



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jon Gruden

Opening statement: "How you guys doing? I'll be happy to answer any questions that I can."

Q: What's the luxury of having an extra day this week?

Coach Gruden: "Well, you're going to lose that day next week. We have a short week. Gave our coaches a chance to look ahead to Kansas City a little bit. We'll try to get the veteran players, the guys that need a little extra day to get an extra day. Hopefully, we used it wisely."

Q: Do you have any sense on where Kelechi Osemele is this week?

Coach Gruden: "Feeling a little more optimistic, though. I think he's got a much better chance of playing this week. We can sure use him."

Q: It was just a practice squad signing, but what do you like about Nathan Peterman?

Coach Gruden: "I heard a lot, got a lot of calls last night for that. Let me say this, AJ McCarron just had a baby, he and his wife. So, he's in Alabama. Not quite sure when he's going to be back. That leaves us with one quarterback. We're happy to have Nate Peterman, a guy that's played in this league this season. He was an opening day starter. We signed him to the practice squad. We'll see where that leads us. Hopefully AJ and his family are happy and healthy and he can get back here soon. But in the time being, Peterman has a lot to learn quick."

Q: Do you anticipate that Peterman will be here when McCarron gets back?

Coach Gruden: "Oh, there's a good chance of that. Hopefully, we can take him into the offseason program. See if we can restart him and get him going."

Q: You had him at your quarterback camp coming out of college. What did you like about him?

Coach Gruden: "Well, he's on the practice squad right now. I want to reiterate that to everybody. He's on the practice squad. I did like the fact that...I go back to the University of Tennessee where he came from. I spent a lot of time there. I know what kind of kid he is and what kind of worker he is. I like what he did at Pitt. They beat Clemson. I like what he did in that game, at Clemson. He showed some real savvy and some real pocket presence. He's an athletic guy. I know he's had some problems in Buffalo, but again we're talking about our practice squad quarterback here. We have a big game on Monday night."

Q: Will Gabe Jackson need surgery?

Coach Gruden: "I don't think he's going to need surgery, but I do believe it's a six to eight week recovery. It's a serious injury. We definitely did the right thing by putting him down. It allowed us to activate Rico Gafford, a young receiver that is also doubling as a defensive back right now."

Q: You said you're going to launch an investigation if Jared Cook didn't make the Pro Bowl. What are your thoughts?

Coach Gruden: "Just very disappointed, obviously. You can't fault [Travis] Kelce for making a Pro Bowl. I saw him at close range, too. I think Eric Ebron has 12 touchdowns. So if you're going to lose out, you might as well lose out to two guys that had stellar seasons. He's a Pro Bowler in my book."

Q: What does it say about Derek Carr that he is closing in on 4,000 passing yards but has 50 sacks this season?

Coach Gruden: "I think he's done well. Obviously, he's taken some sacks. We have to improve on that. Not just the offensive line and the play calling, he has to improve on that. He'll tell you that. But I think he's a heck of a quarterback. We lost some receivers. We lost some running backs. We lost several linemen. He's continuing to be productive. He's totally into it, he's totally invested. I'm excited about that."



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: It's been three months since you played Denver the first time. Can you take anything from that game?

Coach Gruden: "Not really. Totally different teams. Especially us. Marshawn [Lynch] ran good in that game. I think Amari [Cooper] had 10 catches. Donald [Penn] was the right tackle. Martavis [Bryant] made a few plays. Gabe, obviously, was the right guard. We have a lot of things that have changed. We did some good things offensively, we just couldn't close the deal."

Q: Did you guys make a decision on Penn?

Coach Gruden: "We'll make that decision here in the next few days, but it doesn't look like he will play this year. It doesn't look like he will be back."

QB Derek Carr

Q: You played a Christmas Eve game a couple years ago when it was Charles Woodson's last game. With it potentially being the last game at the Coliseum, what do you remember from that and do you think it will be a similar environment on Monday night?

