



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Pro Football Writers of America Executive of the Year Reggie McKenzie

Opening Statement: "I got you guys out here working on an afternoon. I'm putting you guys to work because I got this award. (*laughing*) So you get to do some extra work. I appreciate it guys, I really do."

Q: What does it mean to get an award like this?

McKenzie: "The acknowledgement, to me, is for the organization, from the top down. From the patience and the vision together with me and M.D. [Owner Mark Davis] on through the work, the daily work of the coaches and players and to play on Sunday. That's what the acknowledgement is really all about. You see the entire organization working together to win. That's what I see. It's an accomplishment from the standpoint that we're winning now. That's what I feel good about. That's why this award is special. It's a team award, but it's special to me that this thing is resulting into wins."

Q: Was there any specific decision over the years that you point to as what turned things around for the organization or was it an accumulation of things?

McKenzie: "I would say it's an accumulation of things. I really do. Whether you point at a certain free agent or a certain draft pick, claim or coach decision, it's an accumulation of all of the above. That's what you have to really hang your hat on, just being consistent in the process, with your philosophy, how you want your team to look and play like."

Q: Did it ever get difficult when the results weren't there in the first few years?

McKenzie: "Absolutely. It was very difficult. There's so much change around this league, but when you stay true to what you believe in and people around you support you and that vision, it makes it easier. But yeah, it got hard. Yeah. You know what you guys were writing back in the day. (*laughing*) Nobody likes losing, so I get that. If you really believe in what you're doing and you're supported, the hope is to start to win games, and to get to the playoffs is a step. We feel good about that, but we're only scratching the surface. We still want to hold up the trophy. That's what we're going to continue to strive to do. That's our next step. We need to win playoff games."

Q: How long does it take to get over the horrible luck you had at the end of the year?

McKenzie: "Well, I'm still getting over it until I win my next game. It's tough anytime you lose your last game. It's going to eat at you and that's one thing about being a player, being associated in this, it's the drive for the next game. What can I do to help us win that next game? And that's the hope we have now, is the opportunity to play again, you know? Albeit, in '17, but that's what we've got to do. We've got to set the course for this '17 season. So, it's going to eat at you until then."

Q: Is making sure that Derek Carr and Khalil Mack are locked up for good your first order of business this offseason?

McKenzie: "You can say that. The good thing is we do have time, but I'm not the type to wait until the last minute. Those two guys are not only great players but they are great men. They are true Raiders and I want to make sure we do the best that we can to make sure that they stay Raiders."

Q: Does it complicate things with the amount of money that Carr will need to be paid?

McKenzie: "Well, you know, hopefully it won't beat up the roster that much. You try to do the best that you can to work the contracts so you can keep as many good players as possible. But, we all know that you cannot have a roster of a lot of multi-million dollar players. That's just not the way this system works. So, we're just going to have to continue to strive to get good players for the lesser amount. I mean, it's just the way it is. Our quarterback is going to command a high dollar. Khalil's going to command a high dollar. So, we'll work around it. But we don't feel, at this point, threatened by it."



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Q: When you look at this past offseason, was there any free agent signing that you feel had a strong impact on this group? Anybody jump out at you?

McKenzie: "Do you mean with [Kelechi] Osemele and those guys? I think Kelechi solidified our offensive line, from the standpoint of what we wanted from our run game, from a physicality standpoint, what we had always talked about from Day 1. He added to that and he put some teeth into the whole offensive mentality. I felt like that was an impact. I was happy to see him get his first Pro Bowl. That was good to see. When you talk about an impact in that way, I thought Reggie [Nelson] made some plays and was a true leader back there. When we lost Charles Woodson, from the leadership standpoint, communication standpoint, I felt Reggie came in and did a solid job to help ease that transition. You can never replace a Charles Woodson, but he was able to help ease that transition, especially when we had a young rookie back there."

Q: I know how you mentioned this award is an organizational thing, but having a top guy like director of player personnel Joey Clinkscales next to you, what has that meant to have influence? Do you think it's time that he gets some looks to be a general manager soon?

McKenzie: "I do. I think his time is due. It's really difficult to see what different teams, owners look for. It seems like many of them are going to youth in that regard. That's just the way it is. It means a lot to have a guy like Joey. It means a lot to have the staff that we've got. I think we've got the best scouting staff in the league, I really do. Many ex-players and ex-Raiders. I think everyone knows what it truly is to be a Raider in this department, how to go about finding the right type of players who we can call Raiders and I really lean a lot on my staff."

Q: I know this isn't your department, but I wanted to ask if you had any reaction to the Raiders filing to relocate to Las Vegas?

McKenzie: "I'm going to let you talk to big [Senior Director of Media Relations] Will [Kiss] on this. I just got back from these all-star, senior games down here in Southern California. I've been out of the loop on that. Will would take care of you with those."

Q: What do you see as the biggest needs on defense right now?

McKenzie: "We've got a few. We're just going to have to improve in every area. We're going to have to figure out the players, number one. We're going to have some free agents and we're going to have to overcome some injuries that we had late, but we should be OK with that. We feel like, each level, we need improvement. That's D-line, linebackers and the DB's. We need to get better at all levels. We really do. I don't think we're locked in anywhere as far as position."

Q: In regards to Sean Smith, yesterday he posted a picture of himself post-surgery. What did he have worked on?

McKenzie: "He had an upper body, somewhere in his shoulder area. He had to get that thing worked on. I don't know the details in particular what you would call it, but he had that little thing fixed and he's going to be just fine."