



Oakland Raiders Transcript

QB Derek Carr

Q: How much better is Von Miller than Khalil Mack?

Carr: "No. No. *(laughter)* Not getting there. Not going there. Von has hit me one too many times and I don't want Khalil to hit me too. That's just a mess, so I'm staying away from that one."

Q: How will the team replace Charles Woodson in the secondary?

Carr: "I mean, he's a first-ballot Hall of Famer. 'Wood' is not a guy that you can just replace. You don't just say, 'Okay, 'Wood's' gone, someone new in.' It's Charles Woodson man, same thing with [Justin] Tuck. You know, guys like that, you just don't replace them. But, you get someone that maybe does something a little different, maybe goes about it a different way, still works hard, still a professional, still a great football player. We got a guy like Reggie Nelson who has played a lot of football. Reggie is already one of my favorite teammates I've ever had. He teaches me things that he's doing, things that he sees. He encourages me, he tells me what I'm doing right and he says, 'Keep doing that, it's hard for safeties to do certain things when you do that.' We have a great line of communication. If you watch before every team drill, him and I are always talking to trash to each other and he's begging me throw him one but I'm not even going to get close. Just like 'C-Wood,' I never even threw it near him. Sorry Reggie, I'm not going to throw it by you."

Q: Is there any one particular thing you see yourself improving on from last year?

Carr: "Yeah, hopefully everything improve, that's what I hope. It's always hard to say until the game starts. But, in practice, the game is slower. I can just see things faster. Every year the game slows down, so I could imagine how it felt for 'C-Wood' playing 37 years in the NFL. The game was probably pretty slow to him at that point. The game has slowed down a lot and that's the biggest thing. Once you're just out there playing football and you're not swimming mentally, that's the biggest thing. Now, again, I'm only in my third year so I have a ways to go. But, the fact that it's slowed down already helps me out a lot."

Q: What do you think of the intensity of today's practice and you playing peacemaker a little bit?

Carr: "Yeah, you know, that's my job. I got the red jersey on, so if they can't hit me, I shouldn't hit them. To me, I like the chippyness, I love the competitiveness. They're not doing it just because they don't like somebody. You know, they're doing it because maybe someone got the best of somebody. Or maybe they played a little too hard and we don't want to hurt anybody. There's a fine line when you get professional athletes out here. A lot of guys are trying to make the team, a lot of guys are fighting for spots. There's always going to be that fine line. Where do you draw it? If you don't go hard enough well, then they [the coaches] think 'Maybe he doesn't play hard,' now he's out. They [the players] don't know. Trying to find that fine line, but the fights, that stuff can't happen. That stuff to me, it's not about the fights and people getting hurt which I don't want. If that happens during a game, that's a penalty, that's ejection, and we can't lose one person. That's why if I'm the peacemaker, absolutely, I'll take that role. Now, I'll let them go to a certain extent, get back in the huddle and go kick their butt. But, when it comes time where it's 30 seconds on the clock, now there's 20 seconds on the clock, because [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio won't stop the clock, he's going to let it run and we have to get the play off. So, it trains us for the games, but if I'm ever in there yelling at people or trying to get them back in the huddle, that's why. Because, I don't ever want it to cost us something that we've worked hard for."

Q: Are you noticing the connection developing between you and Amari Cooper and Michael Crabtree?

Carr: "Yes, absolutely. We're past the point of, how do I say, the X's and O's stuff. If you go to Amari and say what do you have on blah, blah, blah. He knows that. I know my reads, all those things. Now, it's those little details that we always talk about. 'Hey, make sure you get to the top of the numbers. Hey, whenever you turn, I'm throwing it right at the back of your helmet, so when you turn around, that's where it's going to be.' Those things that we can get to, that's the next step. That's where you see guys like 'Big Ben' [Roethlisberger] and Antonio [Brown] have that connection that they're throwing the ball 15 seconds early, then he turns around and it's perfect. That takes



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time now. That's something that we're trying to get to. So, if I sail a couple early on, that's why, so don't boo me too fast. (*laughter*) I'm just kidding. That's the kind of stuff that you can do in the second year. That's the kind of stuff you can do with a guy like Amari and Crabtree that work really hard. They were there all offseason and I actually practiced this offseason. How about that? That helps. And so now, all those things lead to all that stuff being better."

Q: What's your relationship with the guys upfront protecting you?

Carr: "I love them to death. I love them to death and whenever I do something to screw it up for them at practice, nobody feels worse than me, because I know how hard they work to try and protect me, I know how hard they work to try and open up holes for 'Tay' [Latavius Murray] and our backs. So, we're going to go as they go."

