



## ***Oakland Raiders Transcript***

### **Head Coach Jack Del Rio**

**Opening Statement:** “We’re busy turning the page to the Carolina Panthers. I know we want to do a little recap here, so let’s have at it, but we’re trying to catch up right now on a short week with the Panthers. Questions?”

**Q: I know you still have a lot of games left this year, but two years into your regime, did you expect this kind of turnaround this quickly? Are you on pace with what you thought would happen when you got here or are you further ahead of schedule?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “I laid it out last year. The expectation is to win the division. You start there. We didn’t get that done last year. There were a lot of positive things to build off of from last year. We’ve kind of carried forward this year, but it still begins with win your division. That’s the surest way to get a spot in that playoff tournament. That will always be goal number one.”

**Q: What is it about your team that’s allowed them to have these fourth-quarter comebacks?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “I think our guys have embraced the idea of competing for the full 60 minutes, regardless of the circumstances, to keep coming and keep believing and keep playing hard. Beyond that, I think obviously we’ve found ways to win and it’s been different ways each week. That’s a credit to the players, a credit to the coaching staff and everybody kind of pulling together and it all being about any way we can. Whatever it takes, by whatever means necessary, let’s find a way to get a ‘W.’”

**Q: How much more confidence does the group get with each comeback victory?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “I think it does build the belief in the squad, as you have success and you experience that. Then you obviously have a reference point to go back and refer to. We’ve done it before, we know we can do it again.”

**Q: Do you have any updates on Aldon Smith? Were you able to talk to Commissioner Roger Goodell about him?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “I did not speak to the Commissioner about that yesterday. Just a quick, a brief conversation on the field yesterday before the game with Commissioner Goodell, but that subject did not come up. I don’t have anything to add. I don’t have any update for you.”

**Q: Could Mario Edwards Jr. come back this week?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “Until I get the green light, I’m going to wait and see with those guys.”

**Q: You have three difficult road games left at the end of the schedule. Do you talk about that stretch with the team?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “Well, what we talk about is the next opportunity to go compete. So right now, we’re talking about recovering from the trip and then we’ll be busy with our preparation. It’ll be all about the Carolina Panthers. The way we’ve approached it each week, we’ve taken each opponent, been very respectful in trying to understand what they’re good at, what their weaknesses are and put together a good plan, have a great week of preparation leading up to the game, then go compete. That’s really part of the process that we’ve been about and the guys have really embraced. That’s how we’re going to continue to do it.”

**Q: Did the game in Mexico City feel like a home game?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “It did not feel like a home game, especially walking up from the field to the locker room, which was a pretty good haul. What did feel like a home crowd was the support. The people there were tremendous. They were really excited to have us play in front of them. They were loud throughout. That part felt like a home crowd.”

**Q: Do you feel like your team got a little more out of that?**

**Coach Del Rio:** “Hard to say. You know, I think we certainly appreciated it, you know? I think we did what we needed to do. The idea was, we’re on a mission to get in there and take care of business, get out of there and get



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back, then begin our preparation knowing that we have a short week for Carolina. That's the way we talked about it, that we had to travel well, not only for that game, but for this game coming up this week. So, I think the travel went well and guys are recovering now and the staff is busy putting a plan together for the Panthers."

**Q: What is the team's plan for the city's announcement of a new stadium here in Oakland?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "That doesn't have anything to do with us and the team right now. We're really focused on the next opportunity and we kind of stay in our tunnel. Those discussions go on. We don't partake in those discussions. So, as the head coach, what I do is I tell the guys, 'I grew up right down the road, I'm really proud to be the head coach of this football team, where it is right now and what we can do is go out and play great football for our fans and for ourselves right now. And so, let's focus on the work and the task at hand.'"

**Q: Do you have any indication if momentum is stronger towards Las Vegas or staying here in Oakland?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "No, I don't. I don't really spend a lot of time with that subject. Again, I really focus on football, preparing the football team and I spend very little time on the business side."

**Q: Will it affect what you do as a head coach and how you function if the team moves?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "As a coach, I take the circumstances that I see our football team in and I do the best I can to put a plan together to help move that group of people to a good end, a good goal. So, it's all about what's next for us and right now, it's the Carolina Panthers coming up this week at home."

**Q: What did you see from Bruce Irvin last night?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Well, he got some numbers but I think he plays hard, he's tough, he's athletic. I think some of those things that Bruce [Irvin] brought, some of the reasons that he's here, I think they showed up last night on the stat sheet, when he gets a sack and makes a lot of tackles, makes an impact on the game."

**Q: When Derek Carr continually keeps having success in the fourth quarter, is it just circumstance or do you see a light go off?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I don't think so. I don't think so. I think what allows a player to excel in those situations is to continue to have the poise, to continue to stay purposeful and to execute. And, it really comes down to the execution in those situations. He's done a great job of that. He's done a great job of staying even-keeled throughout the evening. I mean, you could get rattled. A guy drops a ball he could catch, you could come unglued, or you could respond with belief and pat him on the butt and say, 'Hey, we're going to get the next one.' And, that's the way he's done it. He's really been tremendously poised and composed and he's gone out and delivered for us."