Carr: "Man, I do remember that with C-Wood and how special that moment was just to be a part of. It's one of my favorite memories as a football player just to see all that hard work and sacrifice and then everyone celebrating. It was really cool. I expect this to be a great atmosphere – probably the best we've ever had. With this possibly being the last game in the Coliseum, that's weird to me, this is home. I was drafted here, I've played on this dirt, I've got a lot of blood, sweat and tears, broke bones out there, won some great games, had some memories. It's weird to think that this could possibly be the last game. I don't want that, I know I don't. I know our fans don't. But the fact that it could possibly be, I think that it's going to be a great atmosphere."

Q: Is there a moment where you will probably look around and soak it all in?

Carr: "I think at the end, you know? Knowing our fans though, they'll get our attention with how loud they are and how crazy it will be. You can't help yourself but to enjoy the best fans in the world, the most loyal fans in any sport that any team has to offer. I think that they'll get our attention somehow, there's no doubt about that. But hopefully, we'll be able to get a win and just celebrate there with the fans."

Q: Although the focus is still on the game, how much conversation is there in the locker room with the regarding the Coliseum?

Carr: "There's definitely talk about that. It's not, obviously, on the forefront of our mind when we're out at practice or running plays, but it is something like when you're passing by in the locker room like, 'Man, this could be the last game in the Coliseum.' You think about all of the great games, all of the Hall of Fame players, all of the memories that I've accumulated for five years in that stadium. It's a special place to me and it always will be. The fact that, that is the situation we're in, it does come up. Usually I tell you, no that stuff doesn't come up. This is one of those things, it really does. It's our home, so I think that's why it's so real."

Q: People from the outside criticize the stadium a lot. What makes it special to you?

Carr: "Oh my goodness, yeah, I've heard all of that. People talking trash about it through the media saying our machines are broke or saying the field is terrible or the locker room stinks and all of that. And I just laugh, because it's home to me, you know? When I first went to Fresno State, we barely had enough money to put numbers on our sweats. We didn't have the best conditions all of the time, our field had a six-foot crown on it, and we showed up and we played football. Same kind of thing here. It may not be perfect and to everyone's standards or anything like that, but it's home. Like I said, this is where I was drafted. This is where I have some of my favorite memories. Even when I got hurt, that's still a moment for me that I'll never forget, just the love that the fans would show and driving on the outside of the stadium



Oakland Raiders Transcript

to find the X-ray machine because there's no way straight up to the locker room, driving through the fans. (laughter) Those are things that I'll never forget."

Q: Obviously with all of this going on, you still have a game to play. What do you see from the Broncos?

Carr: "Obviously we have to stop 58 [Von Miller] and 55 [Bradley Chubb]. Their whole front, they are ridiculous. They still have really good players in the secondary. Their linebackers are fast. They like to run and hit. They're a good defense. This will be, this is my 10th time, something like that, ninth time playing Denver. I know them really well. They know us. It's always exciting. I love competing against guys like Von. They're the best players in the world. That's why as a little kid you dream of playing against those guys, especially on Monday Night Football. It's a fun time, but really good defense. We'll have our work cut out for us. Everybody has to do their job. Everyone has to play their best football for us to get the win."

Q: With having taken 50 sacks this year, how are you feeling? Have you not taken a lot of full on, blasting sacks this year?

Carr: "I wish I could say I didn't. To be honest, man, going into season, my No. 1 goal, the No. 1 thing I prayed about was just to finish healthy. I didn't know I was going to get hit the most I've ever had. I don't think any of us saw that happening. We've had injuries. We've had to move some guys around. It's just the way it's been. My body has held up great. This is why I train so hard, to be honest with you. That's why I always try to lift like a linebacker and run like a receiver. That's how my training has always been. Every time I call my trainer, that's how we set it up because you always have to be prepared for times like this. I just thank God my body has held up. I've been sore some days the next morning. But when you eat right and do all those little things that people talk about, it flushes out pretty quick. I'm a firm believer in it because earlier in my career when I was just a young kid figuring things out, I'd get hit once and feel it for like a week. Whereas now, the nutrition, the stretching, taking care of your body, all those things, you learn that stuff, it actually means something. It's just something I learned throughout my years. I actually feel good. I really do. Hopefully, we'll get that right and all those things, but it is what it is. Honestly, it's helping me be better. Understanding that in the pocket it's not going to be perfect at times this year as I'm used to. It's made me a better player to be honest."

