



Oakland Raiders Transcript

RAIDERS HEAD COACH JON GRUDEN

Opening Statement: "I would just like to say I am really proud of our team. I appreciate all of our fans. It was a great atmosphere. We overcame way too many penalties, but the character of this team is impressive no matter what anyone says or saw today. The character in there is special. But, I will answer any questions that I can."

Q: Thoughts on the Steelers line-up after the blocked penalty kick?

Gruden: "I was thinking about what I had to tell you about what happened on the play that set the field goal up. Honestly. I saw the Patriots lose a game today, same sort of fashion. But, we have to coach that situation better. That falls on me. It was a heck of a win for us."

Q: What was visiting the black hole like?

Gruden: "I saw some of my old friends growing up. We are 2-10. I just wanted to thank them and it was an awesome scene today. I appreciate their support. They have been with us no matter what."

Q: Thoughts on Derek Carr responding to the last drive?

Gruden: "Derek (Carr) played great today. We had some series, not at any fault on him. But, we had some penalties that put us way behind and down in the distance. The Steelers are good. I think they came in here with the top defenses and top pass rushes in football. They are going to make some plays. Carr brought us back twice in the fourth quarter and made some great flows and great auto boles. I am really proud of him."

Q: Thoughts on Derek Carr's fumble and incomplete pass?

Gruden: "He had some guys reviewing it in New York. How the hell would I know, I can't even see the guy. We have some guys ruling the game and making these decisions that you can't even have a conversation with. I am not going to get fined or anything like that, but personally I do not like the process of it. We have guys that are officiating the game, we have eight officials, we have guys in the box. I would appreciate it if we had a face to face conversation. I thought Schuster stepped out of bounds. I saw the official throw his hat. That is the mechanics for a man stepping out of bounds. So we challenged it. I am not very good at the challenge process. I am going to try and stay in a good mood tonight regardless."

Q: What did you see on the deep pass?

Gruden: "That was a play designed for Jared (Cook). Derek (Carr) threw it to Seth (Roberts) on the practice field against that coverage. I thought to myself, "I can't believe he threw that." That play is not designed for him. He is an alert. But, Derek (Carr) sees the field and I have been saying that from the beginning. If we can protect him and give him some good looks, he will make the throws. Seth (Roberts) made one heck of a play on that. What can I say, our guys made some clutch plays when they had to make them."

Q: Can you talk about the injuries?

Gruden: "We were lacking oil this week for sure. Without Kelechi (Osemele) today and Maurice (Hurst). Doug (Martin) was wearing a knee brace. We weren't quite sure of his status. So we signed CJ Anderson. Seth (Roberts) was in the protocol and that is obviously a serious matter. Fortunately he was ready to roll."

Q: Thoughts on the performance of the tight ends?

Gruden: "We had a good Frank Smith and a tight end coaching pub. Hopefully he gets some free chicken wings at Hooters or something. Derek (Carrier) wins the game on a great catch and made a great catch on the scene on the drive where Derek (Carr) fumbled. Jared (Cook) was awesome. He clearly is our MVP. In my opinion, he is phenomenal and Lee (Smith) caught another touchdown. We are short receivers and I think we had four active today. We went with four tight ends for that reason, so good for them."



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Q: Is Derek (Carr) growing in the offense?

Gruden: "I think he has played great. He has seen the Ravens and their heck of a defense on the road. He played great there. He played well against the Chiefs. He gave us the possession to win in the fourth quarter. The Pittsburgh Steelers with the division on the line. This is a must win for them. He sees the field, he's really confident. It doesn't matter who he plays with him, it doesn't matter who the left guard is, it doesn't matter who the X or Z receiver is. It is a real credit to him."

Q: Any comments on Reggie McKenzie not coming back next year?

Gruden: "I do not have any comment on that. We are going to bring this team back. We are going to bring the Raiders back, that is all I will say."

Q: Thought on the Steelers performance?

Gruden: "Paul Gunther did a great job. He has coached against the Steelers twice a year in Cincinnati. Obviously we had a guy wearing number 84 with a strobe light all week. You have to credit Schuster. How about Roethlisberger and the gut check he put forth today. They have two great receivers. They came in here with two receivers with over 1000 yards. We had a specific plan to hold Antonio (Brown) in."

Q: Did you expect Roethlisberger to come back in the game?

Gruden: "Yes I was expecting him, with Jeff (Reed) right behind him. It is a credit to him for. Fifteen years, this guy has been the heart and soul of the NFL and the Steelers. That was an awesome performance. He brought them back not once, but twice. If they made that field goal we might still be playing."

Q: What did you think about the performance from both teams in the third quarter?

Gruden: "The Steelers are good. We are not going to score at will. They are a good team. We had some penalties that hurt us. We had a couple of sacks. Alvin (Dupree) and T.J (Watt), those guys are pretty good. We just hung in there and kept taking our cuts that finally connected."

Q: Thoughts on Tahir (Whitehead) being a young linebacker and his performance so far this season?

