



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing

Q: What jumps out at you about this defense?

Coach Downing: "They're very, very sound. They don't do a lot schematically, but they do it well and they're where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. They're certainly talented. They have a lot of good players on that defense and they're going to make sure that they're fitting their gaps and stopping it from being an easy access to their linebacker level. They're a challenge."

Q: What do you remember about Ian Silberman from the offseason and training camp?

Coach Downing: "Ian is an energetic guy, fun to be around because he loves playing football. So we're looking forward to having him back around and in the mix. He's certainly smart; picked up where he left off. He knows our system, so we're glad to have him back."

Q: What do you expect to do without Donald Penn? Do you stick like you had last week and have Marshall Newhouse on the left side?

Coach Downing: "We're working through our plan. Don't want to give away any competitive advantage there, but we're certainly comfortable with what we've got going on, the options we have and the experience we have if needed."

Q: Understanding that last week was kind of an emergency situation, but is there something to be said for only changing one piece of the offensive line instead of multiple?

Coach Downing: "We strive for consistency in everything we do, so the more you can do it with the same people, the better off. You feel you have time on task with certain types of concepts and what not. [Offensive line] Coach [Mike] Tice, obviously, I think the world of him as a coach and he has those guys prepared, so whatever direction we go, I now they'll be ready to rock and roll."

Q: What have you seen from David Sharpe?

Coach Downing: "Obviously, he's a big, athletic guy. Seeing him working in there some has been fun to see and you remember why he got drafted where he got drafted. We're excited about his upside and he's certainly been putting in the time, putting in the work, picking the brain of the vets from technique stuff. He's very dedicated to his craft, so we're excited to see what he's got."

Q: Jack Del Rio said earlier in the week that the way Derek Carr played in the second half on Sunday was similar to the way he played last year. Is that consistent with your views?

Coach Downing: "I think he's had some really good football this year. In a tough year, there can be a lot of critiques, and I think that sometimes it can get lost in the mix that there are some good things in there too. Certainly, Derek showed great toughness on Sunday and stood in there and made some throws. That was pleasing to see, but I think he's done a nice job with a lot of things this year. We just need to be consistent all around, the whole offense, up and down from me all the way down to practice squad guys, we've got to look for ways to be more consistent and be reliable."

Q: What have you seen from him in terms of strides this season that may get overlooked?

Coach Downing: "I think Derek's leadership is something that doesn't get talked about enough. People talk about how he's a good guy and he's high character and all of that, but he demands a lot out of those around him. He'll continue to make strides in that area as he grows. More and more years on the wall, pelts on the wall so to speak. For him this year, watching him develop leadership in the toughest of times. Watching him take accountability in the toughest of times. It's not something that surprises me because I've known him for a while now, but it was certainly good to see."



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Q: What was it like being on the opposite sidelines as Scott Linehan last week?

Coach Downing: "It was fun. It was fun. I'd be lying to you if I didn't tell you it was special to me. The guy that really taught me how to coach a quarterback, taught me how to put a passing game together, taught me how to complement the run and pass game. Standing across the sideline from him and running a concept that he taught me how to run and looking over and seeing him smile about it was a pretty special moment, especially on Sunday Night Football on a big stage like that. That was very neat. I feel very fortunate, very blessed that God has put great people like him in my path that have taught me so many things and then I get to share some of those experiences with those people. Very, very fortunate for that. It wasn't the outcome I would've like against my mentor, but it certainly was a memory I'll have for a long time."

Q: What are you hoping to see from Amari Cooper these last two games?

Coach Downing: "Hopefully he can get rolling. He's been working hard in the training room and trying to get back. We'll see how all of that goes and shakes out. I know he wants to finish the season strong as we all do. I'd like to see him out there flying around if we can get him."

Q: How would you assess Cooper's season?

Coach Downing: "I think as I was talking about earlier, the whole offense can kind of be termed a little inconsistent. He's had some ups and downs. He certainly had his flash moments. The Kansas City game where he exploded for over 200 yards. The first drive of the season against Tennessee, he was making plays. There have been some dips as well. We're all going to strive to be as consistent as possible and continue to work to get better. A little bit of a work in progress I guess is how I would say it."

Q: What struck you about what Rodney Hudson was able to do on Sunday?

Coach Downing: "He's one tough sucker, man. I was telling you guys a couple of weeks ago that we call him Uncle Rodney. I don't know that I have an uncle that tough. He's a guy that embodies that giving it everything he has and leaving it all on the field. He just has such grit and such determination to be there for his teammates. It's really admirable. Something that puts a smile on your face as a coach because you know that he's giving you everything he has."

Assistant Head Coach – Defense John Pagano

Q: What kind of challenges does Nick Foles present?

Coach Pagano: "He threw four touchdown passes last week. He did a great job. You know, offensively, probably the biggest thing is you saw Carson [Wentz] really moving around, how they run – probably different type of quarterbacks. Still, Nick can run. Their offense really didn't lose a lot from the standpoint of him being able to throw touchdown passes. Watching those earlier films, Carson Wentz, he's a hell of a player. I mean, unbelievable talent – sad for the injuries – but, you know Foles stepped right in and threw touchdown passes. So, it's going to be a tough challenge for us."

Q: What have you seen from Nicholas Morrow's development this season and are some of the recent plays he's been making been some of the same plays he would not have made earlier in the season?

