



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Offensive Coordinator Todd Downing**

**Q: When you look back at Sunday, what went wrong offensively?**

**Coach Downing:** “We weren’t efficient on first and second down and we didn’t convert on third down. So, we weren’t on the field very much.”

**Q: Were there any reasons behind it that you saw?**

**Coach Downing:** “Multitude of reasons, yeah. Kind of took turns not operating efficiently and not executing with proper technique. I’m sure I could’ve called a couple of things better, but one way or another, we didn’t get it done.”

**Q: When you’re this far into the season and things aren’t going the way you’d like, how do you deal with that frustration?**

**Coach Downing:** “It’s good to have a group of guys like we have because they have high character. Like you’ve said, we’ve worked so closely and we’ve worked so hard, so we know that each other has put in the proper amount of work. It makes it easier to not get frustrated with anybody else, but just look for ways to improve yourself.”

**Q: I’d imagine nerves can get frayed. Do you back off so to speak and try not to push buttons by being overly critical? Or do you keep the same honest way you’ve gone about it?**

**Coach Downing:** “I pride myself on consistency. Whether we have a great day or a terrible day, I want to be the same guy each day for these players and I expect the same out of them. While it’s OK to be frustrated and disappointed with the way things turned out, you have to carry yourself as a man of character and we have a lot of those type of men around here.”

**Q: What does it mean to you to let it rip?**

**Coach Downing:** “I think it can mean various things. What it’s going to mean for us this Sunday and going forward is we’re just going to play with our hair on fire and let it hang out. We’re going to go out there and play with passion and speed. Play fast and enjoy ourselves.”

**Q: Derek Carr seemed visibly upset on Sunday. How has he harnessed that at practice?**

**Coach Downing:** “Well he’s a prideful guy. He works really hard at his craft, like everyone else that was disappointed in the results. Obviously, it was a big game for us, but the great thing about him is he’s such a tireless worker that he came back in ready to move on to Dallas and try to go get a win on Sunday.”

**Q: On that last drive, five of the first six passes were for single-digit yardage. Why did you feel that was the way to go in that situation?**

**Coach Downing:** “Did you see the design or the concepts? There were some routes much further down the field, but they took it away with coverage. Then the completion took them there. Certainly, in that type of situation, we’re not looking to just nibble and dink and dunk. It was more defensive structured.”

**Q: What’s your evaluation of the wide receivers on Sunday?**

**Coach Downing:** “In spurts, good. Kind of fit with everybody else. There were spurts of what we’re looking for and then there were spurts of falling short of that from an execution and technique standpoint. So, we just need to keep striving to be consistent. We need to hit our route deeps. We need to hit our landmarks horizontally on the field. We need to make plays when we’re given the opportunity to make plays.”

**Q: Do you think details are a reason for the inconsistency this season?**

**Coach Downing:** “As coaches we look every day to turn over every stone and find every little detail. Whether it be route running or combination block on the offensive line or the path of a back or the quarterback booting out to hold backside contain. All those little details are things that we try to pull out of everybody each and every day and



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get better at each and every day. I think what Derek's alluding to is the feeling that all of us have, is that we can do these little things a little bit better and make a big difference."

**Q: What did you see looking back at the tape on the throw to Cordarrelle Patterson where it appeared that Jared Cook was open over the middle?**

**Coach Downing:** "I'd have to watch the play with you to know which one specifically that you're talking about, but I'm more interested in moving on and getting rolling with Dallas than analyzing last week."

**Q: If Amari Cooper isn't able to go, how do you work with his absence?**

**Coach Downing:** "Unfortunately, it's something we've dealt with already this year, and so we have a little bit of better working understanding of what we're dealing with from a wide receiver group standpoint and who can play where. So, we'll be able to mix and match a little bit and try to highlight people's skill sets."

**Q: How do you help get Johnny Holton's mind right with the possibility of him seeing more playing time if Cooper can't play on Sunday?**

**Coach Downing:** "I think it all kind of is a great example of how our season's been as an offense. We have flashes of really good production and executing well and then flashes or spurts where we're not exactly executing the way we want. Johnny's kind of a microcosm of that and so, I would say to him and have said to him and to the team, the message that we preach is let's look for consistency and let's look for doing the little things right. And then the big things happen. So, Johnny is a hard worker and a guy that I know is excited to get back on that field Sunday and have an opportunity to make some plays for us and help us win this ball game. We're looking forward to that."