Gruden: "They had a lot of tackles. Tahir has been a leader on our team. He is a great pick up for us. He can play on all three downs and something for Nicholas (Morrow) and Marquel (Lee) to look up too. Gareon (Conley) had a good look too. He a lot of PB use today. I am really happy with a lot of things we did on defense tonight."

OAKLAND RAIDERS QB DEREK CARR

Q: Was that fun?

Carr: "That was a lot of fun. I think I've said this before too. I wish we didn't have to win them like that. I wish we could win by a touchdown or two, but we'll take it. It was good to see our young guys step up and make a lot of big plays. Offensive line - I thought played amazing for a team that probably gets one of the most sacked, they sacked the quarterback the most in the NFL. There were some sacks, but they weren't all on the offensive line. None of them were their fault. I thought they played extremely well. WR Marcell Ateman - how about him? Making some big catches and diving. I think he's starting to understand the competitiveness and the level that he can play at - the potential. In the NFL, it just means you haven't done it get. I think he's making some plays to show us that he can be a good player."

Q: There was the pass to WR Seth Roberts and Head Coach Gruden shared it wasn't designed for him, can you share what you saw from the field?

Carr: "We had like a crossing route for Seth, coming across the field. Early in the game, we got the look exactly how I wanted but I didn't want to change the play. I wanted to let the play eat and all those kind of things. We got the same time of look with different people covering, different bodies in there. I think it



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was a TV time-out or a two-minute warning, if I'm not mistaken – we were in the huddle. I told him, Seth if we get too high, I know what you have but just take the middle. I'm not trying to pump it one way, I'm going to throw you the ball if it's too high. He just said okay, in his natural form – he just said okay. I threw it – I honestly thought I overthrew it by 12 yards and he hit another gear and went and got that ball. He kept it off the ground. That had to be the play of the game by Seth. That catch and that coverage – it was really impressive.”

Q: When you did that play with WR Seth Roberts in practice, did you expect to be executing it during this game?

Carr: “Well, yeah. When you do things in practice, you see opportunity for it but they have to play the right coverage. They have to play with certain people in certain positions, it's not something that's a foregone conclusion. When we get in this game, this is one of those plays that's for sure going to happen. You just hope that in a certain situation, in a certain set that you get a certain look. They gave it to us and Seth made the play.”

Q: Talk about that last touchdown play to TE Derek Carrier:

Carr: “Well, you know Derek to me is one of those joker kind of players. He's one of those tight ends that runs 4:04, jumps a 40-inch vert and all those kind of things – super explosive. But we have Jared Cook who's a Pro Bowl tight end. If he doesn't go to the Pro Bowl, it's shame. That guy - he's one of the best tight ends in the league. Derek doesn't get all those reps, right? If Jared wasn't here and wasn't playing, obviously Derek would be that guy. If you talk to Goff or any of those guys that had him before, they loved him. They raved about him. The fact that his number was called versus a certain look and all those kind of things, I had 100% confidence. I actually missed him on that same play against Denver. In Denver, he could have scored again. It was my fault, I made a mistake. I hugged him after and said I owed you for the one against Denver. We always have that confidence; he just doesn't get a lot of plays his way. You saw the same route. The guy is a heck of a player.”

Q: Where does today's win rank compared to past wins?

Carr: “Man, this is my second-favorite win ever. If they were in our division, it would be first. This is definitely my second.”

Q: After which one?

Carr: “Kansas City.”

Q: Describe what you saw on that fumble.

Carr: “Oh, I thought for sure I was throwing it. It just slipped out of my hand as I was throwing it. It wasn't like it slipped and I dropped it. I didn't get hit so I knew for sure that it just slipped out as I was trying to throw it going forward. I went to ask and those kind of intense situations – they think you're trying to come at them and they're just like it's confirmed already. You don't get to converse about it. I didn't get to hear why or what...it's just one of those things. I thought it was incomplete. I jogged over there looking at the ball just in case, waiting for a whistle. All of a sudden, they didn't blow a whistle. So I tried to move my guard and look for the ball, I thought it was incomplete honestly. I was surprised.”

Q: Do you feel vindicated regarding your relationship with Coach Gruden after today's game?

Carr: “I went to Fresno State and so those are big words for me. No, I'm just kidding. Fresno is an amazing school, everybody. Ya'll should all go there. Especially all you football players. No, I think that being able to show our team that our relationship, this system – we've tried to sell it as hard as we both can. We knew it was going to be a process. We didn't know stat-wise how it was going to start out. It would just take time for people to see it the way we see it and things like that. To be able to do that, I think feels good because it puts a stamp on it. Like fellas, if we continue to do right and just do it this way then good things can happen. It does feel good in that way. From an outside perspective, I know what I'm capable of. You know



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me. I know what I'm capable of, I know how to play this game. I wasn't worried about that stuff unless it was completely false, then that's different. Those kind of things happen when you lose and it's not going well. I knew eventually it would change. I thank God that we won this game. I think our young guys, the way they played – it showed them if you give that kind of effort, if you compete that way and doing things the right way, we can beat some of the best teams in the world.”

