



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Head Coach Jack Del Rio at the NFL Combine

Q: What's your evaluation on Latavius Murray?

Coach Del Rio: "Latavius had a solid year for us. He went over 1,000 yards. We feel like there were some good moments, and some things that we'll do better as we go forward. He's an explosive young man. He's got long speed, and he's still growing as a player, so he'll have a chance to go back and work on some things in spring, and come out and have a better year next year."

Q: How did the Super Bowl show how important is it to have a strong offensive line?

Coach Del Rio: "You start by wanting to have one. You typically want to protect the blind side of your predominately right-handed quarterbacks, so I think the left tackle always has a little more significance. Being strong across the front is important. It's never about one guy. I think clearly you saw the need for being strong in the trenches with the way the front dominated that particular game."

Q: What's it like having to scout for a quarterback?

Coach Del Rio: "In terms of finding a quarterback? I'm just glad we have one. I feel like we have a really good, young quarterback in Derek Carr who's coming off his second year now, took a significant jump last year for us, and we feel like there's a lot of room for growth there. We're really looking forward to getting him to this offseason and further developing him, further developing our football team. It's imperative that you find a guy that you believe can lead your franchise, and we think we have one."

Q: How much difference is there in offensive lines at the college level compared to the NFL?

Coach Del Rio: "What you see is fewer and fewer college offensive linemen get in three-point stances and do some of the combination blocks that we do in the NFL. There are more and more of the guys that are playing at the two-point the entire time, are not used to coming back to the huddle, different things like that. So there's a little bit of development that's necessary once you get to the league. That's the biggest part. You're still getting big, strong, talented, young men that have the feet to move and the ability to play. Maybe their development is not as far as along as it was when colleges were more closely aligned to what we do in the NFL."

Q: Are you looking to contain the quarterbacks or rush quarterbacks?

Coach Del Rio: "Are we looking to contain rather than rush? No. I think we're looking to rush, looking to disrupt quarterbacks. The idea is to make sure the quarterback is disrupted, not able to be comfortable back there, not able to sit back there, have the ball and go to different reads. The more you can eliminate that time for him and make him uncomfortable, the more affective, the more efficient your defense will be."

Q: Can you talk about how valuable Derek Carr is for this team?

Coach Del Rio: "Yeah, I'm not really going to get into a lot of specifics. Bottom line is that Derek is a good, young player. He exhibits a lot of leadership. He has tremendous arm talent. He can make all the throws. I sat up here last year and said I believe he can throw the deep ball well. That's something we saw on tape. He just didn't have guys that could go get the deep ball. I feel like we collected a couple of guys that can go get it, like with Amari [Cooper]. With that, we saw him hit a higher percentage of deep balls and throw more of them last year. That's something that he has, his arm talent. We'll just continue



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to grow him. He's a young player. There's so much to learn at that position. The command that you have to have to be comfortable to run the whole offense, to be able to get in and out of plays, to be able to direct traffic, some of the game management, some of the subtleties that he can help us execute from that position. It's so imperative that that quarterback really understands those things. He's hungry for it. The great thing about Derek is he's a real hard worker. He understands the importance of working hard and putting in the time and really understanding his craft. There's so many things. It's just a matter of time. It takes time, it takes experience. He has two years under his belt, and we're looking forward to year three."

Q: How would you weigh talent verse off field issues, like in the case of Robert Nkemdiche?

Coach Del Rio: "I think everybody looks at it differently throughout the league. I think the one common denominator, it's easier for all of us when the talent is obvious, when the production is there, when all the character issues are answered. That makes for a clean pick. That makes for more of a consensus selection. If you don't have some of those things, then there are questions that have to be answered and each team will go through and decide what's most important for them and find a spot for them on the board. I'm sure this young man that you're referring to will be in that same situation. If there are questions, they'll need to be answered by people that are preparing to select him at some point."

Q: What do you think of Dirk Koetter getting the chance to be a head coach in Tampa Bay?

Coach Del Rio: "Dirk's a bright coach, a good man. We had a couple of fine years in Jacksonville. I think he's real detailed, relates well with the players and coaches, and I'm happy for him. I'm happy he gets this opportunity. I know that he's got a couple of guys that we had on staff down there with him that are good people and good coaches. Mike Smith being one, a former head coach himself, and then Todd Monken who is back with him as the OC. Todd's an excellent ball coach and a good person. I'm happy for those guys. They're getting together down there. I know we get to play them this year, so we'll get a chance to compete against them, but I'm looking forward to seeing what he gets done down there. I'm happy for his opportunity and hope him the best."