**Q: How much more difficult is this short week, coming off of a trip at high elevation in a foreign country?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "It's been addressed. There definitely are challenges to recovering on the short week and traveling. That's all part of our plan and how we put together our work week. With that, you can add in Thanksgiving. There's a little bit that has to be adjusted there, too. We've got a plan in place. I work directly with [head strength and conditioning coach] Joe Gomes and [football operations coordinator] Tom Jones and several people that spend a lot of time in the offseason going through how we're going to work the team and forecasting things that are coming, the challenges that are in front of us. It's not like we're just trying to decide today what we're going to do. We've got a plan in place. We're going to continue to work that plan, the process in place. The guys have embraced it and we're in that recover, prepare, compete mode. This is the recovery part. It's usually important for us to bounce back from what we just did and get prepared for what's next."

**Q: Are there any long-term effects from playing at the high altitude?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "There can be a little bit. We're working to minimize that as much as possible."



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**Q: With all of that stuff going on, had you pre-scouted Carolina earlier than you normally would have?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Of course. We spent a little bit of time in the bye week."

**Q: Did you experience any issues with that laser pointer?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I saw on the still shots that we get, it showed up a couple of times. It didn't register with me, but I don't know that it was a factor for us."

**Q: What did you learn about the running game struggles last night? Obviously you were still able to move the ball through the air, but you didn't run as well as you normally do."**

**Coach Del Rio:** "[Jadeveon] Clowney caused that. He's a big boy. [Vince] Wilfork, those guys. They did some good things up front. [Texans defensive coordinator] Romeo [Crennel] is a good defensive coordinator. They have some little adjustments. Part of that was having good people. They won up front on a couple of occasions. That doesn't happen very often to our guys. The one thing we did, when you're talking about line play, our quarterback was barely touched. That's a part of it as well. We want to run it better and we will, and we have. They got the better part of... They won the battle most of the night, but we won the battle when we had to have it at the end of the game in that close-out drive."

**Q: When you're not wearing a headset, do you know those plays downfield are coming to the backs?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "I'm not wearing a headset?"

**Q: I didn't see a headset in some of the fourth quarter. But, did you know those plays were coming to the backs?**

**Coach el Rio:** "Yeah..."

**Q: What did you think of those calls by offensive coordinator Bill Musgrave?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Excellent. It's what we ask for. We wanted to be aggressive. We went into the last drive wanting to play to win, not be afraid to throw the ball and Derek made a great play with Jalen [Richard] on our sideline. It was an opportunity there at the end on the fourth down... I think we need to punt this, but hold on. Let's grab a timeout here and think this through. You're going to possibly punt it in the end zone, give them a 19-yard difference, or take a shot at icing it right there. Put it in the hands of the offensive line and let's go get this done."

**Q: To have backs who can not only catch the balls in the flat, but go downfield and make plays like that, how much does that impact what you guys are able to do?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Having the ability... All those guys can pass protect, they can run routes, they can run the ball inside and outside. Having that versatility opens up for the offensive coordinator the ability to utilize them in a lot of different ways."

**Q: Was there a lot of lobbying going on not to punt?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "A lot of lobbying? No. No, there wasn't a lot of lobbying. That's really not how we do it. We communicate, really, [special teams coordinator] Brad Seely and I, I would say. I spend more time with Brad in those kind of situations than anybody else on the staff. Derek always wants to go. It's easy. I've got your vote counted. *(laughter)* I know you're a go. I lean on Brad a little bit in those situations. Brad has been in a lot of those situations over his career."

**Q: At the elevation, did you think about a field goal right before the half?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Not really. At the end of the half, I really thought that we would milk the clock down so that they wouldn't have a lot of clock, which we did, try and draw them off, which we did, and then go ahead and execute a play and try and generate enough yardage to then make a more reasonable attempt at a kick. So, we executed that exactly how we wanted to. We didn't quite connect on the play, but at the end of the day, we minimized their ability to go down and do anything themselves."



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**Q: When you converted that fourth down at the end of the game, the cameras showed you kind of smiling, almost smirking. Was that particularly satisfying to ice it that way?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "Yeah, you know you're putting yourself out there a little bit, but you're believing in your guys, and they delivered. So, when you know you're putting yourself out there, and then they deliver, it's satisfying."

**Q: A lot of times in those situations, teams might try and do a hard count, but you guys snapped it. Was that you, Bill Musgrave, Derek Carr? Who decided that?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "That's part of strategy. That's how we elected to do it there, but I don't want to get into discussions on strategy."

**Q: There has been a little bit of chatter about the two controversial calls in the game last night. Any thoughts on the two calls?**

**Coach Del Rio:** "He was out, and they marked it appropriately." *(laughter)*