Q: What are the differences between today's game and the beginning of the season?

Carr: “I think early on in the season, again – I'm dealing with a new play caller, different mind-set, different plays and all those things. I'm trying so hard to do it the right way. I'm trying to get to the right check and I was making mistakes early on. Mistakes and the fact that I'm trying to force something. We've talked about that too. I'm trying to make too much happen. Instead of throwing the check down, you're trying to force that because I'm trying to push the ball down the field and all those kind of things. As I settled down, Coach [Gruden] grabbed me and said I don't care about stats and things like that. I just want to see you efficiently do exactly what I tell you. Honestly, when we said that it was freeing to me. I thought I was trying to prove something to him. It kind of settled me down. He's a great coach. He calmed me down. Listen man, do exactly the way I've taught you. You see things, check this and get to this audible. Hand signal this. If it's this situation, make sure you don't force this. That kind of stuff. Just having those kind of conversations and learning from him and him just not blowing me off – he really sat me down and just talked to me. We worked really hard together. I think that's the reason our communication is something else that we can laugh at sometimes, but our communication is what got us to this point where I can play freely. And just trust, sometimes they're going to cover that play but live with it because I called it. That kind of thing. He just tries to make it easy on me. He's really, really fun to play for.”

Q: When did you guys have that conversation?

Carr: “What week is this? It had to be early on. I wish I could remember. It was early on after those losses where maybe I tried to do too much or missed something. He would just sit me down – it wasn't a come to Jesus moment. I sit down with him every day for multiple hours. It's not like that. In one of those meetings, he just said that. It was freeing for me. I'm a pleaser. I'm trying to please him, Coach Olsen, Coach Cally [Callahan] – I'm trying to do exactly what they want. And they said just relax, do exactly this way – what we tell you. It was freeing and I think that's exactly what helped me.”

Q: How does the mental translate into physical performance?

Carr: “I think Thanos showed up and banished everybody. It takes time to build chemistry with new guys. Obviously, I knew I had to play better. It doesn't matter who's in there, how many times I've thrown them the ball. You get a guy like Joe LaFell who just shows up one day and you're like he's our starter. And now I have to get this chemistry. Then he gets hurt and it's Marcell, Keon, and then Johnny's back – it's been tough. But there's no excuse in this league that you have to produce. You have to complete passes. I give those guys passes. They continue to work their tails off and just trust anything I would say. Another thing – Jordy Nelson is one of the best player, coaches that I've ever been around in my life. Just having him on our team makes us a better team. Let alone what he can do on the field. Just mentally, what he can do for everybody in certain conversations and things like that. Obviously, there have been a lot of different pieces, I've just had to play better.”

Q: Did you ever think that you would be throwing passes to your tight ends like TE Derek Carrier or Lee Smith?

Carr: “I mean, I did. I don't know if you guys did. Not when we started up, you stand there and you've got Jordy Nelson, Amari Cooper, Seth Roberts and Jared Cook. You forget about Derek and Lee quickly in the pass game. There weren't many plays designed for them in training camp. Lee is the blocker, the heavy guy and all those kind of things. Derek was playing in Jared's spot, just behind him. I know now to throw to everybody during training camp and take every rep. It's one of those things where it's so fun to see guys



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like that come in the fourth quarter and get game-winning touchdowns. You see their hard-work paying off and coming into fruition.”

RAIDERS TE DEREK CARRIER

Q: Where does that touchdown rank for you?

Carrier: “It’s right up there near the top. It was exciting. As soon as that play was called, DC [Derek Carr] and I just smiled at each other because we had been working that for a while. It was exciting.”

Q: Did you notice the defensive back slip when you made your cut?

Carrier: “Yeah, a little bit. That’s why I tried to hurry up and come out of that break real quick and give Derek a throw.”

Q: Was the field slick today?

Carrier: “Yeah, it was definitely slick. I slipped a couple times in pregame and then on my get off on a kickoff too. It was definitely slick out there.”

Q: How impressive was your team’s final drive?

Carrier: “Yeah, just in terms of what we have been preaching as a team is resiliency. We definitely faced some adversity this year and just finishing strong and that’s exactly what we did today.”

Q: Coach Gruden said Frank Smith deserves free chicken wings at Hooters tonight. Are you going to be making that trip with him?

Carrier: “I am going to have to be there in spirit. I have a newborn daughter, number two, but my wife needs all the help she can get. To answer your question, Frank’s done an amazing job with our room. He puts us in positions that we can be successful in and all the credit goes to him.”

Q: What does it say about a two-win team this late in the season to fight back?

Carrier: “Like I said, I just think it’s resiliency and perseverance. We’ve been in position to win games and the ball just hasn’t rolled our way for one reason or another. I think this game we kind of put everything together and made plays when it counted.”

Q: Was that one of the most creative games in terms of Jon’s play calling?

