



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Greg Olson

Q: The running game last week, what made it as affective as it was?

Coach Olson: "Good players, first of all. Give a lot of credit to those backs and the way that they ran. Certainly we need to take care of the football, but they ran hard, especially Doug [Martin] and Jalen [Richard], DeAndré [Washington] when got his chance to get in. He's done some good things here in practice, and we'll continue to give him looks here over the last four weeks."

Q: Do you anticipate guys coming after your running backs this week because of the fumbles they had against Kansas City?

Coach Olson: "Yeah, you always have to guard against that. Anytime the ball is put on the ground at any position, if you're a ball carrier, wide receiver, quarterback or running back. If you've shown that you'll put the ball on the ground, then you become a target for sure. We have to clean that up."

Q: Where do you see C.J. Anderson fitting in if Martin can't play on Sunday?

Coach Olson: "The guy is obviously... I got a tremendous amount of respect for him and what he's done in the league. He did a nice job when we worked him out before we signed him. He looked fresh, looked in shape. He's a bigger type back, so he gives us a little bit of a body type like Marshawn Lynch type runner there. We'll make a decision on Sunday on who's going to be up, but we did like the style of runner that he is."

Q: Is the boxing glove on the stick used to try to punch out the ball during the running back individual period new?

Coach Olson: "No, we've had that. Really [running backs coach] Jemal [Singleton] has done a great job in a lot of his ball security drills. It's not like any of those three runners, to be honest with you. We're very disappointed with it, but it's not like those guys to be loose with the football. We'll certainly continue to emphasize it."

Q: Was Jordy Nelson's game last week a matter of being healthy?

Coach Olson: "I think a big part of it, yeah, that he is healthy. I think practicing in the indoor, getting off his feet a little bit because we weren't able to run full-speed practices. We got a lot above the neck work done and a lot of reps done without the full-speed running. I think he's healthier and he has his legs back."

Q: What's been the problem with play action this year?

Coach Olson: "A number of different reasons for that. A little bit protection wise in what we're trying to do in helping some of the young players there a little bit. Just personnel wise, where we're at right now, where we feel like we're at right now, that best suit to the skills of the players that we have right now. But we certainly see it being a big part of us moving forward."

Q: Is that about as good as Derek Carr has been in terms of running a play this season?

Coach Olson: "Yeah, we thought it was probably his best game of the season thus far. Again, pushed it down the field. He did a nice job of creating with his feet. Did a great job at the line of scrimmage in terms of some audibles that he made at the line of scrimmage. Again, it's a process still somewhat. I know everyone hates to hear that. He's still learning, but we're happy with the direction he's going."

Q: But if he can string together a couple of games like that to carry momentum into the next season.

Coach Olson: "Yeah, that's the plan here. Again, he's had a lot of moving pieces around him, but he's continued to process. We're excited about that."



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Q: During training camp there was a lot made about Carr being able to recite plays. Is there a difference between being able to do that?

Coach Olson: "And actually apply it on the field. There's no question. There's a lot of guys that have quick, short-term memory and are able to recite plays in a sterile environment. But to actually be able to go out on the field with moving parts and bodies flying at you, that's another thing. Not only to verbalize it, but to see it within your mind and go out and execute it. That's where we're trying to get with it."

Q: There's a drill I haven't seen before from you guys, but as far as the running backs individual period where Coach Singleton has a boxing glove on the end of a stick.

Coach Olson: "Yeah, Vic [Tafur] had asked that, but yeah he's used that. We've used that drill before. We'll continue to use it."

Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther

Q: In all the years you've seen [Ben] Roethlisberger in Cincinnati, does he look any different this year?

Coach Guenther: "He looks better this year. Nah, he's playing good. It's always fun to compete against him. He's a heck of a player. I've had a lot of battles against him. It's a fun game to go against him because he plays at such a high level. He can get them in and out of plays and make unscripted plays. I thought I wouldn't see him for a while, but I guess I'll see him sooner than I thought."