Q: Do you have more confidence in this group than groups in the past?

Carr: "I always have confidence in my offensive line."

Q: What kind of advice would you give to guys like Connor Cook going through his first camp?

Carr: "Yeah, that's one thing, there's going to be highs, there's going to be lows. Who cares? Just keep competing, keep competing. That's what I did my rookie year. My brother gave me the best advice, he said 'Man, go out there and whip it. Just go out there and play ball because if you start thinking I threw a pick on this play last time.' No, man, you go out there with confidence and let it rip. Figure out what you can do and Connor has done a great job, he's been awesome. I've tried to, obviously, give him a hard time for being a rookie. But 99 percent of the time I've just been trying to help him and he wants to learn. He's very open to listening and that makes me more excited to want to talk to him more and help him, because he wants to learn. He's OK with me coming up to and saying, 'Hey man, be careful holding your safety to the left and throwing left.' Those kind of things. So, he's been awesome and if he continues to do that, he's going to be just fine."

Q: This seems to be a fun atmosphere this year after watching you and Mack joke around before you took the podium...

Carr: "Yeah, that's me just being me. When I go in there, it's the same thing. I'm talking trash, messing with guys, domino table, which they can't beat me at. (*laughter*) So, I'm always talking trash. You know, so, we just like to have fun. Coming out here should be fun, it really should be. If you're not having fun out here, we're probably doing something the wrong way. That's where you see guys get emotional, that's where you see guys express themselves because they're having fun and they feel open enough to express themselves. Once we learn how to control that, we can't let it get out of control, but if we can control it and have fun, it's going to be a lot of fun this year."

Q: Will adding DeAndré Washington take pressure off of Murray and the struggles of running the ball in the fourth quarter last season?

Carr: "Yeah, you know, that was last year. So, it's tough to talk on that. My mind has been Groundhog Day out here every single day. So, I'm really looking forward to this year and what 'Tay' and DeAndré and 'Maize' [Jamize Olawale] and 'Cel' [Marcel Reece] and all of our backs can do. All of that stuff helps the quarterback. So, the more we can run it, I tell them all the time, 'I don't care if we throw it one time a game as long as we win.' I don't care, I just want to win. They know that and they've worked really hard. The O-line's doing a great job, so they'll be alright."

Q: What is your favorite pastime?

Carr: "My favorite pastime? Well, my favorite pastime is not baseball. (*laughter*) I tried to play it and it was just a little slow for me. I like if I throw a pick, I can get back out there and fix it. When I struck out, I had to wait an hour to hit again. I didn't like that. My favorite pastime, really, is going to church with my family. That's my favorite



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thing to do. That's the favorite thing that I've grew up doing and that's who we are. Family is absolutely important to me. My faith, my family, those are the most important things in my life."

Q: Would you like to run the ball more yourself this year?

Carr: "That's a tricky question. (*laughter*) I hope not to, but, if it comes up in certain situations, I don't mind doing it more. Absolutely. There were times in games where I would try and extend plays, like the Kansas City game I think of off the top of my head. I'm trying to do so much on that one play, I'm going to run and do this and I'm trying to make a play and eventually there was a wide open guy but I got hit, they caught it and ran it back. There's that fine line of do I keep doing that or do you throw it away or check it down, you know? Then in the zone-run game, we had some big ones, I've had a couple in my rookie year against Houston, last year against Baltimore we had one. We've had a few where I got off and that's really to keep people honest. We can do it, but that's not something that I'm going to do 20 times or 15 times a game. But, if we can do it a couple times a game to keep people honest for that back side, then I'm all for it."

Q: How do you feel about Ken Stabler being inducted into the Hall of Fame?

Carr: "It's awesome, Raider Nation man. That's how it should be. He should definitely be there, that's awesome."

DE Khalil Mack

Q: How excited are you about this year's defense?

Mack: "I'm very excited. I'm very excited. Ready to grind and work and that's what we've been doing. Obviously we've been working against a great offense as well. We have great pieces over there. We're just looking forward to getting better every day."

Q: Do you feel like you guys are a playoff team?

Mack: "Most definitely. That's always the goal. The goal is to get to the playoffs and win and be productive. That's what this team is going to do and I feel it."

Q: Today's practice looked a little more intense today.

Mack: "It's always intense out here, but the thing that could switch up is the different ways and the different phases and the different schemes and the different things you see on the outside looking in. Just been taking place over a period of time. We're adding different things to our defense as well as offense, adding different schemes to the offense here and there. So, that's probably what you saw today, the intensity switching up."

Q: Do you think the defense can be more versatile in its second year under Ken Norton, Jr.? Start doing different things?