Carrier: “I think it’s on par. Coach Gruden called an amazing game. I think what you see Lee [Smith] do an awesome job of is that you have to set up those plays, so you can get the defense to over play on them. When you get those opportunities, you take advantage of it.”

Raiders Tight End Jared Cook

Q: Talk about the win today.

Jared Cook: “It was awesome man, something we definitely needed. It shows you the heart and fight of this team. Something this team has been preaching all year is fighting, fighting to the end and resilience. We know we have talent on this team and we know we can win the big games, it’s just up to us to do it.”

Q: Did you know Big Ben [Roethlisberger] was going to come back into this game?

Cook: “No. We kind of figured something was up. One guy said he was pulling a Paul Pierce on us and he was going to come back and ball on us. We figured that he probably would come back into the game, and he did.”



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Q: What were your thoughts when you saw them get into field goal position and get ready for that final kick there?

Cook: "Oh crap' (*laughing*). I was just praying that he wouldn't make it. It looked like he slipped a little bit and kicked it right into the back of his offensive lineman."

Q: Was the turf slippery out there?

Cook: "It's always slippery here."

Q: "What did you think of Lee Smith and Derek Carrier's games today?"

Cook: That's dope man, that's super cool. Those guys work their tails off to be here and to see those guys get rewarded for their hard work is great. Especially Derek. He came wide open on that last play and it wasn't even supposed to be designed to him but he was ready. He caught that thing and got in there. I'm so happy they did, I'm so happy they did.

Q: You had 117 yards today, it seems like you've been building this rapport with Derek [Carr] for a while now, how has it all come together for you guys?

Cook: "We've just been working. Just continuing to be friends, boys, hang, and stay in each other's ear. I think that's the most important part. Always knowing what he's thinking and knowing his thought process as a quarterback is important. Just trying to stay on the same page with him and continuously communicating with him. We're doing the best we can to keep that rapport."

Raiders DB Gareon Conley

Q: What was the key today against Antonio [Brown]?

Gareon Conley: "He's a great receiver and we planned to roll to his side. I feel like we executed our plays."

Q: What happened on that hook and ladder play?

Conley: "That was my fault, I lost leverage on that play."

Q: You've had some big tests these past couple of weeks against some good receivers, how do you feel like you've done so far?

Conley: "I feel like I've done a solid job, but I can always be better. They put me in the right position to cover and I just rely on my technique."

Q: Is this the most comfortable you've felt since you were drafted right now?

Conley: "Yeah, just not having to think about injuries, that's the biggest thing. Being healthy has made a big difference and going out there knowing my teammates have my back. I'd say this is the best I've felt."

Q: Do you feel like you're showing everybody why you were a first round draft pick?

Conley: "Yes."

Q: After taking a lot of hits from the fans and us in the media, what have these last two or three weeks meant to you guys?

Conley: "I feel like throughout the whole season it's been the camaraderie with the team. No matter what we go through, we always stick together. Nobody blames anyone and as players, we all stick together. I feel like that's the only reason we are where we are right now."

Q: Considering all the change you guys have gone through, is that been harder or maybe something that has forced you guys to bond together?



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Conley: "I think it's a little bit of both. When you go through all that change you don't know exactly how to handle it so we just rely on each other to be there for one another."

Q: After that tough loss last week against the Kansas City, how huge was it to get this win against a Pittsburgh Steelers team that's potentially going to the playoffs?

Conley: "That was a big win. It was a great team we went up against coming into the black hole and we had to defend our hole. We haven't been defending it that well this year, but it was a big win for us."

Q: What's going through your mind when Big Ben [Roethlisberger] comes back in and they have that late drive?

Conley: "I don't care who's in front of me or who's playing any position, I know I need to do what I need to do to get it done."

Q: What have you seen out this team in terms of improvement that have made these games more competitive?

Conley: "Probably communication. Lack of communication is probably why we gave up half the plays this year. We've played with every team we've gone up against this year, so just a lack of communication. Our communication has been really good these past couple of weeks."

RAIDERS TE LEE SMITH

Q: Talk about the three tight-end attack today.

Lee Smith: "Jared [Cook] is our bell cow. in our room. He's the one that makes the big plays. He demands a lot of attention. We talked about it all week. If you hit him on the backside he'll drag everybody the other way. It just worked out that way. By no means do I think I'm going to turn into a touchdown machine. Derek [Carrier] scored again today, Jared finding the end zone is a regular occurrence. I found a way to get in and help the team win. It was a momentum-shifter. It was a lot of fun, good stuff."

Q: [Coach Jon] Gruden said [tight ends coach] Frank Smith deserves free chicken wings.

Smith: "I'm calling for Frank Smith to get a raise after that one. Frank Smith is awesome. He came in and took to us really well. We have a veteran room, we've all been around awhile. We all know what our roles are. This is great. Having a guy like Frank around to lead us in the right direction and give us the things we need. He understands I'm different than Jared [Cook], Jared's different from me, Derek [Carrier] is different from both of us. He's awesome. I'll play for that guy my whole career. I know Derek would say the same thing. We have a good coach, that's for sure."

