



Oakland Raiders Transcript

QB Derek Carr

Q: When you think about where this team was in 2014 to where you guys are now, what do you credit most to the turn around?

Carr: "Hard work. There's no secret around it. A lot of mental toughness, a lot of hard days where you still had to come in, the same person, into work. I think that all of those things, there's a lot of character that goes into where we're at today. Not just myself, but I'm saying the whole team. As y'all know, it was tough to come in 0-10. It was tough to come in 0-8, 0-9 and keep doing it. We kept our heads down, and we knew that there was an end goal in mind. Obviously, we're not there yet, so we have a long way to go. To see that it's working, to see how last year went, hey, we got better. It's not what we wanted, but it's better. Now to match our win total already, we see that the process is working. Honestly, just makes us bear down more, grit down more, just trying to achieve those things that we have set out."

Q: Is this what you envisioned when you talked about changing the culture with the rest of your draft class?

Carr: "Yeah. Yeah, you know me, I envision some big things. We haven't done that yet, but this is the process that it takes to get there. [Head] Coach [Jack] Del Rio has done a great job of giving us a vision and a format of how that looks because he's been there. He's done those things. It takes a little bit of both. It's us making it up in our mind, obviously, as players, but it takes a vision and a plan laid out by our leader. I think it's just a perfect mesh of both."

Q: How do you feel about the bye week?

Carr: "I love it. I know our team loves it just because it's such a long year. It's such a long year and it's way different from college. The rookies are finding that out right now. We've played nine games and usually they're getting ready for their bowl games. They're getting ready for the end of their season. Nah, we're not even close, man. It's a long, long season, so it's good right now. It's like a perfect timing for everyone to just gather themselves, hang out with their family and get back ready again to hit the stretch right."

Q: What do you do for these next couple of days? Do you get ready for the Texans already?

Carr: "Yeah, yeah. I get a couple of games in, a couple teams in on who's coming up on our schedule. I just get a head start on things. The physical work goes way down, but the mental side can crank up. I'll just be sitting there while my kids take a nap or Heather [Carr] goes shopping, I can sit there and get caught up on games that we'll be playing coming up."

Q: Are you the kind of guy that can watch football on a day off?

Carr: "Yes. Absolutely. I love it. I'm a huge fan. I'll definitely have my 'RedZone' on. I'll be watching all the games and all those things. Yeah, man, I can definitely watch just because I'm just such a huge fan of the game, and I always will be."

Q: How much belief and confidence does last week's win give to this team?

Carr: "Yeah, I think it really did. I think you hit that on the head because I think we believed it, we knew it, but we just hadn't played them yet and we hadn't beat them. Once we were able to go out and play on the same field and be able to achieve that victory, I think in some guys' heads maybe even some of the younger guys like, 'Oh, hey we are good at this football thing.' Coach Del Rio says you are what you earn in this league. We said that last year when we were 7-9 and we're saying it now. These guys are learning that their hard work and process can lead to wins. I do believe that gave people a lot of belief."

Q: Was there a particular play where you said to yourself, "Man, we can run on these guys."

Carr: "I always am, like y'all know, very positive, so I'll do it from the get go. I'll do it from the very beginning. I don't remember a certain play or anything like that, but it was just a good feeling. The O-line was rolling, tight ends were blocking real good and the running backs obviously, they were rolling. That's my best friend, that running game. I was happy. When those big explosive runs pop off, that's hard for a defense."



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Q: Is it scary that you guys have not put a complete game together on both sides of the ball?

Carr: "Absolutely, we're not even close and I say that so one day, hopefully, I'll be able to say, 'See, we weren't close yet.' We're not close to where we want to be and where we need to be. Are we doing really good things? Absolutely. We are doing really good things, but there's so much more out there for us. I don't ever want us to get complacent. As long as I'm throwing the ball here, I'm not going to let guys get complacent. I can see all of these treasures in all these guys, that there's more that we can get out of them. There's more that I can get out of myself and I'm not going to stop until I see that to fruition."