Q: Have you talked to AJ McCarron this week?

Carr: "Yeah, I have talked to AJ. I don't know what he's disclosed, but yes, I have talked to AJ. He's doing good and I hope to see him soon."

Q: Have you talked to Nathan Peterman before this week?

Carr: "Not really. Obviously, we know of each other, but nothing too close. Just talking to him today, he's a great, great guy. It's been cool getting to know him."

Q: There's a chance that you'll break the NFL record for the most completions by an NFL player in his first five seasons. Is that something that means a lot to you?

Carr: "Well yeah. Anytime Peyton [Manning] has something and you can try and do that, then yes. It would mean something. Did I know? No. Do I know how many I need? No. Thank you for telling me. Just the fact that we've been able to do that is pretty cool."

Q: Is this year's Fresno State team the best ever?

Carr: "Look, I'm going to say this about the Fresno State team. I'm proud of them. They did something that no one ever did before, that won 12 games. Won the bowl game. After the season, we'll strap it up with them. We'll meet them at Bulldog Stadium. I like our team. I like our team's chances."

Broncos Head Coach Vance Joseph (Conference Call)



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Q: Do you have any appreciation for the history of the Oakland Coliseum?

Coach Joseph: "Absolutely. There has been a lot of great football games played there. I coached for the 49ers for six-plus seasons, so I am very familiar with the history that went on in that stadium. If it is going to be the last game and we have a chance to play there, for me it's an honor. We want to go out and obviously play good football, both teams, and give the fans and the country a nice football game to watch on Christmas Eve."

Q: Are you at all nostalgic when you get the chance to play in some of the older stadiums around the NFL?

Coach Joseph: "Well, I think we all are. The guys who have been in this league, and again I was with San Francisco and playing in the Stick [Candlestick], so for me each home game was an honor. To play in the older stadiums and knowing the history and what happened in those stadiums. When you are all done with this job as a player or a coach, all you have is ancient memories and the awards you won. The memories are the most important, so you can tell your kids about playing in that stadium and who played at that stadium before you. For the coaches and players to have a chance to play there, if it's going to be the last game, it should be an honor."

Q: What is it that makes Phillip Lindsay so successful at such an early stage in his career?

Coach Joseph: "I think the person he is. If you just go back to his history of being recruited from high school, he was kind of snubbed there. He had a couple offers and obviously CU [University of Colorado] stayed with him. He got hurt his senior year of high school, so he stayed with his offer. He went there with a chip on his shoulder. He didn't go to the combine at all. He wasn't drafted at all and that chip became a lot larger. Then when he walked in the building, we drafted two backs in front of him, that chip became even larger. This guy came into camp and he was our best gunner from day one. He was on kickoff team, he was a returner, he returned punts in an NFL game without ever returning punts in his entire life, so that just speaks to the person and the character that he brought to our football team. Once he got in to play we all saw the talent, but for him to stay healthy for an NFL season and taking care of his body. Playing on first, second and third down which takes a high football IQ, it's been an amazing story. He has earned every bit of this story that you guys hear about. He has earned it and it's not a fluke. He is the real deal, as a person and as a player."

Q: When did you really know what you had with Lindsay?

Coach Joseph: "I think we all kind of figured it out, probably about Week 3 or 4. You got to understand Royce Freeman was our starter out of training camp, and he [Lindsay] was kind of at the two-spot splitting time with [Devontae] Booker, so he wasn't getting a lot of carries. I think at Baltimore, a game he did not finish because he got tossed for throwing a punch. In that game you could see him run downhill, run behind his pads versus a big and physical defense and not flinch. Against Oakland in Week 2, he made a big run and it was a hell of a cut in the hole. It was a hell of a cut on the safety that kind of bounced him free. Again, he ran tough and physical behind his pads. You can see it, but the more opportunities he received, the more it became apparent that he was going to be the guy."