Q: The last few games, the team is on the upswing and the tight ends seem to be at the middle of it. What does it mean to the tight end group to be one of the keys to the turnaround?

Smith: "Like I said, Jared Cook is the bell cow. Let's not forget just how many plays he made. I had one catch today. Jared is so dominant, it's not fair. It's like if we need one play, go to Jared. At this point in the season, with the injuries we've had, people banged up, the way he and Jordy [Nelson] are playing when most defenses know it's one of those guys who will get the ball when it's on the line. They're still making plays, every third down throughout the game. Coach Gruden loves veteran players and that's proof of it right there. Two guys who've made a ton of plays in this league for ten-plus years and they keep stepping up. In the tight end room we'll continue to do our thing and work hard but my self-awareness is pretty decent. I realize I'm not some huge pass-catching guy by any means. I get a few cheap ones here and there but Jared gets all the credit and all the glory. He's the one that literally pushes the ball up and down the field. Derek [Carr] trusts him. What, a hundred yards the last few weeks. He's just going off right now. It's awesome. I'm glad he's my teammate. Makes it easy on me. Let's me hide and catch wide-open touchdowns because everyone is so concerned about him. It's awesome."



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Q: Were you surprised by how it ended or was it just a sloppy field? Were you happy of how it ended?

Smith: "Regardless, if you have a third-and-one at a certain point it's going to get chewed up. The kicker, [Chris Boswell], don't get me wrong I'm glad we won, but I feel bad for him. That's not a great way to win. He's going to have a long flight back to Pittsburgh. But any field in the NFL, the game of football, we've been on it for weeks and weeks. I'm sure if you go back and look at it there was probably a short-yardage play right around there, maybe some running plays right there. The field got chewed up. When we're not playing on dirt out there there's nothing to complain about. As long as its grass, you won't hear us complain about the field conditions. I'm sure it was just a freak deal."

Raiders LB Tahir Whitehead

Q: Talk about your defensive effort today. It was a big game by the whole unit.

Whitehead: "We're starting to mesh, come together, really just understand what's coming from one another, playing for one another, understanding this game that much better and really just laying it all on the line. We understand that the effort is key. As long as we go out there and we give it all we have, we can have more results like this."

Q: At the very end of the game when they got into field goal position, were you guys thinking there was no way that Ben Roethlisberger and the Steelers could get in that position? Were you surprised?

Whitehead: "Your heart is just racing. It's like, man we worked so hard to get to this point and that's the game of football. You let up a play at the wrong point and time and then you flip the momentum and now they have the opportunity to win the game. These moments are precious. We're thankful we ended up victorious. It was destined."

Q: What were you thinking when he was going for that kick at the end?

Whitehead: "You have to go all out. You have to go block it. At that point we know if they make it, we lose the game, so we went all out for it."

Q: You've had some harsh criticism this year, but today the team put together a complete game. How satisfying is that with how the rest of the season has gone?

Whitehead: "At the end of the day, we know we are all we have. We lean on each other in the locker room. We understand the type of men or the group of men that we have on this team. We understand the type of coaches that we have. We're going to dig deep. It's a blue-collar mentality. We're going to show up every day. We're going to work. We just knew it was a matter of time, we keep putting it all together and we'll be able to go win some games like this and as you see we've been playing our best football as of late. That's what you can expect from us for the rest of the way."

Raiders Defensive End Arden Key

Q: Do you think you guys played better today because you faced a more challenging team in the Steelers?

Arden Key: "Definitely. These last four games of ours have been a challenge. We believe though. The games we've lost, we've lost because of a few mistakes and we didn't lose that badly. We're trying to beat every team from here on out."

Q: What was the talk on that last drive after you went ahead and your defense was able to hold them, what was the conversation?



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Key: "Believe. They only have one more play. Just stop them on this play and our message was just to believe."

Q: On that sack play, you said it was or wasn't a sack?

Key: "Oh it was, it was definitely a sack."

Q: How does it feel to have three wins now?

Key: "It feels great. Every one of these wins feels even better. This one has to be the most exciting win because it's against the Steelers and we don't if they're going to make the playoffs, and they might not because of this game."

RAIDERS WR SETH ROBERTS

Q: What happened on your 39-yard reception to set up the winning touchdown?

Roberts: "Derek told me he was going to throw me the ball if they were in Cover 2, so I tried to stay on my hash and run downfield and catch the ball."

Q: Coach Gruden said that was a play originally designed for Jared Cook and that Derek Carr had thrown it to you in practice earlier this week?

Roberts: "Friday, we had the same coverage and it was kind of the same result. I just thought about that and that's pretty funny."

Q: Was that pretty much a perfect pass from Derek?

Roberts: "Oh yeah, a gorgeous pass. Look at the outcome."

Q: What did you make of Derek Carr's performance today?

Roberts: "Ballplayer. We all ballplayers. We playing ball. I feel like Derek did his thing today. [Jared] Cook did his thing today. Everybody did their thing today. We are a team."