Coach Pagano: "Yeah, each week he keeps getting better and developing. The more you see it, the more you're going to be able to react to those things. He's somebody that shows that he has instincts, shows he can run out there on the field and the thing about those two, you have those two things and you put a guy like NaVorro Bowman next to him, it gives him the opportunity to go make plays. They're doing well together. He's growing every day, he sees something new every day that he's learning. The more reps, the more visual we can be with him and the more, really, meeting time that [linebackers] coach Sal [Sunseri] gets with those guys, it's unbelievable. He's stepping up each and every day, each and every week for us and that's a plus."



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Q: It seems like you have found a good role for Sean Smith lately. Do you think it has benefited him to be following specific guys more than he had earlier in the season?

Coach Pagano: "Well, I think anytime you can get those types of matchups that you're looking for, it benefits not only for us individual-wise, but it benefits for us defensively. I think that's huge when you can do that thing, those types of different matchups and they've responded well. That's tough moving around like that – playing from the left to the right to doing those things. So, a lot of that credit goes to [cornerbacks] coach [Rod] Woodson and [safeties] coach [Brent] Vies [Vieselmeyer] just to be able to get those guys to relax, to be able to be calm, to be able to get them lined up and that. Sean's responded really well with that."

Q: Is there anything in particular you've seen over this stretch that has contributed to the increase in sacks?

Coach Pagano: "You know, I think the effort the last four games has been outstanding. I think having an understanding of the pass rush of how we want to attack teams has been outstanding and those guys are great edge rushers that help us on the edge. You got to get the guys inside pushing that pocket. I think there's been some timely things that have helped us defensively with the rush and it's just keep growing, keep getting better off that. I think it's having a true understanding going into the game how we're attacking them. And I think the guys have done a great job of focusing in on those things."

Q: In terms of one-on-one matchups, Khalil Mack and Lane Johnson, is that as about as entertaining as it's going to get?

Coach Pagano: "Yeah. They're both great players. Competition always brings the best out of each other. You're looking for those one-on-one matchups and sometimes he's going to have that opportunity. When that ball is snapped, you go get it. They do a great job up front. Their offensive line is physical, they're nasty, they get after people and those things. We understand that. We have to play physical, but also, we have to win those one-on-one matchups when the time comes – when they're throwing the football."

Q: Where do you see Shilique Calhoun's growth leading and why have you given him more opportunities on special teams and so on?

Coach Pagano: "He's big, he can run, he has edge rush ability. To me, that's easy enough to be able to get guys on the field on third down to go help us be one of the 11, to do different things and line him up in different areas. He's smart and I think that's a plus for him as a young player developing. And like I said, all those guys have been out here working. And when their number is called upon and when their time is their time, come out and do something. He's been taking advantage of every opportunity that he gets. It's big for us because the more rushers, the more guys you have like that, to be able to rest guys in certain areas to create more things from other guys, it's been a positive for us. I'll take as many rushers as I can get on gameday. It's all about affecting the quarterback and those are things that help us, not only in the front getting after the quarterback but in the back end also."

Q: Is it an opportunity for Jihad Ward to see those heavy snaps? What did you think of what he made of those?

Coach Pagano: "I think he did a good job. He was big, physical. He was active in there. Something that we were looking for. He's somebody that has kept working, stayed the course, didn't blink, waited for his opportunity to be called. Injuries take part of the game and it gave him a chance to go out there and do the things that we want him to do. I think that was great from that standpoint. It's outstanding from the point that a young player like that is still growing, still learning. To be able to come in at that moment to help his team go out there and compete, that's what we're always looking for."

Q: It had been awhile since he had taken the field. As a coaching staff, do you just make sure he's mentally where he needs to be?

Coach Pagano: "Always. No one wants to sit there and not have an opportunity to go play. It's about putting on that jersey. It's about running out of that tunnel. It's about putting that hand on the ground and seeing that ball snapped and getting after it. Everybody is going to get angry and frustrated and pissed off, but the one thing that Coach Del Rio has done a great job of telling those guys is understanding when your opportunity comes, you've got to stay the



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course. For anybody, you get frustrated after a while when you're not one of the guys being active. He took advantage of it and I was happy and pleased with his performance. You can keep growing in that role that we're asking him to do."

Q: When Khalil Mack got in with Derek Carr, he said at the time that their personalities were different. He's acknowledged that he needs to come out of his shell a little more, but what have you seen from him leadership-wise in that regard?

Coach Pagano: "I see great leadership. I don't see as much as a quiet leader as probably he says. I think he's vocal. He leads by example and he leads like that in the meeting room. He's on the field, he's always working with those guys. Being able to truly coach those guys and have a great understanding of what we're doing, he's vocal. He's silent by example, but he's a great leader. He's a great professional. He's a great teammate for the other guys just being around him."

Q: So he'll take charge out there?

Coach Pagano: "No doubt. He does. Between him and Bruce [Irvin], those guys are very vocal. They want to get it done and they want to get it done right. That's something that they've always been."

Q: Did you see the Eagles do anything different last weekend with Nick Foles?

Coach Pagano: "They're running their same offense. I don't see a lot of difference. They do a great job. They're number one in about every category that there is. Offensively, they're second in third downs, first in red zone, high numbers in everything. They're scoring points. They do a great job with their wide receivers. Zach Ertz is an outstanding tight end that can get vertical. I didn't see anything different. They score a lot of points."

Q: Foles is a guy that has done things in this league.

Coach Pagano: "He's somebody that's wanted it. He's competed in the league and he's played at a high level. That's something we have to deal with."