**Q: What do you make of having some problems with the details when the leaders on this team are so detail-oriented?**

**Coach Downing:** "Yeah, you hope that you can create it as a culture and Coach Del Rio has done a great job setting the culture in this building to be a group of people that do the little things right. As far as refining the details and getting us to a more consistent standpoint in that regard, I think you have to have a certain amount of desire to find those little ways to get better. I think our guys do and will. But, it's certainly an ongoing process for us. We hope that the younger guys and the less experienced guys can emulate the Rodney Hudsons and Derek Carrs of the world and prepare as they prepare and be on the details on Sunday."

**Q: How does a let it rip philosophy coexist with details?**

**Coach Downing:** "Sometimes it's a matter of moving on from mistakes as much as it is letting it rip during a mistake, if you will. I'll give you a golf analogy, as I've given you guys a couple times, I love to play golf and sometimes that driver gets a little squirrely on me and I'll spray one out of bounds. I think letting it rip is stepping up on that next tee box, pulling the driver back out of the bag, not choking down and hitting three-wood, but just swinging away. And the little details are setting my stance properly, having good balance, making sure I close my back wrist, things of that nature. I think that let it rip mentality is something that's going to come easy to us, because we got a lot of fight in us and a lot of pride in us. So, we want to do things the right way and get back on a winning track."

### **Assistant Head Coach – Defense John Pagano**

**Q: What have you seen from Nicholas Morrow these last few weeks?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Just growing every day. [Linebackers] Coach Sal [Sunseri] has done a great job, not only in the meeting in the room, but how Bow [NaVorro Bowman] has really grown him. Taking that veteran leadership and making him into a guy that is productive. You ask about a guy that gets in this league and makes things happen. It's been outstanding to watch. His growth, he's learning every day."



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**Q: What do you lose with Cory James going on IR?**

**Coach Pagano:** "You lose that veteran presence and leadership. Cory was a good player for us. He's growing. Injuries are a part of this game and that happens. You just have to next man up mentality. The next guy has to be ready to go. It's always been that way in the National Football League."

**Q: What has stood out about Eddie Vanderdoes this season and where does he need to improve?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think he goes to the whole youth factor of really learning. Just the ins and outs of the inside ply of the game. he's a physical guy. Strong, powerful. Can generate speed to power when you see that. You're just learning. It's such a big blocking emphasis, this game of angles and how your hand placement is. I think he's learning each and every day. Every rep he gets, the better he gets at seeing things and understanding it. I think the biggest thing you have to be able to do as inside tackles is you have to be able to move your feet. Not only be strong enough, but have that foot speed, quickness to keep up for those teams that run the stretch plays that we're going to see this week against Dallas."

**Q: How have you seen Dallas play without Ezekiel Elliott?**

**Coach Pagano:** "Explosive all across the board. They have great wide receivers. The running backs have really stepped up. I know Ezekiel is something special. Watching the film with him on it. Big, physical offensive line that moves people out and they have great skill guys. They're top 10 in every category you can think offensively. I haven't seen the deep of how, if they ever said they were struggling because I haven't seen it on tape. They're a high explosive, powerful offense and coach [Scott] Linehan does a great job there with that."

**Q: Is there anything you've seen Bruce Irvin do specifically over the last few weeks to increase his sack production?**

**Coach Pagano:** "I think any time you're just growing. All these guys have been more focused. The identity that we're trying to create. The listening to the plan of how we're going to attack these things in the rush game. That's been good for us. Bruce and Denico [Autry] and Khalil [Mack] and getting those guys going throughout the four-man rush of truly changing it up. Getting them moving is better for us. But Bruce is doing what we're asking him to do and he's doing it at a high level right now."

**Q: Did Obi Melifonwu get hurt on special teams?**

**Coach Pagano:** "You have to ask Coach Del Rio on injuries."