Q: What was this week like for you, with entering the NFL's concussion protocol and then having a big performance today?

Roberts: "I don't know anything about that. I practiced every day and came out and worked, so I'm fine."

Q: You assumed all week that you'd be playing today?

Roberts: "Oh yeah. I knew I was going to play. I didn't hear anything about a concussion, so I don't know how you guys got that."

Q: There was a lot of talk about your team tanking the rest of the season. What have the last few weeks meant to you guys, the way you have played?

Roberts: "I feel like we are starting to pick it up. Not to say that we weren't having fun in the beginning of the season, but coach is really pushing us. It's the last couple weeks of the season and we all know that, but he (coach) still has a great message for us. To come in, work hard and have fun because that's the biggest thing."

Q: What was going through your mind when the Steelers had the ball on that last possession?

Roberts: "I knew that the game wasn't over with. You can never count a game out, an NFL game, with those guys like JuJu Smith-Schuster and AB [Antonio Brown]. I knew they was going to have something."

Q: What was the feeling in the huddle on the possession that resulted in the long pass to you and a touchdown? Did you guys say, 'Alright, we are going to score right here?'



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Roberts: "That was in our mindset. That was our mindset the first and second half, but we were really like, 'Hey, let's go!' I told [Jared] Cook let's go. I saw OG, Jordy Nelson, talk to Cook like, 'Hey, let's get in there.' We were kind of motivating each other."

Q: Have you ever seen that many opposing fans at a Raider game?

Roberts: "No, never. I was surprised. I didn't even know that they traveled like that."

Q: With so much turnover at the wide receiver position, was it important to prove that you are still a capable receiving core?

Roberts: "Like I said, it's the NFL. It's going to change every week. Guys get hurt and banged up. Our coach EB [Edgar Bennett] has been doing a great job of keeping us locked in and knowing our assignments."



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Steelers Head Coach Mike Tomlin

Opening Statement: "You know, tough outcome. But it's nothing mystical, it's not something that happened to us, it's something that we created and we take responsibility for that. We didn't make enough plays to win the game. We've got to make plays and not only at the end of the game, just throughout the game. Not making enough significant plays, not taking enough of an advantage of opportunities, and we've got to look at all aspects of what we're doing. I have to rectify that, not only what we're doing [but] what we've asked those guys to do, the quality at which we're doing it, all of the above. And it's as simple as that. You know we've got to catch balls we have the opportunity to catch, we have to sustain blocks longer, we have to tackle better, we have to make kicks. Just good fundamental things and we're not doing it. So we're going to continue to work, we're going to absorb the negativity that comes with our current position. We understand that we created it, it's our job to fix it. Ben [Roethlisberger] had a rib injury he was able to come back into the game, nothing else was specifically mentioned. I'll update you a little later in the week obviously. Questions?"

Q: What was the decision to put Ben [Roethlisberger] back in?

Tomlin: "You know, he got looked at at halftime and he got treatment and he came back out. We were waiting to see if he was going to be able to come back in and he was. [He] probably could've come in a series or so sooner but we were in a rhythm and flow of the game, he was ready to go when he got back out there."

Q: Was he medically cleared by halftime?

Tomlin: "He was medically cleared when he got back out there, obviously he wasn't back out there at the start of the third quarter."

Q: Why did [Darrius] Heyward-Bey come out in that last drive?

Tomlin: "Again, we rotate people to keep fresh rushers in so it's probably just that"

Q: Mike any thoughts about calling a timeout when they got down inside the ten?

Tomlin: "Yeah I wanted to always keep a timeout for offense, you guys know I kind of have that mentality about it, and I did, and I wasn't sure JuJu [Smith-Schuster] was going to get out of bounds on the subsequent possession. [I] just wanted to keep a timeout, [I] thought we had a chance to stop them, [I] wanted to utilize a timeout for the possession downs, third down, fourth down, we used one for the fourth down, to no avail."

Q: Was the field slippery?

Tomlin: "The field was slippery for us. It was slippery for them also, so I'm not going to make field conditions an excuse. It was slippery for everyone."

Q: Your kicker Chris Boswell has six missed field goals this season. Are you going to start looking for a new one?

Tomlin: "It's disappointing here today. That's all I'm going to say on it."

Q: You defense gave up a 75-yard drive at the end of the game. How disappointing is that?

Tomlin: "Big time. Big time. I think equally as frustrating is we were on some of these plays. We're there at the ball. We're not making plays on the ball. Probably equally as frustrating is we're not making them, and they are. It's not like these balls are falling incomplete, so we have some work to do."



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Q: You said you want to take a look at everything. What's that process going to look like?

Tomlin: "We're going to go through our normal processes in terms of readying ourselves to play for the game this upcoming week. There is no self-scouting or anything of that nature. Redemption Sunday is coming, and we better be prepared for it as it is every Sunday."

Q: Given how some of the teams in the playoff picture did ahead of you, how frustrating is it that you missed an opportunity here today?

Tomlin: "I'm not really aware of that to be quite honest with you."