Q: [Derek] Carr had a very accurate passing game against your team in Denver in Week 2, but he has been hit a lot in terms of sacks since. What have you seen from him and how he has bared up under it and how he looks now?

Coach Joseph: "I think this guy is as accurate as anybody in the league, especially if he is not being hit. In our first game, they did a nice job of getting a lot of free access and he didn't miss a lot. I think it was an NFL record at halftime, but that's his talent. If you don't pressure this guy he can truly pick you apart. He knows where he is going with the ball before the ball is snapped, that helps, but his accuracy is off the charts. It is our job to squeeze the receivers and take away the first option to allow our pass rushers time to get there. That's the plan and with most quarterbacks, if you hit them enough you can have an effect on



Oakland Raiders Transcript

them. He's not alone. When you pressure and hit a quarterback you can kind of turn his fortunes a little bit, so that's our plan. We have to cover them first, and that's where it starts. You have to cover the first look because if you don't he's going to hit that guy and the ball is going to be gone. Covering first and obviously giving our pass rushers time to get there, that's the plan."

Q: Have you given appreciation for what the duo of Von Miller and Bradley Chubb could be?

Coach Joseph: "I'll tell you what guys, it could be special. Especially with Bradley being so young. He's going to get better. He's never been a 3-4 outside linebacker his entire life. He's been a 4-3 rush end, so he's going to get better and better over time obviously. To watch those two guys play together, along with [LB] Shaquil Barrett and [LB] Shane Ray, we've got three or four rushers that can play. What happens is it allows you to get more one-on-one's. They can't just slide the line to Von and then turn backside on Chubb, and then give Chubb one-on-one's. I think the protections become more fair I should say, as far as how teams game plan. If they are going to chip, they got to chip both sides. If they are chipping both sides, now you get three receivers out and we can play more zone coverage. If we are playing man coverage we can add off those guys. I think having two pass rushers allows you to keep protections true and also when they are chipping both sides you can play more zone and play 5 and 6 over 3 in the backend, so absolutely this duo can be a pretty good one for a long time here."

Q: How difficult of a cover is Jared Cook? What is it that makes him particularly difficult?

Coach Joseph: "I think Jared Cook is as tough a cover as you have in [Travis] Kelce in Kansas City and all the top tight ends in the league. His long speed has always been there. He's been a guy that could run by safeties and linebackers his entire career, but what I've seen from him since he's been in Oakland is that his ball skills have gotten so much better. He's making the difficult catch and when you got a guy that tall and long, his catch radius becomes a lot larger, so it doesn't have to be a perfect throw all the time for him to make the catch. That's what I see from him. His route running and ball skills have definitely gotten better. He's too fast for all of our linebackers and he's probably too big for most of our safeties. We have to have a plan to definitely squeeze this guy and have a chance to bracket and keep him from hurting us. We've had some issues with tight ends the last couple games and we can't afford to give him a big game on Monday night."

Q: What are you most proud of from your team this season?

Coach Joseph: "I'm proud of how our guys have fought. We've had 10 games where it's been one possession, and we've won our share and lost our share. I think we had three games where we have won or lost by one point. I'm proud of how our team battles, through injuries and all those things. These guys never flinch. We've got 22 first or second year guys on our roster that's helping us try to win games each week. We have a young roster mixed with a lot of guys, who have played a lot of football. I'm proud of those guys for how they have led these young guys, and I'm proud of these young guys for how they have stepped up and become good pros. I think we have gotten better and our future is going to be bright here. We have got two more games here and they both are divisional games. We have a chance to win a game Monday, but we can go 4-2 in our division and are playing for a lot. We are playing for now, obviously, and we are playing for the future."