Q: What makes him [Roethlisberger] so difficult to sack in the pocket?

Coach Guenther: "He's a big guy and he can move around in the pocket. He's run a couple times. One time against Carolina, I think he ran for about 40 yards. He's just elusive and he's a big guy to bring down. We got to wrap our arms, grab cloth on the way through on the rush and make sure we get our hands on him."

Q: Our some of the challenges with Roethlisberger the same as what you saw with [Patrick] Mahomes?

Coach Guenther: "It's similar. With Mahomes we did a pretty good job of taking away his first read. He made a lot of plays with his feet, getting out of the pocket. A lot of really impressive throws. Ben is very much of that, being able to do those things. There is going to be five or six plays where he may slide out to the right or left and throw the ball down the field. There was a play against Jacksonville where they were kind of struggling for a while and they get a broken play where AB [Antonio Brown] is on the backside, he kind of stopped his route and he takes off across the field and he throws it for a touchdown, which kind of opened the game up for them. He's definitely a challenge."

Q: Is Antonio Brown the toughest challenge as far as receivers go?

Coach Guenther: "He's good. They move him around. They will put him in the slot some, put him on the backside in a Z or X and do different things with him. He's a very good route runner. He's good at the line of scrimmage, as far as getting off press. He's precise in and out of his routes. Obviously, he has good hands and he's good after the catch. Again, very familiar with him as well and I got a lot of respect for those people over there. The coaching staff and the players, they are a good organization."

Q: Has Gareon [Conley] taking that next step yet? Is he no longer a rookie?

Coach Guenther: "I think so. I think he's done much better. In the beginning he was just kind of getting his legs under him, coming off that injury. I think he's kind of settled in to a starting corner, so yeah I think he's turned the page down to the next chapter of his career."



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Q: What do you see from those specific improvements on the field? What is he [Gareon] doing really well?

Coach Guenther: "Just technique and his leverage. Understanding, 'Hey, if I call this coverage, most likely the way the quarterback is taught the ball is not going to go to that side of the field' or 'Hey, if we are in this coverage, it's probably going to go to you and it's going to be a tough down.' Just understanding those situational things he's got to get, I think he has grown that way tremendously."

Q: You have had to deal with some injuries off the edge and signed two new guys. What kind of challenges does that pose and does Coach Trgovac have to really get these guys ready fast?

Coach Guenther: "I mean a little bit. It's nothing we haven't been used to all year. We've been having a lot of different guys in and out. Obviously, it's our first year here. We pretty much spend the whole week here. We are just going to ask a little bit extra of those guys to stick around, understanding what the plan is. If you are concentrated just on this package, just know that package. We kind of eliminate that way."

Q: What do you want to see from your pass rush over the next four weeks?

Coach Guenther: "Just try to get the guy on the ground. Again, obviously, the numbers aren't quite there. Just continue to improve. There were a few times in the game the other day that I rushed three guys and decided to drop some guys in coverage. When I do that, they have to understand the coverage has got to hold a little bit longer, so the rush can get there. If I call a blitz or a four or five-man pressure, we got to get home and win the one-on-ones. When they are scripted for you to win against a back, against a tight end, against a guard or whatever it is; we got to win those one-on-ones."

Q: What are your thoughts about losing Reggie Nelson for the season?

Coach Guenther: "A lot of respect for Reggie. A lot of history with him. Tremendous guy and a great player. Had a great career. Again, it's unfortunate he had the little nick on his shoulder where he couldn't continue on the journey with us, but we keep him in our minds at all times, for sure. Tremendous leader in our locker room and a tremendous guy for the younger players."

Q: What do you think about Montrel Meander at safety?

Coach Guenther: "He's a good-looking prospect. We are going to try and catch him up to speed as quickly as possible. He's a big guy who can run, who can hit and can cover some space back there for us. We are schooling him up, much like with the defensive lineman and the guys that just got here. Again, we can have certain packages for him if he's up and available."