Q: On the last drive, who's decision was it to run the hook and liner play?

Tomlin: "Hey, I take responsibility for everything we do both good, bad, indifferent. We're not getting into the division of labor and things of that nature. That's not how we function."

Q: How were Stevan Ridley and Jaylen Samuels today?

Tomlin: "We didn't run the ball as well as we'd like, but that's an 11-man job for our offensive unit. I'll have more details or further descriptions or contributions probably for you on Tuesday."

STEELERS QB BEN ROETHLISBERGER

Q: Are you okay? What happened?

Roethlisberger: "What's your definition of okay? I don't know what coach said, but I'll let him address the injury."

Q: How did you feel when you came back to the game after going out with your injury?

Roethlisberger: "You're asking how I feel during a football game where I'm getting beat up. So, I felt okay."

Q: How long have you been sitting on that play that you ran at the end of the game?

Roethlisberger: "A long time. A long time. It's a great call. Randy [Fichtner] asked if I thought it would be a good play call. I thought, if you're going to have one, now's the time. And it was a great call."

Q: Was it the situation that brought that play out or something else?

Roethlisberger: "Yeah, it's the situation right? You can chuck it down the field with plays like that. But it's kind of a trick them type of thing. Obviously it worked."

Q: What kind of a challenge do you guys have ahead of you after losing three straight?

Roethlisberger: "A big one. We all need to look in the mirror and figure out what's going on. It starts with each individual. We have to look inside first."

Q: What do you think the problem is?

Roethlisberger: "No idea. If I knew, we'd have it fixed."

Q: You guys have lost three in a row, all being close games. Does that give you a little confidence?

Roethlisberger: "No, sometimes it makes it worse when it's right there. If you get blown out it doesn't seem to hurt as bad as when you have a chance. But it's a team game. It wasn't easy, and things happen."

Q: What did you have to do to get yourself back into the game?

Roethlisberger: "I was just waiting for coach to tell me when to go."

Q: Can you play the next game?

Roethlisberger: "I would assume so. I can't predict it, but I would assume so."



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Q: You guys are a team that seems to get hot at the right time, and you play three good teams coming up. Is that an opportunity for you guys going forward?

Roethlisberger: "Well we are not at the right time right now. You know we've got three [games] left against really good football teams. It doesn't get any easier."

Q: What do you think this team is made of?

Roethlisberger: "I think we have a lot of heart and a lot of soul."

Q: What were the field conditions like out there today?

Roethlisberger: "Terrible. But we knew that coming in. Randy addressed it. I shouldn't say terrible. I'm sorry, that's the wrong word. The conditions weren't ideal. But Randy addressed it all week to the offense, and preached it every day to the offense; he said to make sure you have the right shoes. You saw how many times guys slipped out there. I think they might have even slipped more that we did. It is what it is."

Q: Is that what happened on the field goal? Did he slip?

Roethlisberger: "It looked like it. I don't know what Bos [Chris Boswell] said. But from my perspective, it looked like it."

Q: Are you worried about place kicks at this point?

Roethlisberger: "No. I still have confidence in him. And I told him that right here next to me. I told him to keep your head up, I still believe in you."

PITTSBURGH STEELERS CB MIKE HILTON

Q: You've lost three straight games. This normally doesn't happen to the Steelers. What's it like in here right now?

Hilton: "We have to get ready for Sunday. There's nothing to be said, it's part of the league. You'll have winning streaks and losing streaks. You just have to prepare for the next one."

Q: How was Derek Carr and his offense able to get into a rhythm on that final drive?

Hilton: "Just doing what they do. Getting the ball out quickly. Their playmakers made plays."

Q: Did you slip on the break at the end there?

Hilton: "Yeah I did but I still have to find ways to make a play."

Q: Did you think they were coming that way?

Hilton: "I mean you always have to expect the ball to come your way. Especially in the last moments. Like I said, you just have to make a play."

Q: Do you view the defense's performance at the end unacceptable?

Hilton: "Yeah, I mean we had plenty of chances to get off the field. We didn't capitalize and they won."

Q: Did you feel like you had a handle on this game?

Hilton: "We did but they found ways to win on that last drive and they got the victory."

Q: Was Derek Carr getting rid of the ball pretty quickly?

Hilton: "He was. Everything was quickstep. Drop back. And if he wasn't dropping back or quick stepping he was getting out of the pocket. They were just finding ways to make plays."



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STEELERS RB JAYLEN SAMUELS

Q: Explain what happened out there today.

Samuels: "It was difficult. Of course we wanted to come out here and win. It's an AFC game. We made a couple of plays on offense, made a couple nice plays on defense, but we just didn't make enough."

Q: Can you talk about the last three games and how you've lost by small margins in all three?

Samuels: "It's been tough these last couple games. But, I mean, it's football. We play great players every week. We just have to take this one under the chin and get ready for next week; go back home and handle business."

Q: Do you feel like it's almost panic mode time?