Q: How does a guy like yourself, who takes chances, go as long as you have without throwing an interception?

Carr: "Oh, man. You know, I don't know. I just try to take care of the ball. I just try to be accurate. The biggest thing is your footwork. You want your footwork to lead you to completions. [Quarterbacks] coach [Todd] Downing always says that to me and you just create a mental clock in your head, 'Hey, you're half-a-hitch too late, get off of it.' Because, it's not worth that risk; there are more completions to be found throughout the progressions. Honestly, I just try to do exactly what coach Downing tells me, because I know that if I do that, it will lead me to good decisions."

Q: How did jumping right into the game as a rookie help you?

Carr: "You know, if the team and the organization is willing to commit to you and stay loyal and faithful to you like this one has to me, it is so beneficial. If they tell you that there's nothing to worry about, we know you're going to make mistakes, you're young, we just want you to go out and play and get better and lead this team. No matter what it looks like, you always be a leader, someone that people can look at and have a smile on your face and those kinds of things. That's what they did for me and I can't speak for another team or organization, but I can speak for this one. They did that to me and gave me the most confidence to go out there and just play my heart out, and I've left everything I have out there on the field for this team. I've learned a lot of lessons, I have more to go. But, so far, they've trusted in me, believed in me and gave me confidence to know that hey, if I screw up it's OK. They still believe in me, learn from it and get better, don't do it the next time – then you have a problem. But, the belief that came from the top down in this building, I think that's what gave me the confidence to just grow."

Q: Does the state of the AFC West keep you guys on the gas pedal?

Carr: "I think that from the outside looking in, it's definitely a good discussion. To us, coach Del Rio says it all of the time, 'We're worried about us.' We're worried about what we can control and that's why, you know we talked about it last week, primetime football and all of those things, that's why our team doesn't get all caught up into that. We have fun with it obviously because it's a good time and all of those things, but we prepare the same way. We have the same process that we go about and we're seeing that it works. We're seeing that it results in wins and so, if we start thinking about other things, we're going to start going down the wrong way and we don't want to do that."

Q: What has Denver Kirkland brought to this team?

Carr: "He's such a good dude, he's so quiet, and all he does is come to work and grind every single day. I got to give a lot of credit to [offensive line] coach [Mike] Tice and [assistant offensive line] coach Tim [Holt] because they work with him like crazy. Tim is with those guys when coach Tice is with the other five or six doing things. Tim's right there in his ear, teaching him the same stuff and what he's got to do. They constantly are working with him and he's willing to listen. We knew from the beginning, we were like, 'Man, this guy could be special. He could be a really good player.' And so far, he's come into games for us and he's played outstanding."

Q: How are Kirkland's hands?

Carr: "Oh, he can catch. (*laughter*) I think our offensive line might have the best hands in the NFL, I'm serious. (*laughter*) Jon Feliciano, he might take the cake in the NFL, he's got great hands."



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Q: Are Feliciano's hands better than Donald Penn's?

Carr: "I don't know, man. D.P. [Donald Penn] obviously has the track record. He's got the touchdowns in the game, but Jon is coming."

Q: Have you ever met Donald Trump?

Carr: "No, no. I've never met him. My brother has at the golf tournament in Tahoe. I'll say this, I was thinking about it a lot and it means a lot to me – it reminds me of football so much. No matter how you feel or how you believe, what should have happened or what you wish happened, you're happy that it happened, however you are, wherever you're at, we still as a country have to come together. It's like a team, there's going to be a coach sometimes that you like, there's going to be, sometimes, a coach that you don't like. Sometimes there's going to be someone that you wish you had before, you know? All I know is that if you want to be successful and you want to dominate, you have to come together. I know, as the people, that we have a new leader that's going to be in place and he's going to lay out a vision, but it's up to us. It's really up to us to come together and love one another and serve each other."