Mack: "Yeah, exactly. I remember last time I explained this question to somebody else and let them know that Coach Ken Norton, Jr., he brings a lot of enthusiasm as well as a lot of versatility from different players. You have a lot of versatile guys on the defensive side of the ball especially. There's going to be different things we can do, but the only thing we can focus on right now is the grind."

Q: If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Mack: "Wow. If I could travel anywhere in the world, where would I go? I'd probably go over to Paris. I've been wanting to go to Paris for quite some time. I didn't get any time to go this offseason, but probably next offseason I'd probably go to Paris."



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Q: What does it do to an offensive to have two legitimate rushers to look out for?

Mack: "Man, big Bruce [Irvin], he's a special player. Didn't get to see too much of what he could do in Seattle as a rusher. That's what his role [here] is going to be, to get after the quarterback. Having him on the other side, it makes me smile. Having a guy like that, not only as a player but as a person. I'm looking forward to doing some great things with 'B-Dog.'"

Q: Marcel Reece said he's never seen two players become so close so fast. Is that true?

Mack: "Yeah, that's my dog. That's my big brother. He shows me a lot of things and just learning from him on and off the field has been a great experience so far. We're looking forward to dominating. That's really both of our mindsets and that's one of the things that brought us close real quick."

Q: Irvin said he's hoping that because of how good you are, you'll draw all the attention so he can rack up the sacks. Are you hoping for the same thing?

Mack: "Exactly, exactly. I feel like it's going to be one of those things where you're going to have to even it up and play man up, one-on-one. One-on-one across the board or either chip on both sides because he's a special player. You really didn't get to see too much of what he can do in Seattle. So just having him going full mode over here is going to benefit us as a defense in a tremendous way."

Q: What specifically has been added to improve the defense this year?

Mack: "I feel like having the leadership in the secondary. Having Sean Smith along with Reggie Nelson, those guys are very smart. They talk, they teach all the... We have a young secondary before they came over and added some maturity. It's been helping all over on our side of the ball. It's been rubbing off and everybody can think fast and play quicker because of those guys. You can see it a little bit now, but I can only see it getting better later on."

Q: Is there information exchange between tackles Donald Penn and Menelik Watson when you're going against them at practice? Is that helpful and are they good with that?

Mack: "It's very helpful having a guy like Donald Penn and a guy like Menelik Watson on that side of the ball because they let you know what you beat them with and we let them know what they got us with. It's kind of one of those things that, especially with having the experience that I've had and Bruce had and D.P., 11 years, almost. He knows what we did to beat him, so having that information it only helps us to use it against other guys."

Q: How much more comfortable is Ben Heeney this year?

Mack: "He's a lot more comfortable. You can see the confidence in him. He has control of the huddle. He goes out and he does his job and that's what you want from your Mike linebacker. You want a smart guy. Ben is a smart guy. He controls the huddle, controls the defense and everybody is listening to what he has going on with calls even."

Q: Were you surprised they didn't upgrade that position?

Mack: "No, no, no. I wasn't surprised at all. Ben Heeney is a hell of a player. He knows how to get to the ball really quick. You can tell from last year on those blitzes, on those Mike blitzes and on those outside runs where the running back may have spurted out a little bit, he was there. You can tell that he's a hell of a player. We're going to see exactly how great he can be this season."

Q: What have been your first impressions of Karl Joseph? Does he play bigger than he is?

Mack: "Yeah, yeah, yeah. What do you call it? A strong neck? Strong neck, man. He's a heck of a player, too. Getting out there, he's still learning some things, but he's a quick learner. You can tell he has the mindset of a safety and he comes in and flies around and does what does. Unfortunately, we haven't gotten to see him really lay nobody out yet. You can't really do that against your teammates. *(laughing)* I'm looking forward to seeing him on the field in game action."



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Q: You always joke about Derek Carr being the chosen one.

Mack: "Yeah, he's on the way matter of fact. You have to hurry up." *(laughing)*

Q: What's the difference with him and his role on the team from when he came in to now?

Mack: "Oh man, you said the difference? I really, honestly, as far as on the field it's a difference knowing the leadership that he has and knowing the control that he has, it's more of a confidence on the field. He's always been a smart, humble, God-fearing leader. You can't do nothing but respect that guy. Knowing that he comes from where he comes from, Fresno. All-world, he's a heck of a player and I respect him a lot."

Q: Who's your favorite quarterback? *(Derek Carr asking)*

Mack: "My favorite quarterback? It's really Aaron Rodgers. *(laughing)* I'm playing. My favorite quarterback is D.C."