Samuels: "No, it's not panic mode. We just have to go back, see what we are doing wrong, fix the mistakes, and keep playing. Doing what we doing."

Q: It seemed like you guys were able to move the ball.

Samuels: "Definitely. We had a couple drives where we got stopped. I don't think we went three and out. But overall we did a good job on offense."

Q: What were the field conditions like?

Samuels: "They were bad. I mean we knew that coming into the game, that it was going to be a different type of field. You know, how the field was made. But it's football; you just have to keep playing. There are no excuses. Like I said, it's football. They are going to slip too. They have the same type of advantage that we got. We just have to make more plays."

PITTSBURGH STEELERS K CHRIS BOSWELL

Q: What do you have to say about the field today?

Boswell: "I mean the fields the field. You can't complain about it. You can't blame anything. It's as bad as it is for me as it is for anyone else. You just have to find a way to put it through."

Q: Chris, that's now six missed field goals this season. How do you evaluate your play this season?

Boswell: "It's terrible, what else you want me to say."

Q: Were the field conditions bad out there?

Boswell: "It's the same for everybody. Same for their kicker. Same for me."

Q: Chris, do you still have confidence in yourself?

Boswell: "Yeah, that won't ever change. I just have to start putting more through."

Q: How hard is it when you miss two field goals and you lose by three?

Boswell: "Yeah, I mean it's definitely a lot of heat on you but it's not the first time in my life this has happened. I just have to find a way through it."

Q: You said this wasn't the first time. How did you figure it out and get through it last time?

Boswell: "You just have to keep going. Every kicker, every player, every position goes through downfalls. You just have to find your footing and get back up."



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Q: How have you worked your way out of this kind of thing in the past?

Boswell: "It's just like any other slump in the world. You just have to keep shooting, keep kicking, keep doing what you're doing. I got here for a reason."

Q: Do you go through a process of picking what cleats to wear?

Boswell: "I've been using the same one since I've been here."

Q: Mike Tomlin was quoted as saying he was disappointed and that's all he's going to say at this point. How do you process that yourself?

Boswell: "He's not the only one disappointed and I mean this is a business. You're evaluated by results and I'm not getting it done right now so whatever happens from here happens."

STEELERS DT CAMERON HEYWARD

Q: How are you feeling after this game?

Heyward: "Stunned man. We didn't get off the field when we needed to. Our offense kept us in the game. Even at the end they were moving the ball. We had a 4th-and-6, you can't ask for a better opportunity. It's a team game, but we have to get the stop right there."

Q: Did Mike [Hilton] slip there on that play?

Heyward: "I don't know. You would have to ask him. But I have to get my hands up. I'm not going to complain about one guy. We have to all get better. One team has to win and one team has to lose. It freaking sucks because these three point games suck; it sucks to be on the wrong end of them."

Q: This is three straight for you guys, normally this doesn't happen.

Heyward: "I could care less what happens on the regular. We just have to find a way to get a win. I don't care who can play. It's unacceptable. You have to find a way to get over the hill man."

Q: What were the Raiders able to do on that final drive there?

Heyward: "They converted some stuff. They caught the ball. They were in rhythm, and we didn't get enough pressure. They caught some good passes."

PITTSBURGH STEELERS S SEAN DAVIS

Q: What were they doing with their tight ends that made it difficult?

Davis: "They were moving them around. Eighty-seven, that's their leading receiver man, and we knew that going into the game. We knew whoever was on top of eighty-seven was in the hot seat. We didn't make enough plays and that starts on Wednesday because as a unit we're not good enough to just come out on Sundays and show up when it's time to make a play."

Q: Where do you go from here?

Davis: "As a leader of DB's, I'm going to take this personal. I have to make sure my unit is playing well. The NFL is hard man; you just can't show up on Sunday to make a play. I believe in trusting the process, I believe in the grind, and I believe that practice makes perfect. You play how you practice and I feel like we need to take a step back as DB's, go through the film and really just be hard on ourselves and want to push ourselves to want the pressure to be on us to make the plays to close the game out. We have to do a better job of not giving the ball back to the offense, closing the games out and winning the game."



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Q: Have you seen issues of guys not taking practice seriously?

Davis: "No but I feel like it's hard to blame a person on Sunday. It's tough, I feel like we just have to do better. We have to practice better. We have to continue to work and get better."

Q: These last three games have knocked the wind out of you guys. How do you overcome this?

Davis: "It's the league and we have another game in seven days. We can't dwell on these. We have to continue to move forward, continue to get better, learn from our mistakes, and put together a winning performance, which we haven't done in three weeks. I'm taking it personal. You can tell the whole locker room is sick. We're just going to take it personal. Continue to work. Keep our heads up. We have three more guaranteed."

You guys seem to be in cruise control. Do you feel like this season is slipping away?

Davis: "No. Never. Playing for the Pittsburgh Steelers, I feel like we make it to the playoffs every year. That's just how we are. We're taught and we're coached to never give up. We're just on a little downhill slope right now. We just have to figure it out and finish up the fourth quarter of the season strong and come out 3-1."