Q: What do you like about Bene Benwikere?

Coach Guenther: "I had him in Cincinnati last year. We kind of cut him there at the last cut. We decided between him and another guy that could play safety, corner, nickel and had a little more value on special teams. I'm familiar with him. He's a smart guy that can play corner and nickel and play safety at times. To have a guy like that, this late in the season, that's going to come in and kind of understand. When I showed him the install of our defense he kind of remembered it right away, so it's a good guy to pick up at this point."

Q: How important is it to have a practice squad player like Rico Gafford who can play scout team as Lamar Jackson, Tyreek Hill and Antonio Brown?

Coach Guenther: "It's good. Any time you can have a young guy who can really work on what he's trying to work on and have that speed in practice is critical. Because it's hard sometimes to match the speed of the game of some of the guys and he's a guy that we have on our practice squad who can give us those things. It helped us tremendously."

Q: A mast impressionist kind of?

Coach Guenther: "(laughter) Exactly."



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Q: In past years it has at times felt like a funeral in the locker room when the season hasn't gone well and you don't really sense that this year. What tricks do you do to make sure things stay upbeat in the locker room at this point in the season?

Coach Guenther: "Honestly, we really haven't had any. The energy at practice – I've been part of teams that have been to the playoffs and I think it was 2010 we started off the season 0-10. That was hard. Again, that was hard from a team that had been used to be going to the playoffs to have that kind of season. But here, I feel like these guys come to work every day, they're energetic at practice. They are mastering the gameplan, they're asking good questions, so I haven't really had to feel – as a coach sometimes you have to kind of lead the charge with that's tuff especially if there are a lot of new guys here – and I felt like these guys have come out and been energetic at practice. Again, it's easy to say oh woe is me, we come out here and not practice hard, but that's not the case here. For some reason or another it speaks to the volume of the guys that are in the locker room."

Q: So you haven't had to do anything as coaches to make sure the energy is good?

Coach Guenther: "No. Honestly, I've had it with other teams that I have been around, yes, but this team, no."

Q: What did you guys like about Damontre' Moore?

Coach Guenther: "We had him in earlier, we watched his tape. He's both good in the run and in the pass game. So, he's a guy to add some juice off the edge. Again, there's not a lot of guys available in December that can do that, so we were fortunate enough that he was still out there to be able to pick him up and bring him in."

Q: How important are these last few weeks for guys like Moore and Kony Ealy?

Coach Guenther: "Not only those guys, but a lot of the guys really. Really the last four games in particular with the guys that are here now and are healthy, we get a good look at and evaluation of those guys. So, when we get done in January we can say here's the guys that we think should stay and here's the guys that we have to move on from and pick up areas in need. It will be a good litmus test for those guys."

Q: There was a touchdown pass where multiple corners on Sunday were pointing to the same guy. Was there a miscommunication?

Coach Guenther: "It was just a miscommunication between those two guys (Daryl Worley and Nick Nelson). I mean, a young player in there. So, that's some of the learning curves that we're going to have to go through with those guys, especially at the nickel spot. It's such an important spot for us. Nick's been in there for us for a few games now, so hopefully as we go on, he doesn't make those kind of mistakes."

Q: Did the same thing happen in Baltimore with Michael Crabtree's touchdown?

Coach Guenther: "No, that was more of a depth issue where we were on the field. In the red zone, typically you play halfway between. If the ball's at the 10 you line up at the five, if the ball's at the eight you line up at the four. You line up halfway and Daryl just happened to be nine yards off the guy. You're going to give up every throw there. It's something that we harp on all the time. He came off the field and he didn't realize how deep he was. It's third-and-8, you know? You're going to give up an out, you're going to give up a slant. You have to understand where you are on the field and the spacing and the route concepts that you're going to get."