coach."

**Q: Coach Gruden says he can see him as a future head coach someday, do you see that in the NFL for Rich Bisaccia?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "I've held him in that regard for a number of years. That's not an opinion that's developing or developed of late. I think he has been capable of that for some time. It's just about an opportunity for him."

**Q: What about Rich [Bisaccia] makes you two guys so close?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "We prowled some of the same ground together. He's a good friend, he's passionate about ball. We share some similar perspectives about the game in that way. He's a fun guy to work with. We've been through good times and bad, like a lot of people that you work with. He's one of the guys where you know what you are going to get from him, regardless of circumstance."

**Q: The coaches here have maintained that they believe in Martavis Bryant's abilities, but it's more about reliability and consistency for him. What do you think what Bryant needs to do to maximize his potential in the league?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "I have no idea. I'm not involved with what's going on with him there and I don't know that it's appropriate for me to have an opinion in that regard. I appreciated his efforts while he was here. He was a positive contributor to our efforts, and largely it was a really good experience. We wished him well and that sentiment remains the same."

**Q: Martavis Bryant is someone over the course of his life he's been through a lot, what do you think about how he's overcome a lot of that?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "I just think he's capable of speaking on his own behalf on some of those things. I don't know if it's appropriate if I have an opinion in this forum."

**Q: What have you seen in the development of JuJu [Smith-Schuster]?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "I just think it's the natural maturation process that young guys go through. This is his second lap around the track, so it's reasonable to expect him to be better prepared. With knowing that, it's easy to expect him to be more consistent in performance, which he has been. We are asking the same thing from T.J Watt, James Conner and a couple other second year guys. To be quite honest with you, we are asking the same thing from Ryan Switzer, even though it's his first year with us, he's been in this league before. We expect those guys to have more consistent performances, to be increasingly on the rise, not wear down in the ways that maybe rookies would wear down, etc. That's just kind of our mantra."

**Q: What sort of leap do you think players are capable of from that rookie year to their second year?**

**Coach Tomlin:** "It really depends on what transpired, to be honest with you. If they played a lot and they were able to maintain their health throughout the course of the journey; then it's reasonable to expect significant gains because they were a part of the whole experience and the totality of it and the lessons learned formal or informal, within the white lines or outside the white lines. Sometimes your rookie years are marred by injury and so forth lack of availability. It's probably less reasonable to expect some of the gains because you missed some of the experiences when you don't play."