Q: You've coached both Von Miller and Khalil Mack. Can you compare the two players?

Coach Del Rio: "Both different I think, but both dynamic off the edge. I think Von, everybody got to see Von a few weeks ago when he dominated the Super Bowl and won MVP. He's a special talent. His ability to bend and his quickness off the edge is probably – maybe only Derrick Thomas had that kind of burst and bend ability. They're similar like that. He's special and a great impact player. For us, Khalil, we're really happy we have Khalil. A little different body type. Khalil is closer to 270, probably 20, 25 pounds more than Von, so he's more of a power player. Also has the ability to bend and also has an ability to impact and get after quarterbacks and impact the game. We're happy we have Khalil. I know Denver is happy they have Von."

Q: Do you have an update on the status of Mario Edwards Jr.'s neck injury?

Coach Del Rio: "I don't have anything to add today to what's previously been reported. At some point, there will be something to talk about, but at this point, there's nothing to add."

Q: What does it mean to the franchise to be playing on Monday Night Football in Mexico City?

Coach Del Rio: "A lot of exposure going down to Mexico City. For me, it represents a challenge, because we're going to play an additional game out on the road and in that altitude. The good part about it is I



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feel very good about our ability to travel. I feel very good about our strength staff, [head strength and conditioning coach] Joe Gomes, and the way we approach games before and after, how we recover, how we travel and go attack these games. Again, it's an opportunity for us to rise up to that challenge, but it adds a challenge for us, no question about that, but I think in terms of exposure, going down there and representing, I think we'll do a good job of that."

Q: Is it difficult coaching this season when you don't know where the team will be playing next season?

Coach Del Rio: "No, really it's very similar to last year for me. I stood up here last year and said the same things. Obviously, some things transpired, but the reality is [Owner] Mark [Davis] would prefer to be in Oakland. He's maintained that. I know there are other things that have to be looked at from a business standpoint, but for me, I'm from that area. I'm excited to be coaching the team, looking forward to this year and hopeful that the future will be resolved shortly."

Q: What is the next step in Khalil Mack's development?

Coach Del Rio: "I think just to continue. It's a little bit like Derek Carr. Two really talented guys off to a great start in their careers. They're great kids. They're team-first guys. They're hard workers. They're both very talented, but the key is to really apply yourself to continue to develop your skills, to learn all the idiosyncrasies of pass rush and what it means – the different angles, the different techniques – to get yourself in great shape so you can sustain the demands of a season and to continue doing that. I think there is growth ahead of him and we look forward to getting more out of Year 3 than we got in Year 2."

Q: What is your evaluation of the tight end position on your roster?

Coach Del Rio: "I don't really want to sit here and go through each and every position on our football team. I'd just say that offense last year, we attacked the offense with some numbers at the wide receiver position with Coop [Amari Cooper] and [Michael] Crabtree, developed a couple of other guys that ended up playing nice roles for us. At the tight end spot offensively, we ended up drafting Clive [Walford] and we ended up signing Lee [Smith], and so we attacked that position as well and brought in some talent. That's the type of impact that we were able to have last year by combining the work that we put in here with the draft, and the combine's the start on that for us – for us, not the scouts – and then the free agency that's coming up. I think you go hand in hand to build your roster where you can. Certainly, tight end and wide receiver were two positions that we attacked last year and there will be other positions that we attack this year."

Q: More head coaches came out in favor of expanding replay last year. Where do you stand on that issue and what is your sense of where the coaches are positioned?

Coach Del Rio: "[Patriots Head Coach] Bill Belichick brought up a great point in our owners meetings last year about allowing a coach to challenge any play if he decided it was worthy enough, so I'm in favor of that. If we have an opportunity to get something right, let's use that opportunity and let's get it right. That's what he was saying. It's like it doesn't really matter, let's just – if we can make it right, if it's wrong and we all know it's wrong and we have an opportunity to make it right under the same criteria – you know, indisputable – then why not? It makes all the sense in the world to me and I'm supportive of something along those lines and we'll see where it goes."